

Local Plan Committee

**Town Hall, Colchester
11 June 2012 at 6.00pm**

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**COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL
LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE
11 June 2012 at 6:00pm**

Members

Chairman : Councillor Bill Frame.
Deputy Chairman : Councillor Martin Goss.
Councillors Elizabeth Blundell, Andrew Ellis, John Jowers,
Kim Naish and Colin Sykes.

Substitute Members : All members of the Council who are not members of the
Planning Committee.

Agenda - Part A

(open to the public including the media)

Pages

1. Welcome and Announcements

(a) The Chairman to welcome members of the public and Councillors and to remind all speakers of the requirement for microphones to be used at all times.

(b) At the Chairman's discretion, to announce information on:

- action in the event of an emergency;
- mobile phones switched off or to silent;
- location of toilets;
- introduction of members of the meeting.

2. Substitutions

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

3. Urgent Items

To announce any items not on the agenda which the Chairman has agreed to consider because they are urgent and to give reasons for the urgency.

4. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman to invite Councillors to declare individually any personal interests they may have in the items on the agenda.

If the personal interest arises because of a Councillor's membership

of or position of control or management on:

- any body to which the Councillor has been appointed or nominated by the Council; or
- another public body

then the interest need only be declared if the Councillor intends to speak on that item.

If a Councillor declares a personal interest they must also consider whether they have a prejudicial interest. If they have a prejudicial interest they must leave the room for that item.

If a Councillor wishes to make representations on an item on which they have a prejudicial interest they may do so if members of the public are allowed to make representations. In such circumstances a Councillor must leave the room immediately once they have finished speaking.

An interest is considered to be prejudicial if a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard it as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest.

Councillors should consult paragraph 7 of the Meetings General Procedure Rules for further guidance.

5. Have Your Say!

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

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

6. Minutes

1 - 7

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the former Local Development Framework Committee meeting held on 26 March 2012 and the Local Plan Committee minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2012.

7. National Planning Policy Framework

8 - 35

See report by the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration.

- 8. North Colchester Supplementary Planning Document** **36 - 115**
See report by the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration.
- 9. Myland Parish Plan** **116 - 148**
See report by the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration.
- 10. Better Town Centre Plan Supplementary Planning Document** **149 - 203**
See report by the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration.

11. Exclusion of the Public

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 DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK COMMITTEE
26 MARCH 2012**

Present :- Councillor Colin Sykes (Chairman)
Councillors Elizabeth Blundell, Mark Cory,
Beverly Davies, Martin Goss, John Jowers and
Henry Spyvee

Substitute Members :- Councillor Mike Hardy for Councillor Andrew Ellis
Councillor Michael Lilley for Councillor Kim Naish

Councillor John Jowers (in respect of being a member of Essex County Council with a Cabinet responsibility for Communities and Planning) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)

30. Have Your Say!

David Clouston, addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). Myland Community Council had been working on a Supplementary Planning Document for North Colchester in respect of traffic and transport and they were becoming concerned that the level of traffic generated would impact on neighbouring wards. At this stage they were struggling to see how the road network would cope with the predicted levels of traffic and it was their intention to retain their own traffic consultants in order to understand the traffic flows.

Karen Syrett, Spatial Policy Manager confirmed that as soon as the modelling work and the Transport Strategy became available to the borough council they would be shared with the community council. This work had been identified as a priority and she was scheduled to meet with the community council in the forthcoming weeks.

31. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2012 were confirmed as a correct record.

Councillor John Jowers (in respect of being a member of Essex County Council with a Cabinet responsibility for Communities and Planning) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)

32. Tiptree Jam Factory Plan

The Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration submitted a report on the proposed

Tiptree Jam Factory Development Plan Document (DPD) including the consequent amendments to the proposals map. The Committee were invited to agree the content of the DPD, to agree that the document be published with supporting information for consultation, and to agree that the document be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination subject to any minor revisions prior to publication and submissions.

Laura Chase, Planning Policy Manager, attended to assist the Committee in its deliberations. She confirmed that the council was relying on existing policies, that is the Core Strategy and LDF policies, which would remain in place. The plan was being dealt with using existing procedures for LDF documents and was moving towards the Regulation 27 stage which involved publishing the document for consultation in advance of submission to Government. Since the Committee's last meeting in January, the Council had completed a consultation on the evidence base which enabled people to see the technical documents behind the proposals. Council officers and members had met with Tiptree Parish Council to discuss the plan process and to confirm Parish Council support in principle for the proposals. The borough council had entered into a Planning Performance Agreement with Wilkin and Sons which included provision for the company to finance the final Examination. The Tiptree Jam Factory Plan complied with the Core Strategy, because new government policy permitted additional housing numbers over and above those already allocated and the proposals map would need to be revised to show the new allocation in Tiptree. She referred to two amendments to Policy TJF1 on page 27 of the agenda. In the second sentence '15.6 hectares' should read '4.5 hectares' and in the third sentence 'Chapel Road/Quince Close' should read 'Chapel Road/Quince Court/Wood View'. The next step would be a consultation period from 2 April to 11 May and any comments received would be added to the documents for submission to the Government which would be about the end of May.

Terry Slater, Chairman of Tiptree Parish Council, addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3) in support of Option 4. Wilkin and Sons was a recognised brand which contributed to Tiptree and the surrounding area and should be supported. He was aware that in any event part of the operation would be relocating outside of Tiptree but if the entire operation was to be relocated elsewhere it would have a major impact on its employees. He was also mindful of the national shortage of affordable housing and of the need to ensure young people remained in the village. The Parish Council took the view that it was logical that the new factory was funded by the enabling development.

In response to a question from the Committee regarding the ability of the local road network to cope with the increased traffic, Councillor Slater referred to the Essex County Council traffic assessment which concluded that traffic flows did not warrant any additional pedestrian crossings and the new roundabout in Factory Hill would improve the corner.

Ian Thurgood, Wilkin and Sons, addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). In response to a query from a local developer as to why the company had not simply submitted a planning application, his response had been that they were aware that there would be some disruption and they wanted to involve the village and ensure they met the needs of local people. As a result of this

process over the last year there had been some changes to their thinking. The company was also aware that during the last 50 years Tiptree had trebled in size with a consequent impact on the ability of its infrastructure to cope. The company had enjoyed a record year last year and in the first two months of this year sales were up by 25%. They wanted to stay in Tiptree and he asked the Committee to approve the plan for publication and submission to the Secretary of State.

Councillor Elliott attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Committee. He referred to the Government's discussions about housing on greenfield sites. He considered that it could prove difficult to limit the number of houses because developers may want to build more houses. He asked the Committee to support the plan.

Members of the Committee congratulated Wilkin and Sons on their success and supported the plan. However, there was a request for a further consultation drop-in session in the Tiptree Community Centre. Members considered the process had been transparent and the work being funded by Wilkin and Sons was in line with council policies including the Core Strategy which promoted sustainable development. Councillors wished to see limits on the overall number of units on the site to avoid overdevelopment. The process had given the village more say on what development would be permitted. Members acknowledged that some people would be affected more than others and confirmation was sought that a buffer zone would be maintained between the development and Tolleshunt Knights.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that it would be possible to undertake another consultation in the Community Centre in Tiptree with a drop in session. The objective was to allow the planning application to fine tune a layout that best fitted the site. However, it should be possible to include an indicative number of units for the site in the Plan. She confirmed that the development would bring additional housing numbers for Tiptree but that it would not remove anything already in the allocations schedule. She also confirmed that there would be two buffer zones, one at the north of the site to protect the existing residential area, and a second one to ensure adequate separation between the development and Tolleshunt Knights.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) that –

- (a) The content of the Tiptree Jam Factory Development Plan Document (DPD) and amendments to the Proposals Map be agreed.
- (b) The Tiptree Jam Factory DPD and all supporting information including the Sustainability Appraisal be published in order that representations relating to issues of soundness can be made.
- (c) The Tiptree Jam Factory DPD be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination.
- (d) The Spatial Policy Manager be authorised to make minor revisions to the document prior to publication and submission, including two amendments to Policy TJF1 on page 27 of the agenda – the second sentence to read '4.5 hectares' instead

of '15.6 hectares' and the third sentence to read 'Chapel Road/Quince Court/Wood View' instead of 'Chapel Road/Quince Close'.

Councillor John Jowers (in respect of being a member of Essex County Council with a Cabinet responsibility for Communities and Planning including the Essex Design Guide which was being updated with an Urban Design Guide) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)

33. Wivenhoe Local List

The Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration submitted a report inviting the Committee to adopt the Wivenhoe Local List of heritage assets. The report set out the criteria used in selecting buildings or historic features to be included on the list and identified the group of volunteers who undertook the work. The report explained that the Local List was not a static document but would change over time as more information became available.

Beverley McClean, Coast and Countryside Planner, attended to assist the Committee in its deliberations. She explained that the Committee was requested to adopt the Wivenhoe Local List in principle because there were a small number of entries about which there were concerns. She identified two entries, the St John Ambulance building which was originally a Wesleyan chapel and was the subject of a current planning application, and land opposite Millfields School. These two sites would need further consideration and the Committee was requested to consider adoption of the Wivenhoe Local List in principle. There were 78 buildings or features on the Local List which was appended to the report together with an example of a recording sheet for one of the buildings. It was intended to transfer the information onto the council's mapping software and the council's internal planning software to ensure the information was available when planning applications were being assessed. She referred to the Colchester Local List work and pilot projects in Wivenhoe and Langham being included as a case study in the Local List Guidance being developed by Essex County Council and English Heritage.

Robert Needham, addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). He asked the Committee to support adoption of the Wivenhoe Local List which had been formally launched in 2011 and supported by Colchester Borough Council, Wivenhoe Town Council and the Wivenhoe Society. They took on board a set of draft guidelines produced by English Heritage. The list would be revised over time and could be held up to public scrutiny. All the owners of buildings or features identified were notified of their inclusion and in some instances extra information was volunteered. He formally requested that the Committee adopt the Local List for Wivenhoe.

In response to questions from the Committee he explained why vistas should be included as set out in the officer's report. He also referred to The King George V

Playing Fields being bequeathed to Wivenhoe to celebrate the coronation of King George V and the site would be used in the forthcoming Queen Elizabeth's Jubilee celebrations for a beacon. Millfields was the site of a former traditional windmill and granary.

Members of the Committee supported the document and referred to vistas being important to the community, but they preferred that the two sites referred to in the officer's introduction be removed to enable further enquiries to be undertaken. The Committee to agree to adopt the Wivenhoe Local List in principle.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) that, subject to the removal of the St John Ambulance building and Land opposite Millfields School, the Local List for Wivenhoe be adopted in principle.

Councillor John Jowers (in respect of being a member of Essex County Council with a Cabinet responsibility for Communities and Planning, for which his portfolio provided funding for the Rural Community Council of Essex and financial assistance towards Peldon village hall) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)

34. Winstred Hundred Village Design Statement

The Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration submitted a report on a proposed Village Design Statement and Parish Plan for the parish of Winstred Hundred. Village Design Statements and Parish Plans were examples of community led plans prepared by a locally constituted community group and once adopted as Planning Guidance Notes, Village Design Statements became material consideration documents during the determination of planning applications, and Parish Plans could potentially be useful for the preparation of the future Local Plan for Colchester.

Beverley McClean, Coast and Countryside Planner, and Karen Syrett, Spatial Policy Manager, attended to assist the Committee in its deliberations.

Charles Dymond addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). He was presenting this document on behalf of the parish council and the working group. Work on the document had taken three years to complete by a dedicated group who were justifiably proud of the result. The document related to four villages and led on from two village surveys in 2009, one for adults and one for young people, and the findings were presented in 2011. The responses formed the basis of this document and the action plan. Both the Village Design Statement and the Parish Plan focussed on what was special to residents. He was delighted to commend the document for the Committee's approval.

Members of the Committee were impressed with the response rate to the two questionnaires and the amount of co-operation received which had resulted in this document. Members commented on how the community fabric had changed over time in terms of workshops, public houses, the lack of any shop, very little public transport

and not many facilities for young people in the four villages. On the positive side the document identified some industrial activity and the special character of the buildings. Members' also commented that this document set the benchmark for future such documents and the community should justifiably feel very proud of the outcome.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) that the Winstred Hundred Village Design Statement and Parish Plan be agreed and adopted as a Planning Guidance Note.

LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE
23 MAY 2012

Present :- Councillor Bill Frame (Chairman)
Councillors Elizabeth Blundell, Andrew Ellis,
Martin Goss, John Jowers, Kim Naish and Colin Sykes

1. Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Frame be appointed Chairman for the ensuing Municipal Year.

2. Deputy Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Goss be appointed Deputy Chairman for the ensuing Municipal Year.



Local Plan Committee

Item

7

11 June 2012

Report of	Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration	Author	James Firth 01206 508639
Title	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Implications for Colchester		
Wards affected	All		

The Local Plan Committee is asked to note the publication of the NPPF and the implications of this for Colchester

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 The Committee is requested to note the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the implications of this for Colchester as set out in the report below and attached annex which look in particular at issues of consistency and potential policy gaps.
- 1.2 To agree that any potential areas of conflict with the NPPF will be addressed through the forthcoming review of the Local Plan. No single issue Development Plan Document (DPD) will be undertaken at this stage to introduce additional policy guidance.
- 1.3 To agree the preparation of guidance to assist applicants making applications for rural workers dwellings.

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 The NPPF was published on 27 March 2012 and immediately superseded the previous national planning policy guidance contained in Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) notes. The publication of the NPPF has implications for Colchester's existing Local Development Framework. The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of plans and the policies contained in the NPPF are material considerations in the determination of planning applications. The main issues covered in this report are the level of conformity of Colchester's existing Local Plan (LDF) with the NPPF, and any potential policy gap that may now exist in Colchester as a result of the revocation of the previous PPS and PPGs and their replacement by the NPPF.
- 2.2 There is considered to be a limited degree of conflict with the NPPF and therefore a low risk of vulnerability. Whilst taking more immediate action to prepare new policies could be considered, the risks and implications are on the whole considered to be low and unlikely to justify a specific review of local policies in advance of the forthcoming review of the Core Strategy/Local Plan. To undertake a single issue Development Plan Document (DPD) at this stage to introduce additional policy guidance would need to include full public consultation and be

subjected to examination in public. There would therefore be considerable time and expense implications of such a decision.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 The Committee could decide to undertake a single issue Development Plan Document (DPD) at this stage to introduce additional policy guidance. This document would need to include full public consultation and be subject to examination in public. There would therefore be considerable time and expense implications if such a decision was taken.
- 3.2 The Committee could decide to attempt to provide additional policy guidance in new Supplementary Planning Documents. It should be noted however that the Department for Communities and Local Government do not support this approach and advise that where Local Planning Authorities wish to retain elements of national or regional policy they should do so by means of a single issue DPD.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The NPPF is clear that the planning system remains plan led. As set out in paragraph 2 of the NPPF, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 remains unchanged and requires that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 The development plan consists of the Local Plan and any adopted neighbourhood plans. The development plan documents which the Council has already adopted (Core Strategy, Development Policies, and Site Allocations) all now form part of the 'Local Plan'. Paragraph 211 of the NPPF makes clear that the Local Plan should not be considered out-of-date simply because the documents were adopted prior to the publication of the NPPF. Colchester's adopted Development Plan Documents therefore continue to form the basis for planning decisions in Colchester.
- 4.3 The East of England Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy) currently still forms part of the development plan until it is formally abolished by order using powers set out in the Localism Act. The NPPF states that it is the government's clear policy intention to revoke regional strategies subject to the outcome of the environmental assessments currently being undertaken. The government letter to chief planning officers setting out the intention to abolish regional strategies states that this should be treated as a material consideration.
- 4.4 When adopted, Neighbourhood Plans will also form part of the formal development plan. Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan but once in force, the policies in a Neighbourhood Plan can take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan for that neighbourhood.
- 4.5 Annex 1 of the NPPF (implementation) makes clear that adopted Local Plans can be given full weight for 12 months from the date of publication of the NPPF, even if there is a degree of conflict with the NPPF. The proposed requirement to obtain a 'certificate of conformity' for Colchester's existing policies has been dropped by the government. It is, however, necessary to establish the degree of conformity with

the NPPF and therefore the weight which will be able to be attached to Colchester's planning policies following the initial 12 month period.

- 4.6 This report and the attached annex considers the degree of conformity of Colchester's existing Local Plan with the NPPF, and attempts to identify any potential policy gaps in Colchester left as a result of the revocation of the former Planning Policy Guidance notes and Planning Policy Statements. The main areas where action may be required are underlined in the attached report and have also been summarised below. In general the potential areas of conflict with the NPPF are limited and are considered to be issues that could be addressed through the forthcoming review of the Local Plan. The alternative would be to undertake a single issue DPD at this stage to introduce additional policy guidance. This would need to include the full public consultation and be subjected to examination in public and therefore this would take considerable time and expense.
- 4.7 *Presumption in favour of sustainable development*
- The government has produced a standard model policy on the presumption in favour of sustainable development which will need to be included in all plans. This policy will need to be incorporated into the Council's Local Plan when it is reviewed and has been included in the Tiptree Jam Factory Plan which has been submitted to the Government for examination.
- 4.8 *Section 1- Building a strong, competitive economy*
- When plans are updated a new assessment will be required looking at the deliverability of allocated employment sites to ensure their long-term protection is justified.
- 4.9 *Section 2 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres*
- Consideration could be given to identifying primary and secondary shopping frontages in other centres around the borough rather than just Colchester town centre as this is now emphasised by paragraph 23 of the NPPF.
 - The NPPF requires Councils to review the extent of town centres. The extent of the town centre was recently defined through the Core Strategy and Site Allocations documents. Further work may be required on this given the requirement in the NPPF to undertake an assessment of the need to expand town centres.
 - The NPPF suggests Local Plans should be very clear on exactly how out of centre retail developments will be considered. The Council therefore could consider possible further local policy on this aspect.
 - The Council may wish to consider setting a different floorspace threshold for the more focused impact test should there be local evidence to suggest this would be justified.
 - Opportunities to create and support markets could be further explored in local policy.
- 4.10 *Section 3 – Supporting a prosperous rural economy*
- Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. The Council's existing policies are considered to reflect these objectives.

4.11 *Section 4 - Promoting sustainable transport*

- The Council's existing planning policies set parking standards for all uses, which were based on county wide evidence. In light of the greater flexibility in the NPPF allowing maximum or minimum standards for all use classes the Council may wish to consider reviewing parking standards. This section also states that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.

4.12 *Section 6 – Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes*

- Colchester's strong record of housing delivery means it is considered that it is only necessary to identify a 5% additional buffer to the 5 year supply as required by the NPPF. Colchester's housing trajectory will need to be updated as required to be in compliance with this. If windfall sites are to be included then compelling evidence will also need to be provided.
- References in existing local policy and text to PPS3 requirements such as minimum densities, which have been revoked, will need updating in due course.
- A review of employment land will need to be undertaken as part of the evidence base when the Local Plan is reviewed.
- There is no longer a national minimum threshold for affordable housing. It is considered that the 35% local target remains justified as a balance between housing need and viability but will be reviewed, along with the Strategic Housing Market Assessment to inform the Local Plan review.
- Colchester's adopted policies support affordable exception sites contiguous with village settlement boundaries. These schemes are required to be comprised entirely of affordable homes. The NPPF now provides support for schemes that include an element of market housing in order to deliver significant affordable housing. This may therefore need to be reflected in additional local policy.
- Annex A to PPS7 contained details of the evidence required to justify a new agricultural workers dwelling in the countryside. Although the NPPF recognises the needs of rural workers it is absent on detail. The Council may therefore in reviewing its plan wish to set out the justification required and the tests applicants need to demonstrate they comply with. In the interim Guidance or a Supplementary Planning Document could be produced to help applicants make applications. The Town Centre SPD has been prepared to reflect this intention.
- The NPPF suggests that local authorities could set out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens. The Council already has an adopted Backland and Infill Development SPD, however, it may be appropriate to review the detail in the SPD and make it a policy in future to afford it more weight in decision making.
- Colchester's locally adopted policies set out a preference for re-use of rural buildings for agricultural or employment purposes and do not support residential use. It appears the NPPF may provide more flexibility. This issue may therefore need further consideration in local policy.

4.13 *Section 8 – Promoting healthy communities*

- Colchester currently designates public and private open space for protection as shown on the proposals map. The NPPF includes a new type of designation called 'Local Green Space'. A policy that would enable the protection of Local Green Spaces and manage any development within it in a manner consistent

with policy for Green Belts is therefore likely to be required when the Local Plan is next prepared or reviewed.

4.14 *Section 11 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment*

- There are no longer any national brownfield targets. The Council could consider in future setting its own local targets but this would need to reflect land availability evidence.
- The reduction in detail on pollution and contaminated land issues at the national level may therefore require further consideration with the Council's specialist officers and additional local guidance developed on these issues.

4.15 *Section 12 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*

- Assessment of applications for Listed Building consent or other applications affecting heritage assets will need to be assessed against the more limited amount of guidance set out in this part of the NPPF. This may cause some difficulty in assessing applications and additional local policy or guidance could be considered.

4.16 *Planning strategically across local boundaries*

- In the future further emphasis will need to be given to cross-boundary working with other neighbouring authorities particularly if it is considered necessary to meet development needs in other areas. Greater emphasis will also need to be placed on joint working with other public and private sector bodies and working relationships with Local Enterprise Partnerships in line with the NPPF.

4.17 *Neighbourhood Plans*

- There may be a need to formally define the policies in the Council's existing adopted documents that are considered 'strategic policies' to which neighbourhood plans must conform, and which are considered 'non-strategic' policies over which neighbourhood plans may take precedence.

5. Proposals

5.1 It is proposed that the Committee agree to note the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the implications of this for Colchester as set out in this report and attached annex.

5.2 Where action may be required, it is considered that in the majority of cases the issue can be addressed when the Local Plan is reviewed. It should be noted that a reviewed Local Plan will not be adopted until after the 12 month period in which the existing policies can be given full weight. After this 12 month period the weight that can be afforded to local policies is relative to the degree of conflict with the NPPF. As there is limited conflict it is considered that substantial weight would still be afforded to the Council's existing adopted policies.

5.3 Areas where it is considered there is a limited degree of conflict or a lack of guidance and therefore a risk of vulnerability following the 12 month period are listed below. Whilst taking more immediate action to prepare new policies could be considered, the risks and implications are on the whole considered to be low and unlikely to justify a specific review of local policies in advance of the forthcoming review of the Core Strategy.

- Policy guidance on rural workers dwellings and what will be considered to be an essential need for a new dwelling in the countryside. Guidance could be provided to help applicants and to supplement the approach set out in the NPPF.
- Policy guidance on how rural affordable housing schemes that also include a small element of market housing will be considered.
- Policy guidance on pollution, contaminated land, and the historic environment may be needed subject to discussions with the Council's specialist officers. It should however be noted that the NPPF technical annex and retained practice guide do provide some level of additional guidance on these topics.
- Identification of the existing local policies that are considered 'strategic' and those which are considered 'non-strategic'. It is considered that these policies could be identified by the Council without the need for a new policy document.

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 The Local Plan can contribute to the delivery of all of the aims of the Strategic Plan including provision of affordable housing, regeneration and enabling business to thrive.

7.0 Consultation

- 7.1 Public consultation was carried out by the Government at the national level prior to the publication of the final NPPF in March 2012.
- 7.2 Any changes proposed to local planning policies will require public consultation in accordance with the recently published Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 A decision to note the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the implications of this for Colchester is not expected to generate a significant amount of publicity.
- 8.2 The review of local planning policies and the required public consultation would be likely to generate local publicity.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1 The review of local planning policies and evidence base documents will have financial cost implications depending on the extent and nature of the reviews undertaken.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Local Development Framework and is available to view on the Colchester Borough Council website by following this pathway from the homepage: Council and Democracy > Policies, Strategies and Performance > Equality and Diversity > Equality Impact Assessments > Strategic Policy and Regeneration > Local Development Framework.

11. Human Rights Implications

- 11.1 Human rights implications will need to be considered through the preparation of any new or revised local policy and through the sustainability appraisal process.

12. Community Safety Implications

- 12.1 Community safety implications will need to be considered through the preparation of any new or revised local policy and through the sustainability appraisal process.

13. Health and Safety Implications

- 13.1 Health and safety implications will need to be considered through the preparation of any new or revised local policy and through the sustainability appraisal process.

14. Risk Management Implications

- 14.1 A decision to agree that any limited areas of conflict will be addressed through the forthcoming review of the Local Plan and that no single issue Development Plan Document (DPD) will be undertaken to introduce additional policy guidance at this stage will avoid the need to produce a single issue DPD. There is a risk that, following the initial 12 month period in which adopted plans will be given full weight, the weight that may be attached to some existing local policies will be reduced. As set out above, however, the level of conflict is considered to be low and therefore the weight that can continue to be attached to the Council's existing policies should be high. The provision of guidance in relation to agricultural workers dwellings could be provided without the need and expense associated with the production of a DPD although the weight afforded to it in decision making will be less.
- 14.2 A decision not to wait for the forthcoming review of the Local Plan and to undertake a single issue DPD immediately would ensure full weight could continue to be attached to local policies. It would, however, have significant resource and cost implications for the Council and would be quickly superseded by the review of the Core Strategy/ Local Plan when this takes place in the near future.

Appendix 1 - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - Implications for Colchester – LDF consistency and policy gaps

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Implications for Colchester – LDF consistency and policy gaps

NPPF and the role of the Local Plan

The NPPF is clear that the planning system remains plan led. As set out in paragraph 2 of the NPPF, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 remains unchanged and requires that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan consists of the Local Plan and any adopted neighbourhood plans which have been adopted in the area. The development plan documents which the Council has already adopted (Core Strategy, Development Policies, and Site Allocations) all now form part of the Local Plan. Paragraph 211 of the NPPF makes clear that the Local Plan should not be considered out-of-date simply because the documents were adopted prior to the publication of the NPPF. Colchester's adopted Development Plan Documents therefore continue to form the basis for planning decisions in Colchester.

The East of England Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy) currently still forms part of the development plan until it is formally abolished by order using powers set out in the Localism Act. The NPPF states that it is the government's clear policy intention to revoke regional strategies subject to the outcome of the environmental assessments currently being undertaken. The government letter to chief planning officers setting out the intention to abolish regional strategies states that this should be treated as a material consideration.

When adopted Neighbourhood Plans will also form part of the formal development plan. Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan but once in force, the policies in a Neighbourhood Plan can take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan for that neighbourhood.

Annex 1 of the NPPF makes clear that adopted Local Plans can be given full weight for 12 months from the date of publication of the NPPF, even if there is a degree of conflict with the NPPF. The proposed requirement to obtain a 'certificate of conformity' for Colchester's existing policies has been dropped by the government. It is, however, necessary to establish the degree of conformity with the NPPF and therefore the weight which will be able to be attached to Colchester's planning policies following the initial 12 month period.

The sections below consider the degree of conformity of Colchester's Local Plan with the NPPF, and attempt to identify any potential policy gaps in Colchester left as a result of the revocation of the former Planning Policy Guidance notes and Planning Policy Statements.

Achieving Sustainable Development

Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

Achieving Sustainable Development is a thread that runs throughout the whole of the NPPF. This includes all three dimensions of sustainability - economic, social and environmental. The section on the presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraphs 11-16) makes clear, however, that the planning system remains plan led.

Paragraph 15 states that Local Plans should follow the approach of the presumption in favour of sustainable development so it is clear that development which is sustainable can be approved without delay. All plans should be based on and reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, with a clear guide as to how the presumption will be applied locally.

Implications for Colchester

Colchester's Adopted Core Strategy is positively worded to promote sustainable development and is therefore consistent with this approach. Sustainable Development is listed as the first objective under Chapter 3 of the Core Strategy including economic, social and environmental sustainability. The Core Strategy when read as a whole provides a guide to the local circumstances when development can be considered sustainable. The Core Strategy meets the full objectively assessed needs for the area. The policies allow for flexibility in delivery and phasing should monitoring prove this is necessary and therefore are able to adapt to rapid change. The document is positively worded and therefore there is a clear presumption that development will be favourably considered where it meets the policy requirements.

Colchester's Adopted Development Policies document contains the more detailed policies necessary to define when specific types of development will be considered unsustainable and therefore unacceptable. This is consistent with the overall approach set by the Core Strategy. Development Policies concerning economic growth or community facilities are worded particularly positively and state that such developments will be encouraged or supported where they meet the defined requirements. This is again consistent with the approach of a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Colchester's Adopted Site Allocations identifies land allocations to meet the strategic need for sustainable development set out in the Core Strategy.

The government has produced a standard model policy on the presumption in favour of sustainable development which will need to be included in all plans. This policy will need to be incorporated into the Council's Local Plan when it is reviewed.

Core Planning Principles

The NPPF sets out 12 core land-use planning principles that should underpin both plan-making and decision taking. These are set out under paragraph 17 of the NPPF. All of these principles will therefore be very relevant and remain broadly similar to the previous approach adopted in national policy. Points that are particularly notable for comment in this section are:

- The intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside should be recognised and support given to thriving rural communities within it. The reference to intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside has been reinstated and did not appear in the earlier draft of the NPPF.
- Emphasis is placed on re-using land that has been previously developed. There are no longer any national and regional brownfield targets.

Implications for Colchester

The twelve core planning principles are reflected in Colchester's existing adopted local policy. Colchester's local plan is up-to-date and provides a practical framework within which decisions can be made.

Delivering Sustainable Development

Section 1- Building a strong, competitive economy

This section of the NPPF together with the following section on 'ensuring the vitality of town centres' replaces much of the previous guidance contained within Planning Policy Statement 4 (Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth).

The NPPF states that:

- *significant weight* should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system (paragraph 19).
- Investment in business should not be over-burdened by the combined requirements of planning policy expectations (paragraph 21).
- Planning policies should seek to recognise and seek to address potential barriers to investment by addressing a number of criteria (paragraph 21). Local policy should set out a clear economic vision for the area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth.
- The NPPF also includes a similar statement to that previously found in PPS3 which states that land allocations should be regularly reviewed in order to avoid long term protection of employment land where there is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for that purpose (paragraph 22).

Implications for Colchester

Colchester's Adopted Core Strategy includes a clear vision and Centres and Employment Hierarchy in order to support economic development and the delivery of new jobs in Colchester. This is therefore in accordance with the

NPPF and is based on robust evidence such as the employment land study and evidence prepared by economic development colleagues. This evidence is likely to need regular up-dates in the future. The Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPD together identify strategic employment zones to meet the needs for local and inward investment.

The NPPF refers in particular to business sectors and the need to take account of whether they are expanding or retracting. An up-to-date evidence base on economic matters and business need in Colchester will therefore be important.

The NPPF supports the development of clusters of industry which supports Colchester's existing approach of identifying growth areas and areas for development such as the Knowledge Gateway. The identification of priority areas for regeneration, infrastructure provision and environmental enhancement is also consistent with the regeneration areas and key facilities and infrastructure requirements (Core Strategy table 6d) which are included in Colchester's adopted local policies.

The NPPF supports flexible working practices such as residential and commercial uses within the same unit. Colchester's local policies do not make specific reference to live-work units, however, such uses would be acceptable in principle if they meet other policy requirements such as impact on residential amenity.

The statement that significant weight should be given to the need to support economic growth will need to be considered when making decisions on planning applications. Colchester's Local Plan, however, sets out a framework and strategy to support economic growth including the centres and employment hierarchy and the identification of strategic employment zones and local employment sites. This part of the NPPF is therefore not considered to justify development which is otherwise clearly contrary to the adopted local plan as sufficient land is allocated to support and encourage economic growth.

The deliverability of employment sites is based on evidence including the Employment Land Review and has relatively recently been found sound at examination. The Review specifically looked at existing employment sites and allocation to check if they were still appropriate. Rezoning took place where there was no reasonable likelihood of the site being used for employment purposes. When plans are updated a new assessment will be required looking at the deliverability of employment sites to ensure their long-term protection is justified.

Section 2 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres

This section of the NPPF requires local authorities to set out policies for the management and growth of centres.

- Town centre vitality and viability should be supported
- A hierarchy of centres should be defined
- A clear definition of primary and secondary frontages in centres should be made including policies on acceptable uses in such areas
- promote 'competitive town centres' and a diverse retail offer
- retain, enhance, re-introduce, or create markets
- allocate a range of sites for town centre uses to meet need in full and undertake an assessment of the need to expand town centres.
- allocate appropriate edge of centre sites for main town centre uses that are well connected to the town centre where sufficient and viable town centre sites are not available.
- set policies for consideration of main town centre uses which cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to town centres
- set policies to encourage residential development on appropriate sites in town centres
- where town centres are in decline, local planning authorities should plan positively to encourage economic activity

Sequential test (NPPF paragraphs 24-25, 27) – The NPPF states that a sequential test should be applied to applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan. Town centre locations should first be considered, then edge of centre locations, and then out of centre only if suitable sites cannot be found at the previous stage. Preference should be given to accessible sites that are well connected to the town centre. Flexibility in terms of the scale and format of development should be shown but there is no specific requirement to split/disaggregate schemes. This approach should not be applied to small scale rural offices or other small scale rural development.

Impact assessment (NPPF paragraph 26, 27) – An impact assessment should be required for applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan, if the development is over a proportionate, locally set threshold. The default national threshold is 2500 sqm if there is no local threshold. The content of this test is more focus on the impact on centre investment and on town centre vitality and viability. Town centre impact should be up to 10 years for major schemes rather than the standard 5. If the impact of proposals is significantly adverse then the application should be refused.

Main town centre uses are defined in the glossary to the NPPF as retail, leisure, entertainment, more intensive sport and recreational uses, offices, arts, culture, and tourism uses.

It should be noted that the PPS4 practice guide has not been revoked by the NPPF and remains as relevant guidance.

Implications for Colchester

Colchester's Core Strategy currently seeks to promote town centre vitality, a competitive town centre, and identifies a Centres and Employment Hierarchy. This is therefore consistent with the NPPF.

Primary and secondary frontages are identified in Colchester Town Centre and Development Policy DP6 sets out the policy requirements for such centre. Acceptable uses for other centres are set out in the Core Strategy Centre and Employment policies, however, consideration could be given to identifying primary and secondary frontages in other centres as this is now emphasised by paragraph 23 of the NPPF.

Colchester's adopted Site Allocations DPD at Policy SA TC1 allocates sites and sets out how the Town Centre and nearby North Station Regeneration area will accommodate the full need for town uses identified in the Core Strategy. Other growth and regeneration areas are allocated growth as appropriate. The areas include centre or edge of centre sites that are well connected to the town centre and this approach is therefore fully consistent with the NPPF. The extent of the town centre was recently defined through the Core Strategy and Site Allocations documents. Further work may be required on this given the requirement in the NPPF to undertake an assessment of the need to expand town centres.

Colchester's range of adopted policies including transport and accessibility policies in particular when taken together allow for consideration of main town centre uses which cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to town centres subject to the proposals passing the sequential and impact tests set out in the NPPF. The NPPF suggests Local Plans should be very clear on exactly how out of centre retail developments will be considered. The Council therefore could consider possible further local policy on this aspect.

Colchester's Core Strategy sets policies to deliver a minimum of 2000 homes in the town centre and fringe between 2001 and 2012. Adopted Development Policy DP6 supports bringing upper floors back into use, particularly for C3 residential purposes. Colchester's local policy is therefore fully consistent with the NPPF in this respect.

The sequential and impact tests remain broadly similar to those previously found in PPS4 as set out above. The Council may wish to consider setting a different floorspace threshold for the more focused impact test should there be local evidence to suggest this would be justified. The exceptions for small scale rural office developments are consistent with the Core Strategy and Development Policies DPD's existing support for small scale rural business (DP9, CS ENV2).

More intensive sport and recreational uses are considered to be main town centre uses as set out by the NPPF. 'More intensive' is not defined in the NPPF. Colchester's adopted Development Policy DP5 states that indoor sports uses will be considered appropriate for employment sites and zones.

As the NPPF is a material consideration this is not considered to necessitate an immediate of this policy given that the Council's transport and accessibility policies already seek to locate development at accessible locations. The acceptability of indoor sports uses is therefore likely to remain a matter of scale and type of use having regard to the particular circumstances of the case.

Opportunities to create and support markets could be further explored in local policy.

Existing references to PPS6 in the Centres and Employment section of the Core Strategy can be read as the NPPF and remain consistent.

Section 3 – Supporting a prosperous rural economy

This section of the NPPF states that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development:

- Supporting sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses.
- Promote development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses
- Support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside, including tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations and where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres
- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities

This section along with section 11 (conserving and enhancing the natural environment) replace much of the previous guidance in Planning Policy Statement 7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas). Section 6 (Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes) includes a list of the circumstances in which special circumstances may justify isolated new homes in the countryside.

Implications for Colchester

The NPPF provides strong support for sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise through both conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings. Adopted Development Policy DP9 states that proposals for new rural employment buildings will only be supported in exceptional circumstances where there are no appropriate existing buildings and the need has been adequately demonstrated. Whilst it is reasonable to require justification as to the need for buildings in order to ensure developments are sustainable the NPPF appears increasingly positive on this aspect.

Development Policy DP8 is a positively worded policy which supports agricultural development and diversification.

Development Policy DP10 supports rural tourism, leisure and culture where they are compatible with the rural character and avoid undue harm. Where accessibility is poor, proposals should be small scale.

Development Policy DP4 protects existing Community Facilities and is therefore also consistent with this section.

PPS7 previously included a policy preference for the re-use of existing rural buildings for commercial uses prior to residential conversions being considered. The NPPF allows for the re-use of rural buildings for commercial and residential uses (in other sections), and does not explicitly state a preference in policy terms for either.

Annex A to PPS7 contained details of the evidence required to justify a new agricultural workers dwelling in the countryside. Although the NPPF recognises the needs of rural workers it is absent on detail. The Council may therefore in reviewing its plan wish to set out the justification required and the tests applicants need to demonstrate they comply with.

Section 4 - Promoting sustainable transport

Chapter 4 of the NPPF is dedicated to transport policy and replaces PPG13. The policies follow a similar approach with the exception of the final bullet point below:

- Policies should facilitate sustainable development, and recognise that policies and measures will vary between communities from urban to rural areas
- Developments that generate significant movements should be located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised.
- There is emphasis on accessibility for all modes of transport including walking and cycling in particular
- Transport assessments and statements, and Travel Plans are required for developments that generate significant amounts of movement.
- Proposals for mixed use developments are encouraged and key facilities located within walking distance of most properties
- Sites that are well located in terms of existing facilities will be favoured.
- If setting local parking standards accessibility, type of development, availability of public transport, car ownership levels, and a need to reduce the use of high emission vehicles should all be taken into account.
- It is stated that developments should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe which is somewhat different to the 'Nil Detriment' test in the National Guidance for Transport Assessment.

Implications for Colchester

Colchester's Adopted Core Strategy and Development Policies DPD both place strong emphasis on transport and accessibility. They are therefore consistent with the approach to sustainable transport set out in chapter 4 of the NPPF.

There is greater flexibility in the NPPF to set local parking standards for all types of uses which could be given consideration in local or neighbourhood plans. There is also greater freedom to set minimum or maximum standards for all types of uses, replacing the previous approach where non-residential uses were required to be maximum standards. Colchester has an adopted Parking Standards SPD (2009) which provides parking standards for all types of uses. The Council may wish to consider reviewing parking standards in light of this extra flexibility, however, there is considered to be no immediate policy gap or vacuum.

When making planning decisions consideration will need to be given to any improvements which can be undertaken that can cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development. The requirement that development should only be refused when residual cumulative impacts are severe will need consideration but is generally reflected in existing local policy which seeks to allow development to proceed wherever possible by adopting a design which gives high priority to accessibility and access issues.

The Council's adopted policies include consideration of rural developments in line with the NPPF. DP10 (Tourism) supports small scale tourism or building conversion schemes where accessibility is poor for example. Larger developments are directed towards the urban centres.

Existing adopted policies were developed through joint working with infrastructure providers and the County Council in particular. The Core Strategy includes a list of infrastructure requirements at Table 6d and the Development Policies document includes a policy for assessing Transport Infrastructure Proposals (DP18). This is in line with the requirements of the NPPF.

Section 5 – Supporting high quality communications infrastructure

The NPPF places significant emphasis on the development of high speed broadband and other communications networks. Although there are no specific new requirements for the policy content of local plans this section states that local authorities should support expansion of electronic communications networks.

Telecommunications masts should be the minimum necessary for efficient operation of the network, however, it also states that local authorities should not seek to prevent competition between different operators or question the need for the development. As with the previous guidance, local authorities should not determine health safeguards if the proposal meets the International

Commission guidelines for public exposure. New masts should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.

Implications for Colchester

Colchester has an adopted Digital Strategy (Cabinet July 2011) which aims to provide superfast broadband, both wireless and fixed, throughout the borough. This has the objective of making Colchester the best connected place in Essex and the East of England. The Council therefore recognises the importance of such communications infrastructure which is now also reflected in the NPPF.

Colchester has no local planning policies dealing specifically with telecommunication masts. The NPPF, however, appears to contain sufficient policy guidance to allow the Council to continue to determine such applications based on their individual merits.

Section 6 – Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

This section replaces guidance previously found in PPS3 (Housing). The Local Plan is required to meet the full need for market and affordable housing as objectively assessed in the evidence base.

The Council must identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites that meet 5 years' worth of housing with an additional 5% buffer to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Where there has been a record of 'persistent under delivery', a 20% buffer should be provided. Sites or broad locations should also be identified for years 6-10 and ideally years 11-15, and the schedule should be updated annually.

The NPPF also states that local authorities should set out policies on housing density, mix, and affordable housing. It is stated that applications for change to residential use from commercial buildings should normally be approved where there is an identified need for additional housing in that area, provided there are not strong economic reasons why such development would be inappropriate.

There is no longer a national minimum threshold for affordable housing. Policies should be set at a local level.

Reference to rural exception sites for affordable housing remains in the NPPF similar to previous policy guidance, however, there is now also a statement that local authorities should consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs.

Rural housing should be located to enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as rural workers housing; to secure the future of a Listed Building; where re-using redundant

buildings would enhance the immediate setting; or where there is a truly outstanding or innovative design.

There are no longer any national or regional targets for brownfield land.

The NPPF suggests that local authorities should consider setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens.

Implications for Colchester

It is considered that Colchester's strong record of housing delivery means it is only necessary to identify a 5% additional buffer to the 5 year supply. The housing trajectory will need to be updated to be in compliance with this requirement (bring forward sites from later years). If windfall sites are to be included then compelling evidence will need to be provided.

Colchester already has adopted Core Strategy policies that include housing density, mix, and affordable housing, and is therefore consistent with the NPPF. However, references in existing local policy and text to PPS3 requirements such as minimum densities, which have been revoked, will need updating in due course.

Colchester's adopted Core Strategy sets out a clear framework for addressing housing need and provides land for commercial developments. Under normal circumstances, therefore, it is not considered likely that there would be a need for further housing that would justify the loss of allocated employment land. This part of the NPPF, however, highlights the need to have sufficient evidence on the suitability of employment land for economic development if it is to be safeguarded for employment purposes. A review of employment land will need to be undertaken as part of the evidence base when the Local Plan is reviewed.

Core Strategy Policy H4 sets an affordable housing requirement of 35% with different thresholds dependent on the location of the site. As set out in the explanatory text the 35% was considered to represent a balance between housing need and viability. It is therefore considered that the 35% target remains justified but will be reviewed, along with the Strategic Housing Market Assessment to inform the Local Plan review.

It is not considered that the removal of national and regional targets for brownfield land would affect the delivery of growth areas or sites identified in the Core Strategy. It remains a Council objective to complete the regeneration of allocated brownfield sites in Colchester.

Colchester has an Adopted Backland and Infill Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which sets out the circumstances in which backland development and garden development will be acceptable. The suggestion in the NPPF is that local authorities could set out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens so it may be appropriate to

include the detail in the SPD and make it a policy in future to afford it more weight in decision making.

Colchester's Adopted Core Strategy, Development Policies, and Site Allocations documents remain the primary consideration in determining planning applications. As the NPPF supports market housing forming part of rural exception sites, in some circumstances, greater consideration may need to be given to any proposals for housing contiguous to village settlement boundaries which meets identified local housing needs. The NPPF makes clear such proposals should deliver significant additional affordable housing. A large proportion of such schemes will therefore need to be affordable homes. This issue will need to be reflected and further addressed through additional local policy.

The special circumstances in which isolated new homes in the countryside can be supported remain limited. The NPPF has, however, resulted in the revocation of annex A of PPS7 on sustainable development in rural areas. The annex gave guidance on how to establish whether rural workers dwellings can be justified as an exception to rural restraint policies and also a method of assessing applications for the removal of agricultural occupancy conditions on existing dwellings. This policy gap therefore may require further guidance at the local or national level.

In terms of re-use of existing buildings in the countryside this would need to 'enhance the immediate setting' and would need to be consistent with Colchester's locally adopted policies which set out a preference for re-use for agricultural or employment purposes and do not support residential use. This issue may therefore need further consideration in local policy.

Section 7 – Requiring Good Design

The NPPF states it is important to plan positively for high quality and inclusive design for all development. This section remains similar to previous national policy guidance on design.

The NPPF is clear that 'permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions' (paragraph 64).

Design codes should be considered, however, unnecessary prescription should be avoided. Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes.

Local planning authorities should have local design review arrangements in place. Major projects should be referred to national design review when appropriate.

Great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs. Design processes involving the local community should also be treated more favourably.

Guidance on advertisements remains similar to previous guidance in that they should only be controlled in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts. The NPPF sets out requirements for detailed consultation and justification if an Area of Special Control on advertisements is to be approved.

Implications for Colchester

The approach to design is consistent with Colchester's existing locally adopted policies. The NPPF retains some clear statements on the need for good design which can be used in planning decisions as appropriate to complement local policy in Core Strategy Policy UR2 and Development Policy DP1 in particular.

The availability of Urban Design specialist advice at Colchester allows for local design review.

Colchester has no specific local policies on advertisements, however, the NPPF provides guidance that states amenity, public safety and the cumulative impacts of advertisements are all relevant considerations, and this should assist in the determination of planning applications on their merits.

Section 8 – Promoting healthy communities

This part of the NPPF covers issues related to open space and many of the issues previously covered by PPG17. It is stated that Local Planning Authorities should work with communities to create a shared vision of the residential environment and facilities they wish to see. Places should promote opportunities for meetings between members of the community and should be safe and accessible.

Plans should plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities and other local services, guard against loss of valued facilities, enable established shops and services to modernise, ensure an integrated approach to the location of housing and facilities.

Local authorities should take a positive and collaborative approach to enable development to be brought forward under Community Right to Build Orders.

Robust and up-to-date evidence on the need for open space, sports and recreation facilities is required.

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless a number of criteria are met (paragraph 74). This section of the NPPF now has a wider definition than that found in previous guidance which referred to playing fields only.

Planning policies should protect and enhance existing public rights of way and access.

The NPPF allows local communities, through local and neighbourhood plans, to identify special protection for green areas of particular importance. By designating 'Local Green Space' communities rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. Local Green Space can only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed and will not be appropriate for most green space as set out by the criteria in the NPPF. The space should be local in character (ie. not vast tracts of land).

Implications for Colchester

Colchester's Adopted Core Strategy and Development Policies plan positively for community facilities and local services. In particular Core Strategy table 6d sets out the facilities and infrastructure needed to support growth and Development Policy DP4 seeks to retain and support the enhancement of existing facilities.

Adopted Development Policy DP15 already applies to existing or proposed public or private open space, outdoor sports grounds, school playing fields and allotments. A second part of the policy deals with indoor facilities. In this respect the Council's policies are therefore already broadly consistent with the definition in the NPPF although the criteria set out do differ somewhat.

A policy that would enable the protection of Local Green Spaces and manage any development within it in a manner consistent with policy for Green Belts is likely to be required when the Local Plan is next prepared or reviewed. Open Space is already designated and protected under Development Policy DP15, however, as the Local Green Space designation fulfils a somewhat different role further policy guidance is likely to be required. As the NPPF makes clear Local Green Spaces can only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed it is anticipated that such further guidance could be included in that plan.

Section 9 – Protecting Green Belt land

The section covers designated Green Belt land. As Colchester has no designated Green Belt within the borough it is not directly relevant.

Section 10 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

This section of the NPPF covers issues previously addressed by PPG20 (Coastal Planning), PPS22 (Renewable Energy) and PPS25 (Development and Flood Risk). The guidance remains broadly similar.

Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework, which was published at the same time as the main document, provides details on the application of Flood Risk policy including the sequential and exception test, flood risk assessment, and flood resilience and resistance.

Local planning authorities are required to adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Local authorities should also have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources.

Renewable or low carbon energy development should be approved if the impacts are or can be made acceptable and applicants should not be required to demonstrate the need for such development.

Implications for Colchester

Colchester's adopted Core Strategy Policy ER1 and Development Policy DP25 provide particular support for renewable energy schemes including community level projects. This approach is therefore consistent with the NPPF. As set out by Core Strategy Policy ER1 residential dwellings and non-residential development are encouraged to achieve minimum ratings in accordance with the Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM respectively. The Council also has an adopted Sustainable Construction SPD which has been recently reviewed and conditions relating to sustainable construction are now being applied to planning applications.

Section 11 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

There are no significantly different requirements for the policy content of local plans in this section of the NPPF. The key areas now emphasised by the NPPF are as follows:

- Plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value
- Plans and decisions should seek to re-use land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value. Local planning authorities may continue to consider the case for setting local targets for use of brownfield land.
- LPAs should set criteria based policies against which development proposals affecting protected wildlife, geo-diversity sites, or landscape areas will be judged.
- Great weight should be given to conserving the landscape and scenic beauty of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Planning permission should be refused for major development except in defined exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated the development is in the public interest.
- Planning decisions should conserve and enhance biodiversity and criteria are set out in the NPPF (paragraph 118) for various types of development.

- The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply to development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives.
- The later part of this section covers contaminated land, noise pollution, air quality and light pollution issues. These sections are covered in considerably less detail than the separate Planning Policy Statements and Guidance notes which were previously in force.

Implications for Colchester

As there are no significantly different requirements for local plans, Colchester's adopted policies are considered to remain in conformity with the NPPF.

Considerable emphasis is given to the re-use of brownfield land. There are no longer any national and regional brownfield targets. The Council's allocated Core Strategy and the Site Allocations document accord with this approach and direct the majority of Colchester's housing provision to previously development land (PDL). The removal of national and regional targets recognises that the previous high levels of development on brownfield sites cannot be continued indefinitely but will be encouraged. The Council could consider in future setting its own local targets but this would need to reflect land availability evidence.

Significant emphasis remains on the protection of AONB such as Dedham Vale in Colchester.

Guidance in PPG14 on unstable land, PPS23 on planning and pollution control and PPG24 on noise is now no longer in force. The reduction in detail on pollution and contaminated land issues may therefore require further consideration with the Council's specialist officers and additional local guidance developed on these issues. It should be noted that guidance such as the national 'Explanatory Note to the Noise Policy Statement for England' (Defra, 2010) remains in force alongside the NPPF.

Section 12 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

This section of the NPPF replaces the previous guidance in PPS5 (Planning for the Historic Environment). The previous numbered policies found in PPS5 are no longer found in the NPPF however the policy content of the section remains broadly the same. There are no significantly different requirements for the policy content of local plans in this section of the NPPF which includes the following points:

- Heritage statements continue to be required.
- Decisions should take account of the desirability of putting heritage assets to viable uses, the positive contribution made by such assets, and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution.
- Great weight should be given to assets conservation. The tests relating to substantial harm and wholly exceptional are retained, as are the

circumstances in which substantial public benefits may outweigh loss or harm to a heritage asset. The effect of proposals on non-designated heritage assets should also be taken into account and a balanced judgement made.

- Local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment publicly accessible.

The PPS5 Practice Guide does not appear in the listed of documents replaced by the NPPF (Annex 3) and therefore appears to remain applicable.

Implications for Colchester

The planning considerations remain broadly similar. Assessment of applications for Listed Building consent or other applications affecting heritage assets will need to be assessed against the more limited amount of guidance set out in this part of the NPPF. This may cause some difficulty in assessing applications and additional local policy or guidance could be considered.

Colchester's Core Strategy ENV1 refers to the historic environment, and Development Policy DP14 (Historic Environment Assets) provides policy guidance to assist in the determination of applications. These policies remain consistent with the NPPF.

Section 13 – Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals

Essex County Council is the planning authorities responsible for minerals and waste matters. This section is therefore not directly relevant to Colchester.

Plan-making

This section of the NPPF replaces previous guidance on local spatial planning contained in PPS12.

Great emphasis continues to be placed on Local Plans as being key to delivering sustainable development. Plans should seek opportunities for net gains across all three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social, and environmental.

Each local planning authority should produce a Local Plan for its area. It is stated that this can be reviewed in whole or part to respond flexibly to changing circumstances. Any additional DPDs should only be used where clearly justified. SPDs should be used where they help applicants make successful applications or aid infrastructure delivery. SPD should not be used to add unnecessarily to financial burdens on development.

Only policies that provide a clear indication of how a decision maker should react to a development proposal should be included within the plan.

There continues to be significant emphasis placed on the need for early engagement.

Local plans should set out the strategic priorities for the area. They must also:

- plan positively and be drawn up over an appropriate timescale (preferably a 15-year time horizon),
- be based on co-operation with neighbouring authorities, public, voluntary and private sector organisations (para's 178-181)
- Indicate broad locations for development (key diagram) and land-use designations (proposals map)
- Allocate sites to promote development and flexible use of land
- Identify areas where it's necessary to limit the change of use of buildings
- Identify land where development would be inappropriate
- Contain a clear strategy for enhancing the natural, built and historic environment (para. 157)

Implications for Colchester

Colchester's Core Strategy conforms with the approach set out in this section. The adopted Supplementary Planning Documents in Colchester assist in the delivery of sustainable development by assisting applicants in designing and submitting acceptable applications. Clearly these issues will need further consideration when the Local Plan is reviewed or any new SPDs are proposed or existing documents updated.

Using a proportionate evidence base

The section on using a proportionate evidence base sets out that plans must be based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence including economic, social, and environmental issues. Strategies must have full account of relevant market and economic signals. Various specific evidence base requirements are section out in this section. Key areas of interest include:

- On housing, Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments continue to be required.
- A robust evidence on business needs is required based on joint working including land need and land supply issues; the role, function and capacity of town centres; and locations of deprivation.
- The need for information on the quality and capacity of infrastructure and the consideration of infrastructure delivery is more clearly stated.
- Up-to-date information is required on environmental issues. Sustainability appraisal should be an integral part of the plan preparation process. Other assessments should be produced as required but should be proportionate.
- Evidence on the historic environment should allow the assessment of the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to the environment.

- A requirement with greater emphasis is that local planning authorities should work with public health leads and organisations to understand and take account of the health status and needs of the local population (eg. sports, recreation, places of worship).
- Greater emphasis is placed on viability and deliverability. The plan should be assessed to ensure the scale of obligations is not such that viability is threatened. Normal costs of development should also be taken into account to provide competitive returns to a willing land owner and developer. The cumulative impacts of requirements should be considered. Community Infrastructure Levy charges should be worked up and tested alongside the Local Plan where practical. Infrastructure and development polices should also be planned together to ensure there is a reasonable prospect that planning infrastructure is deliverable in a timely fashion.

Implications for Colchester

Many of these evidence base requirements are already in place in Colchester but will require up-dating over time to support the revision of the Local Plan. Information on business need from the economic development team and other sources will be important, as will joint-working with health authorities in order to meet these requirements. Considerable viability and deliverability work was undertaken to support the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPDs. This issue was considered at public examination and the plans were found to be deliverable. Viability of sites will, however, need to be kept under review as is acknowledged by the Council's existing adopted policies.

Planning strategically across local boundaries

Public bodies now have a duty to co-operate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries. Joint working should allow authorities to meet development requirements which cannot be wholly met within their area. In two tier areas, country and district authorities should cooperate with each other on relevant issues. Local planning authorities should work with Local Enterprise Partnerships, Local Nature Partnerships, private sector bodies, as well as utility and infrastructure providers. Evidence of cooperation should be shown, such as plans or policies developed through a joint committee, a memorandum of understanding, or jointly prepared evidence or strategies.

Implications for Colchester

The preparation of Colchester's existing adopted documents involved significant co-operation particularly with the County Council, infrastructure and utility providers, and other local bodies. They are therefore considered to be in conformity with this overall approach. In the future further emphasis may need to be given to cross-boundary working with other district authorities as appropriate should it be considered necessary to meet development need in other areas. Greater emphasis will also need to be placed on joint working with private sector bodies and working relationships with Local Enterprise Partnerships in line with the NPPF.

Examining Local Plans

The tests of soundness are set out by paragraph 182 requiring that plans are positively prepared, justified, effective, and consistent with national policy. The previous tests set out in PPS12 emphasised only that plans should be justified, effective, and consistent with national policy. The NPPF therefore places greater emphasis on plans being prepared positively to meet the objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements. There is also greater emphasis on cross-boundary working on strategic priorities in order to meet the effective test.

Implications of Colchester

The revised tests of soundness will need to be taken into account when documents are being prepared for public examination.

Neighbourhood Plans

The NPPF sets out the role of neighbourhood plans to set policies to determine decisions on planning applications, and the ability of Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders to grant planning permission for specific development that complies with the order. The NPPF sets out the requirement that neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. They should not promote less development than that set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies. Once adopted, however, policies in a neighbourhood plan can take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan.

Implications for Colchester

There may be a need to formally define the policies in the Council's existing adopted documents that are considered 'strategic policies' to which neighbourhood plans must conform, and which are considered 'non-strategic' policies over which neighbourhood plans may take precedence.

Decision-taking

This section of the NPPF highlights the importance of pre-application engagement and front loading, and how this should be encouraged. Local validation requirements are supported and it is stated that the Council should publish a list of information requirements.

The section again emphasises that the planning system is plan-led. In assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The section also provides guidance on additional local planning controls, planning conditions and obligations, and planning enforcement matters.

The planning obligations tests are clearly defined in paragraph 204 and remain that they must be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development, and fairly related in scale and kind to the development. The need to take into account changes in market conditions over time is also emphasised.

Authorities should consider publishing a local enforcement plan.

Implications for Colchester

It is not considered that this section raises any particular issues for planning policy in Colchester.



Local Plan Committee

Item
8

11 June 2012

Report of	Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration	Author	Karen Syrett 506477
Title	Adoption of Supplementary Planning Document – North Growth Area Urban Extension		
Wards affected	Mile End, Fordham and Stour		

This report seeks the Committee's approval to adopt the Supplementary Planning Document for the North Growth Area Urban Extension .

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 The Committee are requested to adopt the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in respect of the North Growth Area Urban Extension (NGAUE.)

2. Reasons for Decision(s)

- 2.1 Supplementary Planning Documents add detail to policies already contained within the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPD and bridge the gap between the strategic planning documents and a planning application. The guidance can be site specific, it can relate to a wide geographical area or it can relate to a particular subject. It is important that developers are provided with good quality relevant information prior to submitting a planning application. It is also important that Council Officers and Members have detailed advice to assist in the decision making process.
- 2.2 The NGAUE SPD is intended to supplement existing policies in the Core Strategy and the Site Allocations DPD by providing more detailed guidance. The supplementary guidance document has been prepared by officers as a joint exercise following consultation in 2010 on a first draft of the SPD. A further period of public consultation took place earlier this year. The adoption of this guidance will help inform development of the site and will be used as a material consideration in the determination of any planning application submitted for the site.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 To operate without the additional guidance and rely on the existing Core Strategy and Site Allocation Policies.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Core Strategy sets the strategic context for all other development plan documents and represents an overarching policy statement. In support of the Core Strategy, further documents, including a Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD), Development Policies DPD and a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD), have and are being prepared to set out additional policies, provide extra information or convey further guidance.
- 4.2 The Council's adopted planning policy identifies land south of the A12 as the location for new strategic development required to meet growth targets and local housing needs. This area, known as the Colchester North Growth Area (NGA), is identified in one of the Core Strategy Key Diagrams (KD2). A strategic allocation for 2,200 homes is included to the west of Mile End and south of the A12 and is identified as the North Growth Area Urban Extension (NGAUE). It is to the NGAUE strategic allocation that the SPD relates.
- 4.3 This Supplementary Planning Document is an opportunity for the Council to set out more detailed guidance for the strategic allocation. The Core Strategy – because it is a strategic document relating to the whole Borough – can only set out an overall policy framework and key policy to inform subsequent planning decisions. The Site Allocations DPD provides policies to guide development in the area but there is also a need for additional detail such as that now contained in the SPD.
- 4.4 The SPD provides the background to the development, the context for growth, the approach to development and the delivery approach. There are a number of figures and diagrams to help illustrate the text. It is recognised, however, that there are important influences on new development which are beyond the highlighted area – the existing communities of Mile End and Braiswick are particularly important influences. Whilst the guidance therefore applies to proposals being brought forward for the NGAUE, the guidance is informed by circumstances beyond that area.
- 4.5 The Introduction sets out briefly the background, purpose and scope of the document. Section 2 sets out the context for the SPD, including an explanation of the context for growth and the need for new homes; the context for new development, including other recent and emerging changes in Mile End. Section 2 also includes a description of the site and its important features. Section 3 of the SPD sets out the approach to development, and sets out the guidance which applicants and developers of proposals within the SPD area will need to take full account of in preparing their proposals. This section includes guidance on land use, transport and accessibility, landscape, the community and supporting facilities, and is an expression of the Council's aspirations for future development of the site. An overall master plan for the future development is also included. Section 4 of the SPD sets out guidance and expectations in respect of the delivery of proposals. It sets out requirements in terms of the information to be submitted as part of proposals for development, and highlights particular issues which the proposal(s) must address including architecture, design and planning obligations.

- 4.6 SPD will be given more weight as a material consideration in the development control context if it is prepared alongside a Sustainability Appraisal and it is a statutory requirement to undertake consultation with the public and strategic consultees. The plan led system of development control requires decisions to be made in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. SPD should be consistent with the development plan, although it does not have the same status as an adopted development plan policy. The SPD is intended to supplement and clarify policies the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPD. In order to afford it as much weight as possible in the decision making process the SPD has been prepared with a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and full public consultation.
- 4.7 The purpose of the SA is to promote sustainable development through better integration of sustainability considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans. The Sustainability Appraisal was updated alongside the revised SPD and formed part of the consultation. Because of the size of the appraisal it has not been attached to the committee report but it is available on the Councils website and in the members room or by request.
- 4.8 A previous version of the SPD was published for consultation in 2010. There was a lot of concern raised locally about the proposals and the LDF Committee agreed further work should be undertaken. This included engagement with the community and further highways and transportation work. The first stage of the engagement work consisted of an independent exercise delivered by the University of Essex. The aim was to understand how local residents feel about the area (i.e. good points, issues, ideas for change etc.) and to ensure that any proposed developments in Mile End would be shaped with as much input from the existing residents as possible. This process was taken out to the community of Mile End last July with help from a team of people comprising i) local residents, ii) local business people, community councillors, grassroots workers and ward councillors and iii) University of Essex facilitators.
- 4.9 435 local residents gave their views and three major themes emerged:
- Residents value the green and open spaces in Mile End - and are therefore concerned about i) the possible loss of green space as a result of any future development and ii) the potential to change the essential character of Mile End, deemed so special by those who live here.
 - Residents say that the largest issue facing Mile End is the limitation of the local transport infrastructure and the resultant traffic congestion (particularly around North Station roundabout). Residents are also worried about the impact of further development in Mile End, especially the impact of further housing on existing facilities and services (e.g. possible pressure on local schools, services, further difficulties with roads and parking).
 - Residents value the local sense of 'community', but also have concerns about the lack of community facilities and suggested the need for a local community centre, more community groups, youth clubs and other facilities for young people and more shops and services, especially considering the likely population increases associated with the building of hundreds of new homes.

- 4.10 This exercise was extremely useful and has helped inform the revised SPD. This was subject to consultation itself between 20 January and 17 February 2012. A summary of the responses received is attached as Appendix 1. A full Statement of Consultation will be published when the SPD is adopted.
- 4.11 Various issues raised during the engagement and consultation exercises have been considered and the final version of the document includes the following changes;
- There has been a reduction in the number of dwellings on the site from a minimum of 2200 to approximately 1800.
 - Fords Lane playing fields will be extended.
 - A network of open spaces will be provided comprising about 30% of the site.
 - Land has been allocated for a new primary school and secondary school.
 - A neighbourhood centre will provide space for additional shops and facilities to serve the growing community.
 - A new or extended community centre will be built alongside the existing pavilion at Fords Lane.
 - A Travel Strategy has been produced which sets out proposals for transportation in North Colchester.
 - The A134 will be realigned which could lead to a better quality of life for residents in the northern section of Nayland Road and Boxted Road.
 - More detail has also been provided in the SPD covering issues such as boundary treatment and screening of existing properties which was raised by many residents.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Committee agree to adopt the Supplementary Planning Document so it forms part of the Local Development Framework and will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The developers of the site have indicated they are likely to submit an application in June and it is therefore important to have adopted guidance in place by that time.

6. Strategic Plan References

- 6.1 The delivery of 1800 new homes, which will include 35% affordable housing, will contribute to the Strategic Plan objective of providing more affordable housing across the borough. The development will also help provide sport and leisure facilities alongside green space and play areas.

7.0 Consultation

- 7.1 Public consultation has been undertaken in line with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 Regulations and the Council's own Statement of Community Involvement which outlines the methods and means of consultation it will go through as part of the SPD adoption process. The SCI is available on the Council's website.
- 7.2 Statutory adverts have been published in local papers at each formal stage of consultation. Letters were sent to all those properties abutting the site. Local

publicity through Ward Councillors, Myland Community Council and the LoveMyland group has helped to promote the consultations and the University engagement exercise. Drop in sessions have been held at each stage and all the documents have been available on the Councils website, at Angel Court, the central library and Myland Community Council offices.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 The proposed development of this site has generated a significant amount of publicity for the Council. A press release will be issued prior to the adoption of the document to inform people that the Council has adopted the SPD.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1 Costs for publishing the document are provided for within existing budgets although it is hoped hard copies will be kept to a minimum.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Local Development Framework and is available to view on the Colchester Borough Council website by following this pathway from the homepage: Council and Democracy > Policies, Strategies and Performance > Diversity and Equality > Equality Impact Assessments > Strategic Policy and Regeneration > Local Development Framework.

11. Human Rights Implications

- 11.1 Such implications are considered through the process of preparing SPD and the sustainability appraisal.

12. Community Safety Implications

- 12.1 One of the key objectives for the planning of new housing is to create quality, sustainable places where people feel secure. To achieve this, emphasis must be placed on design and the need to achieve higher standards. Designing for community safety is a central part of this.

13. Health and Safety Implications

- 13.1 None.

14. Risk Management Implications

- 14.1 The adoption of guidance notes and supplementary planning documents, is intended to support adopted planning policies and reduce the risk of inappropriate development. The SPD provides consistent advice to landowners, developers, officers, Councillors and members of the public.

Appendix 1 Summary of Consultation

Appendix 2 North Colchester Supplementary Planning Document

Appendix 1 – Summary of Consultation

Consultation Process

The supplementary planning document was published for consultation to allow an opportunity for the wider public and interest groups to comment on the revised draft guidance. Consultation was held over 4 weeks between 20 January and 17 February 2012. As previously, publicity included letters, e-mails, a public exhibition, statutory advertisement and press releases.

Letters and/or emails were sent to properties bordering the site and individuals recorded on the Local Development Framework List of Consultees compiled by the Council. The list was drawn up in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) Regulations 2004 and therefore included “specific consultation bodies” such as Government agencies like Natural England and the Highways Agency. In addition, in line with the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement, a large number of “general consultation bodies” were consulted representing voluntary groups, ethnic minorities, religious groups, disabled persons and business community representatives.

In accordance with regulations, a statutory advert was posted in the Daily Gazette on 20 January 2012 notifying people of the consultation details.

A total of 87 organisations and individuals responded to the NGAUE SPD consultation and provided 92 responses. Those provided by statutory consultee’s are summarised below along with a table detailing comments received using the SNAP survey. Full details of all comments received and the Councils response will be published in a Statement of Consultation to be published alongside the SPD.

Myland Community Council

1. SPD is considerable improvement over predecessor.
2. Concern that document is couched in terms which engender doubt and ambiguity (especially where community facilities are concerned.)
3. Travel strategy is incomplete/not fit for purpose and renders a comprehensive response to the SPD virtually impossible.
4. Impact of this development, together with Severalls and other recent development sites should be recognised as having far-reaching implications for both the Town and Myland’s neighbouring parishes and villages in respect of transport infrastructure.
5. Cycle paths and footpaths should remain segregated.
6. Bus frequency should be every 10 minutes (not 15)
7. Encourage living streets and shared road surfaces.
8. Strengthen requirement for access across A12 and ensure linkages between footpaths 233 (Tower Lane) and 38, 39 and 46 are incorporated.

9. Footpath maps are inaccurate.
10. A single vehicular access point risks gridlock – a solution would be therefore to reduce housing numbers.
11. MCC welcome the proportion of open space, retention of trees and hedgerows but there is still a serious loss of flora and fauna habitat and reduced open feel.
12. Bee orchid colony should be recovered and preserved.
13. The development represents a serious loss of flora and fauna habitat resulting in a profoundly reduced 'open feel' to the area. It will be vital therefore, that every effort is maintained to ensure as much green-corridor connectivity as possible and that this should embrace the provision of dedicated and protected wildlife supportable biodiversity areas e.g. the north and south wetland and green corridors. A corridor to Tower Lane through development sites and over the A134 via a pedestrian / wildlife bridge is desirable.
14. Need to take account of views to north and south.
15. There should be unfettered access to all green space.
16. Pleased to see reduction in house numbers but suggest it should be reduced further to less than 1000 as this would be more sustainable. 1800 should be the maximum number.
17. Welcome new community centre and ideas suggested for size and function.
18. Further community facilities required – integrated with schools.
19. Would prefer to see primary school more centrally located. Early years and childcare should be provided.
20. Design standards should reflect Myland Design Statement. Functional standards should be adopted for room areas and heights.
21. Design should support neighbourliness.
22. Car parking standards should be applied.
23. Bungalows should be built where land is higher than adjacent existing properties/gardens.
24. Constant wet areas on southern slopes may make building uneconomic.
25. Location and service needs for Myland communities need to be economically viable, accessible and complementary.
26. MCC commits to working collaboratively with all involved parties.
27. MCC welcomes design approach but does not wish to see housing or retail alongside the A134 – this should comprise of a wide tree lined verge which would maintain the rural – urban transition.
28. Consideration should be given to building in nesting boxes for birds.
29. Design codes should be rigorously applied.
30. S106 details suggested for community building at Fords Lane and Footbridge over A12.
31. Contents of Growth Area Framework are noted and include reference to "the Borough's expectations" and "the Council's aspirations for the site". There is no commentary on the relationship between this framework and the CBC Core Strategy from which it is derived.
32. The comment "delivery of approximately 1,800 homes" MCC would wish to see amended to "a maximum of 1,800" . Related to this MCC requires solid guarantees that the number of dwellings approved can never be increased by later planning applications for a period >50 years after final completion of the development.
33. Travel Strategy does not address issues.
34. Absence of modelling data is a serious omission. 2008 data is out of date and may skew results.

35. No evidence that impacts on villages have been taken into account.
36. Strategy focuses on modal shift but does not confirm what extent of modal shift is required.
37. Strategy acknowledges proposals would create problems in the future, there are funding issues and it does not portray a reassuring picture that it is cohesive or deliverable.
38. MCC assume further detail will emerge on sustainability in other DPDs.
39. Detailed comments provided on the sustainability appraisal related to insufficient evidence about housing and employment demand. On balance the Chesterwell is unsustainable as a development site. The criteria used are limited at SPD level.

Highways Agency –

1. Support considerable effect being made to encourage and design modal shift.
2. Mention should be made within the document to requirements for travel planning.
3. Robust measures should be incorporated to manage down demand wherever possible and necessary.

Essex County Council –

1. Education, Early Years and Child Care Facility - information contained within the SPD should be justified by evidence, and where mitigation measures are required the SPD should clearly explain the nature of the measures that will be taken to resolve issues. Proposed site is not recommended in Land Compliance Study. Concerns include topographic issues, noise, air pollution and vibration, a water course across the school site. A site south of the community hub would be preferred. There should be 2 points of access – indicative layout suggested.
2. Heritage and Archaeology – the SPD should include reference to need for appropriate evaluation and mitigation for archaeology and heritage.
3. Opportunities should be sought to retain ditches for SUDS.
4. Development must be in sympathy with historic park and garden and listed building at Severalls.
5. SPD should ensure that consideration is given to the timely delivery of social, physical, environmental and economic infrastructure. Funding mechanisms, phasing and responsibilities should be clearly expressed.
6. Suggest higher densities maybe facilitated and more sustainable. Further advice should be sought from ECC Design Team.

Boxted Parish Council

1. Welcome the reduction in housing numbers but concerns about urban sprawl into the countryside remain.
2. All road infrastructure should be completed before the development.

West Bergholt Parish Council

1. Concerned that draft Travel Strategy lacks evidence to support the assumptions made.
2. No mention of impact development will have on rural communities.
3. If gyratory system is found to be ineffectual impact will be significant leading to congestion issues for the rural villages.
4. Consultation does not allow Parish Councils to meet and respond.
5. Agree there should be no vehicular access onto Bergholt Road.

6. Cycle routes along Bergholt Road are insufficient; support new proposals that improve situation.
7. No evidence that there will be less traffic under north station bridge.
8. Agree with bus priority and 15 minute frequency but more detail required to be assessed by Task and Finish Group.
9. Good mix of open space but landscaping should be introduced into development.
10. Primary and secondary schools are required but should be closer to North Station.

Natural England

1. Unlikely development will have an adverse impact on nearest SSSI (Bullock Wood) however environmental assessment will provide more detail.
2. Site likely to support a number of protected and/or biodiversity species - detailed mitigation will be required.
3. Welcome proposals to retain habitat such as Chesterwell Wood and hedgerows/trees.
4. A Green Infrastructure Plan should be prepared as part of the development process.
5. Development should seek to achieve 40% informal accessible open space as far as possible.
6. Standards suggested for proximity to natural/open space.
7. In addition to large areas of open space, multi-functional green corridors should be used.
8. Welcome proposals for SUDs which should be multi-functional.
9. Landscape mitigation should be used to minimise impact of development on areas of visual significance.
10. Satisfied with Habitats screening; believe the Sustainability Appraisal provides full consideration of relevant aspects of the environment and fully support the mitigation and enhancement measures.

Homes and Communities Agency

1. 35% affordable housing should be delivered with nil-grant.
2. Support secure by design principles.

Sport England

1. Support extension to Fords Lane playing fields in principle but exact location, area and layout should reflect current/future local needs ie if need is for new senior cricket pitch it should be designed to accommodate it.
2. New expanded or enhanced ancillary facilities should be provided.
3. Colchester Rugby Club should be consulted to see if satellite club facilities could be created or financial contributions made towards improving/expanding existing facilities.
4. If pitches are provided on triangle site they should provide for summer and winter sports and include ancillary facilities (changing, parking, etc) This could be a significant cost. Access through residential area would need to be carefully considered.
5. Community facility that accommodates sports hall for badminton and other sport is welcomed. Providing it at Fords Lane is desirable.
6. If new secondary school is provided dual use indoor sport, fitness and dance facilities could be provided to avoid duplication.

Question	Yes	%	No	%	Don't know	Total Number
Q1 Do you consider the Council's design approach as outlined on page 33 to be the most appropriate?	9	14%	46	73%	8	63
Q3 Access for vehicles to the proposed development will be created at the north of the site off the A134 Sudbury Road. The route of the northern section of Nayland Road will be changed and the existing road will be made a cul de sac as outlined in the Transport and Accessibility section. Do you support this approach?	16	25%	36	57%	11	63
Q4 The Transport and Accessibility section outlines that a comprehensive network of footpaths and cycleways will link all parts of the development across North Colchester with links to the Hospital, the station and the town centre as well as to the rural areas across the A12. Do you support this approach?	32	51%	26	41%	5	63
Q5 The proposed development is to be served by at least three new bus services as detailed in the Transport and Accessibility section. This will give access to the town centre, Severalls Hospital development, the General Hospital and the North Colchester Business Parks. Do you support this approach?	33	55%	20	33%	7	60
Q6 The Transport and Accessibility section proposes to widen some surrounding roads to allow two lanes around Colne Bank and Essex Hall roundabouts, alongside improved priority for buses and bus lanes in both directions along North Station Road and Station Way. Do you support this approach?	16	26%	37	61%	8	61
Q8 The Landscape and Open Space section describes a wide range of formal and informal open spaces and recreation spaces, which are shown on the master plan on page 40. Do you consider these appropriate for meeting the needs of future residents as well as improving facilities for existing residents?	22	35%	33	53%	7	62
Q11 The SPD on page 45 outlines three areas where a variety of facilities will be provided for community development. These areas, referred to as community hubs in the SPD, will include shops, sport and leisure facilities. Are these hubs sufficient	11	20%	18	33%	25	54

	and in the most appropriate locations?								
Q12	A primary and secondary school are proposed as part of the development on page 47. Are these facilities appropriate and in the right locations?								
Q12.a	Primary school required	23	43%	10	19%	20			53
Q12.b	Secondary school required	22	42%	10	19%	21			53
Q12.c	Primary school location	10	20%	11	22%	28			49
Q12.d	Secondary school location	5	10%	11	22%	33			49
Q13	The proposed development will deliver approximately 1800 homes, most of which will be houses with up to 10% flats in locations above shops for example. Do you support this approach?	14	23%	43	72%	3			60
Q14	The proposed development will incorporate a variety of building heights with the majority being 2 and 3 storeys as seen on page 48. Do you think this is the best approach? If not, please detail what you would change in relation to building heights?	14	26%	30	57%	9			53
Q15	It may be possible to include an element of self build housing in the scheme as outlined on page 60. Do you think this is a good idea?		50%	18	32%	10			56

List of Respondents					
Mrs A Walsh	Wendy Gunthorpe	Philip Adcock	Michele Knowles		
J H Chinnery	Janet Fulford	James Borges	Margaret		
Jane Chinnery	P Andrew & L Borges	Liz Freemont	Simon Gilhooly		
B Palmer	M Abdi	Kenneth Bruce Jackson	Eliza Chilvers		
Mrs T Barrell	Miss C Brown	Ben Wilde	Jane Adcock		
Denis Cockcroft	Mr William Rowley	Patrick Mills	Elaine Boekhoudt		
Doreen Cockcroft	David Croger	Martin Goss	Simon Rapley		
Boyer Planning for Colchester Golf Club	Janet Nuttall Natural England	Denise Humphris Boxted Parish Council	Zhanine Oates Essex County Council		
Anne Atkins	T F Harrison	Heather Payne	Michael Watkins		
F Jones	Miss P Freeth	Mrs J Roberts	Linda Camper		
Dr A W R Lothian	Ken Aldred	Mr C Narrainen	Steven Knowles		
Mrs Val Walsom - Parish Clerk West Bergholt PC	Michelle Reynolds - Colchester Retail Business Association (x2)	Roy Warren Sport England	Helen Harris Myland Community Council		
Lindsey Allen Forestry Commission England	David Catty Office for Nuclear Regulation	Mags Hobby (Ramblers Assoc)	David Lock Associates for Mersea Homes and Countryside Properties		
Mark Williams	John Gamage	Graham Macpherson	Malcolm Nicholson		
Colin Stallwood	Richard Tatum	Robert Dore (x 2)	Mrs J Blake		
Simon Rapley	Tracy Bowring	Mr John Wilde	Jean Dickinson		
James Holland	Mrs C Harris	M F Borges	Paul Horwood		
Mrs A Wilkinson	Chris Coe	Margaret Barrett	Mr J C Dickson		
Richard Blake	Roland Buss MBE	Barry & Jeanette West	Mr K. Gray		
G R and R COX	Wilfred Ring	Cathy Tatum	Ron Abbott		
Brian Rowe	Paul Rickwood (x 4)	Don and Joan Manhire	Sama Jones		
Will Bramhill Colchester Cycling Campaign	Eric Cooper Highways Agency	Mike Goulding Homes & Communities Agency			



North Colchester SPD

Local Development Framework

North Colchester Growth Area Supplementary Planning Document

June 2012



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1. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

As part of the Haven Gateway, Colchester has planned positively to meet its share of housing need in the East of England. The adopted Core Strategy – part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) – sets out the Borough’s overall planning policy for accommodating that need.

The Core Strategy sets the strategic context for all other development plan documents and represents an overarching policy statement. In support of the Core Strategy, further documents, including a Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and Development Policies DPD have been adopted which set out additional policies and provide additional information.

The Council’s adopted planning policies identify land to the west of Mile End and south of the A12 as the location for new strategic development required to meet housing growth targets. This area, known as the North Growth Area Urban Extension (NGAUE) forms part of the larger North Growth Area (NGA), and is identified in Figure 1, which reproduces Core Strategy Key Diagram KD2. A strategic allocation for 2,200 homes is included in the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPD, and is shown in Figure 2. It is to the NGAUE Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that this relates.

This SPD is an opportunity for the Council to set out more detailed guidance for the strategic allocation. The Core Strategy – because it is a strategic document relating to the whole Borough – can only set out an overall policy framework and key policy to inform subsequent planning decisions. There is a need to set out in other documents more of the detail needed to inform proposals for development and the way in which they are to be brought forward and delivered. This document provides that additional detail and helps inform the local community.

This SPD therefore bridges the gap between the strategic policy and the bringing forward of planning applications for development. The role of the guidance is to provide more information about the site and its context, to set out the Council’s aspirations, and to make it clear what the Council’s expectations are for any future development proposals.

The Government have recently published a the National Planning Policy Framework. Supplementary Planning Documents should be used where they can help applicants make successful planning applications or aid infrastructure delivery. The Council is satisfied that this type of SPD meets the requirements of the national policy.

SCOPE

The intention is that the SPD will be adopted as being supplementary to the Core Strategy and the Site Allocations DPD and should be read alongside those documents. This guidance acts to emphasise and elaborate policy already set out in the adopted documents. Consultation on the draft document, took place with the public and stakeholders on two occasions and comments received have helped shaped the final SPD. Since the final document approved by the Council will have been subject to public consultation and will be informed by a process of Sustainability Appraisal, it will hold considerable weight as a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications.

The guidance in this document relates primarily to the North Growth Area Urban Extension (NGAUE). It is recognised, however, that there are important influences on new development which are beyond the area – the communities of Mile End and Braiswick are particularly important influences, as are links to the station, the town centre and the strategic road network. Whilst the guidance therefore applies to proposals being brought forward for the NGAUE, the guidance is informed by circumstances beyond that area.

Policies are set out in the Site Allocations DPD and Development Policies DPD which relate to the form and delivery of new development. This document does not reiterate that policy, and whilst proposals for development for new development will be guided by this SPD, they must also be in accordance with adopted policy set out in all the relevant DPDs.

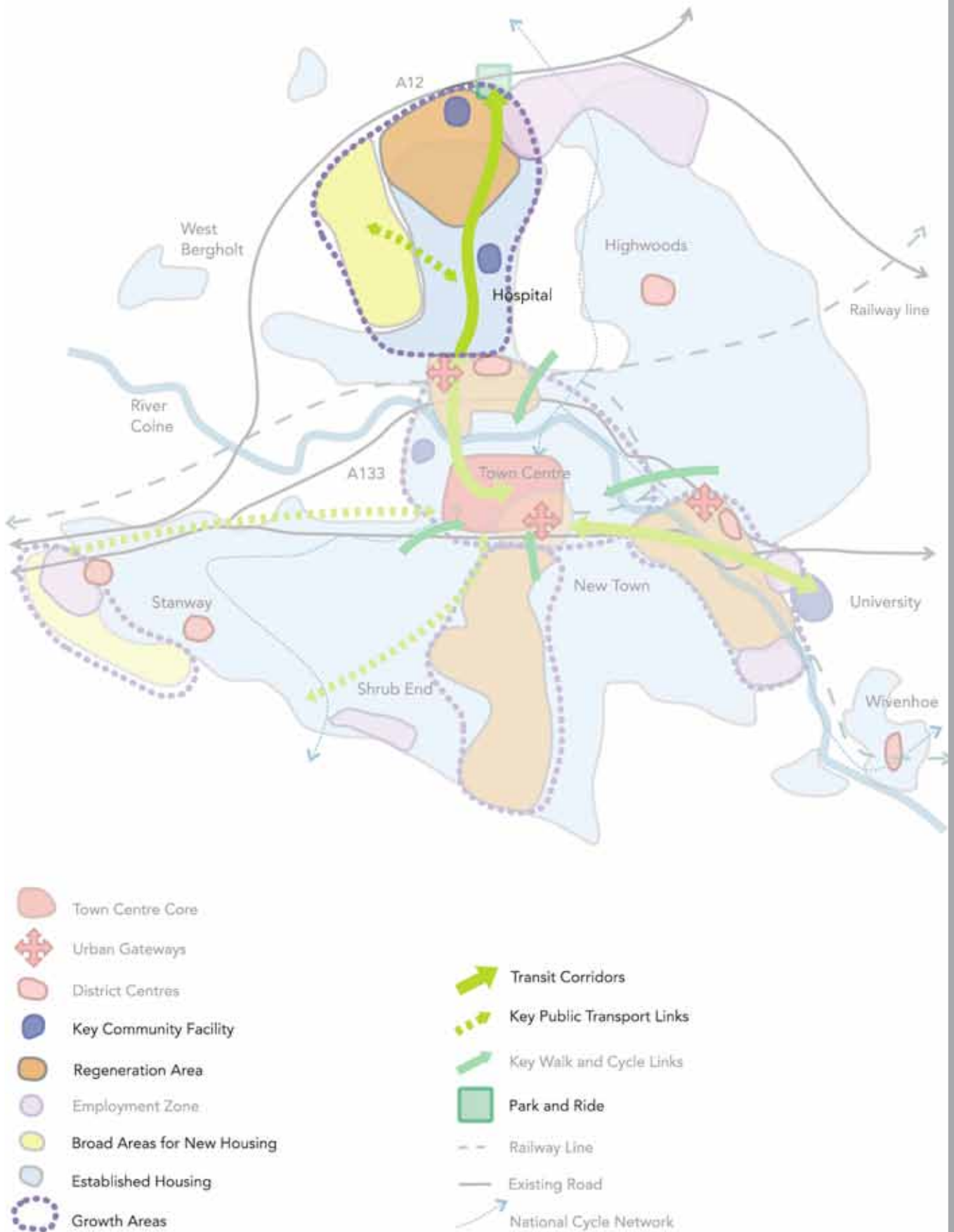


Figure 1: The Northern Growth Area

CONSULTATION

Formal public consultation first took place in February and March 2010. Stakeholders involved in the early stages of the project were notified of the consultation. Letters were sent to every household bordering the site (326). Email and letter notifications were also sent to 364 residents, organisations and businesses on the Council's LDF database. A statutory advert was placed in the newspaper and a number of articles published in the paper. Myland Community Council (MCC) (known as Myland Parish Council at the time) and local Councillors publicised the consultation in local documents. Hard copies of the consultation materials were made available to view in the Customer Service Centre, in Colchester Central Library and at Myland PC offices. The material was also made available on the Council's website.

Two public consultation events were held in 2010 as agreed with the Parish Council and ward Councillor. These took place on Thursday 11 February at Colchester Golf Club in the afternoon and evening and on Saturday 13 February at Myland Parish Hall between 10am and 3pm. Staff from Colchester Borough Council and Essex County Council along with developers and consultant's were available to answer any questions. The events were extremely well attended. A total of 372 responses were received during what was known as the Regulation 17 consultation. A full summary of the consultation was prepared and is available on the Councils website.

Several key messages emerged and as a result several pieces of work were identified as being required to enable the SPD to proceed. These included;

- An independent facilitated workshop with developers, consultants, Myland Parish Council and welovemyland group reps.
- Preparation of a masterplan providing more certainty for local community
- Undertaking additional technical work including transport assessment.

The workshop evolved into a community engagement project which was facilitated by the University of Essex Interdisciplinary Centre for Environment and Society. This community engagement took place between

the 11th and 18th of July 2011 and the University of Essex designed a fully inclusive participatory process to enable representative community participation. A team composed of a cross-section of i) local residents, ii) professionals who work in the area (local business people, grassroots workers, ward councillors) and iii) University of Essex facilitators, took this process out to the wider Mile End community. The community engagement process reached 435 local people.

Participants provided 437 comments describing a huge variety of aspects that they feel are special about living or working in Mile End, ranging from comments about the amount and quality of greenspaces in the area, how tranquil many places feel, the good facilities etc. through to the sense of community spirit. The responses clearly indicate however that residents value local green and open spaces (especially High Woods Country Park and Chesterwell.)

A total of 674 different issues and 383 different opportunities for change were identified on the map model of Mile End. These problems and the opportunities for improvement as identified by local residents, were grouped into key nine key areas: i) Transport and Roads; ii) Housing; iii) Education and Training; iv) Leisure and Recreation; v) Employment and Local Economy; vi) Crime and Security; vii) Environment and Conservation; viii) Community; and ix) Facilities and Services.

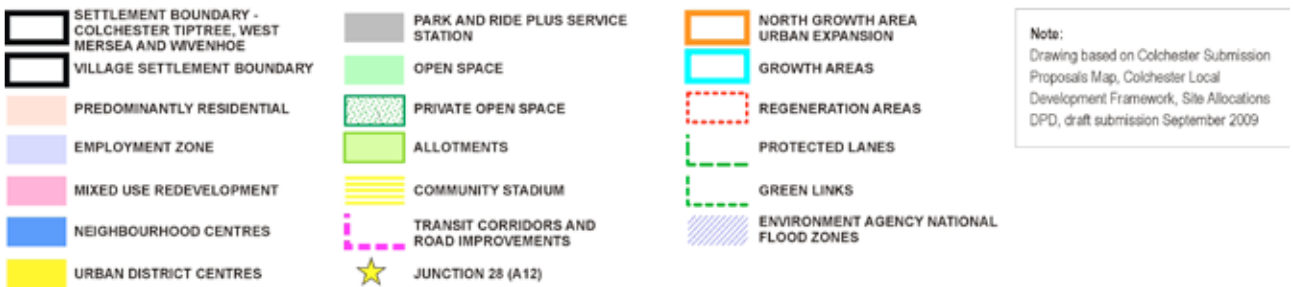
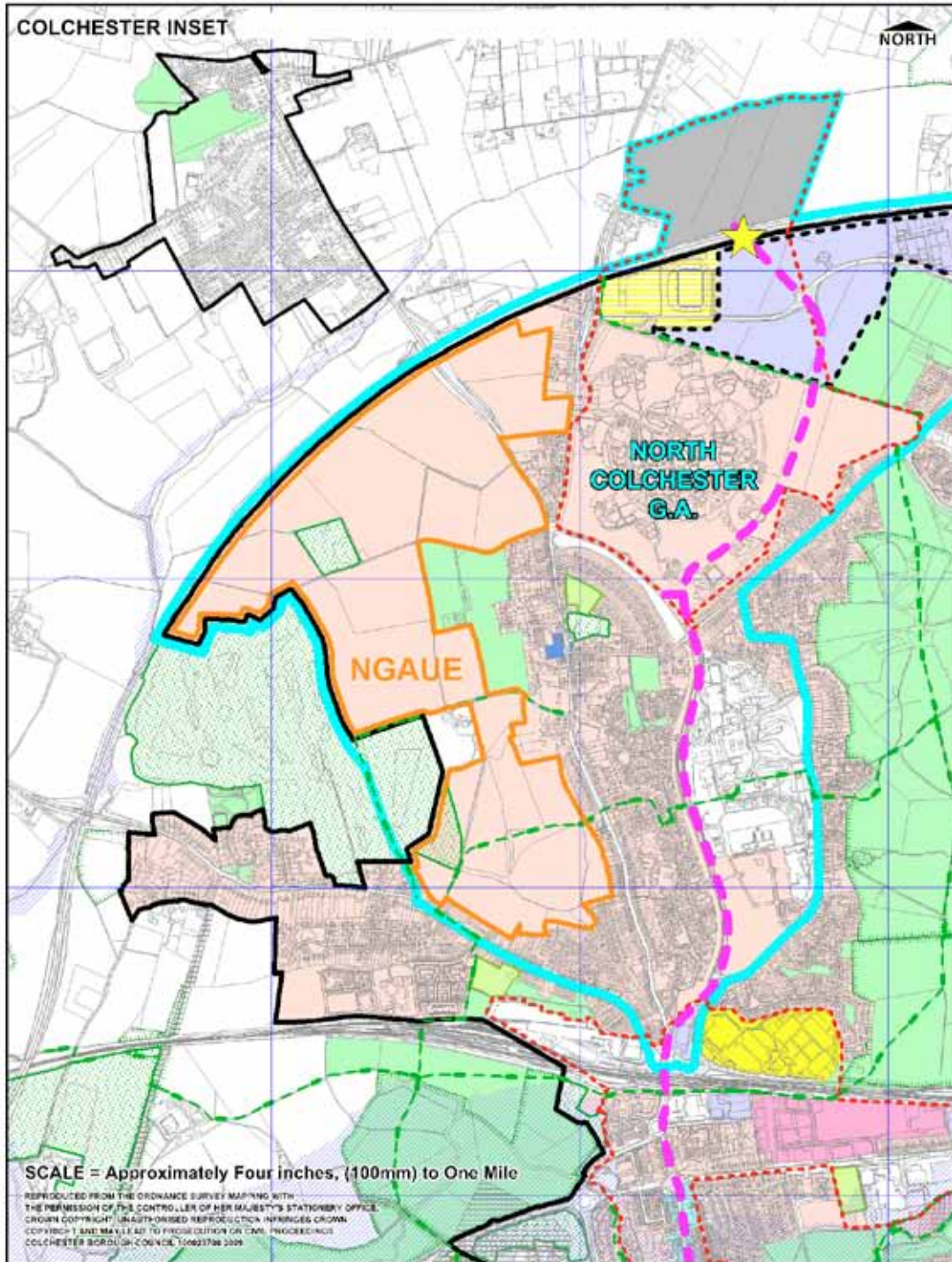


Figure 2: Northern Growth Area Urban Extension

Regarding the transport and roads of the area, the main concern was about traffic – both generally in the area and particularly at North Station roundabout (188 comments), with concerns about parking (73) and bus services (36) also being raised. Respondents cited 124 issues about housing within Mile End with the majority of these to do with a general concern related to the building of more housing within the area or indeed pleas for no more new housing (77). The next most frequently mentioned concern was that of how the new houses would impact on local services and there were calls for more local infrastructure before house building commences (23). Respondents also listed 66 problems related to environment and conservation of the area including worries over the development impact on greenspaces (23), concern over dogs fouling pavements (23) and concerns about litter (11).

Mirroring respondents' concerns, suggestions for improvements to the local area focused primarily on improvements to transport (139); the provision of more facilities and services (93) and community related ideas (38); although ideas for community and housing also feature.

The engagement process has provided a valuable opportunity to obtain the views of a wide section of the population of Mile End and Braiswick. The findings from this process were taken into account in the preparation of the final draft of the Supplementary Planning Document alongside other material considerations.

This was published for formal consultation in January 2012 and similar methods of engagement and publicity were used as in 2010. Two drop in sessions were held which were well attended and people and organisations submitted comments. The main concerns remained about traffic congestion and the principle of development on the site. There was, however, support for the provision of new schools, extending the playing fields, retaining footpaths and creating cycleways. A statement of consultation will be published along with this SPD.

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL AND STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is about asking at various intervals during plan preparation: "how sustainable is my plan?" A range of objectives are established and all options are assessed against these objectives to com-

pare their environmental, economic and social effects and ultimately to assess how sustainable an option is.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required under Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes. The objective of SEA, as defined in the government's guidance on strategic environmental assessment, is

"... to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans ... with a view to promoting sustainable development" (Article 1).

On 6 April 2009 the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 were amended in accordance with Section 180 of the Planning Act 2008. The 2009 Regulations remove the duty to provide a Sustainability Appraisal report for Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). However, the Council is still required to carry out an environmental assessment in accordance with the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.

In order to achieve a balanced appraisal a SA is being carried out for the North Colchester SPD. This fulfils the requirements of the SEA Directive, but will also ensure that the social and economic impacts of the SPD are fully understood. The SA being prepared will fit within the framework established by the SA undertaken to inform preparation of the LDF, including the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPDs.

The SA Scoping Report was published for consultation with statutory agencies in March 2009. This process sought to confirm with relevant agencies that the scope of the assessment being undertaken was appropriate and adequate to assess and inform preparation of the SPD.

Following confirmation that the scope of the SA was appropriate for the SPD, the Council proceeded to develop and refine options relevant to the issues being discussed in the SPD helping to inform the preferred approach being taken forward in the guidance. This work is described in the SA Report which was published for consultation alongside the draft SPD in 2009. The SA Report was reviewed following the initial consultation and the more recent engagement process. The final SA will be published alongside the Revised Draft SPD. Following confirmation that the scope of the SA was appropriate for the SPD, the Council has pro-

ceeded to develop and refine options relevant to the issues being discussed in the SPD helping to inform the preferred approach being taken forward in the guidance. This work is described in the SA Report which is published alongside the SPD

HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT SCREENING

As part of the SA being used to inform the SPD, a screening has been undertaken in response to the Habitat Regulations. The screening concludes that there are unlikely to be any effects on international sites as a result of this SPD. The SPD is some distance from the international sites, the closest site, the Colne Estuary SPA, is approximately 5 miles away as the crow flies and so no direct effects are likely. In terms of indirect effects, the population increase as a result of the SPD is included in the Core Strategy figures and so the indirect effects of this allocation have already been considered. No further assessment was therefore considered necessary.

STRUCTURE

The Introduction to this report – this section – has set out briefly the background, purpose and scope of the document. Section 2 sets out the context for the SPD, including an explanation of the context for growth and the need for new homes; the context for new development, including other recent and emerging changes in Myland. Section 2 also includes a description of the site and its important features.

Section 3 of the SPD sets out the approach to development, and sets out the guidance which applicants and developers of proposals within the SPD area will need to take full account of in preparing their planning applications. This section includes guidance on land use, structure and supporting facilities, and is an expression of the Council's aspirations for future development of

the site. An overall framework for the future development is set out.

Section 4 of the SPD sets out guidance and expectations in respect of the delivery of proposals. It sets out requirements in terms of the information to be submitted as part of proposals for development, and highlights particular issues which the proposal(s) must address.

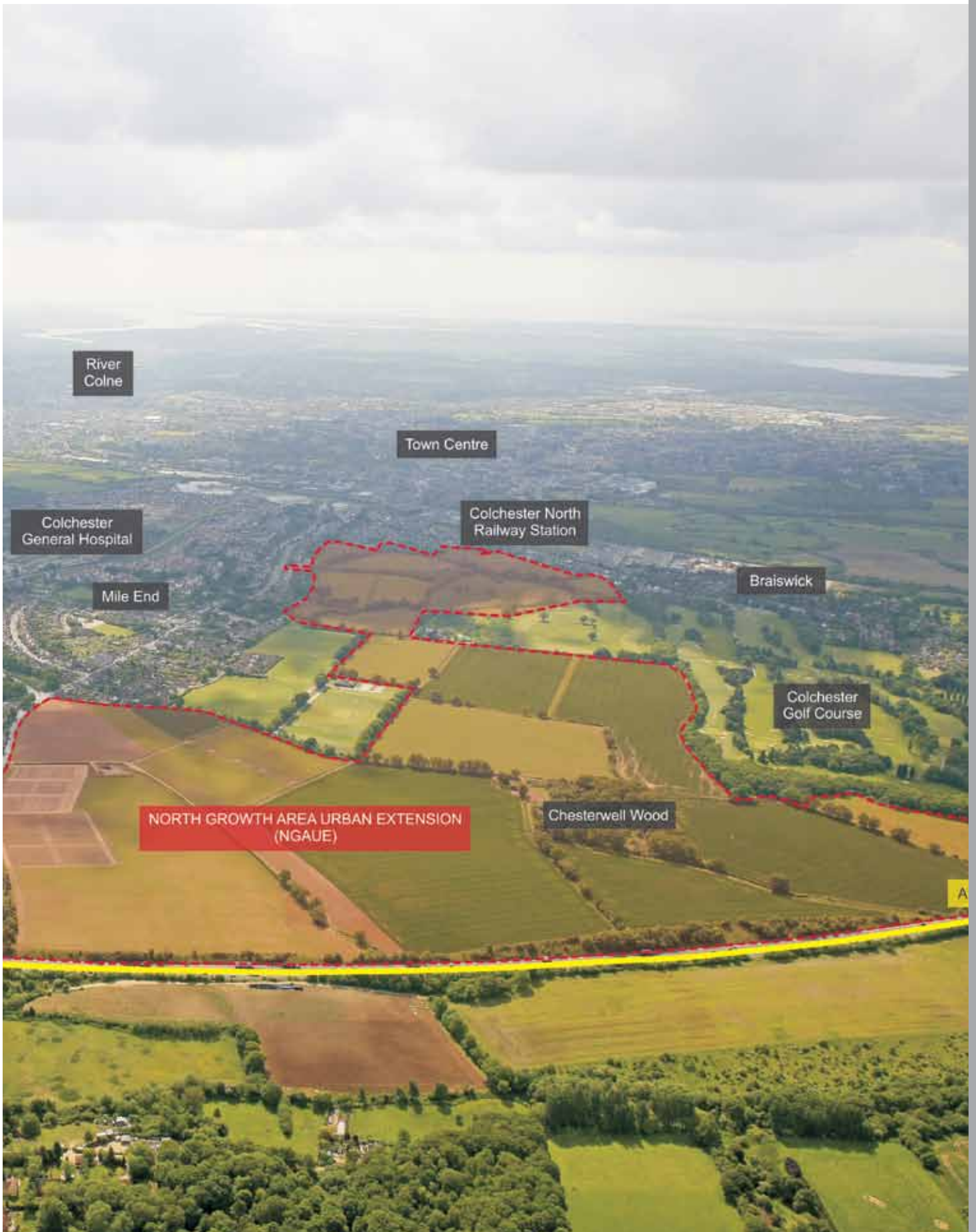


Photograph 1: The North Growth Area - View facing North





Photograph 2: The North Growth Area - View facing South East



2. CONTEXT

THE CONTEXT FOR GROWTH

Colchester sits within the Haven Gateway which is one of the Growth Points identified by national planning policy. Growth Points are a means of providing support to local communities to deliver sustainable growth in partnership with Government.

The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) – the East of England Plan – published in May 2008 takes forward the role of the Haven Gateway and sets out specific policy relating to that area. Colchester is recognised as a key centre for change and development and is identified as a location for major growth. As an authority, Colchester has taken the opportunity to plan positively to ensure that additional new growth is accommodated

in a managed way and that investment in infrastructure supports that growth. The Core Strategy therefore recognises Colchester's role as a regional centre serving not only the Borough but also a much wider area of north east Essex. This means investing in business development and training, as well as helping to deliver new homes and infrastructure to serve them.

The RSS identifies the scale of development to be accommodated within the region over the next decade and beyond – setting out housing provision figures for local planning authorities for the period 2001 to 2021. For Colchester Borough, the minimum dwelling provision for the period 2001 to 2021 is 17,100 dwellings.



Although the Coalition Government has indicated that they intend to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies they remain part of the development plan until the abolition takes place. Therefore the preparation of this SPD must have regard to the RSS.

Other national policy has also been subject to change since the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPD have been adopted. There is no longer a requirement to build to a minimum density for example and therefore the number of dwellings to be built on individual sites has been reassessed. The emerging National Planning Policy Framework has also been taken into account.

The Councils adopted Core Strategy makes provision for the delivery of at least 17,100 homes between 2001 and 2021 as required by the RSS. To meet the requirement to provide a 15 year housing supply, the Core Strategy makes provision for 19,000 homes, of which 6,200 are identified as being delivered within the North Growth Area. Within the North Growth Area, 2,200 homes are identified to be brought forward in the broad area of new housing identified in the Key Diagram (as shown in Figure 1). It is this site to which this SPD relates. A planning application for the site is expected in 2012 and this guidance is a means of providing a framework against which any planning application will be considered.

The Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPD have identified within the wider North Growth Area the main land uses necessary to collectively deliver a sustainable, accessible structure for growth. The strategy recognises the need for a broad grain approach to land use and has emphasised the need to broadly co-locate employment, residential, community and transport facilities within an overall structure for growth.

The Council adopted its Core Strategy in December 2008, and in October 2010 the Council adopted the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) and the Development Policies DPD. It is strongly recommended that this SPD is read alongside these DPDs.

The Site Allocations DPD relates policies to specific areas, providing a more geographically focussed basis for the 23 strategic policies set out in the Core Strategy. A Proposals Map accompanies the Document and identifies specific site boundaries for the allocations made.

The policy approach to the North Growth Area, which includes the NGAUE (for which a specific boundary is identified) as well as other important sites, is subject to five specific policies in the Site Allocations DPD – Policies SA NGA1 to SA NGA5.

Policy SA NGA1 establishes the overall scale and type of uses which would be appropriate within the North Growth Area – including an overall minimum total of 4,500 homes to be accommodated on a number of sites, including the North Growth Area Urban Extension (which is identified as land off Nayland Road and Mile End Road). The policy establishes the expectation that all new development within the North Growth Area should directly or financially contribute towards delivering infrastructure required to serve the area.

Policy SA NGA2 sets out the allocation for greenfield development in the North Growth Area, reiterating Core Strategy policy which sets out an expectation that development will commence after 2016 unless monitoring demonstrates a need to commence development in advance of that date. The policy sets out specific elements which should be incorporated within any future development of the site;

POLICY CONTEXT

- A minimum of 2200 new dwellings

- The creation of a neighbourhood centre
- The retention of Chesterwell Woods and other visually significant trees and hedgerows
- The retention of Mile End playing fields unless suitable alternative provision is made
- The provision of additional sports pitches and open space including allotments, green links and a landscaped buffer to the A12
- New primary school(s)
- New community facilities
- Sustainable transportation and highway improvements such as continuous links through the site for public transport, cycling and pedestrians
- Comprehensive travel planning to reduce the need to travel by private motor car
- Provision of a convenient, cohesive, safe and attractive walking and cycling network to ensure local facilities are accessible
- Provision of public transport infrastructure and services to meet local needs and link into the wider network
- Enhancements to the new A12 Junction 28
- A12 demand management and access control measures
- A comprehensive package of Travel Planning measures
- The North Transit corridor
- Completion of the Northern Approaches Road
- A133 Central Corridor
- North/South Capacity improvement (A133/A134) - the provision of additional off-site highway works at but not limited to the Colne Bank, Albert and Essex Hall Roundabouts are likely to be required.
- A bespoke package of public transport, cycling and walking measures

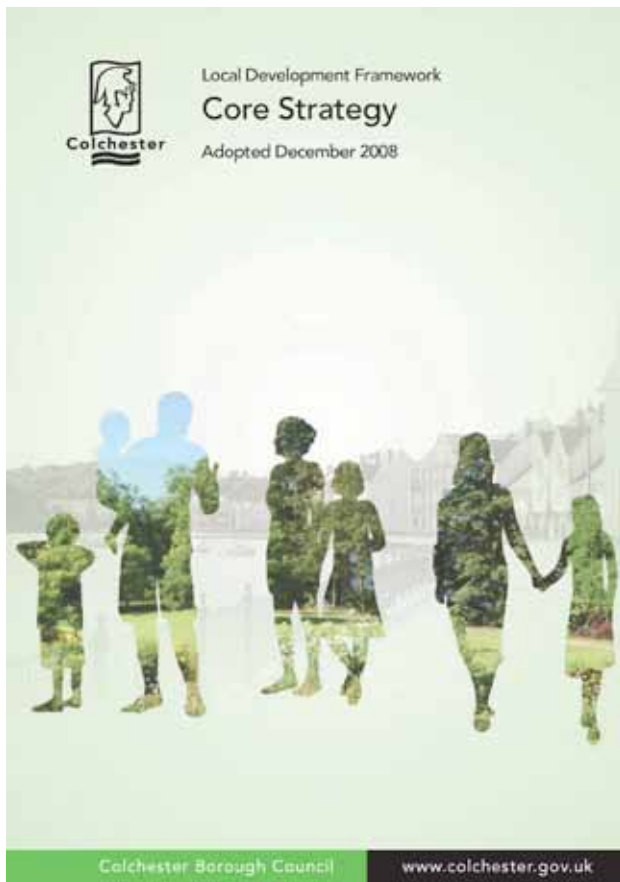
The Development Policies DPD has been prepared to provide further detail for specific issues and area dealt with at an overall scale by the Core Strategy. A total of 25 policies are set out, addressing policy areas including sustainable development, public realm, transport and accessibility, environment, and energy and resources. These policies apply across the borough.

Policy SA NGA3 relates to employment uses within the Strategic Employment Zone which lies within the North Growth Area but beyond the NGAUE. Although the policy does not relate specifically to the NGAUE, it does provide important policy context for employment opportunities which will support new homes.

Policy SA NGA4 sets out a policy basis for the delivery of strategic transport infrastructure, including Phase 3 of the Northern Approaches Road and the North Transit Corridor. Policy SA NGA5 identifies those infrastructure elements relevant to the NGAUE, and are summarised below;

THE CONTEXT FOR DEVELOPMENT

Mile End and Braiswick are characterised by ribbon development along a Mile End Road and Bergholt Road



dating from the Victorian and Edwardian periods, extended and in-filled by later development during the inter-war and post-war periods. This development extended further along Bergholt Road and Nayland Road in the post-war period, culminating in a focus in Mile End of shops, local services and community facilities. The following paragraphs describe the key contextual elements which influence the site. The site itself is described in greater detail in subsequent paragraphs.

Access

The North Growth Area is defined on its northern edge

by the A12, with a new junction recently provided adjacent to the Community Stadium.

The North Growth Area is defined on its southern edge by the London to Norwich mainline railway and by Colchester's main railway station. A branch of the railway serves Colchester Town station, located on the southern edge of the town centre. The North Station also acts as a focus for public transport services serving the north of the town and connecting to the town centre. Bus services run northwards along Mile End Road to serve Mile End, Great Horksley and beyond, along Turner Road to serve the hospital and Highwoods area, and along Bergholt Road to serve Sudbury and Lavenham.

The Northern Approaches Road (known as the NAR) provides a strategic alternative to Mile End Road and the southern part of Nayland Road. The NAR currently connects the North Station area to Mill Road, and will be extended to the new A12 junction in 2012. This has allowed Nayland Road to be closed to through traffic south of its junction with Boxted Road, providing a bus-only connection. Although the Northern Approaches Road provides an effective corridor for vehicle movements, the pedestrian environment is unwelcoming, and the road acts as a barrier between the existing

community to the west and the community, open space and facilities to the east.

The railway acts to restrict the physical space available to accommodate north-south movement corridors, and acts to channel pedestrian, cycle and vehicle movements between the Turner Rise area north of the station and the Essex Hall junction to the south. Although the North Growth Area is relatively close to the town centre, the existing pedestrian and cycle environment in the vicinity of the station reduces the attractiveness of making journeys on foot or by bicycle. This area was highlighted as a major concern by people who took part in the SPD consultations and the university engagement project.

Growth Area Funding from the Haven Gateway partnership has been used to produce a Travel Strategy for

North Colchester. The findings of this strategy have informed the production of this document.

Land Use

As long established urban areas, Mile End and Braiswick are served by a range of facilities and services although in recent years a number of these have either closed such as the shop on Bergholt Road or been redeveloped ie the Woods and Royal London Sports Grounds.

Community Action in Mile End – a community group led by a Community Development Officer and funded by a range of local organisations, including the Borough Council – undertook to audit local facilities available in Mile End. Their report – their Community Facilities Assessment – was published in December 2008.

The report found the main focus for services is the Mile End local centre, focussed at the junction of Nayland Road and Mill Road. A pocket of small businesses also exists at the southern end of Mile End Road. To the east of this, the Turner Rise retail park includes a large supermarket and a number of large out-of-town retail units, a gym and restaurant.

The Mile End local centre comprises a limited number of shops including a Co-Op store, pharmacy, pub and take-away food outlets.

Community facilities are more widely dispersed, and include meeting spaces such as those at St Michael's Hall at the northern end of Mile End Road and the Methodist Hall on Nayland Road, both of which can accommodate a range of community activities and meetings. A dance club is also located on Mile End Road, providing accommodation for specialist activities.

A range of sports activities are accommodated across Mile End at a number of dispersed locations. To the west of Nayland Road the Fords Lane sports and recreation facility accommodates football and cricket pitches focussed around a sports pavilion. Other facilities, such as Colchester Golf Club (north of Bergholt Road), Severalls Bowls Club and the Brinkley Road Gymnastics Club provide important facilities. To the north east,

the Colchester Rugby Football Club accommodates cricket and archery as well as rugby pitches.

Colchester General Hospital, immediately east of the NAR provides high level healthcare facilities and a drop-in facility. The Mill Road GP surgery and a number of dental practices provide day-to-day healthcare services. There are a number of specialist healthcare facilities in the locality, including care, teaching and accommodation for vulnerable individuals or those with learning difficulties.

Braiswick has a far more limited provision of local facilities, with only a dentist’s surgery and a beauty salon, but no convenience shops or community meeting spaces.

The only other service provision is a petrol filling station which includes a shop. As part of the redevelopment of Flakt Woods shop(s) are expected to be provided.

Primary schools are located at The Myland Community Primary School, on Mill Road, and the Queen Boudica Primary School off Turner Road. A new primary school will be delivered as part of the Severalls development and a site has recently been acquired by Essex County Council in Braiswick which may deliver an additional primary school.

The nearest secondary provision is the Gilbert School in Highwoods (some 1.5 miles from the existing Mile End local centre), and St Helena, south of the railway



Colchester North Railway Station



Walking routes in High Woods Country Park



Northern Approaches Road



North Station Junction

2. CONTEXT

(also some 1.5 miles from the existing Mile End local centre).

The CAM report identifies a number of facilities which have been lost to the community in recent years. These include a range of local shops, two post offices and a number of social and sports clubs. There is a strong sense amongst the local community that the facilities serving Mile End are inadequate to serve existing needs, and that further demand will require a greater provision of services to serve both the existing and extended community.

A number of factors may have contributed to the decline in local facilities – the NAR has reduced the potential for passing trade along Mile End Road, and the Turner Rise Retail Park offers a competing retail offer, including a large supermarket. It is also likely that changing shopping patterns, focussing on fewer larger shopping trips by car and the role of internet shopping may have reduced demand for local day-to-day shopping facilities.

Landscape and Open Space

A strong landscape and open space structure provides a setting for Mile End and Braiswick, although in some areas, the lack of green space is a particular issue. Figure 5 provides an overview of the main landscape structuring elements.

Within the Mile End urban area there are pockets of mature trees within back gardens and clustered in the

village church yard. There is little street planting along the main or secondary streets, although in a number of places mature landscaping along boundaries between plots extends to the street edge. A number of footpaths cross the area including ones in the vicinity of Chesterwell Wood, which is currently in private ownership. Although Mile End appears green when viewed from an aerial photograph, little of this landscape is within public areas.

To the east of Mile End, the High Woods Country Park acts as an important recreational space providing both formal and informal recreation space. Extending to more than 300 acres, the park includes a visitor centre and includes woodland, parkland and grassland areas. The park can accommodate a wide range of activities, including walking, cycling and fishing, as well as informal games. Although the park is an important focus for activity, access to the park from the west is poor, hampered in part by the NAR, the hospital site and by tortuous pedestrian routes through parts of Mile End.

The Nature Reserve at Cymbeline Meadows provides another important informal recreational space as part of an area of protected wildlife habitat.

South of Mill Road, between Mile End Road and the NAR, the Mill Road recreation area includes green space which connects to mature trees retained as part of development to the south.

A further area of open space south of Bergholt Road



Nayland Road



The A12 Strategic Road Network

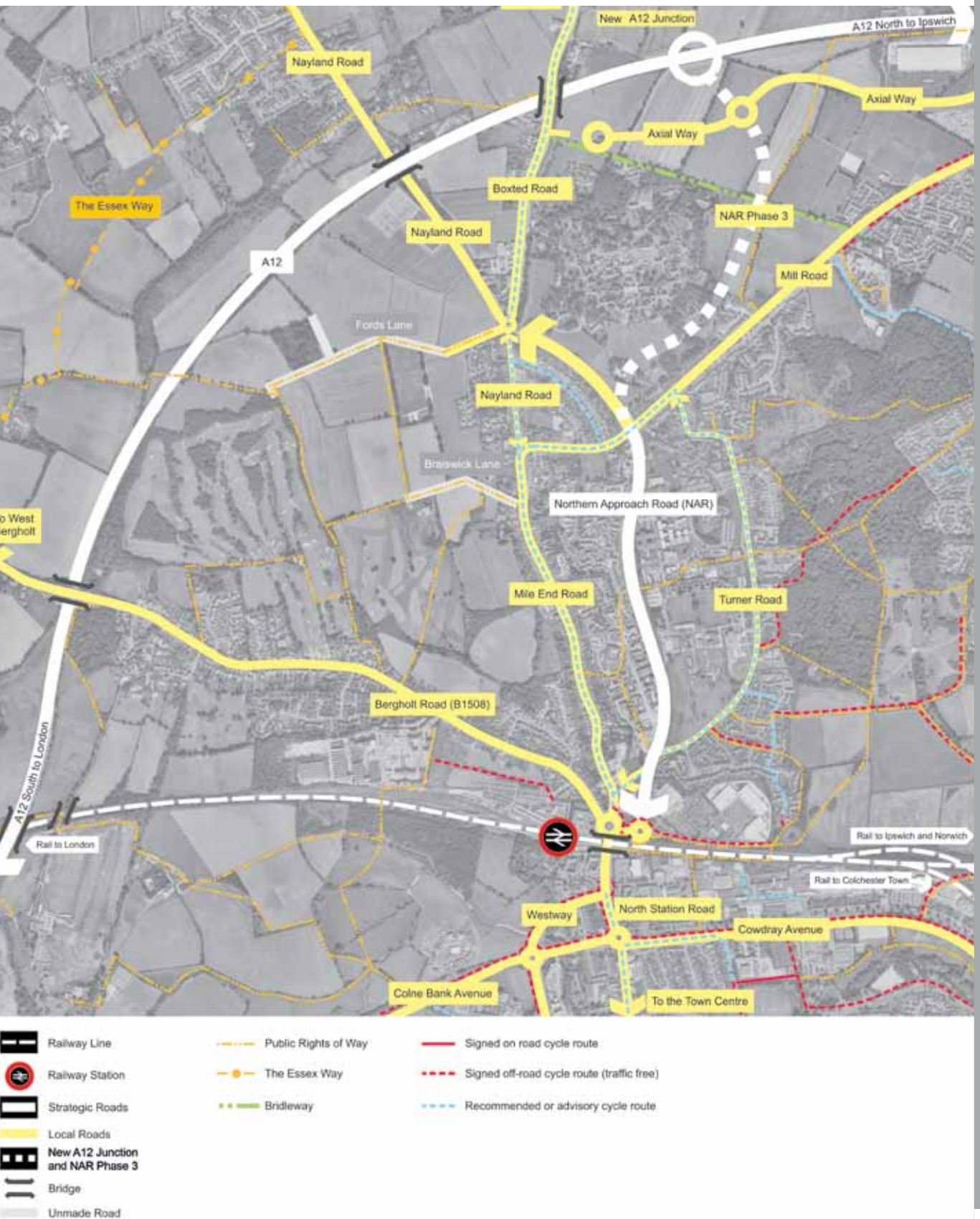


Figure 3: Access Context

also includes playing fields as well as play space.

Colchester Golf Club, located north of Bergholt Road, provides an important green edge inside the A12. The mature course is heavily treed with pockets of woodland, and has, for the most part, strong landscaped edges comprising hedgerows and mature trees. To the east of the main course, a grassland driving range and practice area is enclosed by mesh fence but has little mature landscape.

The pitches at Colchester RFC provides green space which acts as a buffer between the Cuckoo Farm employment area and recent residential development south of Mill Road. Although the playing fields are kept as managed grass pitches, the pitches act to maintain openness between developed areas.

Two allotments sites in the area are largely hidden by urban development but provide an important community resource.

Growth in the North Growth Area

Significant development proposals have been approved as part of the strategy for Colchester’s growth, but in some cases are yet to be delivered. In parallel with this development there have been a number of large scale infrastructure investments undertaken, with further works planned.

Further transport capacity will be delivered by the new A12 junction and the planned Park and Ride, both of which will connect into an extended Northern Approaches Road. These infrastructure projects will deliver a new strategic access into Colchester from the north. Developments in the area will be served by frequent and reliable public transport services and at certain points priority access will be given to buses. Public transport in the NAR will use a bus only carriageway and will provide a reliable and rapid connection to the railway station and town centre.



Agricultural land trees and hedgerows in the NGAUE

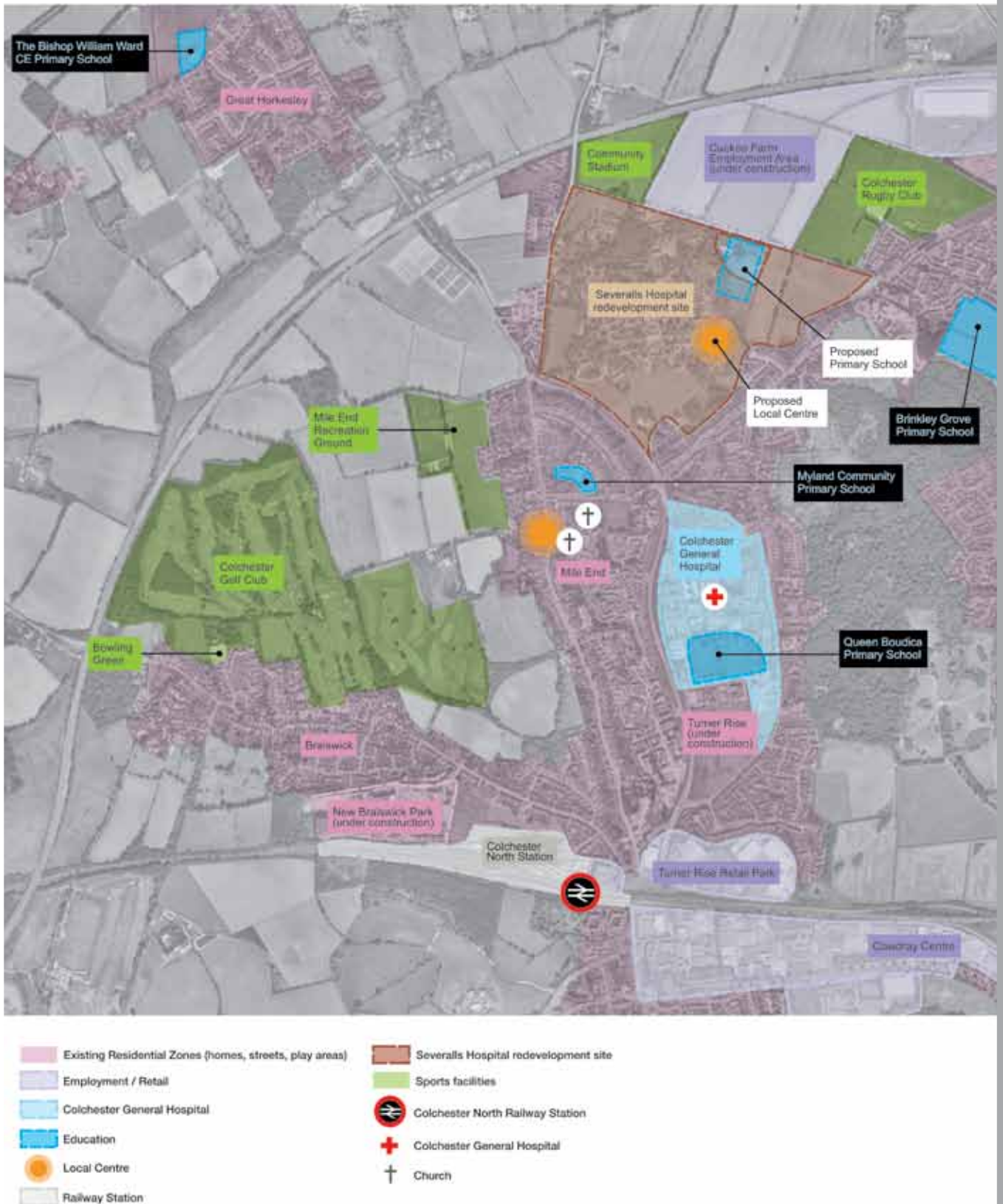


Figure 4: Urban Context

2. CONTEXT

Recent growth in Mile End has served to give rise to community concern about the adequacy of facilities and the impact that growth is having on community integration. In some cases, growth has been seen to be both a positive and a disruptive influence – the NAR, for example, has served to reduce the volume of traffic using Mile End Road, and has resulted in an improved environment for residents. However, the reduction in the volume of through traffic may have served to divert trade away from local shops, possibly contributing to their closure.

The North Colchester Travel Strategy has been developed to serve the travel needs of both incoming and existing residents and employment premises. Prioritising movement by public transport, for cyclists and for pedestrians will help to create sense of place and to provide better connections to the town centre.

THE NGAUE

The North Growth Area Urban Extension, identified in the Site Allocations DPD (see Figure 2) extends to around 110 hectares and broadly lies to the west of existing development along Mile End Road. For the pur-

pose of the SPD, the boundary of the NGAUE forms the focus of the guidance although there are important connections beyond this allocation.

Not all land within this area is expected to be developed or redeveloped, rather, this is the area of land within which new homes and the associated supporting facilities – including green space, facilities and infrastructure – will be accommodated.

The site broadly extends from the A12 in the north, to the rear of properties along Bergholt Road. To the east, the rear of existing properties along Mile End/Nayland Road and Boxted Road defines the boundary, with Colchester Golf Club and the A12 forming the western boundary. Land north of the A12 is in the same ownership as the NGAUE but is not proposed to accommodate housing (it offers the opportunity, instead, to be a reserve to be used for appropriate supporting uses only, such as green space or other community use, if appropriate). The Site Allocations DPD makes it clear that the principle of residential or commercial development in this location would be unacceptable.

To the south and east, the boundaries of the area of new housing are defined by existing properties. In some cases, such as along Bergholt Road and Braiswick, the dwellings themselves are located towards the rear of plots and have little landscape buffer to the fields behind them. In other cases, such as along parts of Mile End Road, plots are deeper, with properties lo-



Residential Streets in Braiswick



Residential area in Mile End



North Station Junction



Mile End local facilities



Community Stadium



Housing Adjacent to Mile End Recreation Ground



Housing in Mile End



Agricultural Land in the North Growth Area

2. CONTEXT

cated away from the rear boundaries which are heavily landscaped.

The boundary to the golf course is, in parts, relatively shallow. In general, it provides a robust edge to the course and acts both as a landscape and visual barrier, separating the golf course from the footpath to the east (which lies within the NGAUE). A ditch on the eastern side of the landscape buffer acts to reinforce the containment of the golf course.

The boundary to the A12 is of mixed character, in part a consequence of the rolling topography of this part of the site. Immediately north of the golf course, the A12 is on embankment as it crosses the Black Brook. This results in visual and aural intrusion to the site. As the A12 curves north eastwards, the site rises causing the A12 to pass into a cutting – reducing its impacts on the

site. The A12 largely remains in cutting as it continues eastwards.

The predominant land use within the site is arable agricultural land. The size of the fields within the site varies, and although there is a dominance of rectangular field patterns, there are a number of smaller irregular shaped fields. In most cases, the field boundaries are characterised by visually dominant hedgerows and mature trees which create a strong sense of enclosure, and act to reduce the inter-visibility of the site. Many of these hedges incorporate ditches which are either predominantly or occasionally dry.

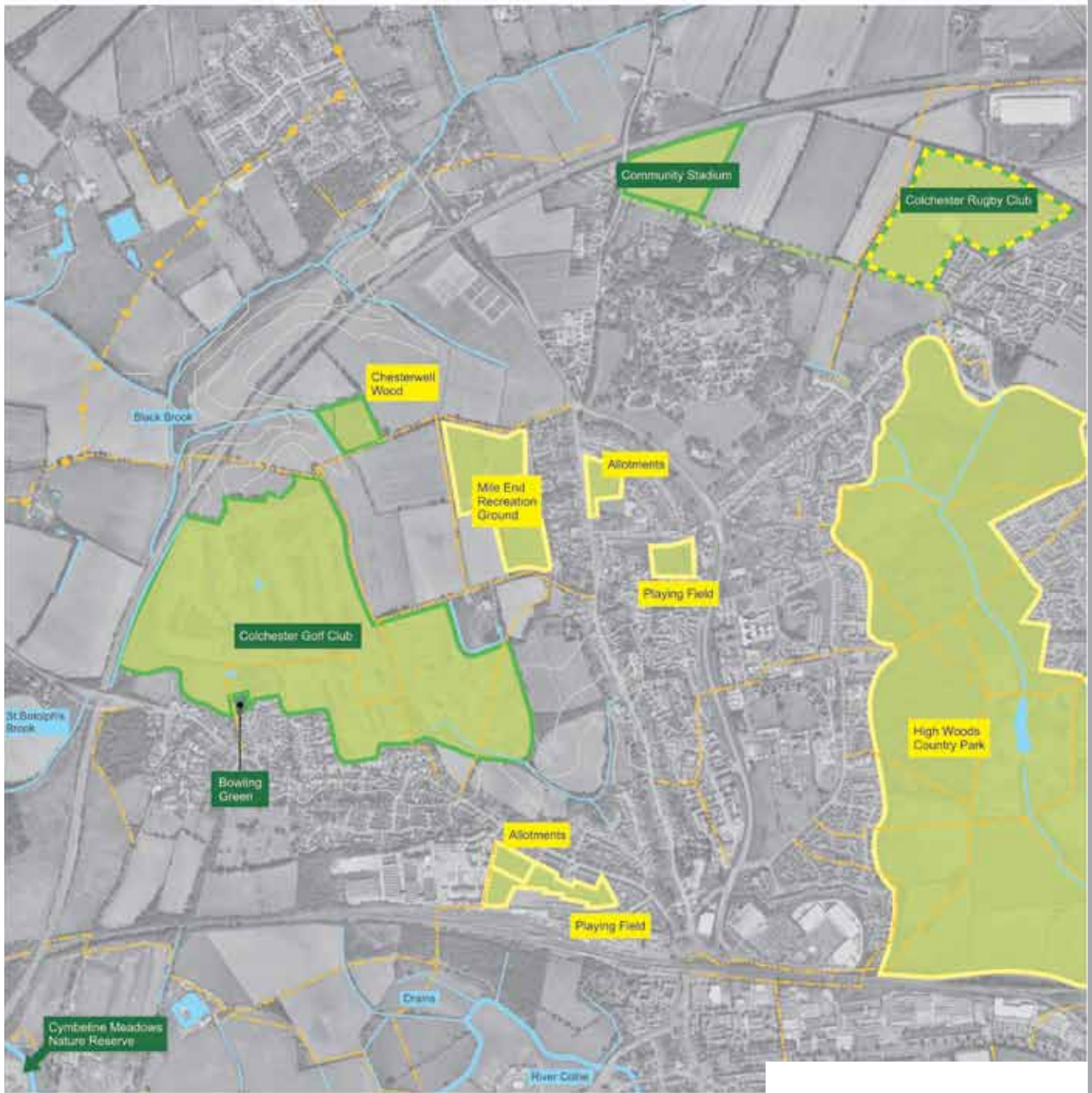
Although the central part of the site is relatively flat, to the south and north, the topography falls away. Be-



Open space in Mile End



Rights of way through fields



- Public Open Space
- Private Open Space
- Dense Landscape
- Landscape Links (hedgerows)
- Water Courses
- Contours
- Public Rights of Way
- The Essex Way
- Bridleway

Figure 5: Landscape Context

2. CONTEXT

cause of the strong landscape elements within the site, it is only where the site topography falls away to the south that the urban context beyond the site is readily visible. To the north, the valley formed by the St Botolph's Brook provides a rural outlook to the site.

Although there are no scheduled monuments within the site, there have been a number of archaeological finds as well as evidence of crop marks within the site. Against the backdrop of Colchester's settlement history, there is a need to accommodate potential archaeological interests within emerging proposals.

There are landscape blocks within the site which further act to structure the site. Towards the north of the site, Chesterwell Woods is both an important landscape

component and a valuable ecological habitat and covers an area of some 2.5 hectares. In the southern part of the site, some of the field boundaries have been strengthened by additional planting which has tended to create linear blocks of landscape.

The arable use of much of the site has reduced the potential for important ecological value, and with the exception of Chesterwell Woods, which is recognised to be of ecological value, there are no statutory designations or locally designated wildlife sites within the site. Assessments undertaken to inform the preparation of the Core Strategy indicate that although there is the potential for protected species to be present on site, these do not represent a particular constraint to development.



Colchester Golf Club course



Allotments south of Bergholt Road



Mile End Recreation Ground Pavilion



Agricultural fields, trees and hedgerows



Play area at Mile End Recreation Ground



High Woods Country Park

2. CONTEXT

The site is crossed by a number of footpaths which predominantly run along field boundaries. In many cases, these paths follow agricultural tracks used for access to the site. These paths provide access to the south (connecting to Bergholt Road), and east (connecting to Mile End and Nayland Road). Although a footpath runs to the north west, it crosses the A12 at grade, making this a dangerous crossing. This footpath does however connect into the Essex Way to the northeast, providing an important connection to the strategic footpath network.

The only current vehicular access to the site is by means of Braiswick Lane and Fords Lane. Both points of access are narrow in width and provide no real capacity to serve further development.

The undeveloped nature of much of the site means that there is little existing infrastructure within the site, although a recently laid high pressure water main crosses through the north eastern part of the site. There are no overhead power lines crossing the site, and no other strategic utilities infrastructure.

The site is therefore characterised as one which, whilst proximate to Mile End and Braiswick, and well related to the town centre, is subject to strong landscape



Recent housing development in Mile End



Community Stadium

edges, and which, at its northern end, is influenced by proximity to the A12.

The boundary of the NGAUE as illustrated in Figure 2, excludes two areas which are occupied by existing uses.

Braiswick Farm comprises a number of buildings including dwellings and an agricultural shed, together with an area of emerging woodland. This is the site of Braiswick Farm, dating from the 15th Century and Little Braiswick. Elements of the farm buildings survive and are Grade 2 listed.

The Mile End recreation ground comprises playing pitches and a pavilion, and is bounded on its western side by field boundaries. There are six football pitches which accommodate two cricket pitches, as well as an equipped play area and car park. The facility serves not only the local communities but acts as a borough-wide facility.

Mile End itself, whilst served by a range of facilities, has a limited community focus, in part a consequence of a lack of green space at its core. Many of the facilities are at the periphery of the area – to the south or north east, although there are a range of important community-focussed activity spaces at its heart. There are important infrastructure links serving the area, including the railway and the NAR, but these can form barriers to movement across them. Recent growth has tended to



New Braiswick Park under construction



New NHS Facility at Colchester General Hospital



New homes at Turners Rise

2. CONTEXT



3. APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

In producing this Masterplan the Council has ensured that regard to good urban design principles is what shapes structure and layout and not the traditional highway first approach. Whilst it is acknowledged that the provision of infrastructure, accessibility and movement are important the design process employed here has not been dominated by the early fixing of road patterns around which built form, spaces and activity are then applied.

Rather the design process has been informed by the need to create interesting new urban environments

where people, spaces and buildings interact to produce stimulating possibilities for activity, experiences and opportunities. Where valuable landscape features are retained, pedestrian and cycle friendly movement corridors created, enabling easy access to integrated facilities both within and beyond the site. Individual character areas will be created to avoid aesthetic sterility and a strong sense of place established. High levels of amenity are provided both within plots and within easy walking distance of every dwelling. The development will work with the terrain, respect key views/create new ones, boost biodiversity, provide sensitive buffering of the A12 and make the use of public transport and non-car modes of transport attractive and realistic alternatives to the motor car.

The arrangement of spaces and built environments creates small neighbourhoods that have direct access to open space at the very local level whilst providing the wider connectivity of a green network that links through the whole of the growth area.

The geography of this wedge shaped site and the fact that it bridges the developed communities of Mile End and Braiswick inside a ring of rural settlements and countryside brings with it the potential for a spectrum of characters from urban in the south through to suburban the further north you travel to rural fringes on the northern and western edges.



Landscape setting for Community Hub



Primary School in Community Hub

3. APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT



Potential to include Health Centre in Community Hub



Mix of uses at Community Hub



Community Hub



Play Areas to be provided as at Mile End Recreation Ground



High Woods Visitor Centre



Access to High Woods

Enhancing its potential to create sustainable new communities is the fact that the site enjoys the significant locational benefits of being in close proximity to:-

- Colchester's main railway station (large parts of the Masterplan area are within easy walking distance),
- The planned new segregated bus corridor into the town centre from North Colchester
- The planned North Colchester park and ride facility
- The new Junction 28 on the A12
- Jobs on Severalls Industrial Estate, Cuckoo Farm Employment Zone, Colchester Business Park and at the general hospital.

TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY

The growth area will develop a layout and spatial arrangement that maximises the potential for modal shift. This is a highly sustainable attribute of the masterplan and will rely on other factors of layout and uses to facilitate local movements and non vehicular advantages. The draft Northern Colchester Travel Strategy is being developed to inform this SPD.

This strategy will promote a strong and accessible network of cycle/footpaths that connect to the wider network. Local centres will provide a range of facilities for day to day needs within walking distance of all neighbourhoods. The public transport route will provide bus stops within easy reach of all homes and local facilities plus an advantageous connection to the wider network. This provides the most direct and sustainable access to North Station and the town centre beyond.

Bus services will pass through the site on a regular basis. These services will have an exclusive access to Mile End Road via a bus only route that will connect to the existing network whilst connecting the new communities that will emerge across the north of Colchester.

The public transport network is an important structuring element to proposals, and should integrate with the wider Growth Area and beyond. The spatial strategy set out in the Core Strategy provides for a broad grain approach to land use, with areas of employment, residential and community facilities co-located within an

overall growth area. Public transport provides a critical link between these land uses, delivering and supporting sustainable patterns of development at a settlement scale. Opportunities for integrating existing services with new services should be considered, particularly where benefits would arise for the existing community; where new services are being developed as part of other new development proposals, opportunities for integration should be considered and promoted.

Applicants will be expected to engage with relevant authorities and operators in identifying the potential for delivering integrated transport solutions for the North Growth Area.

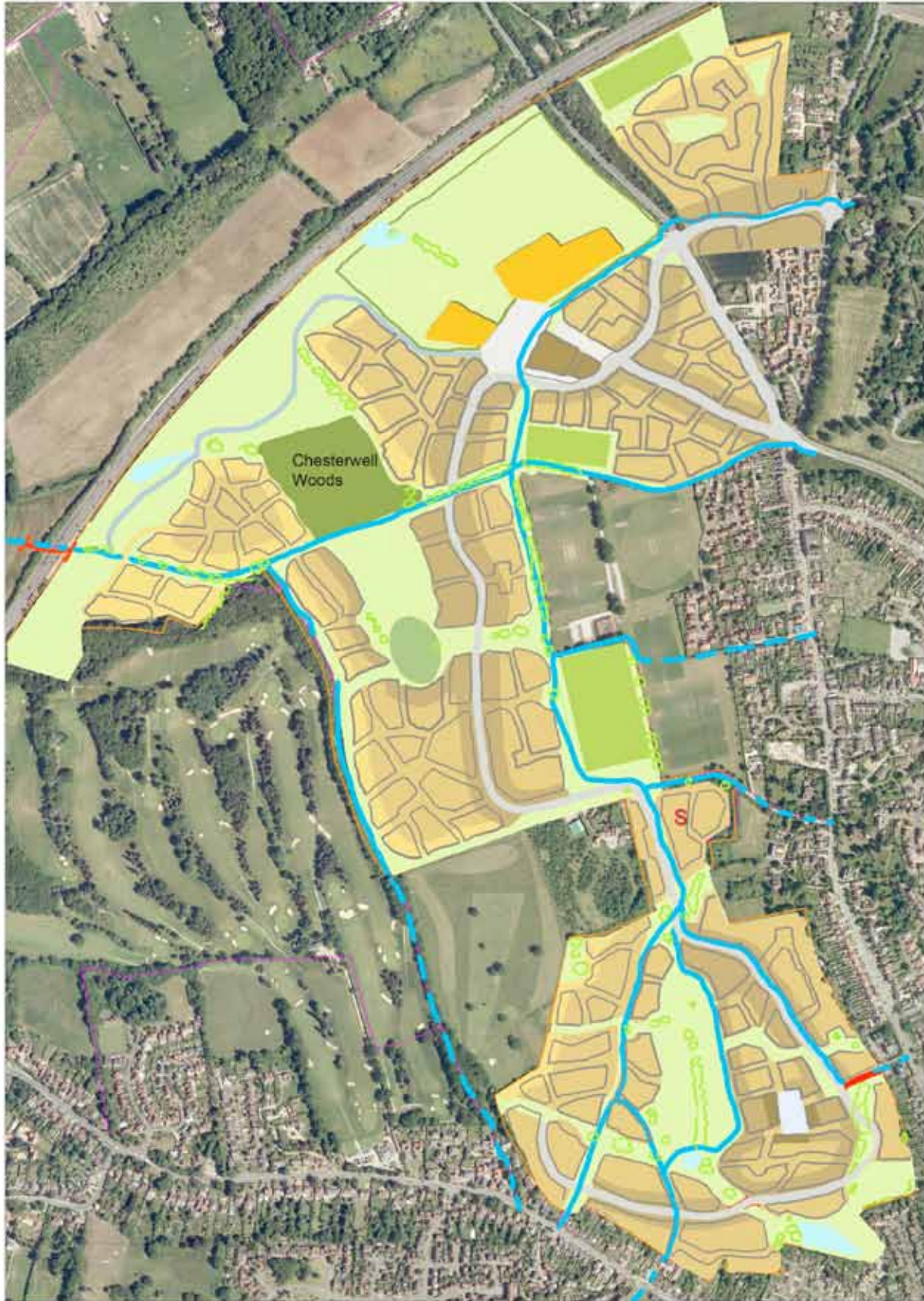
The Masterplan deliberately shows a new junction onto the A134 at the northern end of the site providing a sole general vehicular access to the site. This is intended to further assist in discouraging private vehicle trips and encourage the use of more sustainable modes of travel such as public transport, cycling and walking. A bus gate is shown at the southern end of the site as well as cycle and pedestrian links.

There are various options available for the sole general vehicular access referred to above. The existing Fords Lane Roundabout is unlikely to have sufficient capacity and therefore is likely to need removing and the A134 continued straight into the site. The existing A134 Nayland Road (north of the Fords Lane Roundabout) as well as Boxted Road and Fords Lane itself could then either be realigned to meet the newly aligned A134 or become cul de sacs, serving existing properties and in the case of Nayland Road and Fords Lane an element of the new development

The spine road will be designed to carry all traffic to the only access point at the northern part of the site, connecting to the NAR and the strategic corridors for vehicles. Public transport will also use this route into the growth area but will have a dedicated southern access that connects with the existing routes used by buses.

The spine road will be designed to operate at 20mph. This will be achieved by design elements such as a meandering alignment with many curves that naturally keep speeds to a minimum and single points of access for dwellings which enable cars to reverse onto the spine road. This, together with the omission of designated crossing points and integrated on street parking can provide an element of speed control. Further masterplanning with the Highway Authority will ensure the

NGAUE Draft Masterplan January 2012



- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| New Schools | Retained trees, informal space | Bus only access |
| Neighbourhood Centre | SUDS wetland retention ponds | Potential self build site |
| Civic spaces | Formal park and garden | New sports pitches |
| Cycle routes | Cycle bridge over A12 | Potential bus access |
| Lowest density, edge character | Central areas character | Spine road and park |

appropriate design, layout and operation of the transport route network.

The spine road will be an avenue, designed to have a unique character and legibility that is consistent over its whole length. It will provide a cycle/pedestrian route of 3 metres in width to substitute the main cycle route where it cannot be provided through open space.

Further design codes will detail a hierarchy of streets from the spine road, characterised by the avenue planting down to mews streets and small, peripheral private drives. These codes will detail surface treatments applicable for each type of street within the hierarchy.

The use of rear parking courts must be restricted to places where no other solution can be provided, such as flats above other uses where the frontage space would form shoppers parking. Occasionally small rear parking courts offer a viable parking solution but in these cases a court is unlikely exceed 12 spaces and will have suitable visual mitigation and lighting. Appropriate management and maintenance arrangements will be secured through condition or legal agreement.

Residential parking should be provided as front courts, parking squares or on plot. Visual mitigation of parking courts will be required as predominantly trees. This will be substituted with other layers of soft landscaping that does not prevent surveillance of parked cars from adjoining homes. Visitor parking must be well distributed through areas that provide only 200% parking per dwelling. Measures will be implemented to ensure the streets are not used for commuter parking.

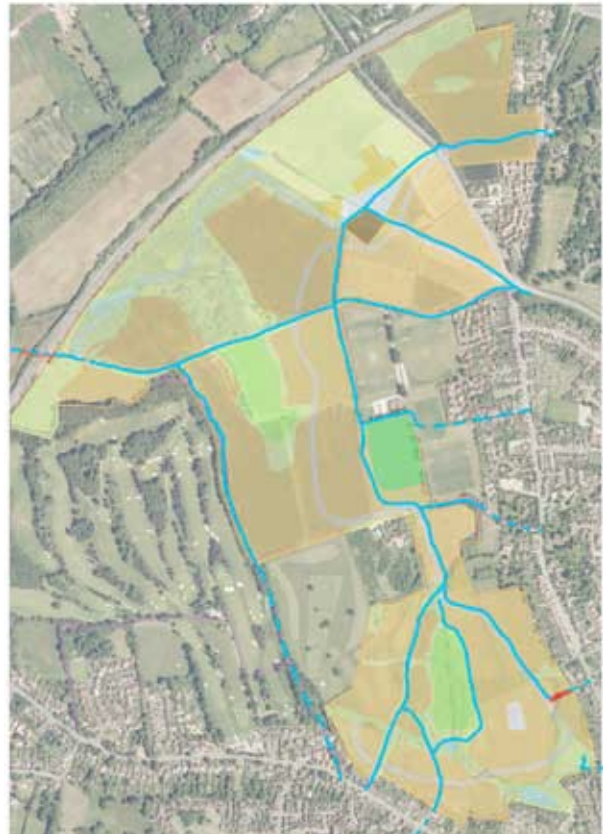
Key to delivering sustainable movement through the growth area is a comprehensive cycle network and pedestrian routes linking to the existing southern access points. Delivery of these connections should be agreed with the Council as part of the phasing strategy.

This cycle route will work in reverse to the traffic which will leave the growth area at the northern end. Its viability as a route depends on establishing high quality and functional connections at the southern boundaries to facilitate the sustainable modal pattern that mitigates the lengthy journey for cars which can only access to the north. There will need to be a strong cycle route throughout the whole area that provides the neighbourhoods with a direct link to the wider cycle network, with

the southern focus at the connection to Tufnell Way and the existing cycle route to North Station

It is considered appropriate that the smaller roads within the hierarchy can support cycle movement as well as car movements. The main cycle network will be provided off-road within the open spaces and green linkages throughout the site where possible or provided as a 3 metre combined cycleway and pavement where off street routes are not possible.

Opportunities for access across the A12 should also be considered as part of the green space and recreational network within the site and strategically. The existing at grade A12 crossing between the site and the Essex Way to the north acts to constrain access for what are very clear safety issues. Opportunities for improving this access should be considered by applicants and necessary safeguards designed in to development to ensure the future implementation of any such proposal. All sources of funding and support will be pursued to deliver a footbridge and cycleway across the A12 in this



The comprehensive cycle network

location.

It is also expected that improved linkages with the countryside to the north via a possible new A12 foot/cycle bridge or simply by improving footway and cycle way connections under the A12 alongside the A134 will actually facilitate increased accessibility, mobility and connectivity for the villages north of Mile End and better access to the countryside for Mile End residents .

The development should be served by new bus services, giving access to the town centre, Severalls Hospital development, the Hospital and through the north Colchester Employment land and onto the North Colchester Business Parks.

The NGAUE will require investment in off site highway infrastructure which will be identified as part of the planning application process and secured through legal agreement. The following is a brief summary of proposed changes to existing services and infrastructure which are deemed necessary to enable new development to be integrated into the existing highway network:

North South Capacity Improvements (A133/A134) -

- A bus lanes in both directions along North Station Road (section past the Norfolk) and through Essex Hall roundabout.
- New signalised North Station gyratory to replace existing North Station/Northern Approach Road junction;

- New bus interchange within North Station Gyratory;
- Widening of carriageway to allow two northbound lanes between Colne Bank and Essex Hall roundabouts

A133 Central Corridor Improvements -

- New left slip lanes at Colne Bank roundabout for Westway to Cymbeline Way and Cymbeline Way to Station Way movements
- Widening of carriageway to allow two westbound lanes between Albert and Colne Bank roundabouts;

NGAUE Connections -

- Main vehicle access to the NGAUE in the Nayland Road/Boxted Road area
- Bus, cycle and pedestrian only accesses to serve new and expanding residential developments at New Braiswick Park, Northern Growth Area Urban Extension, Severalls Hospital site, plus employment in the North Colchester Business Parks area;
- Potential new bus route network for North Colchester area;
- New cycle and pedestrian network across North Colchester, links to the Hospital, the station and the town centre and links to the rural area across the A12.



Bus routes given priority



Attractive tree lined streets



Walking and cycling routes



Parking on street



Primary streets - formal landscape design



Landscaped squares and streets

T

LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE FRAMEWORK

Whilst the ecological and historic value of the existing landscape may vary, the important ecological and aesthetic role of the hedgerows and maturing trees has been acknowledged by the significant retention and enhancement built into the Masterplan. Relatively recent planting may contribute to the structure of the site and may help to provide a role in breaking the larger open fields into smaller pockets. For this reason, as part of an assessment of the value of those landscape areas the principle of landscape buffers being retained on their existing alignments has been given a high priority. A Green Infrastructure Plan will need to be prepared and submitted as part of the development process.

Where permeability dictates some thinning out then

extensive replanting and reinforcement should follow. Proposals will also need to consider the retention of hedgerows. Where existing landscape edges are thin or non-existent, these should be assessed and where necessary strengthened to protect the amenity of existing residents. This is particularly true where existing properties are located to the rear of plots and where there is little or no existing buffer such as in Braiswick.

Where possible new development should follow secure by design principles and build dwellings that back onto existing houses to not leave vulnerable back gardens exposed to new public spaces. In some instances however, such as at the south of the site there is a desire to utilise the natural open space that exists.

The protected trees should be integrated into the public realm rather than be included in private space wherever possible. Given that the extensive footpath network follows the field edges, it will be important to safeguard these routes and to set them into corridors which pro-



Landscaped car parks



High quality public open space

mote access, amenity, recreation and wildlife. Existing green space in Mile End is largely constrained to mature landscape areas within private plots, rather than within the public realm. Avoiding this approach, by incorporating green space, including street planting and landscape corridors will avoid the creation of exclusively hard public realm areas, as is evident in relatively recent developments in Mile End.

Providing a variety of open spaces in both form and function will utilise both the contoured areas that are not suitable for development and create new and extended parks that augment the more natural places which will not be suitable for all forms of recreational use. It will also be important to deliver space within the community which acts as a focus for activity and which offers a space to which the community can relate. Although the Mile End recreation ground is perceived by the local community to perform this role, the reality is that it is only its location close to the middle of Mile End which supports this view – there is nothing locally distinctive about the space or its function which makes it specifically ‘of’ Mile End.

An opportunity exists to use the growth of Mile End as



Formal landscaping in Community Hub



Attractive Landscape Setting for Housing



Public open space



Public Open Space

3. APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

a way of delivering an improved and more community-focussed green space at the recreation ground as well as providing the new development with its own sports and recreation facilities, in addition to the structural landscape corridors. The exact amount of public open space to be delivered will be, in part, determined by the exact scale and density of the development being proposed. The Council's masterplan and indeed the draft masterplan promoted by the developers show well in excess of the minimum 10% of the overall site area required by policy. The Council's masterplan illustrates open space provision across the whole area that creates accessibility at highly localised levels and a strategic green corridor throughout the site.

The Council's PPG17 study states that 19.56ha of open space in total is needed in the NGUAE if 1800 new properties are built. This is broken down into a range

of typologies including formal parks and gardens, children's play areas, allotments and semi natural green space. Some flexibility in typologies may be appropriate but there should be no relaxation in the amount of space provided within the site. The open space will be dispersed reasonably throughout the site and not concentrated in any one area.

Open space should be located so as to meet accessibility standards and to ensure that all homes are close to play spaces and open areas. No dwelling should be more than 300 metres from an area of open space. Accommodating the open space requirement presents an opportunity to respond to specific circumstances in the north of the site. The A12, although in cutting along much of its length, does give rise to localised noise and visual impacts. This is particularly acute as the A12 crosses the Black Brook. This land is not suitable for new homes but can serve the area as informal open space.

Although there is a need to ensure that there is no imme-



Trees retained for landscape setting for new community



Green space next to homes

diate risk to road safety, locating open space adjacent to the A12 would act as a buffer to residential development within the site. It would also allow a continuous green edge to be established alongside the A12, providing a continuous wildlife corridor and allowing the opportunity for radial green corridors emerging from the development to be linked as part of a green network to the wider area. There is a strong local desire to use this to link existing rights of way from Tower Lane to the east with existing footpaths to the west of the site. This space will provide a strong feature of the northern area and link through Chesterwell Wood to further, more formal space in the centre of the development area.

A formal park will be designed to provide the opportunity for formal planting beds and act as an attraction for the many varied user groups of the local communities. These may include water features, play equipment and infrastructure for formal events.

A series of smaller amenity areas will be created within each of the designated development areas. Each will be a minimum of 10% of these areas and will ensure the retention of existing individual specimen trees

Further open spaces will need to be located to serve southern parts of the site, providing a variety of spaces to cater for different needs and user groups.

The Council encourages natural play areas as well as recognising the need for flat open areas that act as kick

about space. The topographic features of the southern area can provide excellent natural play environments and walking spaces but other types of space will also be provided. All areas of open space will be made suitable for recreational use or protected and enhanced for biodiversity in accordance with a design code for open space and a management plan that will be agreed with the Council prior to development.

The PPG17 study requires the provision of additional sports pitches for the new community. These requirements are shown as an extension to the existing playing fields off Fords Lane and to the north of the triangle site between Nayland and Boxted Roads. Fords Lane will be the focus for a new community centre well connected to all parts of the new development as well as the existing Myland community.

The northern perimeter of the site, against the A12 corridor will provide a large informal open space together with dedicated space for allotment gardens. This site and others used for the provision of allotment gardens can be provided on suitable land adjacent to water retention features that form part of the SUD system.

The varied topology of the site will be used positively for both visual amenity and to provide a system of swales that are both functional and attractive aspects of the landscape. An existing series of open drainage ditches will be assessed for their compatibility with a Sustainable Drainage System (SUDS). It will be highly



Lower density residential



Medium density residential

3. APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

desirable to utilise many of the existing features of the site to regulate and retain surface water.

The detailing of any SUD system must provide for attenuation and infiltration taking into account opportunities for:

- Biodiversity enhancements – such as the wetland areas in the southern area
- Environmental protection from contaminants
- Rainwater harvesting
- Green or brown roofs
- The safeguarding of protected trees.

LAND USE

The Core Strategy expresses in Policy H1 clear requirements for the scale of development to be accommodated within the broad area of new housing. The Site Allocations DPD identifies specific land uses which should be accommodated. These include the creation of a neighbourhood centre, new primary school a site for a secondary school in case it is required and community facilities (together with additional sports pitches and open space), and recognises the need to retain Chesterwell Woods. Although the Core Strategy identifies a need for at least 2200 homes on the site, na-

tional and local policy changes and local opinion have resulted in the Council agreeing with the developers that approximately 1800 units would be more appropriate. The key principles for the disposition of these uses is described in the following text, and illustrated in the masterplan.

There are three focus points for the physical and social hubs of the new development. These areas provide an appropriate environment for shops, work space and community uses. The northern hub will also create space around the entrances to schools thus enhancing the activity and vitality that defines a hub. The southern hub provides a smaller scale of activity but remains an import focus for the local community and at the heart sits a new community centre focused on the existing pavilion site.

The northern neighbourhood centre should be located to respond to the opportunity to focus services and facilities in an accessible and commercially realistic way. The greatest likelihood of delivering a self-sustaining and commercially viable centre would be to combine both commercial and community facilities, including new educational facilities in a single coherent core; where this can be associated with a public transport hub and with passing trade. The highest degree of accessibility and footfall can also be delivered. The delivery of new schools within this suggested hub should also be tied into careful planning of new pedestrian and



Higher density residential



Shops in Community Hub

cycle facilities in order that contact with roads is minimised and thereby the delivery of safer routes to school encouraged. A car free core to the community hub also then creates a local place to rendezvous and enjoy outdoor contact in a safe environment.

The location of the centre should consider the opportunity for maximising the number of homes which are well related to the centre – creating a stronger relationship between land uses and maximising the opportunity for cycling and walking. To that end, proposals should recognise that a new northern neighbourhood centre should form the focus for new development. The centre should be mixed use in both horizontal and vertical forms, and should accommodate residential uses on upper floors. The scale of commercial facilities should be commensurate with the new population being accommodated within the area, but should accord with the hierarchy of centres set out in the Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPD.

It is important that the centre acts as a focus for the development, and that it is of a scale and quality which ensures its long term viability and vitality. The centre should, at minimum, be capable of meeting day to day shopping needs, as well as offering supporting services normally associated with a neighbourhood centre. Consideration should be given to the opportunity of a suitably sized anchor store which will help to establish

the centre and support the viability of smaller supporting units, such as a hairdresser, pharmacy, and other similar functions. These will allow residents to benefit from convenient and accessible services. It is expected that proposals will set out justification for the volume of retail floorspace proposed as part of the neighbourhood centre. Small scale employment opportunities should be promoted where they are compatible with the mixed use nature of the centre.

The centre should also accommodate community, social and healthcare facilities as may be required to serve the new population and be of a scale commensurate with guidance set out in the Borough's adopted SPD entitled "Provision of Community Facilities", coupled with a well-designed public realm providing opportunities to relax and spend time, the neighbourhood centre should be a focus for activity throughout the day. At least one large community building should be delivered and should either form part of the community hub in the northern part of the site or be focused on the existing pavilion at Fords Lane Playing Fields. The centre should act as a focus for activity, where social interaction supports a sense of community and gives a focus for the development. The building should be capable of hosting a range of activities, and should incorporate a sports hall capable of accommodating badminton and other court games. Ensuring that the building provides flexible space will be important, allowing room for meeting, socialising and the performing arts, as well being capable of accommodating administrative functions if required. Consideration should be given to incorporating a green roof on the neighbourhood centre.

3. APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT



Housing mix



Housing mix



Small scale employment uses



Small scale employment uses

Subject to feasibility assessment further community facilities could be provided to serve the southern part of the site and may include meeting space, open space or other community functions. The long term management and funding of these facilities must be considered at the outset. The use of flexible space, capable of reverting to residential use, may be appropriate if the case for additional commercial/community space is not clear-cut. Applicants will be expected to work with Myland Community Council to ensure that the long-term sustainability of community facilities can be demonstrated.

Given the need to accommodate public transport and non-car movement, it is considered a structural imperative to manage the main vehicle movement route into the site as well as accommodate a range of services and facilities. To this end a strong urban structure should be developed to ensure that the neighbourhood centre acts as a single place, not as a disparate set of functions associated in one location. Innovative solutions will be expected in terms of traffic management

for both through movement and movement associated with the development, ensuring that this movement complements and supports rather than detracts and undermines the need for effective place making.

Where possible, new schools should be well located with respect to the centre, offering the opportunity for parents and pupils to make use of facilities and space in the centre. One primary school is expected to be built within the site to meet the demand arising from the new development. In addition land has been shown on the masterplan for a secondary school if it is needed at a future date. Essex County Council as Education Authority has already undertaken a Land Compliance Study which identifies those parts of the site considered suitable for school development and full regard should be taken of the findings. Developers will also need to work with Essex County Council to inform a Site Feasibility Study for new educational facilities.

The primary, early years and childcare facilities and secondary school should share a single plot to provide flexibility. The land required for shared education facili-



Housing in terraced form



Contemporary terraced housing

3. APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

Criteria associated with different densities	Low Density	Medium Density	High Density
Typical illustration of character – precedent photos			
Character	Dispersed arrangement of larger homes, on larger plots, with larger areas for private gardens and on – plot car parking.	Mixture of housing types with medium sized plots and garden sizes.	Concentrated arrangement of taller buildings. Smaller plot sizes with greater emphasis on high quality public open space for taller buildings to face onto.
Typical Density Measurement (dwellings per hectare : dph)	15 – 25dph	25-35dph	35-50dph
House plot size	Larger individual plot sizes	Mixture of plot sizes	Smaller plot sizes
House Type Mix	Detached houses and Semi-detached houses.	Wide range possible, including detached house, Semi-detached houses, townhouses and terraced housing.	Mostly Townhouses, apartments, terraced housing.
Building Heights	Mostly 2 storeys as appropriate for detached and semi-detached homes.	2-3 storeys.	2-3 storeys. Taller buildings for townhouses, apartments and mixed use blocks (as found on High Street in Community Hub).
Building Lines & Frontage Set Backs	Informal arrangement, with no set building lines. Housing set back at variable depths on deeper, larger plots. Larger front gardens and parking in front of houses.	More formal arrangement, with buildings set back at consistent distances from streets and public realm.	Formal building alignment, building frontages aligned to streets, close to street edge, short set backs from building to street.
Private Open Space	Largest private gardens, providing private open space at the front and back of houses, on larger plots.	Well proportioned back gardens, but variable approach to front gardens. Front gardens may be smaller but minimum of a small set back required to provide some private threshold between the home and the street.	Private open space provided on balconies and roof gardens for apartments. Apartments to also have shared communal open space. Townhouses to have back gardens and potentially front gardens too.
Public Open Space	Public open space dominated by soft landscaping, retaining existing landscape features in landscape corridors.	Mixture of soft and hard landscaping – landscape corridors, children's play areas and public squares.	More formal landscape design with public squares and wider streets providing attractive durable public open space.
Private Car Parking	On-plot, with garages and driveways.	Provided on-plot where possible. Some garages, drives and parking in front of homes.	Mixture of on-plot, shared parking courts and parking on street. Fewer garages.
Location for density to occur within North Growth Area	Lowest density to be found on the outer edges of the site, for instance in far west past Chesterwell Wood.	On primary street network and overlooking larger areas of public open space.	Community Hub in north, and near Community Facilities in the south.

Table 1: Residential Density

ties is provisionally estimated by Essex County Council as 9.7 hectares including primary, secondary and early-years facilities. This would depend on the total number of places being provided and in the case of the secondary school would serve a wider catchment beyond the site. Encouragement will be given to shared use of both the educational buildings and the playing fields to ensure the local community has access to the facilities.

Residential areas should be designed to deliver mixed and sustainable communities capable of instilling a sense of place and community. They should comprise homes, open spaces, landscape areas and play areas, and should not be considered as areas which should contain only homes, with supporting facilities pushed between residential areas. Whilst the master plan will identify a strategic landscape structure to frame residential zones, a finer grain landscape and open space network, including street planting, should exist within the individual residential zones recognising the need for both public and private green space within residential neighbourhoods. Whilst the neighbourhood centre provides a focus for development, residential areas should equally be capable of demonstrating different intensities of activity, reflecting accessibility thresholds and the local and strategic landscape context.

A mix of housing types and tenures should be delivered, reflecting policy set out in the Development Policies DPD. Within the site, development densities should reflect the accessibility within and beyond the site, and the intensity of activity arising from the pattern of land use. Residential zones nearest the neighbourhood centre will be closest to public transport and local services, and will be capable of sustaining rela-

tively higher densities than other areas. It is not envisaged that higher densities will predominate, rather that a range of densities will be delivered, with an average density of about 32 – 35 dwellings per hectare being acceptable across the development.

Building heights should similarly reflect the context for those buildings – where development addresses public or open spaces, taller buildings may be acceptable. In the case of the neighbourhood centre, buildings up to three storeys in height may be acceptable when addressing public spaces. Where new development is proximate to existing development, residential amenity should be protected through careful consideration of building height, density, access and landscape, recognising that two storey development is most likely to be appropriate. Mixed development forms should be delivered, reflecting variations in development density and building height and allowing a mixed community to be established.

Whilst modern communities tend to be more mobile and less tied to one particular location than in previous generations, the opportunity for residents to grow and move within their community according to their housing needs should be maximised. An appropriate range of specialist housing should be delivered to support the widest range of community needs, in accordance with policy set out in the Development Policies DPD. Other land uses which should be accommodated within the NGAUE include specific types of green space or leisure uses, such as allotments, which help to underpin community relations and can provide important wildlife areas.



Contemporary semi detached housing



New homes in landscape setting



Scale of Community Facilities	Types of Facilities Provided at Different Scales / Locations
<p><u>Local facilities</u> Immediately accessible to all homes in the North Colchester Growth Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible public open space – e.g. landscape corridors • Footpath and cyclepath networks • Smaller Children's play areas (LEAPS)
<p><u>Neighbourhood facilities</u> Facilities provided for the North Colchester Growth Area that are within walking / cycling distance of all homes in the growth area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Hub including; • Primary School; • Shops (Convenience retail); • Community Space / Hall; • Public Transport stops; • Larger Children's play areas (NEAPS)
<p><u>District facilities</u> Facilities in existing districts / parts of town that neighbour the North Colchester Growth Area. For instance facilities in Mile End, Braiswick and Highwoods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary Schools • Colchester North Railway Station; • High Woods Country Park; • Colchester Community Stadium; • Colchester Golf Club; • Colchester Rugby Club; • Hospital; • Proposed Park and Ride; • Allotments in Mile End and Braiswick; • Urban District Centres
<p><u>Town / Borough facilities</u> Central town facilities provide to serve whole town</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town centre shops and services; • Castle, Museums and other civic facilities; • University of Essex; • Cymbeline Meadows Nature Reserve

Diagram 1: Community Facilities

Public realm should form a backbone to the development, with focal areas capable of acting as informal community spaces. Positive consideration should be given to the need to accommodate the needs of all members of society, recognising that these needs vary and may conflict with one another in terms of the sort of public space and public realm which meets their needs.

SUSTAINABILITY

The National Planning Policy Framework and other relevant national standards will be the main determinant of many of the sustainability measures to be incorporated within emerging development proposals. Core Strategy Policy ER1 and supporting DPDs set out local

policy in respect of specific sustainability measures to which proposal must accord.

Opportunities for ensuring the long-term sustainability of new development should be accommodated within the design process. This will mean encouraging developers to achieve the requirements of the Code for Sustainable Homes including Lifetime Homes and making sure that the overall development structure is capable of effectively delivering appropriate site-wide sustainability measures such as sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) meeting specific policies on these as set out in DPDs and in adopted SPD and national policy on sustainable development.



Community Allotments



Potential for green and brown roofs



SUDS in streets



Integration of SUDS

3. APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

The built form of development should also reflect the need for longevity in the face of climate change. Whilst drainage and utilities supplies will need to be designed to accommodate climate change predictions, the environment around and within the built form should similarly be capable of accommodating changes in climate, including more intense weather patterns, and be capable of ensuring that micro-climatic conditions within the development are sustainable in the longer term. This might mean more street trees capable of offering shade, or street forms capable of accommodating



Opportunity for solar panels



SUDS integrated in landscape framework



Community demonstration projects of renewable energies



Wind power generation opportunities

greater volumes of surface water. In essence, the need for sustainable development forms should be an integral part of proposals at all levels from master planning to dwelling design.

GROWTH AREA FRAMEWORK

The master plan provides an illustration of the key principles described in this SPD and sets out an illustrative structure for the site. The accompanying illustrations provide a further guide to the Borough's expectations. Policies set out in the Site Allocation DPD and Development Policies DPD should guide the detail of proposals. The master plan illustrates how the broad disposition of land uses discussed in this SPD could be brought forward in a way which meets the Council's aspirations for the site. Other options may prove equally relevant and in these cases, this SPD and relevant DPD policies will be used to ensure that the proposals adhere to an overall master plan and follow the basic core principles outlined herein. All development solutions for this site will however be required to make a demonstrably effective contribution to overall infrastructure investment needs.

At the northern end of the site, the neighbourhood centre acts as a fulcrum for movement and activity, drawing together public transport, community and local services. Proposals will be expected to demonstrate how priority can be given to public transport, and how perceptions of vehicle movement as a barrier is

prevented. Crossing points within the centre, as well as pedestrian and cycle access should be designed to ensure a high quality, safe and accessible environment. The area would accommodate the main retail and service elements for the NGAUE, and could accommodate other uses. Public transport services could be focussed at the centre, allowing interchange between new services serving the NGAUE and other services serving north Colchester.

To the north and west of the neighbourhood centre, residential zones could be established at relatively higher density, taking advantage of the proximity to services and public transport.

Green links between the zones, and green space within the zones would help to connect the neighbourhood centre with the green buffer to the A12, which would accommodate informal recreation space and link to the wider right of way network.

To the north of the neighbourhood centre, the primary and secondary schools reinforce the role of the centre, focussing daily activity to allow multi-purpose trips to be made by residents and visitors. Whilst reinforcing the commercial potential of the neighbourhood centre, co-locating these uses increases the opportunity for informal social interaction.

Green links extend westwards from the primary school, connecting existing landscape edges and providing a green connection between the Mile End recreation ground, Chesterwell Wood and the buffer to the A12 beyond.

The public transport spine and main site access extend southwards through the site, maintaining a 400m bus stop catchment for the main residential zones. A bus-

only link at Bartholomew Close ensures that the main spine road cannot function as a through-route for general vehicular traffic. Only buses, cyclists and pedestrians can access Mile End Road from the southern part of the site. All other vehicular traffic from the south must travel northwards on the spine road and egress the site in the north. An exception may be made if temporary vehicular access is required to allow for phasing of development and delivery of infrastructure in the most timely manner.

A number of additional access points allow greater pedestrian and cycle permeability, making use in some cases of existing rights of way. The southern part of the site, although reasonably well related to the station, has a strong relationship with existing development and could be brought forward at relatively low densities, at

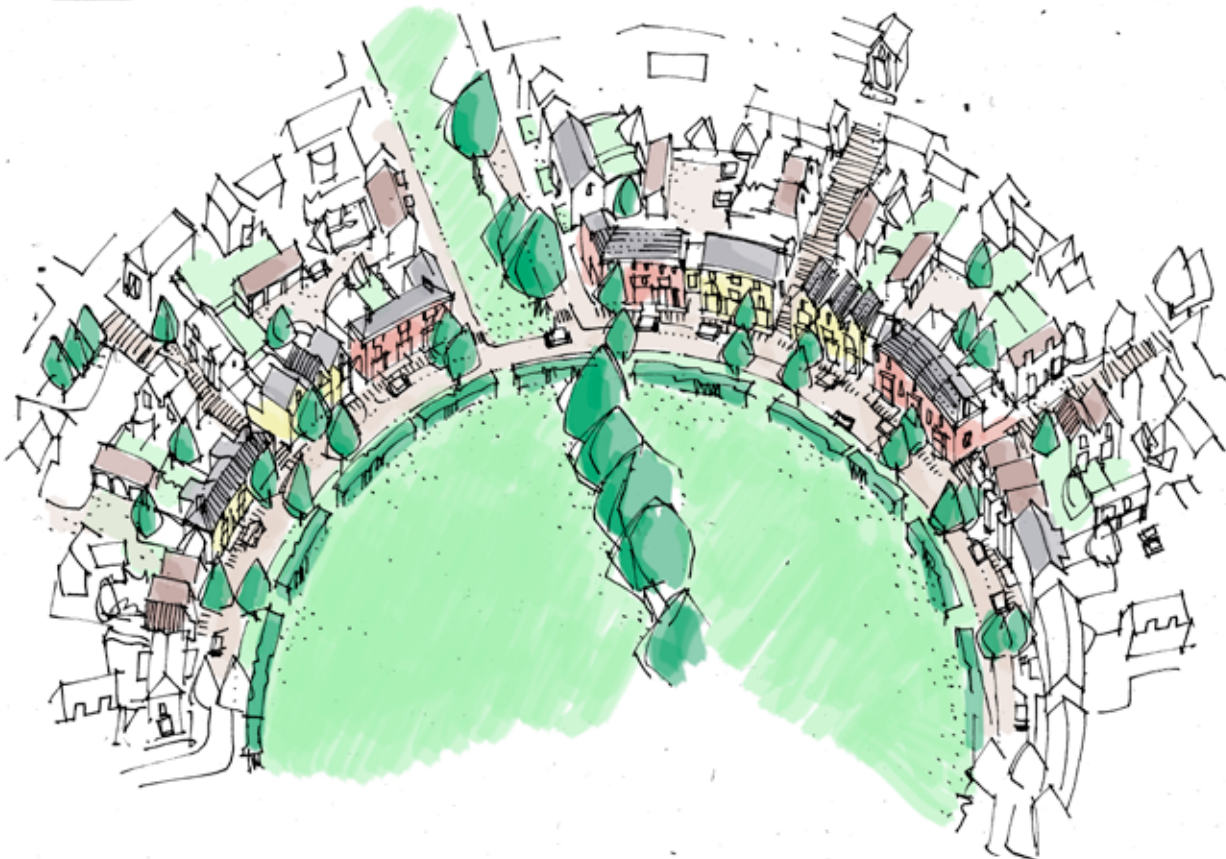


Diagram 2: Medium Density Residential Crescent

around 30 to 35 dwellings per hectare. Green links provide a buffer between new development and existing dwellings, wrapping around the southern edge of the site. The existing Mile End recreation ground provides an opportunity to deliver a better relationship between the Mile End community and the existing playing fields. As a green space at the interface between existing and new development, there is an important opportunity to create a community axis – linking a new community centre/pavilion, the neighbourhood centre, schools and village green. The opportunity to create a community focussed green space is shown in the location of the existing Mile End recreation ground.

THE WIDER NORTH COLCHESTER CONTEXT

This document has provided considerable guidance on how the Council expects the site to be developed but it cannot be read in isolation and nor can it ignore the Masterplan that has already been agreed for the former Severalls Hospital which lies immediately to the east. That land has planning permission for mixed use development including a new mixed use centre and 1500 new homes. The opportunity should be taken by interested parties to ensure that excellent linkages are provided between the two developments and that essential community infrastructure is logically dispersed to deliver well supported and sustainable (in terms of



Diagram 3: Medium Density Residential Block

catchment and viability) facilities. The development of this whole northern quadrant of urban Colchester provides a unique opportunity to build a lasting legacy for the town and its people. It warrants and deserves a coordinated approach and needs to successfully resolve the challenges for delivering sustainable development in a form that people enjoy experiencing.

THE COMMUNITY

Myland Community Council (MCC) provides strong community leadership in the area and developers will be encouraged to work collaboratively with not only the Borough and County Councils but also MCC. Developers should seek to encourage community projects designed to bring forward delivery of community infrastructure in ways that ensure local people have a direct influence on shaping their environment.

PRE ADOPTION MAINTENANCE

All developers will be required by legal agreements to ensure that communal infrastructure provided is routinely and systematically maintained in good order at their expense prior to formal adoption by the relevant local authority or agency. If communal areas accessible to the general public are to be maintained by a management company, opportunities for community representatives to be co-opted onto the relevant boards of such companies will be encouraged. Infrastructure falling into the pre-adoption category covered by this overall requirement includes, for example, footways, street lights, litter collection, appropriate waste collection, intermediate road surface, landscaped areas and play areas.



Diagram 4: Lower Density Residential Area and Green Corridor



Cricket Green

4. DELIVERY APPROACH

A phased approach to implementing the proposed development will ensure the effective delivery of infrastructure with the minimum disruption to new and existing homes from ongoing construction. The sequence of phases is illustrated below.

Cycle and pedestrian connections to the south must be established at the earliest opportunity as temporary but functional routes until later phases permit permanent construction of these important aspects of the Masterplan.

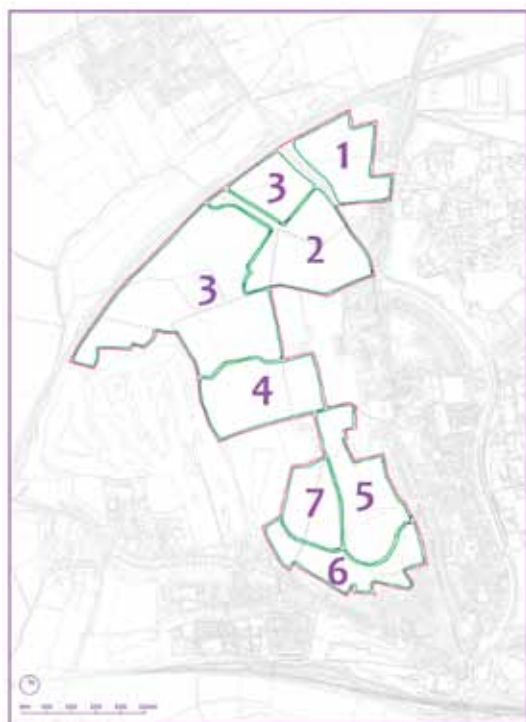
The adopted Core Strategy and Site Allocations DPD set out in clear terms the infrastructure required to ensure that growth can be delivered effectively in north Colchester. The Council has set out its intention to implement a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which would support the delivery of key infrastructure projects. The need to contribute through S106 or Section 278 agreements or CIL (whichever mechanism is most appropriate at that time) towards investment in infrastructure, particularly in the case of public

transport capacity and priority should be recognised by applicants.

Community infrastructure is equally important, and includes education, healthcare, recreation and leisure facilities, as well as community space. Proposals will need to demonstrate how they have taken account of the delivery of other facilities in the North Growth Area and the demand for new facilities arising from new development. As part of the master planning process, proposals will need to demonstrate how planning for community infrastructure is being addressed comprehensively and how those facilities will be delivered in a timely and coordinated manner. This need relates particularly to the northern neighbourhood centre, to public transport, to open space and to utilities capacity. The delivery of the neighbourhood centre as part of the early phases of development is considered an important aspect of establishing the new community and strengthening the existing one. Proposals unable to demonstrate this comprehensive approach will not be favourably considered.

Developers are expected to engage positively with local communities and demonstrate how proposals are in accordance with the Council's policies and guidance. It is anticipated that a regular dialogue is maintained with existing and emerging communities throughout the construction of the whole development.

In the case of transport and access, proposals will again be expected to demonstrate how they have considered, planned for and contributed to the development and delivery of appropriate access and transport solutions. This should be informed by the Draft North Colchester Travel Strategy published January 2012. The Strategy highlights opportunities for transport to be integrated with other growth investment, such as the Park and Ride, and the need for accessibility throughout the Northern Growth Area to be considered. Proposals will be expected to demonstrate how this wider context has informed their proposals for access and particularly for public transport, pedestrians and cycling. It is essential that public transport is provided early in the development to ensure maximum take up of services. Bus operators should be contacted at the earliest opportunity to agree routing and subsidies. Development proposals must demonstrate integration with existing



and emerging development – proposals which cannot demonstrate this will be not be favourably considered.

The Draft North Colchester Travel Strategy has been developed to serve the travel needs of both incoming and existing residents and employment. With physical constraints such as rail and road bridges, plus limited land availability, a policy of promoting sustainable travel modes has been the main focus of the strategy. This is consistent with national policy; new infrastructure upgrades have therefore been developed to help promote walking, cycling and public transport use as travel modes of choice. It is, however, also important that existing road space is fully optimised and therefore the strategy also includes plans for maximising highway capacity where feasible.

The following summary of proposed changes to existing services and infrastructure is detailed within the strategy and alongside assessments which inform the planning application will help determine the nature, timing and scope of infrastructure improvements necessary to support the development:

- New signalised North Station gyratory system incorporating A134 Northern Approach Road, Mile End Road and Bruff Close to replace existing North Station /Northern Approach Road junction;
- A bus lane in both directions along North Station Road and Station Way;
- New bus interchange within North Station Gyrotory;
- Widening of carriageway to allow two westbound lanes between Albert and Colne Bank roundabouts;
- Widening of carriageway to allow two northbound lanes between Colne Bank and Essex Hall roundabouts;
- New left slip lanes at Colne Bank roundabout for Westway to Cymbeline Way and Cymbeline Way to Station Way movements;
- Bus only access to serve new developments to the Northern Growth Area Urban Extension and former Severalls Hospital sites, plus employment in the North Colchester Business Parks area;
- Potential new bus route network for North Colches-

ter area linking up the hospital and other amenities;

- New cycle and pedestrian network showing existing, planned and potential routes across North Colchester and links to the town centre; and
- Smarter Choices – a variety of initiatives which encourage existing and new residents to use sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport.

Measures will also be required in respect of travel planning. It is important to appreciate that in conjunction with physical measures, there is a need for systems to be in place to encourage, monitor and review people movements from those living, working and passing through the area. Without enforceable and effective travel planning targets then there is a risk that aspirations will not be met.

It is unlikely that the proposed developments will provide sufficient funds to provide additional capacity beyond demand management and control and therefore robust measures must be incorporated to manage down demand wherever possible and necessary.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROPOSALS

Applicants are advised to seek early contact with the Borough Council to ensure that their proposals, in terms of their design and the content of applications, are robust and capable of being fully assessed. The content of planning applications will be informed by the Borough Council's local validation guidelines, and should be supported by relevant technical assessments. These assessments should consider the wider context for proposals, and should demonstrate that the proposals are compatible with the master plan.

The role of Health Impact Assessments in supporting planning applications should be recognised by applicants. Design and Access Statements submitted in support of applications must demonstrate how the specific proposals being promoted fit into the policy framework for the site.

There is an overarching requirement to demonstrate the delivery of approximately 1800 homes within the area of new housing identified in the Councils' Proposals Maps. Whilst national and local planning policy guidance will influence the form and density of development, proposals should recognise that the site offers the opportunity for a range of densities and development forms which contribute to delivering mixed and sustainable communities. 35% affordable housing will be sought across the site. Where proposals emerge for one part of the development area, it is expected that the applicants demonstrate how the scale, form and type of development will contribute towards achieving the overall ambition for mixed communities of the scale anticipated.

URBAN DESIGN

The NGA will have a number of character areas based upon an urban hierarchy of place and density. This provides an appropriate scale and massing for built form ordered with regard to the retained features of the site, new open spaces and the levels of activity generated by different neighbourhood places.

Highest densities will be expected in areas where there is a community focus ie where shops and civic spaces are provided along with excellent accessibility. There will be a correspondingly high quality public realm in these areas. In the north, the schools will relate to the local centre with entrances and accesses integrated into the mixed use core of the area.

The function of the community hubs will be separated from the spine road and vehicular dominance by creating buildings around civic spaces. These spaces can support day to day interactions as well as providing an arena for community events.

The main route through the area will be a wide boulevard. The route connects all the housing to the wider area and makes public transport accessible to all. Buildings on the spine road should generally provide an appropriate ratio of building height to street width. Front gardens of differing depths and parking courts will provide variation and augment character variations within different neighbourhoods.

The edges to the wider open spaces being provided can accommodate three storey built form and like the spine road character will be varied and articulated to provide alternative styles and character.

Most of the NGAUE will be within a character area best described as general neighbourhood and will comprise of mainly two storey houses in streets and mews. Small squares and open spaces will contribute to the character variations.

Where the open countryside and landscape features meet development, the lowest densities will be built. This will provide a transition between the urban areas and the natural openness beyond.

The urban edge to the north will require a built form that incorporates adequate protection from the sound generated by the A12. This treatment must address noise issues yet create a positive visual aesthetic.

Where the site backs onto existing development on Mile End Road and Bergholt Road the new development must protect the amenity of existing dwellings. Where existing back gardens address the site edges new dwellings should be sited that face away from the existing with back to back distances that conform to policy standards.

ARCHITECTURE

To augment the urban structure each neighbourhood will require an individual architectural style. Aesthetically, the growth area must have visually distinct neighbourhoods that have a unique character. Architecture has a key role in expressing the distinction and character of these neighbourhoods.

No phase or neighbourhood should consist of standardised house types. Any developer must demonstrate the individuality of their designs and how this design has been produced in response to the particular landscape constraints and opportunities present in each part of the growth area.

Opportunities for self build plots will be encouraged and although these will be subject to the same policy considerations as other parts of the NGAUE, they will not require an affordable housing element.

Applicants should have regard to the adopted Myland Village Design Statement and the emerging Parish Plan which is expected to be adopted prior to the application being submitted.

DESIGN CODES

Applicants should recognise that urban form and streetscape are an important integrating element of new development and are subject to specific policies within the adopted Core Strategy and Development Policies DPD. Applicants will be expected to commit to a design coding exercise in collaboration with the Council to ensure that an overall design management process is maintained for the new development area. The design codes will be adopted by the council to ensure that the development is of a consistent and high quality. This is a particular concern of the local community who are keen to ensure that the quality of development is not diluted over time or by a range of different developers.

Design codes are a series of written and graphic principles that govern the quality of all aspects of development. The design codes will build upon the Masterplan to establish a design benchmark for the new development. As technical documents the codes will establish the character of each phase as well as a standard for the various types of open spaces and street hierarchy.

Design codes will be agreed as part of the outline planning applications for the following aspects of the Masterplan;

- Urban form.
- Townscape.
- Block principles.
- Frontages.
- Street Hierarchy.
- Building types.
- Density and building heights.
- Land use.
- Parking.
- Sustainability principles - energy, biodiversity and ecology, drainage, water conservation and waste.
- Landscape - formal, informal and civic spaces.

S106, S278 & CIL

Whilst the validation guidelines require only that draft Heads of Terms are submitted with planning applications, it is expected that applicants will be able to demonstrate through their proposals how the more significant elements of such an agreement will be phased and delivered.

Applicants will be expected to conform to adopted guidance on planning obligations or other legal agreement mechanisms in respect of the extent and nature of contributions which will be sought. Recognising that legal agreements can take some time to agree, applicants are encouraged to engage with the Borough Council and other relevant organisations at an early stage of pre-application discussions to ensure that this process does not lead to delays. The need to consider a wide range of infrastructure investment decisions relating to both local and strategic issues means that applicants will be expected to work closely with strategic partners before submitting their proposals, and will continue to work with them whilst their proposals are considered. Consideration will be given to the use of Planning Performance Agreements to support the planning application and determination process.

The following list is intended to illustrate the type of infrastructure expected to be funded through this development;

- Site and funding/build of new primary school
- Site for a secondary school
- Provision and maintenance of various typologies of open space, sport and recreational facilities
- Landscaping
- 35% affordable housing
- New or extended community building and management set up/running costs for limited period
- Off site transportation and highway works
- Travel planning and public transport contributions
- Provision of cycleways and footpath links.

The list is not intended to be exhaustive but the minimum expected.

At this time the Council is intending to implement a Community Infrastructure Levy. However at the current time it is intended to use S106 and S278 agreements to deliver infrastructure.

Appendix 1

List of those attending the consultation workshops

The following individuals attended the public consultation workshops held to inform the SPD.

12 December 2008

Rosemary Gates

Rev. Ray Gibbs

Brian Morgan, ADP Ltd

Gary Parsons, Anglian Water

Cllr Lyn Barton, Colchester Borough Council

Cllr Martin Goss, Colchester Borough Council

Adam John, Colchester Borough Council

Beverley McClean, Colchester Borough Council

Nelia Parmaklieva, Colchester Borough Council

Bob Penny, Colchester Borough Council

Karen Syrett, Colchester Borough Council

Bridget Tighe, Colchester Borough Council

Cllr Anne Turrell, Colchester Borough Council

Andrew Tyrrell, Colchester Borough Council

David Whybrow, Colchester Borough Council

Paul Wilkinson, Colchester Borough Council

Michael Mays, Colchester Golf Club

Paul Nunny, Colchester Golf Club

Roger Robertson, Colchester Golf Club

Steve Bradshaw, Colchester United

Jo Wheatly, Community Action in Mile End

John Oldham, Countryside Special Projects

Steve Price, Countryside Special Projects

Keith Brown, David Lock Associates

Arwel Owen, David Lock Associates

Simon Pugh, David Lock Associates

Lawrence Revill, David Lock Associates

Andrew Hunter, Environment Agency

Cllr Jon Jowers, Essex County Council

Martin Mason, Essex County Council

Eric Cooper, Highways Agency

Davina Galloway, Highways Agency

Mike Goulding, Homes and Communities Agency

Stuart Cock, Mersea Homes

Liz Gray, Myland Parish Council

Helen Harris, Myland Parish Council

Patrick Mills, Myland Parish Council

Mark Leigh, Savell, Bird & Axon

31 March 2009**Andrew Borges****Rosemary Gates****Brian Morgan**, ADP Limited**Andy Ayton**, Braiswick Resident Association**Mark Cole**, Braiswick Resident Association**John Spur**, Braiswick Resident Association**Robert Green**, Buro Happold**Cllr Lyn Barton**, Colchester Borough Council**Shelley Blackaby**, Colchester Borough Council**James Firth**, Colchester Borough Council**Adam John**, Colchester Borough Council**Patrick O'Sullivan**, Colchester Borough Council**Nelia Parmaklieva**, Colchester Borough Council**Bob Penny**, Colchester Borough Council**Karen Syrett**, Colchester Borough Council**Cllr Anne Turrell**, Colchester Borough Council**Andrew Tyrrell**, Colchester Borough Council**Paul Wilkinson**, Colchester Borough Council**Mike Mays**, Colchester Golf Club**Ian Newman**, Colchester Golf Club**Roger Robertson**, Colchester Golf Club**Steve Bradshaw**, Colchester United**John Oldham**, Countryside Properties**Steve Price**, Countryside Properties**Keith Brown**, David Lock Associates**Arwel Owen**, David Lock Associates**Simon Pugh**, David Lock Associates**Lawrence Revill**, David Lock Associates**Andrew Hunter**, Environment Agency**Paul Anstey**, Essex County Council**Blaise Gammie**, Essex County Council**Martin Mason**, Essex County Council**Davina Galloway**, Highways Agency**Stuart Cock**, Mersea Homes**Revd Ray Gibbs**, Myland Church**Jean Dickinson**, Myland Parish Council**Liz Gray**, Myland Parish Council**Helen Harris**, Myland Parish Council**Robert Johnstone**, Myland Parish Council**Patrick Mills**, Myland Parish Council**Ken Aldrid**, Myland VDS**Mark Leigh**, Savell Bird Axon**Darren Shorter**, Terence O'Rouke

GLOSSARY

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

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – a new process that allows local authorities in England and Wales to raise funds from developers undertaking new building projects in their area. The money can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure that is needed as a result of development. This includes transport schemes, flood defences, schools, hospitals and other health and social care facilities, parks, green spaces and leisure centres.

Community Facilities - Are buildings, which enable a variety of local activity to take place including, but not limited to, the following:

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

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

Core Strategy - The Core Strategy, adopted in December 2008, sets out the long-term vision for the sustainable development of Colchester and the strategic policies required to deliver that vision. It provides for the enhancement of the environment, as well and defines the general locations for delivering strategic development including housing, employment, retail, leisure, community and transport, which are then given precise boundaries in the Proposals Map.

Development Plan Document (DPD) - Development Plan Documents that the council are required to prepare include the core strategy, site specific allocations of land and area action plans. There is also a proposals map, which illustrates the spatial extent of policies that must be prepared and maintained to accompany all development plan documents. All Development Plan Documents must be subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement, consultation and independent examination, and adopted after receipt of the inspector's binding report.

Development Policies – A document that the council has produced alongside the Site Allocations document to guide future development of the Borough. The Policies contained within this Development Plan Document, along with other relevant national and Core Strategy policies, have replaced the Local Plan Policies and are used to determine planning applications.

East of England Plan (also known as Regional Spatial Strategy/RSS) - A strategy for how a region should look in 15-20 years time and possibly longer. It identifies the scale and distribution of new housing in the region, indicates areas for regeneration, expansion or sub-regional planning and specifies priorities for the environment, transport, infrastructure, economic development, agriculture, minerals and waste treatment and disposal. The Coalition Government have announced their intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies.

Green Links – Areas of land which are a vital part of the public realm. Green links provide attractive, safe and accessible spaces which contribute to positive social, economic and environmental benefits, improving public health, well-being and quality of life. Green links also provide the opportunity for sustainable travel between areas and are also rich in biodiversity. Strategic green links provide a buffer between urban areas and ensure these areas do not become one. Strategic green links are shown on the Core Strategy Key Diagrams.

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

Growth Area – An area broadly identified for future housing and employment growth. A growth area may include both regeneration areas with potential for brownfield land redevelopment or the use of greenfield sites as indicated on the key diagram (KD2 Colchester Town).

Local Development Framework (LDF) - This is the term given to the portfolio of documents which will provide the framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for the area.

Local Development Scheme (LDS) - This is the project plan for a three year period for the production of all documents that will comprise the Local Development Framework. It identifies each Local Development Document stating which are to be Development Plan Documents (see above) and which are to be Supplementary Planning Documents, and establishes a timetable for preparing each.

MCC – Myland Community Council – formerly known as Myland Parish Council which was established in 1999.

NAR – Northern Approach Road – strategic link between the A12 to the north and the town centre to the south.

Neighbourhood Centre - A Neighbourhood Centre is a collection of local shops, services and community facilities at the centre of both villages and urban neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood Centres could range from a small parade of shops through to larger commercial areas providing a variety of services and facilities.

Planning Contributions – also known as S106 Agreements - 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.

Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG) and Planning Policy Statements (PPS) – Guidance notes and statements issued by Government setting out planning policy and main land uses. They provide guidance and advice on the application of national policy. They are supported by a range of good practice and other documents providing guidance and advice on the application of policy. Planning Policy Statements are the replacements for the Planning Policy Guidance Notes.

Primary Schools – Facilities for pupils up to the age of 11 including provision for pre-school age children.

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.

Proposals Map – The Proposals Map shows all boundaries and designations specified in a Development Plan Document (DPD) such as the Core Strategy, Site Allocations or Development Policies.

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.

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) see East of England Plan above

Residential Travel Pack – Provide information regarding travel and transport between the site and key attractors. The Packs may also include vouchers for 12 months free travel on public transport.

Section 106 Agreements – see planning gain above.

Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) – The Site Allocations document sets out the criteria for the boundaries shown on the Proposals Map and provides area and use specific allocations.

Spatial Planning – “Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function. This will include policies which can impact on land use, for example, by influencing the demands on or needs for development, but which are not capable of being delivered solely or mainly through the granting of planning permission and may be delivered through other means.” (PPS 1 ODPM, 2004, pp3).

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – A document produced by the Council to add further detailed guidance and information on a particular subject such as Sustainable Construction or Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities. An SPD is subject to a formal consultation period and then is used as a material consideration when determining planning applications.

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 stormwater 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 Communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.

Sustainable Construction – is the name given to building in an energy efficient way. The incorporation of many new technologies and energy saving techniques into a building can dramatically reduce the CO2 emissions and carbon foot print of a building. Initiatives include grey water recycling systems, solar panels, home recycling, wind turbines and ground water heating systems. Full details can be found in the Council’s Sustainable Construction SPD.

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

Transit Corridor - A rapid transit corridor provides a corridor for the fast and frequent movement of high quality public transport. Colchester’s rapid transport corridors will enable buses and coaches to bypass traffic congestion and link key facilities, centres, transport nodes and neighbourhoods. These corridors may also provide quality walking and cycling paths.





Local Plan Committee

Item

9

11 June 2012

Report of	Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration	Author	Beverley McClean 01206 282480
Title	Myland Parish Plan		
Wards affected	Myland		

The Local Plan Committee is asked to agree the adoption of Myland's Parish Plan as Planning Guidance.

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To agree the adoption of the Myland Parish Plan as a Planning Guidance Note.

2. Reasons for Decision

- 2.1 Policy ENV2 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy promotes the preparation and adoption of Parish Plans and Village Design Statements. Adoption of the Myland Parish Plan as Planning Guidance will ensure that the aspirations of local residents and businesses in Myland can be properly considered when new planning policy documents are being prepared in the future and when planning applications for Myland are being assessed.

3. Alternative Options

- 3.1 The alternative is to rely solely on the Local Plan policies to guide how Myland develops in the future. The Parish Plan provides evidence about what the local community values about Myland, issues that need to be addressed and provides a blue print for action to help the Parish Council resolve problems in the local area. The Parish Plan can also feed into the planning system by guiding decision making when planning applications are being considered.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 A Parish Plan is a broad based community led plan prepared by either the Parish Council, Community Council or locally constituted community group. A Parish Plan sets out a range of social, economic or environmental issues that local residents have identified for action in the parish. These can range from a lack of adequate community facilities, poor Rights of Way maintenance, traffic speeding or litter. A Parish Plan differs from a Village Design Statement in a number of ways. A Parish Plan is less focused on design and built environment matters. These tend to be dealt with through Village Design Statements. A Parish Plan also includes a vision setting out how a parish is to develop and an action plan which identifies lead partners and a timetable for when and how local issues are to be resolved.

- 4.2 Whilst Parish Plans can include some planning related recommendations on the whole they focus more on social, community and environmental problems being experienced in an area and identifies a list of actions to resolve them.
- 4.3.1 Once adopted as Planning Guidance Parish Plans are a material consideration when planning applications are being determined. Parish Plans can also provide useful evidence to support the Local Plan process by providing detailed information to supplement policies already contained within the Local Plan thereby filling the gap between the statutory development plan and the planning application process. Parish Plans can also assist local communities seek funding to deliver projects identified in the plan.
- 4.4 Parish Plans provide information for developers, councillors, planning officers and the local community about issues that are of local concern and provide evidence for use when planning applications are being assessed or new development plans being prepared. Parish Plans and Village Design Statements could contribute to the delivery the Government's Localism agenda and evidence gathered during the preparation of a Parish Plan (or Village Design Statement) could provide useful evidence to support the production of future Neighbourhood Plans.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 Work started on the Myland Parish Plan following completion of their Village Design Statement in 2010. The Myland Parish Plan aims to establish the principles that the local community wish to see adopted in all future development within Myland. It is not intended to nor will it stop change from happening, but as guidance it is intended to influence how new development and wider social and environmental issues can successfully be delivered or addressed in Myland in accordance with community aspirations.
- 5.2 Myland's Parish Plan includes a number of planning related recommendations covering the need for sympathetic development at Severalls that respects the parkland setting, the desire for lower densities in future housing schemes, traffic improvement works at North Station, ensuring that adequate education facilities are provided as part of the North Growth Area development plans, promoting new local employment opportunities and community hubs as part of future development proposals, extending walking and cycling facilities locally and exploring opportunities to improve public transport provision to Myland.
- 5.3 The Parish Plan also includes a number of non planning recommendations to address the issues raised by local residents/businesses to improve village life. These include the need for more clubs/activities for young people, extending Neighbourhood Watch and more visible policing, the need for new community facilities such as better library provision, new open space and a new community garden.
- 5.4 Some of the issues in the Myland Parish Plan can be addressed through new development in the area however many of the actions will involve the Community Council working in partnership with a range of agencies to resolve locally identified problems. The Parish Plan provides a clear steer about how the local community wish to see Myland develop and be improved in the future. Myland Community Council is a Neighbourhood Plan Frontrunner and some of the actions identified in the Parish Plan may be deliverable as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process or through the use of new Community Rights introduced by the Localism Act.

5.4 A copy of the Mayland Parish Plan is attached as an Appendix to this report.

6. Strategic Plan References

6.1 The Parish Plan has enabled the residents of Myland to become involved in planning and help shape how their parish develops in the future. Adoption of the Myland Parish Plan will help inform the Council's vision to be a place where people want to live, work and visit. It will also contribute to the following Council priority areas and outcomes: creating opportunities for all its residents, enabling local communities to help themselves, regenerating our Borough through buildings, employment, leisure and infrastructure, improving opportunities for local business and retail to thrive, and improving our streets and local environment.

7. Consultation

7.1 No additional consultation is proposed before the Parish Plan is adopted as a Guidance Note.

7.2 During the production of the document several workshops, consultation exercises and events were held. This enabled the community group developing the plan to gather views from local residents which helped influenced the content of the final document. An explanation of the various consultation exercises undertaken and how these helped shape the Parish Plan are discussed on pages 7 & 8 of the document.

7.3 Once adopted the Myland Parish Plan will be publically available on both Myland Community Council's website (www.mylandcommunitycouncil.org.uk) and also on Colchester Borough Council's website (www.colchester.gov.uk).

8. Publicity Considerations

8.1 None

9. Financial Implications

9.1 None

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

10.1 The document was produced using a range of methods in order to enable as many people as possible to respond regardless of gender, gender re-assignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age and race/ethnicity

10.2 This document will work to increase individual human rights by increasing involvement in the planning process. An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Local Development Framework which is available following this pathway from the homepage: - Council and Democracy > Policies, Strategies and Performance > Equality and Diversity > Equality Impact Assessments > Strategic Policy and Regeneration > Local Development Framework.

11. Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 The Myland Parish Plan has identified the need for new pedestrian crossings at Colne Bank Avenue (Avenue of Remembrance) and traffic management on Nayland Road near the Co-op to reduce congestion and improve community safety.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 None

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 The adoption of guidance notes is intended to reduce the risk of inappropriate development and provide information about community needs/facilities. Adopted guidance also provides the opportunity to offer consistent advice to landowners, developers, officers, Councillors and members of the public.



Myland

Parish Plan

Your neighbourhood, your voice, your say



Version: Final 1.0 - May 2012

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1. Introduction

The Myland Design Statement was produced in 2010 and a Parish Plan was the next logical step in identifying and documenting the views, hopes and needs of Myland residents. It also serves as a precursor to an eventual neighbourhood plan.

Myland is situated to the north of Colchester, at one time a village separated by a band of fields, nurseries and allotments but now an integral part of Colchester's expansion. The area comprises Mile End and the northern aspects of Highwoods.

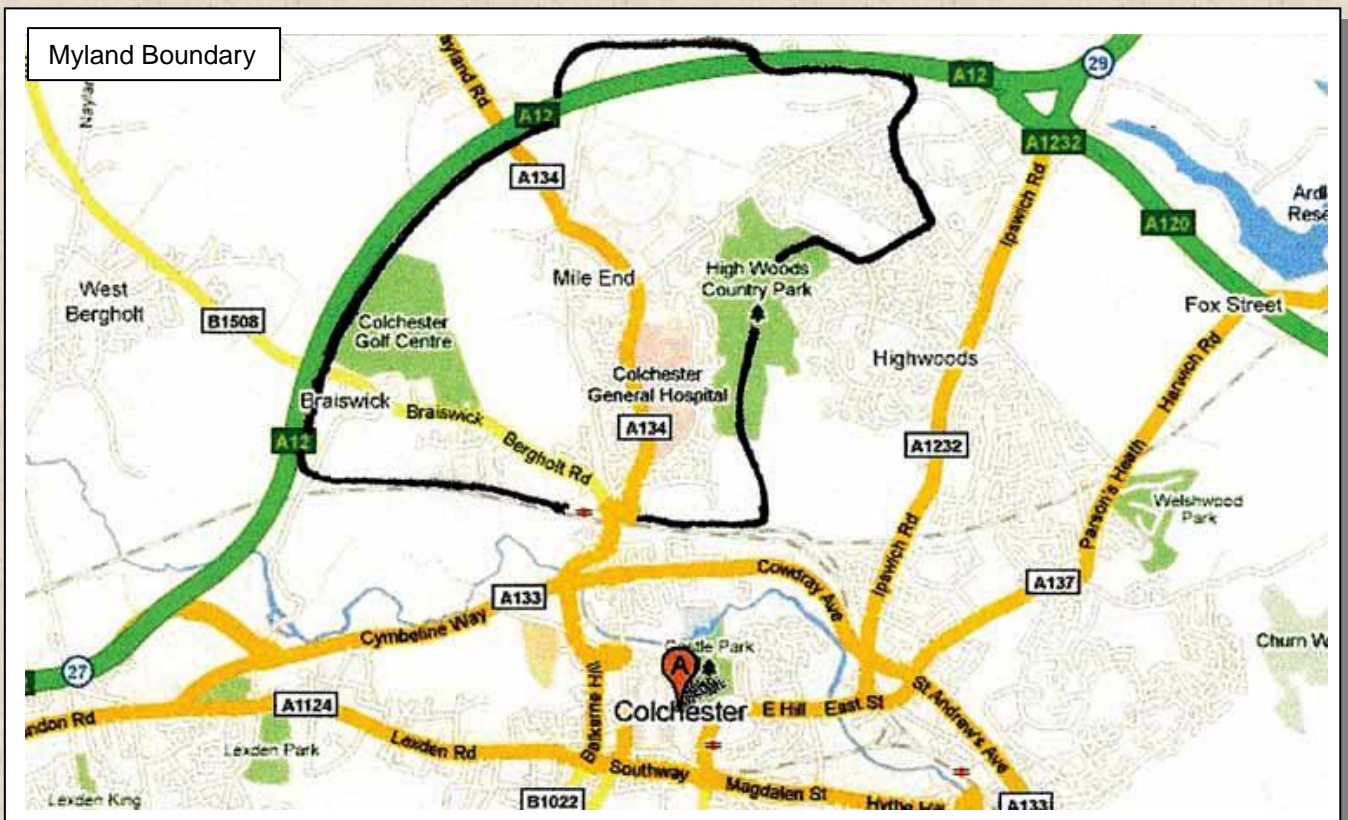


View from Chesterwell Wood

It has undergone extensive development in the last decade, some more sensitively carried out than others.

This has resulted in a marked change to the size of the local population - which now exceeds 12,000 - and the overriding character of the area. The last significant area of open land, called the North Growth Area Urban Extension (NGAUE) by CBC but known locally as Chesterwell Wood, was included for development within Colchester Borough Council's Local Development Framework/Core Strategy in 2008, a move that prompted significant and continuing opposition from local residents. Wherever Chesterwell Wood is mentioned in this document it refers to the NGAUE.

It is hoped this Parish Plan will help to encourage future development to be less intrusive, more attractive and more responsive to local residents' concerns about their quality of life and 'sense of place'.



2. Planning Policy Context

Until March 2012, planning policy at a national level was covered in a suite of Planning Policy Guidance documents (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). These were interpreted at a regional level into Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS). Colchester falls within the Haven Gateway sub-region of the area covered by the East of England Regional Spatial Strategy. A new National Planning Policy Framework was published by the Government on 27 March 2012 which has replaced most, if not all, the PPGs and the PPSs.

It should be noted there is a stated intention to abolish the RSSs.

The key policies guiding development in and around Myland are currently contained in:

- The Colchester Borough Local Development Framework (LDF) development plan documents.
- The Core Strategy
- Development Policies DPD
- The Site Allocations DPD
- Fields in Trust policies
- Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- Community Facilities SPD
- Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities SPD
- Parks and Green Spaces Strategy
- The Draft SPD for Colchester's North Growth Area Urban Extension
- Sustainable Construction SPD.

The Severalls Masterplan/Development Brief, prepared in 2001, is also relevant to the future development of the Myland area.

Colchester's Core Strategy was adopted in 2008. The document sets the strategic context for development in the Borough and includes information on the strategic vision, objectives and policies for development in Colchester Borough up to 2021 (2023 for housing). Following adoption, CBC commenced production of the Site Allocations and Development Policies. These, along with local recommendations for necessary changes, were adopted in March 2010. A review of the LDF documents is scheduled to begin in December 2012 as part of the production of the new Local Plan for Colchester.

2a. Purpose of the Document

A Parish Plan is a business plan for the community, identifying social, environmental and economic issues affecting local residents. It results in a set of actions which can be undertaken by the Parish Council &/or local groups or proposals to influence the plans, policies and actions of larger organisations. This Parish Plan was reviewed and agreed by Myland Community Council and Colchester Borough Council and the expectation is that it will be formally adopted in due course.

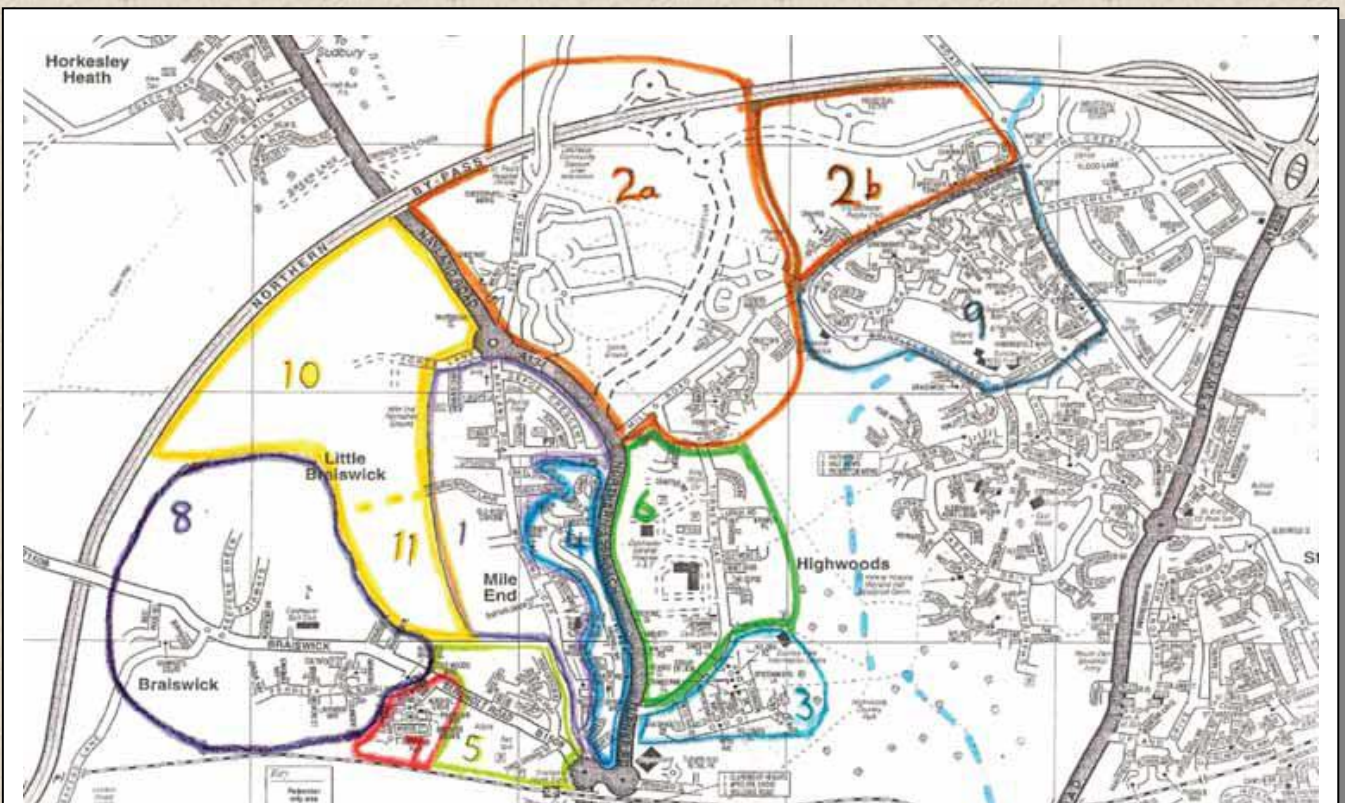


3. A Bit of Background

Myland lies to the north of Colchester, being roughly bounded by the Norwich-London railway line to the south, the A12 trunk road to the west and north and Highwoods Country Park to the East.

The area comprises a mixture of old (Victorian) housing stock, mid (1960/70) housing and new (2000/11) development. It has changed in the last decade from being a semi-rural community to an area fighting to retain its last area of rural open space (Chesterwell Wood).

As various areas have been developed during that period they have acquired their own discrete characteristics. For convenience and clarity they are referred to by the name each neighbourhood is now known by, whether by design or by usage. The separate neighbourhoods are shown on the map below.



Neighbourhoods

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Mile End Village | 6 Turner Road/Northfields |
| 2 Severalls Development Area | 7 New Braiswick Park |
| 3 Turner Rise | 8 Braiswick |
| 4 Northern Approaches | 9 Little Rome |
| 5 North Station | 10/11 Chesterwell Wood |

The following chart shows the current/future size of the neighbourhoods and the amenities and employment opportunities associated with them. The lack of additional facilities provided with previous developments accounts for residents views that there is now a shortfall of community amenities in Myland.

Myland Developments

Myland Zone	Build Status	Dwellings (As at date)	Employment	Facilities/ Amenities*
Mile End Village	Complete	906 (2011)	As on the right, except Ford Lane Rec., church halls and allotments	Ford Lane Recreation Ground, Primary School, Co-op, Fish & Chip Shop, Hairdressers, Pub, Church Hall (2), Pharmacy, Dentist, Doctors, Oaks Hospital, Allotments
Turner Rise	Complete	240 (2011)	All in box on right	Highwoods Country Park, Retail Park, Asda, Pizza Hut, fitness centre
Turner Road/ Northfields	In Progress	454 (2011)	All in box on right	Highwoods Country Park, General Hospital, Walk-In Health Centre, General Store Primary School
Little Rome	Complete	1036 (2011)	None	
North Station	Complete	396 (2011)	Pub Garage	Pub Garage/Shop Allotments
Braiswick	Complete	450 (2011)	All in box on right	Beauty salon, Dentist, Bowls Club, Golf Club
New Braiswick Park	In progress	700 (2015)	None	Community Room
Northern Approaches	Complete	617 (2011)	None	
Northern Gateway	Expected	70 (2025)	All in box on right	Community Stadium Business Park
Severalls Ph 1	In progress	250 (2015)	None	
Severalls Ph 2	Planning	1250 (2025)	Retail?	Community Centre? Retail? Bowls Club, Rugby Club
Chesterwell Wood	Expected	1800 (2030)	All in box on right except community centre	Secondary School? Primary School? Community Centre? Retail?

* Existing facilities shown in **bold**; those acquired as part of the development shown in **red**; possible future facilities shown with a question mark ?

4. Evidence for the Parish Plan

This Parish Plan has been based on the views of Myland residents gathered over time by a variety of methods. A survey and two drop-in sessions were conducted in 2008/9, essentially to gather data to support the Myland Design Statement but with the Parish Plan as a background objective. In 2011 a survey, consisting of questions more closely related to Parish Plan themes such as transport, community, crime & safety etc.*, was included in the parish *Mylander* magazine, which is distributed to all houses in the area. These questions were also put to the *Senior Moments* group (a community group of senior citizens).

At about the same time a local consultation exercise was carried out by the Interdisciplinary Centre for Environment and Society (iCES) at the University of Essex. This exercise was commissioned by Colchester Borough Council (CBC) to encourage greater local engagement with the planning process in line with the new 'localism' approach to community development.

A variety of sampling approaches were used in the engagement process to ensure that the surveyed group was representative of the resident population. The approaches were:

- Drop-in sessions at the Myland Community Council offices on Nayland Road.
- Outreach to pre-arranged groups, involving visits to local groups and other stakeholders during their usual meeting times at their usual venues. These included parent and toddler groups and schools.
- Outreach to pre-arranged locations, with chance encounters to access those members of the community who do not necessarily belong to a specific group/club/institution. The engagement teams visited popular places in the locality to involve people who happened to be there at the time.



Myland Community Council office

Feedback from these sessions was collated and a report issued in August 2011.

In addition to these studies and surveys reference was made to the 2008 Community Facilities Assessment report researched and prepared by Jo Wheatley, Community Development Officer. Although things have moved on since this report was written it is interesting to note that the list of facilities identified in the report's conclusion as being needed still largely mirrors the comments from more recent studies. A copy of the list is shown in section 6h.

Furthermore, the Parish Plan team gained access to the 2010 Gilberd School Youth Survey. Although this school is in the Highwoods ward, Myland forms a significant part of its catchment area. Many of the questions are not relevant as they were seeking views on existing facilities in Highwoods but there is some interesting feedback on the type of amenities that young people would ideally like.

* See Appendix A for the question set used in the survey.

4a. Analysing the Responses

The variety of methods used had some benefits, namely ensuring a wide range of participation and input, however it made analysis difficult. The drop-in sessions and the iCES survey used very open questions to elicit comments around predefined themes, an excellent means of drawing out residents' ideas and concerns. The 2008 and 2011 surveys consisted of specific questions whereby residents were asked to rate the options. Most questions also offered the opportunity to add comments. This approach makes analysis much easier and highlights the level of residents' interest in the specific topics however it is recognised that the respondents' attention is limited to some extent to the scope of the questions.

Amalgamating the results of these subjective and objective survey techniques has proved difficult and the outcome prone to misinterpretation. For example, during the drop-in sessions only one person may have proposed (say) creation of a village green. Because it was suggested by only one resident it would be easy to dismiss it but, if a question about a village green had been included in the survey, it is possible that 90% would have said they were in favour – they'd just never thought of it before!

To resolve this, the Parish Plan group have not discounted suggestions which seem sensible and appropriate, even if suggested by only one or two people. Furthermore, statistics from the various surveys and other data gathering sessions have only been shown where they are available, accurate and unambiguous.

4b. Participation

The 2008 survey was completed by 183 residents.

It was impossible to record the exact number of residents who attended one of the 2008 drop-in sessions but it exceeded 100. 452 comments were captured overall.

There was a poor response to the 2011 survey, with only 30 forms returned. It is not clear whether this was due to the form being embedded within the *Mylander* magazine rather than distributed on its own or whether it indicates a degree of 'survey fatigue' among Myland residents.

The survey conducted with the *Senior Moments* group elicited 32 responses.

The iCES study, in all its sampling methods, reached a total of 435 residents.

4c. Results

The full results of these surveys are available from the Myland Community Council offices at 101 Nayland Road, CO4 5EN.

Tel: 01206 853400

Email: clerk@mylandcommunitycouncil.org.uk

Website: www.mylandcommunitycouncil.org.uk

5. Summary of Results

The iCES survey asked residents which aspects of Myland they value the most, problems they were concerned about and what opportunities for change they had identified. In addition the 2008 and 2011 Myland Community surveys asked specific questions about residents' environment and community. The results of both exercises were complementary.

Three major themes emerge from the findings. Firstly, there is an appreciation of the local green and open spaces in Myland and a concern for their future. It is clear that residents value green and open spaces in Myland and are therefore worried about the loss of green space as a result of any future development and its potential to change the essential nature of the area: the greenness, the open spaces and the 'village feel', deemed so special by current residents.

Secondly, the largest issue facing Myland highlighted by local residents is the limitation of the local transport infrastructure and the resultant traffic congestion (particularly around the North Station roundabout area).

However, these two topics are already the focus of much discussion between Myland Community Council and CBC's planning department and are outside the scope of a parish plan.

The third theme in all surveys is that of local facilities and services. Whilst there were many positive comments about the local sense of community, residents expressed concerns about the lack of community facilities and suggested the need for a local community centre, more community groups, youth clubs and other facilities for young people. Respondents value existing education facilities, amenities, local clubs, groups, healthcare and public transport but felt that the area would benefit from more shops, a Post Office and options for entertainment, especially considering the local population increases associated with the building of hundreds of new homes in the area.

Many of these proposals are within the remit of

the Community Council and/or resident groups and are reflected in the action plans on page 20.

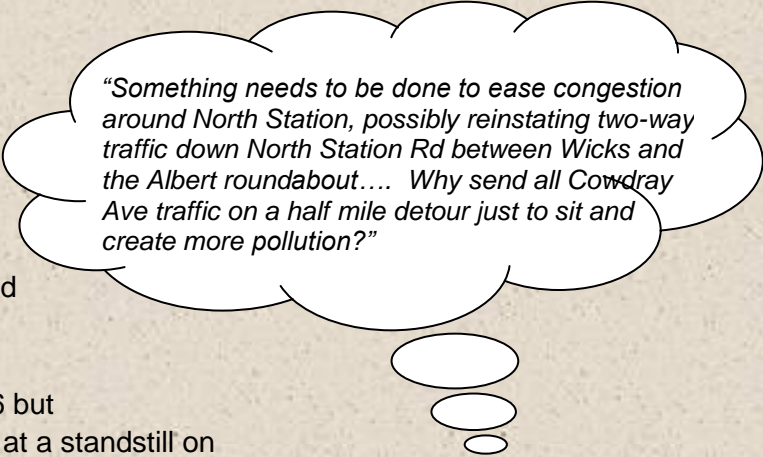
There was positive feedback on various aspects of living in Myland in all the studies and surveys. The 2008 survey showed that residents like the convenience of being close to the town centre (106/183) and the countryside (108/183) and particularly value the sense of community (128/183). The 2009 drop-in session specifically asked what residents liked about living in their neighbourhood and community spirit again featured strongly with local facilities such as the churches, church halls, sports grounds and open spaces for walking. The 2011 iCES study showed that attitudes had not changed, with the three most common responses to the 'What makes Myland special?' questions being: environment and green spaces (25%), peaceful location (20%) and general facilities (18%). The 2011 *Mylander* and *Senior Moments* surveys also showed very positive feedback on more mundane issues. Replies indicated a very high satisfaction with the local refuse collection and recycling service (50% rating it as adequate and 50% as excellent) and a general feeling that Myland is a safe, crime-free area (98% did not think crime was an issue where they lived).

Myland residents still seem to believe it is a pleasant and friendly place to live but feel they have accepted an unfair proportion of the new housing built in Colchester in recent times and have received few benefits from doing so. The various studies and surveys, conducted since 2008, have identified a number of proposals which could improve residents' environment and lifestyle opportunities. Some of these have already been addressed (improved community information, additional community events/groups, provision of litter/dog mess bins etc). The action plan identifies further proposals which can be progressed independent of or in parallel with the more fundamental special policy issues.

6. Issues and Proposals

6a. Transport and Roads

The railway, as Myland's southern boundary is a mixed blessing. The proximity of the station is very convenient for those residents who commute by rail. However, there is only one road bridge under the railway and this causes access difficulties for all north/south traffic movements. A roundabout complex was implemented in 2006 but has not solved the problem. Traffic is frequently at a standstill on the roundabout and neighbouring roads.



"Something needs to be done to ease congestion around North Station, possibly reinstating two-way traffic down North Station Rd between Wicks and the Albert roundabout... Why send all Cowdray Ave traffic on a half mile detour just to sit and create more pollution?"

Problems related to transport and roads featured strongly in all the surveys, comprising 51% of all comments in the iCES study. The 2008 survey requested a rating for various local topics while the 2011 survey focused on public transport and cycle routes. Between them these surveys generated 48 ad-hoc comments about transport.

Four common themes emerged from these comments:

- Concerns about traffic. - These were mainly complaints about congestion around North Station and the Asda roundabout and local speed limits not being adequately enforced. There were several comments in the 2008 survey expressing frustration at the introduction of the Nayland Road bus-gate although this is hardly mentioned in the more recent iCES study. Maybe residents have got used to it.
- Concerns about parking. - All the surveys contained comments about parking issues, these ranged from general complaints about the amount of on-road parking caused by new developments with insufficient off-road parking to specific issues such as the parking chaos outside the Co-op store in Nayland Road.
- Concerns about the bus services in the area. The high cost of bus travel, especially for families with children, was mentioned in all surveys. The 2011 *Mylander* survey asked specific questions about public transport and elicited detailed responses. Myland is served by several bus routes (see box) connecting it to the town centre, with North Station and the General Hospital common stopping points. Residents' comments identified a poor service for the Mile End Road area and a difficulty getting across the parish using existing routes.
- Concerns about footpaths and crossings. 76% of the *Mylander* and *Senior Moments* survey respondents used the footpaths in the parish on an occasional or regular basis. There were requests for existing footpaths to be protected and better maintained and for some new ones especially to help with crossing the A12 and the top of the Northern Approach Road.

Myland Buses:

Route 65 North Stn – Turner Rd – Highwoods/Tesco (10 mins)
Route 66 North Stn – Bergholt Rd – Braiswick (30 mins)
Route 63 North Stn – Bergholt Rd – Tufnell Way (20 mins)
Route 2 North Stn – Mile End Rd – Mill Rd – Gt Horkesley –
Brinkley Grove – Tesco (60 mins)
Route 8 North Stn - Turner Rd - Gavin Way – Tesco
Route 80 North Stn - Turner Rd - Nayland Rd - Boxted (twice daily)
Route 84 North Stn - Turner Rd - Nayland (60 mins)
Route 753 North Stn - Bergholt Rd - West Bergholt (60 mins)

These two surveys asked similar questions about cycle routes. It was a surprise to find that 76% of *Mylander* returns and 87% of *Senior Moments* responses showed that cycle routes were rarely or never used. The most common suggestion for improvement was to separate cyclists and pedestrians, dual use pavements being seen as inappropriate and dangerous.

Residents suggested several opportunities for improvement to transport issues in Myland. These reflected the problems outlined above

The most pressing issue is the traffic congestion at North Station, raised repeatedly by residents and forming 188 out of the 344 transport concerns in the iCES study.

Specific proposals to improve the situation were:

- Reintroduce two-way traffic in North Station Road
- Alternative ways for pedestrians to cross the Avenue of Remembrance to avoid traffic backing up at the roundabout.
- Reduce congestion along Turner Road by increasing parking provision at Colchester General Hospital.

There were several suggestions for the introduction of specific bus routes or more frequent services, notably to link the parish centre (Mile End/Nayland Road) with other parts of the area and to popular destinations such as the Highwoods Tesco and the town centre.

6b. Housing & Development



During the last 10 -15 years Myland has changed from a semi-rural parish to a heavily built-up, high density area of housing. Few, if any, additional facilities have been gained in this period, indeed several sporting and leisure facilities have been lost to housing development. Housing, and particularly further development, was the second most common

theme in the consultation, only transport eliciting more comment.

62% of the housing comments in the iCES study were to do with a general concern related to the building of more housing within the area and, indeed, there were many pleas for no more new housing.

The earlier 2008 survey showed 87% of respondents (160 out of a total of 183) against any further housing development. The next most

frequently mentioned concern was that of how the new houses would impact on local services and there were calls for more local infrastructure to be in place before any further house building commences.

One particular comment highlights the impact on the quality of life for some residents:

“The proposed 2200 houses will be a disaster for our area, and we will probably move out of Myland. This used to be a small 'suburb' of Colchester, now we are getting urban sprawl, but without any new infrastructure. Our water pressure is already the 'legal' minimum, and this will

“Far too much building. Leave us some green open space”

only drop further with more development. We can't use our electric showers if anyone nearby is using water”.

Although this degree of opinion deserves to be acknowledged, this topic is the subject of other development documentation, particularly the LDF, and is not part of the scope of a parish plan document.

The opportunities for improvement mirrored the problems identified, with the most frequently mentioned being the need for more infrastructure to support the new development and the retention of as much green space as possible. The 2008 survey asked for residents' views on the type of housing acceptable in Myland (a multi-choice question); the top three were: family homes (77 replies), affordable homes for sale to local people (75) and sheltered accommodation for the elderly (69). The least desirable were: local authority/ housing association rental property (17), shared equity schemes (23) and car-free developments (24). The 2009 drop-in sessions resulted in 14 specific requests for no more flats in the area and 11 requesting family-sized homes built in traditional styles.



A significant number of residents (253) stated that the green spaces, parks and the rural aspect/countryside were of greatest importance to them. This response was similar in the 2008 survey (128 replies) and more recent iCES study (108) and was supported by the comments received during the drop-in sessions (17) which specifically mentioned the value put on the Country Park, recreation ground and the green fields. Future development must ensure that access to these amenities is protected.

6c. Education and Training

Education did not feature strongly in the iCES study, related comments being only 3% of the total. There was more interest in the 2008 survey, with more primary school places being the top concern (96 replies) and more adult education classes coming in second with 70 replies. The difference may be explained because primary school provision has increased since the earlier survey was carried out. All the comments on education were largely centred around the lack of, or difficulty finding, school and pre-school places in the area. There were concerns that if this is the case currently, then any new development will certainly make the situation worse. It is likely that residents making these comments were unaware that major new developments would almost certainly include the provision of new schools.

The location of a new secondary school should ideally be in the centre or north of Myland, the south already being served by the St Helena school. The Severalls development area was identified by some residents as an ideal location.

Primary schools need to be as local as possible if parents driving children to school is to be discouraged. This would suggest two small schools, one in the north and one in the south. The centre is already served by Myland Primary School in Mill Rd and the new Queen Boudica School off Turner Road.

6d. Leisure and Recreation

Myland is well served with play areas for younger children with specially designed areas in Worsdell Way, Bradford Drive, Mile End Rec., Mill Road and Bergholt Road. However, there is a severe lack of facilities for older children and teenagers. Additional activities could be provided using a new community centre as the focus but there are also suggestions for more out-door activities such as a skate park and sports facilities (other than football). The 2008 survey had requests for improved facilities for: aerobics, badminton, carpet bowls, cricket, dance, cycling (competitive off-road), swimming, tennis and running, among others.

There are sporting facilities situated in Mill Road (rugby and archery) and Fords Lane (football and cricket) and a private golf club at Braiswick. It is especially pleasing to see that the Mile End Recreation Ground, off Ford Lane, has now acquired protection under the Fields in Trust scheme. The only non-sporting amenity for young people is the youth club based at St Michael's Church Hall.

Older residents are slightly better served with allotments at Nayland Road and Bergholt Road, public houses centrally located in Mile End Road (The Bricklayers) and Nayland Road (Dog and Pheasant), Severalls Bowls Club and various other clubs (see box) based around the church halls which are also in Mile End/Nayland Road.

The iCES study and the 2008 survey show that local people appreciate the existing facilities. The 2009 drop-in session which took place at the parish fete asked people what they liked about the area where they lived. It is apparent that people use their local facilities, for example: replies from Turner Rise valued the Country Park, replies from Braiswick liked the golf club and those from Mile End village valued the local shopping facilities. In general, residents seemed unaware of and reluctant to travel to facilities in other parts of the parish.

The newer developments at Turner Rise, Little Rome, Northern Approaches and New Braiswick Park currently have few, if any, amenities for residents and the housing density precludes any now being added. Instead, there is a need to ensure that new community facilities are available to, and accessible by, existing residents by providing good pedestrian and cycle access and generous parking.

Parish Hall Activities

Art Group
 Girl Guides
 Kids Acting & Theatre Skills
 Mothers Union
 Myland Pre-school
 Scouts
 Senior Moments
 Women's Institute
 Youth Club
 Yoga
 Youth Emmaus

Methodist Hall

Rainbow Pre-School
 Shell Group
 Parent & Toddler
 Morris Dancing
 Indoor bowls



Dance School, Mile End Road



Allotments, Nayland Road

6e. Employment



Local business, Mile End Road

The iCES consultation raised few concerns or suggestions about employment and the community survey did not include any questions about employment. The general theme from those who did respond is to protect existing local businesses and create more local employment.

The retail park at Turner Rise provides some employment for local residents and there are a number of small businesses in the centre of Myland, along Mile End/Nayland Road. An employment survey carried out in 2008 by Jo Wheatley (Community Development Officer)

together with Myland Community Council showed a surprising number of independent, home-based businesses (plumbing, electrician, painting & decorating and consultancies etc). In addition, Severalls Business Park, the on-going development of Axial Way and, of course, the hospitals offer local employment opportunities.

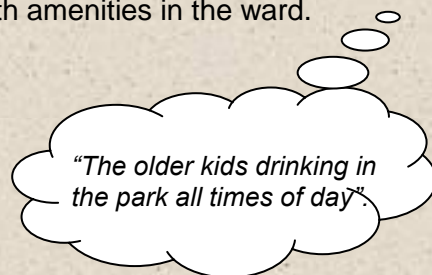
A significant proportion of residents commute to London - the proximity of North Station is a key attraction of the area for those who work in London.

Specific suggestions concerning employment were obtained from the 2009 drop-in sessions. These were aimed at promoting further local employment include the development of small incubator units and the integration of small, non-intrusive business units within residential areas. One comment was; *"... build (serviced) offices – we are a local small business and currently travel to the Hythe for good facilities which are affordable."*

6f. Crime and Security

It would appear that crime is not a major issue in Myland. Only a single reply to the Community surveys said that crime was a major issue where they live and the majority also said there were no problems with anti-social behaviour or graffiti. The iCES study indicated some concerns about anti-social behaviour in specific areas such as the Bergholt Road play area, the churchyard and the Mile End Recreation Ground. This is possibly linked to the lack of youth amenities in the ward.

Despite this recognition that Myland is a low crime area most replies to the Community survey showed a desire for a more visible police/PCSO presence on the streets. Responses also indicated that most respondents are either already part of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme (14/48) or would like to be (25/48).



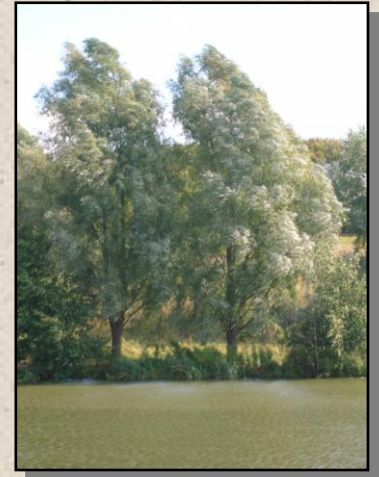
Moving Forward

Some actions can be taken that are within the remit of the Community Council, such as locking the gates to the recreation ground and organising local residents into 'clean-up' squads. Opportunities

to work more closely with CBC Zone teams could also be explored. The introduction of more Community Support Officers would presumably require budgetary support.

6g. Environment and Conservation

The third most frequently mentioned category of problems shown in the iCES study concerned the environment and conservation. These were grouped into three key themes: development worries, concern over dog fouling and concerns about litter. These concerns were common to all areas in Myland although they were not reproduced in the Community and Senior Moments surveys. Those responses showed that Myland was considered to be a tidy area, with most residents saying litter was not a particular problem (40/55) although there were issues in specific locations near retail stores.



The potential loss of the last remaining green area (Chesterwell Wood) is obviously on most residents' minds. The community survey did not ask about this topic as it was well covered in the previous year's survey but there were still many unsolicited comments about it. The following are typical examples:

“Why are new houses being considered, building over open countryside, whilst there are many unoccupied and derelict dwellings within Colchester and surrounding areas? “

“Worried about wildlife going - seen sky larks, foxes and muntjac deer in the open areas“

Improvements were largely concerned with preserving green spaces and trees, dealing with dog fouling and littering prevention ideas.



Concerns about conservation and environmental issues made up 10% of all comments. Practical proposals included:

- Ensuring a green and sensitive development of the Severalls site
- Retain the Chesterwell Wood area and include as part of a 'round Colchester' rural walking route
- Ensure any future development retains existing hedges, trees, ponds, paths and as much open space as possible.

6h. Community, Facilities and Services

Residents' comments about their community fall into two key themes: the lack of a community centre and a loss of a sense of community. 58 out of the 70 suggestions made on this topic were asking either for a community centre or additional facilities.

Unfortunately, many residents think the progressive development in Myland has been to the detriment of the area's community spirit. The following two comments reflect the feelings expressed by many:

"The way things are going, there is not very much to like about the area. It was a quiet and friendly area and we felt separate from the main town area. This is no longer the case. We've had the NAR pushed through and soon this will have traffic from the A12 either thundering down it or stuck in the biggest jam in Colchester (which is saying something). We are seriously considering leaving the area".

"What was special about living here since 1970 has mostly disappeared due to over development, a worst bus service and more traffic congestion".

The Community survey reinforced the desire for facilities to promote a community spirit with many requests for at least one, ideally two, community centres. The Senior Moments survey also mentioned the difficulty the elderly experience when trying to get to existing facilities which all tend to be located in the centre.

It is interesting that residents felt, by a factor of 3:1, that no additional medical facilities are needed.

Council services were viewed positively in the Community survey with all residents rating their refuse collection/recycling service as either adequate or excellent. There were suggestions for additional recycling facilities at Asda to avoid driving to the site in Stanway.

Residents suggested several improvements, mostly concerning the need for additional community facilities and events. A community centre(s) could be the focus for a pre-school nursery and mother & toddler meeting point. It could also include a coffee shop as somewhere to socialise. There was one request for more community facilities at the Community Stadium (although what they might be was not made clear) and many, many requests for a local post office.

An overwhelming majority of those residents (42/54) who responded to the Community surveys would like a grit bin in their road to help keep traffic moving during snowy weather.

It is useful to compare the suggestions for additional facilities with the facilities identified as being needed in the Community Facilities Assessment written by Jo Wheatley, Community Development Officer for Community Action in Mile End (CAM). This report was produced in December 2008.

Extract from report conclusion (pg 26)

Community Facilities needed:

- Community halls and centres
- Youth facilities/youth workers
- Multi-use games area and skateboarding/BMX bike facilities
- Youth shelters
- Community Development Worker
- Public toilets
- Car Clubs

Other facilities needed:

- Children's Centre
- Improved public transport
- Network of signed cycle paths
- Two Post Offices/post office counters

- Extended school provision
- Allotments
- Open spaces and more local playgrounds
- Local food shops
- Retailing and other leisure services (pubs, hairdressing, cafes, restaurants, banking)
- Adult education provision
- Local library services
- Opportunities for new local businesses.

The Gilberd School Youth Survey, carried out in 2010, looked at two different age groups: 11 – 13 and 14 – 16. When asked what facilities they would particularly like to see, the younger group were interested in climbing frames and climbing walls and a graffiti wall (24/89) with football coming a close second (23/89). The 14-16 group also wanted a football pitch (or just posts!), both rating 20 responses out of 48, with a skate park and climbing frame/wall almost as popular.

The most common reason given by both groups for using facilities was to *'hang out with friends'* while both said they would use facilities more if they were more comfortable and sheltered from the weather, the older group adding *'Lit up at night better'* to their list.

The most common reason given for not using many of the existing facilities (in Highwoods) was either not knowing they existed or knowing where they were.

7. A Vision for the Future

Building on the concerns, fears and wishes expressed both in the iCES survey and previous canvassing undertaken as part of the Myland Design Statement (MDS)* preparation, the Parish Plan Group donned their rose-tinted specs to visualise a future that would see Myland continue to be a pleasant place to live and which would meet the needs and aspirations of its communities.

Transport While continuing to encourage walking and cycling it will be acknowledged that these forms of transport are not realistic for all residents or all occasions and that vehicle traffic has to be accommodated and managed. The future vision is for free-flowing traffic crossing the railway line and at the junctions each side of it. All new housing will have adequate off-road parking provision such that local roads do not become linear car-parks when residents are not using their vehicles.

Colchester General Hospital, which will be increasing its patient numbers with the transfer of services from the Essex County Hospital, will increase the parking provision for patients, staff and visitors so as not to inconvenience local residents.



No more restricted pavements

Housing New housing will be developed to complement the existing aspects of Myland that residents value, such as the community spirit, access to leisure facilities and green spaces. There will be a mix of properties to reflect the communities' needs, which will include family homes, low-cost accommodation as well as sheltered accommodation for the elderly. New developments will have good access for pedestrians, cyclists and road traffic to include them in the neighbourhood and avoid the creation of isolated ghettos. Roads and pavements will be wide enough to provide a safe environment for vehicles and pedestrians.

It is acknowledged that these ambitions are outside the scope of a parish plan but members of the Myland community council will continue to lobby and influence CBC planning at every opportunity.

Education & Training Our vision for the future is that local children will not need to travel or be driven across Colchester to go to school. There will be enough local school places for children from the same family to attend the same school. Schools will have excellent access via traffic-free footpaths and cycle-ways.



Community garden

Leisure Existing leisure facilities will be protected and new facilities for residents of all ages introduced, for example, a skate park and sporting facilities for young people and indoor facilities for adults and elderly residents. Increased development will also have increased the need for residents to access green open space resulting in the provision of additional footpaths and pedestrian access across the A12. Existing footpaths and cycleways will have been retained and linked to form a network across the area.

*The MDS was produced in 2010 by local residents. A copy is available from the Community Council offices.

Employment Because of its location Myland will always attract residents who commute to work by train. However the future will see more small employers setting up in the area and offering employment locally. Ideally, neighbourhood-friendly commercial ventures will be integral with housing rather than isolated in business parks.

Crime Myland will continue to be a relatively safe and crime-free environment and the increase in the total population will be reflected in a proportionate increase in policing. Neighbourhood Watch schemes will be established throughout the area.

Environment & Conservation Development on protected or unallocated green spaces will have been kept to a minimum with the retention of existing hedges, mature trees and footpaths. Natural green areas will be provided as a refuge for wildlife.

Community Attractive community centres will be built in the north and south of the area. These will be overseen by resident management groups and offer leisure, educational and entertainment events as well as being a focal point for socialising for residents of all ages.



Chesterwell Wood development site (NGAUE)

8. Action Plan

This Parish Plan, including the Action Plan that follows, has been adopted as policy by MCC. MCC will be working with the delivery bodies to bring about the Action Plan's implementation.

No	Action points	Delivery Body	Importance (ABC)/ Urgency (123)
Transport			
1	Work with appropriate bodies to improve traffic flow at North Station	Essex Highways + CBC	A1
2	Lobby bus companies for more bus provision from Nayland Road to Tesco and Asda	Bus Companies	B2
3	Work with appropriate bodies towards the re-introduction of 2-way traffic in North Station Road to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion.	Essex Highways + CBC	A1
4	Seek alternative way for pedestrians to cross Remembrance Avenue in order to reduce congestion.	Essex Highways + CBC	B2
5	Liaise with Col. Gen Hospital management to provide additional parking to avoid congestion in Turner Road	MCC + CHUFT	B1
6	Resolve daily traffic chaos outside the Nayland Road Co-op.	MCC + Essex Highways	C1
Housing & Development			
1	Take all opportunities to reduce housing density on the Chesterwell Wood development plans	Developers and CBC	A1
2	Take all opportunities to reduce housing density and include more green space at the Severalls Ph 2 site	Developers and CBC	A1
3	Seek a sympathetic approach to the legacy features such as parkland and original layout at the Severalls Ph 2 site.	Developers and CBC	B1

Education & Training			
1	Ensure additional primary schools provided in line with new housing developments.	Developers + CBC + ECC	A3
2	Ensure additional secondary school provided in line with new housing developments.	Developers + CBC + ECC	A3
3	Seek opportunities to ensure adult educational facilities are provided in line with new developments	Developers + CBC + ECC	B2
4	Seek opportunities to ensure pre-school facilities are provided in line with new developments.	Developers + CBC + ECC	B2
Leisure & Recreation			
1	Provide youth activity facilities, eg. skateboard park with supervision, climbing wall/frame, graffiti wall.	MCC + CBC	C2
2	Ensure a venue is provided for a community café, to include facilities such as mentors for youth careers guidance etc.	MCC + CBC + ECC	B3
3	Provide community facilities such as multi-use games area and youth shelters. Employ a Community Development Officer to help develop facilities.	MCC + CBC + Developers	C2
4	Encourage the expansion of sports facilities (other than football), suitable for all ages and genders.	Developers + CBC	B1
5	Extend footpath network including safe access across A12 to meet the Essex Way	ECC + CBC + Developers	A2
6	Develop posters advertising community and youth facilities, with a map to show their location.	MCC	C1
7.	MCC to work with CBC to extend the cycle network.	MCC + CBC	

Employment			
1	Promote the provision of 'pop-up' shops, eg. for art exhibitions and local businesses	Developers + CBC	B2
2	Promote the provision of business Incubator unit.	Developers + CBC	B2
3	Promote the provision of integrated small commercial units (non intrusive) within housing developments.	Developers + CBC	B2
Crime			
1	Encourage the mobile PCSO unit to be more visible.	MCC + Essex Police	C1
2	Continue to organise resident 'graffiti' and litter-picking squads	MCC	C1
3	Liaise with police to promote expansion of Neighbourhood Watch schemes	MCC + Essex Police	C2
Conservation & Environment			
1	Seek opportunities to promote biodiversity across all new developments.	Developers + CBC	A2
2	Seek opportunities to ensure the provision of dedicated green space for community events	Developers + CBC	A2
Community, Facilities & Services			
1	Develop and enhance the community garden for people to work in and socialise, possibly involving NHS Mental health services.	MCC + CBC + Mental Heath Trust	B2
2	Ensure development plans include the provision of more allotments.	Developers + CBC	B3
3	Ensure delivery of community centres, in conjunction with new developments.	MCC + CBC Developers	A1
4	Ensure greater local library provision	ECC	C3

5	Ensure development plans include community hubs with shopping facilities and meeting places.	CBC + Developers	A1
6	Promote better recycling facilities, especially for residents in flats	CBC	C2
7	Research requirements for re-establishing a Post Office in Myland	MCC + PO + CBC	C2

9. Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following residents for their help and support in producing this document:

Carolyne Hurst

Ken Aldred

Pete Hewitt

Patrick Mills

Helen Harris

Beverley McClean (CBC)

Hundreds of Myland residents who helped by completing surveys and participating in consultations.

10. Glossary

CBC	Colchester Borough Council
ECC	Essex County Council
iCES	Interdisciplinary Centre for Environment and Society
LDF	Local Development Framework
MCC	Myland Community Council
MDS	Myland Design Statement
NAR	Northern Approach Road
NGAUE	North Growth Area Urban Extension (Chesterwell Wood)
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer

Appendix A

2011 Mylander/Senior Moments survey questions

1. Your Environment

1a. Have your journey times been affected by the new A12 junction?

- Significant improvement
- Some improvement
- No difference
- Made things slightly worse
- Made things significantly worse.

1b. Has the new A12 junction affected the traffic in your area?

- Significantly reduced
- Slightly reduced
- No difference
- Slightly increased
- Significantly increased

1c. Do you use the public footpaths (ie. Public Rights of Way) in Myland?

- Regularly
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

1d. We are interested to know whether the footpaths link the right places:

Can you use a footpath to get to most places you visit? **Y / N**

Are there locations you would like to be linked by a public footpath that currently are not? (Please give details)

1e. Are there any problems with flooding where you live? **Y / N**

(If Yes, please give brief details) _____

2. Amenities

2a. What local amenities (eg. sports facilities, meeting rooms etc.) do you use and would like to see continue?

2b. What additional amenities would you like in Myland?

2c. Do you think additional healthcare facilities (GP surgery, dentist etc) are needed in Myland?

Y / N

(If Yes, please give details) _____

2d. How would you rate the broadband service where you live?

- Excellent
- Adequate
- Poor
- Terrible
- Not Applicable

3. Transport

3a. Do you use local public transport:

- Regularly
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

3b. Do you think changes are needed to local public transport? **Y / N**

(If Yes, please give details) _____

3c. Do you use cycle routes:

- Regularly
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

3d. We are interested to know whether the cycle routes link the right places:

Can you use a cycle route to get to most places you visit? **Y / N**

Are there locations you would like to be linked by a cycle route that currently are not? **Y / N**

(If Yes, please give details) _____

4. Social and Community

4a. How do you rate your refuse collection service?

- Excellent
- Adequate
- Poor
- Terrible

Comments: _____

4b. Do you have any comments about the recycling facilities where you live?

4c. Is litter a problem where you live? **Y / N**

Comments: _____

4d. Would you like to have a grit/road salt bin in your road?

- Yes
- No
- Already have one

5. Crime and Safety

5a. Do you think crime is a major issue where you live? **Y / N**

5b. Is anti-social behaviour a problem where you live? **Y / N**

5c. Is graffiti a problem where you live? **Y / N**

5d. Do you think the lighting for streets and footpaths is adequate in your area? **Y / N**

(If No, please give details) _____

5e. We'd like your views on policing where you live:

Comments: _____

5e. What are your views on Neighbourhood Watch schemes?

- Good idea and would like to be part of one
- Good idea and already involved in one
- Waste of time
- Don't care

6. Other

We have not asked questions about issues such as housing development, shops and facilities, traffic congestion etc. as these were included in surveys in 2009/10. We have a pretty good idea of residents' views on these topics. However, please feel free to make any additional comments below:

Thank you for completing this survey. Please leave it at one of the following locations by XX June:

Appendix B

2009 Myland Summer Fete drop-in survey form

Form for Residents' Views

Neighbourhood Area: [Name]

Please say what you think below

What is good?		What needs changing?	
In Your Area?	In Mile End Generally?	In Your Area?	In Mile End Generally?



Local Plan Committee

Item
10

11 June 2012

Report of	Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration	Author	Laura Chase 01206 282473
Title	Better Town Centre Plan Supplementary Planning Document		
Wards affected	Castle		

The Local Plan Committee is asked to approve consultation on the draft Better Town Centre Plan Supplementary Planning Document

1. Decision(s) Required

- 1.1 To approve public consultation on the draft Better Town Centre Plan Supplementary Planning Document (attached as Appendix 1 to this report).

2. Reason for Decision

- 2.1 To provide a co-ordinated corporate approach and planning framework for the reinvigoration of spaces, uses and activity in Colchester's historic centre during the day, evening and at night that will ensure its continued vitality in a 21st Century context of economic challenges, climate change and new ways of spending leisure time.
- 2.2 The Plan takes the form of a Supplementary Planning Document which is intended to supplement existing policies in the Local Plan by providing more detailed guidance. The adoption of this guidance will help inform development of the area and will be used as a material consideration in the determination of any planning application submitted for the area.

3. Alternative Option

- 3.1 The alternative is not to proceed with the preparation of the Supplementary Planning Document and to develop proposals and consider planning applications for the Town Centre on the basis of less specific national and local policies.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 The Better Town Centre Plan sets out the Council's aspirations and plans for Colchester's Town Centre. The Council appreciates that helping the Town Centre to flourish in challenging times requires co-ordinated action and has developed a range of initiatives to help achieve this under a 'Better Town Centre' banner. The Better Town Centre Plan is intended to provide a guiding framework for these initiatives.

- 4.2 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) cannot set out new policy, but instead expand upon how Local Plan policies should be applied. In this case, the Town Centre SPD provides detailed guidance on the delivery of the vision set out in the Core Strategy for the future direction of Colchester's Town Centre and the appropriate uses outlined in Site Allocations Policy SA TC1 (Appropriate Uses within the Town Centre and North Station Regeneration Area).
- 4.3 Work on the Better Town Centre Plan SPD to date has involved a significant degree of inter-departmental working through the Better Town Centre Steering Group. The document reflects the group's wide ranging agenda and also reflects stakeholder and public views arising from a number of consultations carried out by the Steering Group on Town Centre issues.
- 4.4 The Introduction to the plan sets out the local and national planning context for Town Centre work. It notes that the Plan is linked to a number of related documents concerning Town Centre issues including:
- Public Realm Strategy (adopted as guidance in June 2011)
 - Lighting Strategy
 - Walls Management Plan
 - Digital Strategy
 - Adopted Shopfront Guidance SPD
 - Delivery Plan (to be included with final SPD)
- 4.5 Chapter 2 provides a spatial portrait of the Town Centre explaining key functions and links. Chapter 3 identifies the following issues and challenges for the Town Centre:
- Meeting the challenge of climate change
 - Keeping ahead in a fragile global economy
 - Ensuring an appropriate mix of uses to create activity and to provide employment, services, culture, leisure and housing opportunities
 - Maintaining a high standard of design, local distinctiveness and environmental quality in Britain's oldest recorded town
 - Importance of public realm in creating an active town centre
 - Need to address access to and circulation within the town centre
 - Serving a rapidly growing population.
- 4.6 Chapter 4 outlines the consultations on Town Centre issues that have informed the Plan. Brief summaries on the 2,000 year history of Colchester's Town Centre and planning policy over the last fifty years are then provided in Chapters 5 and 6 to highlight the town's rich heritage and how planning policies have sought to enhance it.
- 4.7 Chapter 7 contains the vision and key objectives that structure the remainder of the Plan. The document proposes the following four main inter-linked themes based on policy, consultation responses and discussion of objectives at the Town Centre Steering Group:

Sustainability

How can the Town Centre achieve sustainability in its widest sense, including prioritising reductions in the town centre's carbon footprint, enhancing the resiliency of Town Centre commercial and social businesses, and promoting social inclusion?

Activity

What uses and activities should be supported to create a lively 21st century town?

Heritage and Design

How should we enhance the old while also creating tomorrow's heritage?

Movement

How can we achieve a safe and accessible Town Centre?

- 4.8 Chapter 7 includes detailed guidance and proposals for each topic area and illustrates relevant proposals with a map. Chapter 8 discusses proposals for the nine Character Areas within the Town Centre.
- 4.9 The Plan in its final form is intended to incorporate a number of maps, illustrations and links to related documents to ensure that it is as easy-to-use and as internet-friendly as possible. A Delivery Plan will be added to the final version of the SPD showing plans and progress on Better Town Centre projects, which will be updated as needed. The Plan will be made available on both Planning Policy and Better Town Centre website pages, given its importance to both areas.

5. Proposals

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Committee agree to publish the Better Town Centre Plan Supplementary Planning Document for consultation. The Plan will then be returned to the Committee following consultation for adoption so it forms part of the Local Plan and will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

6. Strategic Plan Reference

- 6.1 Development of the Better Town Centre Plan SPD will inform the Council's vision to be a place where people want to live, work and visit. It will also contribute to the following Council priority areas and outcomes: regenerating our borough through buildings, employment, leisure and infrastructure; improving opportunities for local business to thrive including retail; promoting sustainability and reducing congestion; and bringing investment to the borough.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 Successful initiatives for the Town Centre require the involvement of a wide range of partners. Internally, work on the Plan has been co-ordinated by a cross-departmental sub-committee of the Town Centre Steering Group. Externally, the Council is seeking involvement from a range of town centre interests. The Plan was presented and discussed by a group of town centre business, civic and interest groups at a meeting held on 24 May. Formal consultation on the SPD will run from

22 June to 27 July and work is underway to ensure good publicity and a range of events to raise awareness and gather feedback.

8. Publicity Considerations

- 8.1 Colchester's Town Centre continues to be the subject of media interest which will be proactively managed by the Council and its Communication team. The Council has developed a Better Town Centre webpage which will feature information on the Plan, in addition to publicity on the Council webpages.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 No direct implications. Indirectly, the plan is intended to help direct the effective expenditure of limited Council resources in the Town Centre.

10. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Local Development Framework which is available following this pathway from the homepage: -Council and Democracy > Policies, Strategies and Performance > Equality and Diversity > Equality Impact Assessments > Strategic Policy and Regeneration > Local Development Framework.

11. Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 One of the key objectives for the Better Town Centre Group is 'Ensuring Clean, Safe Places and Spaces' and the plan contains guidance on high quality design, street furniture, lighting, and activity to help meet this objective.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 No direct implications

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 The adoption of Supplementary Planning Documents is intended to support adopted planning policies and reduce the risk of inappropriate development. The Plan provides consistent advice to landowners, developers, officers, Councillors and members of the public.

Better Town Centre Plan -Colchester Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Chapter One

Introduction –

This document sets out the Council's aspirations and plans for Colchester's Town Centre. The Council appreciates that helping the Town Centre to flourish in challenging times requires co-ordinated action and has developed a range of initiatives to help achieve this under a 'Better Town Centre' banner.

The following Better Town Centre Plan is intended to provide a guiding framework for these initiatives. It takes the form of a Supplementary Planning Document which provides detailed planning guidance building on Colchester's general policies as set forth in its adopted Local Development Framework (LDF) [link]. SPDs cannot set out new policy, but instead expand upon how LDF policies should be applied. In this case, the Town Centre SPD provides detailed guidance on the delivery of the vision set out in the Core Strategy [link] for the future direction of Colchester's Town Centre. The SPD provides a holistic approach to the reinvigoration of spaces, uses and activity in Colchester's historic centre during the day, evening and at night that will ensure its continued vitality in a 21st Century context of economic challenges, climate change and new ways of spending leisure time.

Nationally, the challenges facing town centres are being approached both through the planning system, with policies safeguarding the role of town centres forming a key element of the National Planning Policy Framework, and through the wider economic and political agenda with many towns choosing to take up the challenge posed by the Mary Portas review to remake their town centres. In Essex, the role of Colchester town centre is highlighted in the plan guiding future planned investment in the County, the Integrated County Strategy (link). It states that town centre regeneration is a key driver for development and identifies opportunities for Colchester Town Centre to consolidate its position as a focus for the Haven Gateway area of the region.

The Core Strategy, adopted in 2008 [link], sets the overall direction for all subsequent planning policy documents in the Local Development Framework [link], including this SPD. It highlights the role of the Town Centre as the cultural and economic heart of the Borough, and provides that it will be enhanced and extended through regeneration, public realm improvements and a balanced mix of uses that sustain activity throughout the day and evening. The adopted Development Policies and Site Allocations documents, adopted in 2010 [link], provide further guidance on appropriate town centre uses. The general support for mixed uses is tailored to ensure that future development builds on the strengths of existing uses and local character. Relevant LDF policies are attached as Appendix A [link]. The Council adopted a Town Centre Public Realm Strategy in June 2011 [link] and is attached as Annex 1 to the SPD. The Strategy should be read alongside this document to give a complete picture of how public spaces in the Town Centre should be designed, built and maintained.

The SPD and other associated LDF documents do not provide specific detail on the masterplanning of particular sites, rather they provide guiding principles which should then be applied in the process of developing individual proposals for the Town Centre. The SPD provides a means for co-ordinating and directing the incremental change that will occur over the coming period as the Town Centre adapts to changing economic, environmental and social circumstances.

This consultation version of the plan will be refined to reflect the feedback received and will then be submitted to the Local Development Framework Committee for adoption of the plan. This SPD will be augmented by a number of annexes on detailed subjects which will also be submitted to Committee and will then be available with the SPD on the Council's website.

- Public Realm Strategy
- Lighting Strategy
- Digital Strategy
- Walls Management Plan
- Town Centre Project Delivery Plan
- Creative Colchester Strategy

To be developed:

- Market Strategy
- Air Quality Guidance

In addition, the LDF Committee has already adopted an SPD on Shopfront Guidance which is a further important detailed guidance document for the Town Centre.

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Chapter 2

Spatial Portrait

The Town Centre's hilltop location reflects the strategic choices made centuries ago by Roman colonisers, a legacy that remains in the street grid pattern that still underpins the modern town. The Wall erected around the Roman town also still continues to define the Centre, both by its physical presence in many areas and by defining the compact commercial core of the town, which tends to be of a higher density and different character to development outside the walls. The insertion of new roads on Balkerne Hill and Southway in the 1960-70s created strict boundaries between the Town Centre and surrounding residential areas to the west and south sides.

Key landmarks in the Town Centre include the green oasis of Castle Park to the north, which ascends the slope from the Colne River to abut the High Street. The historic restored Castle, built by the Normans on the ruins of Claudius's temple sits at the top of the park. The High Street is distinguished by the park entrance at one end and the Victorian Jumbo water tower visible at the other end, with a range of period commercial buildings and the Edwardian Town Hall with its clock tower in the middle.

Functionally, the Town is characterised by a shopping core centred around the High Street, Culver Square, Lion Walk and the lanes running along the Roman Wall. The St. Botolphs Quarter area to the east is the main focus for new development in the town centre, with the new Firstsite gallery development providing the catalyst for cultural-related development. Residential uses predominate in the historic Dutch Quarter tucked in behind the High Street, North Hill and Castle park, while other residential units are scattered throughout the Town Centre above shops and mixed in with other uses. Office uses are concentrated in the Town Centre fringe, which contains a number of larger modern office buildings, although some of the historic Town Centre buildings have been adapted for office use.

The boundary of the Town Centre is illustrated on the Central Area plan of the LDF Proposals Map and is based on the historic and topographic considerations described above. It excludes Castle Park, but since no new development would be expected to be approved within the Park, it is not considered necessary to include it within the Town Centre boundary.

The Town Centre boundary defines the area within which 'town centre uses' are to be located within Colchester. Town centre uses appropriate to Colchester's town centre are defined by Core Strategy Policy CE2a as including retail, offices, leisure and cultural facilities. The Town Centre is the preferred location for these uses. Proposals for these uses outside the Town Centre will be required to demonstrate they could not be accommodated within the Town Centre, in line with national policy in PPS4.

Chapter Three Issues and Challenges

Meeting the challenge of climate change

The need for more sustainable forms of development to address climate change is a key driver for Town Centre planning in the future. Innovative solutions will be required to the problems of traffic congestion; poor air quality; energy hungry buildings; provide shade and scarce land and raw material resources for new development.

Keeping ahead in a fragile global economy

In common with town centres around the country, Colchester's retailers are faced with an array of challenges including the growth of internet shopping, increasing costs, competition from out-of-town centres and restrictions on consumer spending. Mary Portas's High Street review (Dec. 2011) [link] has highlighted a number of recommendations to support town centre vitality, with a focus on partnership working and a willingness to try new ideas. These recommendations accord with the finding of the Council's Town Centre Retail Study (published Nov. 2011) [link] which found that while Colchester was maintaining a reasonably healthy retail position, it would need to continue to innovate and develop new retail space to remain competitive. While Colchester's Town Centre shops have a large hinterland, geographical position alone will not be enough to secure recovery from recession and ensure renewed vitality. Colchester businesses will need to exploit the potential of new technologies and digital connectivity [link to Digital Strategy 2011] to retain their competitive positions.

Ensuring an appropriate mix of uses to create activity and to provide employment, services, culture/leisure and housing opportunities

Colchester has a diverse mix of uses and activities in its Town Centre, but will need to retain and strengthen this diversity of employment opportunities, mix of independent and national retailers, and range of services to ensure resilience in times of recession. A mix of uses and activities is also important in creating an animated atmosphere and active street scene that is physically accessible in both day and evening hours which contributes to the quality of life for residents and the attractiveness of the town to visitors.

Maintaining a high standard of design, local distinctiveness and environmental quality for Britain's oldest recorded town

Colchester's uniqueness is underpinned by its rich historic legacy of buildings, streets and spaces. Safeguarding this legacy will rely on reinvigoration of historic environments with new uses; interpretation of characters and historic events as well as heritage to promote its appreciation; and the creation of new well-designed accessible buildings and high quality materials that will become the legacy for the future.

Interpretation is defined by the Association for Heritage Interpretation as 'the art of helping people explore and appreciate our world to enriches our lives through engaging emotions, enhancing experiences and deepening

understanding of places, people, events and objects from the past and present'. The aim of interpretation is to improve the image and reputation of the place, enhance the experience of the place and in so doing manage or mitigate unruly behaviours and create a sense of civic pride.

Importance of public realm in creating an active town centre

While the Town Centre contains a number of attractive spaces and streets, links between these are fragmented and there are many areas that warrant upgrading. An enhanced public realm will be critical to strengthening the role of the town centre as a welcoming gathering space that serves a wide and changing range of users, including those with physical disabilities, at different times of the day and night.

Need to address access to and circulation within the town centre

A successful town centre inevitably creates significant movements of people. The challenge is to manage this process to encourage more people to travel by bus, foot and cycle to minimise congestion while providing sufficient vehicular access and parking to sustain economic activity and facilitate accessibility.

Serving a rapidly growing population

Colchester's Core Strategy [\[link\]](#) has responded to the ever-increasing population pressures on the South-east by providing for the development of 19,000 new housing units for the period 2001-23. The Town Centre will accordingly need to serve more people as a sustainable hub for services, jobs, shops, and leisure activities.

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Chapter Four

Process for developing the plan – Consultation, partners-

Development and implementation of the Better Town Centre Plan does not just involve land use considerations but touches on a variety of issues and requires the continued involvement of different organisations and interests. The dialogue on these issues has been ongoing, and the Supplementary Planning Document synthesises the results of a number of previous consultations that the Council has carried out through the Better Town Centre initiative. The issues accordingly aren't new, but the proposed approaches in the SPD reflect the latest co-ordinated thinking on these topics and places. The Council's Better Town Centre initiative has relied on a cross-departmental approach in developing the plan, with direction given by a Town Centre Steering Group composed of representatives from each main section of the Council as well as representatives from Essex County Council on transport and urban design. [link to BTC website when it goes live again]. The Council has carried out consultation exercises in March and October 2010 on the following nine components of this cross-cutting programme to improve the town centre;

- Improving Colchester for you and your family
- Creating quality public spaces and places
- Bringing new buildings and street scenes
- Supporting business and retailers
- Making it easier to get to and around Colchester
- Promoting Colchester
- New things to see do and visit
- Ensuring clean and safe places and spaces
- Changing Colchester after dark

Consultations on the Better Town Centre programme were themselves following on from a number of consultations:

- Colchester 2020 Transport Assembly (February 2009)
- Night Time Economy Task and Finish Group (2009)
- Castle Park consultation (October 2009)
- Street Care Strategy (February 2010)

The following summary shows key feedback from the two Better Town Centre consultations in 2010. In general, there is widespread appreciation of the town centre and its unique rich heritage, but opinions are sharply polarised on a number of topics including the relative attractions of other nearby town centres, the merits of new town centre buildings, the quality and diversity of Colchester shops, and, probably generating the most controversy, approaches to movement and circulation of cars, buses, pedestrians and cyclists in the town centre.

1st Consultation – March 2010

The consultation was launched with an event attended by over 70 people and then followed by consultation over several days in a mobile unit stationed in several units around the Town Centre. Attendance numbers averaged 100

people per day and most people requested further information to take away and read. A number of consistent themes came across:

Unattractive and dirty streets – Most people were extremely impressed by the new public realm in Lion Walk and believed that to improve the Town Centre for locals and visitors, more needed to be done to improve the quality and cleanliness of the streets.

Unsafe/undesirable night time location – The attractiveness, cleanliness and safety of the town after dark was raised as a concern during a number of the events.

Design of new buildings, including Firstsite art gallery and Magistrates Court – New building projects remain contentious, with the lengthy development period for the Firstsite project in particular generating negative comments, but as construction of buildings has advanced, understanding and appreciation of their roles in providing new facilities and supporting further new development has increased.

Initial ideas on Town Centre Transport – The consultation included proposals for limiting access to the High street. Generally positive comments were received once people realised that the plans did not include full pedestrianisation of the High Street. Concerns were raised about disabled parking, local access, and parking for deliveries. Unreliable buses and the need for shorter journey times were raised as important issues.

2nd Consultation – November 2010

The second consultation sought to showcase new projects including those listed below and inform the public of progress that had been achieved since March.

- Completion of improvement works in St. Botolph's Priory grounds
- St. Botolph's public realm landscaping plans
- Town Station Square designs
- Greyfriar's boutique hotel designs
- Plans showing proposals for changes to the town centre in respect of traffic and transport were displayed and a questionnaire relating to these proposals was distributed.

A stakeholder event launched a week long exhibition. Councillors, access groups, interest groups and other interested parties were invited to the launch event where officers were available to talk the projects through and answer any questions.

The exhibition in the town centre was held at a retail unit in Red Lion Yard provided at no rent by Lion Walk Shopping centre. Over 530 people dropped into this location through the course of the week and over 90 hard copy questionnaires were returned. Details were available on the Better Town Centre website, which had an online questionnaire. There were 127 responses on the electronic survey plus 75 emails.

Responses to the new schemes listed above were largely positive. In particular, there was a swing to more positive responses to Firstsite. The proposed transport improvements to the High Street were considered to have a largely positive effect for pedestrians, but the effect on businesses, traffic levels leading to the Town Centre, disabled parking and deliveries continued as concerns.

Further consultation on town centre issues as part of developing this document will provide the opportunity to provide a comprehensive approach to addressing the wide range of inter-related issues that have been identified. It will allow the wide range of individuals and organisations with a stake in the future of the town centre to continue their involvement in agreeing the best policy approaches. The consultation will use a wide range of methods including social media to reach a wide audience.

Evidence – The SPD is informed by a number of studies carried out by the Council. In the first instance, this includes the wide range of studies carried out for the Local Development Framework documents that underpin and precede this latest plan for the town centre. These are listed in Appendix B [link]. More specifically, the Council has carried out a Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (2007) [link] and a Town Centre Retail Study (2011) [link] to inform consideration of particular Town Centre locations and issues.

Sustainability Appraisal –The Council has undertaken a Sustainability Appraisal for this document to inform the plan's content and to ensure the plan promotes sustainable development. The Sustainability Appraisal report is attached as Annex 2 [link]. The 2009 Regulations remove the duty to provide a Sustainability Appraisal report for SPDs. However, since the Council is still required to carry out an environmental assessment on all Local Development Documents in accordance with the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive where significant environmental effects are likely, the Council considered it appropriate to consider these environmental effects alongside the social and economic effects covered by a Sustainability Appraisal. The Council published a Scoping Report for consultation by the relevant statutory bodies (Natural England, English Heritage and the Environment Agency) during the period 4 November – 9 December 2011 and the comments made have been incorporated into the final Sustainability Appraisal.

Chapter 5

Historic Background

Colchester has been the principal town in north Essex for as long as those words have had any meaning. Modern Colchester, seamed with new roads and ringed with housing estates, industrial parks and hypermarkets may seem far removed from its Roman and medieval ancestors, but like them it is shaped by its site and the surrounding countryside.

The history of Colchester begins before the Roman occupation of Britain. At the beginning of the first-century AD the British king Cunobelin (Shakespeare's Cymbeline) ruled over the kingdoms of the south-east from a capital upon the Colne. This capital was called Camulodunum, after the Celtic war god Camulos.

Camulodunum was a natural objective of the Roman army when Britain was invaded in AD43, and the ridge to the south-east of the native capital was chosen as the site of a legionary fortress succeeded by the first colonia of veteran soldiers to be founded in Britain. This colony became a prosperous town and an important pottery and tile making centre. In the later first century it was fortified with walls which, like the monumental west or Balkerne Gate are still standing today, (Fig.1).

The main streets of the Roman town have become the main streets of modern Colchester, except that the High Street once ran through to the Balkerne Gate in the west wall, whereas today it stops at the line of North Hill and Head Street.

By the time of the Norman Conquest Colchester was a town of some importance, with a mint and a court, and the strongest defences in Essex.

The Domesday Book shows Colchester to have been a populous place in 1086 with several churches. Of the churches standing today, Holy Trinity has a Saxon tower and St. Peter's is mentioned by name in Domesday Book. The lost church of St. Runwald's in the High Street (demolished 1878), seems to have been another Saxon foundation.

By the end of the eleventh-century a powerful castle had been built, the largest known of its kind, raised over the base of the Roman temple, all surrounded by a timber and earth rampart with a defensive ditch, around which the High Street has to deviate and bend to the south. What affected Colchester more however was a series of recessions in the cloth trade. Salvation came however with the Protestant refugees who fled from Spanish rule in the Netherlands. Those Flemings or Dutch as they were locally known are still recalled today in that area of the town centre north of the High Street which bears their name, (Fig.2).

The Siege of Colchester in 1648 was the last time the walls were used defensively to protect the Royalist occupiers against the Parliamentary armies. The built-up area continued to be constrained within them apart from some ribbon development along the approach roads until the early Victorian

period when the first of the substantial extra-mural housing developments began.

The Napoleonic Wars brought a garrison to Colchester, but these buildings were demolished in 1817, (Fig.3). The military did open a permanent military camp in 1856 thirteen years after the arrival of the railway line from London. The railway fed an engineering industry and encouraged the town to expand rapidly. The churchyards within the town were closed and a municipal cemetery opened in 1856, and six years later the cattle market was moved from the High Street to the foot of North Hill (Middleborough), where it remained for over 100 years. The general market remained in the High Street.

At the centre of the town a bus park, now the site of St. John's Walk shopping precinct, was opened in 1923, and the High Street was invaded by chain stores in the early '30's, (Fig.4). The growth of motor traffic began to choke the main streets, and in 1933 a by-pass road was opened on the north side of town, (Avenue of Remembrance/Cowdray Avenue). By 1939 the by-pass had attracted ribbon development with service roads, and extensive demolition for car-parks had begun in the old town.

After the war the unfinished public library in Shewell Road (most recently occupied by Superdry (Men and Women Fashion Retailer) in Culver Precinct) was finally opened to the public.

It was not until the late 1950's that the town's public face began to change noticeably. There was much new housing, commercial and industrial developments as the rail links to London were improved. Above all motor traffic increased. The most important single change was probably the introduction of a one-way traffic scheme in 1963 that temporarily swept the Saturday market out of the High Street. Five of the central parish churches were closed in 1954 with one, St. Nicholas, being demolished, to be replaced by the Co-operative Store, though the churchyard has been kept as a small garden. The bus park moved to East Hill in the 1960's bringing a heavy flow of traffic into the area enclosed by the town walls.

The 1970's saw the construction of a new dual carriageway motor road around the southern and western edge of the historic town, and the town centre saw a major pedestrian shopping development at Lion Walk, (opened 1976), followed a decade later by a similar scheme off Culver Street (opened in 1987) both of which served to cut Culver Street in two. Both of these developments inaugurated a new street pattern at the heart of the town centre.

Town Centre Planning Policy History

A review of earlier plans for Colchester's town centre highlights the enduring tension between commitments to preserve and enhance the historic environment and pressures to redevelop to meet market demands, the rise in car ownership, and changes in employment and shopping trends.

Postwar plans for the town centre emerged slowly. A development plan prepared by the County Council was approved in 1957 for the period to 1971. It was based on survey work undertaken during 1949-52.

'Like many other towns, Colchester produced a series of tentative central area plans in the post-war period. As these were largely highway and traffic management based it was not surprising that the overall fabric and townscape was somewhat neglected when in 1967 the Borough Council proceeded with an extensive study of the area in advance of the preparation of a Town Centre Plan.' (Report on Town Centre Revitalisation, 1976)

The Town Centre plan, published in 1969, reflected the prevailing goal of a functional and attractive townscape, and large scale redevelopment was accepted as part of that objective. It was assumed that the centre would remain the focus for shopping and jobs and the plan proposed redevelopment in areas now known as Lion Walk, Culver Precinct and St. John's/Vineyard. Car traffic has consistently been seen as an inappropriate element in the historic core. The 1968 Town Centre Report by Colchester Council stated: *It is evident from the studies that long term unrestricted vehicular entry cannot be tolerated and private car usage must be limited by the restriction of internal parking space, the improvement of peripheral parking facilities and what is more important the improvement of public transport facilities. Traffic management must play its part and further restrictions on complete accessibility in the town and through traffic must be planned. It is inevitable that these policies will not be wholly popular. However, in the interest of retaining the town's character the unimpeded entry of traffic into the town with its prejudicial attributes must be stopped.* Extensive constraints on the car in general, however, were not of course supported in the years predating concerns about climate change and a less interventionist view was put forth in the 1967 Land Use/Transportation Study noted;

'It is thought undesirable to restrict the use of motor vehicles more than is absolutely necessary and although some form of pricing to control car parking is recommended, this general restriction is not a course which would be suggested without a full investigation of alternatives.'

The decision in the 1960s to carve out a set of relief roads around the town centre was accordingly intended to limit car access to the town centre rather than to limit car journeys in general, although the need to provide good public transport was consistently noted. The physical impact of the creation of new roads was the isolation of the Town Centre from the Victorian estates to the south and west. Peripheral car parks were also meant to be part of the

solution, although they were never provided at the level anticipated in the early 60s when it was thought that 10,000 spaces would be needed by 1981. 6300 spaces were proposed in the 1969 Plan, while 3,252 were actually being provided in the 1984 Plan. There was also a commitment to transferring day-to-day food shopping to 'effective suburban centres' to lessen demand in the town centre.

The success of this approach, however, was questioned by a 1976 study which commented;

'Apart from Kingsway and the new Lion Walk Precinct, the centre of Colchester has recently become a scene of development stagnation and considerable dereliction caused by the run-down of several existing trades and businesses. This is completely in contradiction of the ambitious plans of the 1960s when the centre's economy was buoyant and wages in general continued to spiral in an upwards direction. Today both the national economy and the purchasing power of the weekly wage packet have to a large extent diminished. The traumatic affect of this financial situation upon the town centre has resulted in a drastic slow-down in the previously approved Plan, as developments are postponed and car parks abandoned or shelved and the number of empty shops increase. The opening of the major redevelopment at Lion Walk could not have happened in a worse economic climate as there is a decrease in demand for new commercial premises which has caused shops vacated by occupiers of new accommodation in the Precinct to remain unfilled. Certain commercial stagnation is undoubtedly further affected by the failure to keep up with the planned provision of parking spaces in the town and the present shortage of car parking has made Colchester town centre extremely vulnerable to peripheral shopping pressures.'

The Colchester Central Area Local Plan, adopted in 1984 confirmed the shift to a more incremental approach. The Plan reflected a 'growing financial restraint and a shift in attitudes away from comprehensive redevelopment towards improvement and small scale new building works'. It noted that only two of the originally envisaged redevelopment areas, Lion Walk and St. Peter's Street had been completed. (Culver Precinct was granted planning permission in 1983, but not completed until 1987-89) The shift to out-of-town shopping was now perceived to be a mixed blessing, with the Council seeking to resist some new development which was considered to harm town centre shopping. Clearly, resistance was limited in its effect, particularly since it ran counter to the Council's largely accommodating view of new development.

A study of UK planning first published in the late 80s used Colchester as an example of 'trend planning' that sought to tread a delicate path between placating local conservation interests and accommodating new developments, with the balance very much in favour of accommodating new development. (*Remaking Planning: The Politics of Urban Change*, Brindley, Rydin and Stoker, Routledge, 1989) The study used the example of the complicated planning history of Culver Square to illustrate the point that the goal of preserving the town centre was bound to be diluted by the constraints of market demand, the Council's interests as a property developer, and the goal

of modernising facilities. An additional factor for both Lion Walk and Culver Square was the desire to provide delivery servicing for lorries to minimise the effects of traffic on the High Street and pedestrian precincts. The achievement of this goal required significant excavations at the expense of the loss of sections of the Roman Wall, historic buildings, and at Lion Walk, the medieval street network, with Culver Street cut in two.

The Plan included what it branded as two new planning concepts;

- Mixed Use Areas – they were located around the primary commercial core and were designed to retain the existing range of uses, and to resist large scale development
- Areas of Development Opportunity – they were similar to the previous redevelopment areas, but broader and more flexible in concept. They included both comprehensive redevelopment and improvement to existing buildings. The 1984 Plan considered a much larger area than the previous Town Centre Plan based on the identified need to provide new offices and residential outside the core area to avoid traffic impact, and the ADOs were largely on the fringe of this wider area;
 1. Essex Hall (hospital site, redeveloped for housing)
 2. Colne Bank (new housing along river behind North Station Rd)
 3. Headgate
 4. Whitewell Road
 5. Vineyard
 6. Magdalen Street.

The Mixed Use Areas are still with us, although the Core Strategy policies have relaxed the distinction between them and the retail core in the interests of introducing more early evening leisure uses into the retail core. Areas of Development Opportunity have, however ceased to exist since they've mostly been redeveloped (with the exception of Vineyard Gate). The Core Strategy returned the focus to a more tightly drawn town centre, given the continuing need to focus on traffic, public realm and the mix of uses in the historic core.

The 1984 Plan noted that conditions for pedestrians and cyclists had deteriorated in recent years as traffic flows increased, but proposed to address this by providing a largely traffic free area in Lion Walk and the Culver Precinct. Provision outside this area had a vaguer commitment predicated on additional road capacity – *'further measures to help pedestrians and cyclists...may be possible when further traffic management measures are introduced and new road schemes built.'*

The 1995 and 2004 Local Plans continued the approach established by the 1984 Plan of promoting the Town Centre as the primary focus for comparison retail, with outlying bulky goods parks and supermarkets considered to complement rather than weaken the Town Centre's pre-eminence. The focus on the distinction between comparison and convenience retail was mirrored by the methodology of retail studies which measured supply and demand for bulky and non-bulky comparison goods and convenience shopping. This distinction between separate types of demand has tended to become less

relevant with the growth of ever larger supermarkets that provide both types of shopping.

The SPD is accordingly the latest attempt to seek a balance between change and preserving a unique resource. This view of the problem from the 1960s is familiar;

'There are....two competing elements – the future increase in demand which an enlarging and more affluent population will make upon all central area services and facilities versus the overriding need to conserve and enhance the fabric and environment of a unique and precious historic centre. (Colchester Town Centre Plan, 1969)

The main difference now is that the assumption of ever increasing prosperity and growth has started to be replaced by a focus on sustainability as well as an awareness that Town Centre issues need to be addressed through collective effort, with planning documents linked to actions delivered by a range of partners.

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Chapter 6 Vision and Objectives

Vision for Colchester's Town Centre (first paragraph taken from the Core Strategy Vision)

The historic Town Centre will be the cultural and economic heart of the Borough, surrounded by thriving suburbs, villages and countryside. New cultural, retail, office and mixed use developments will be delivered through regeneration of the Town Centre and its fringe.

The town centre will continue to be the key gathering point for the area, driving economic growth in terms of job and wealth creation and entrepreneurial opportunity during the day as well as through the evening and into the night time. It has a positive role in attracting and retaining skills and talent as well as telling the stories of generations of Colcestrians in its buildings and spaces. The aim is to enhance the town centre's sense of place with a broad and inclusive appeal, be a destination of choice for visitors as well as being a place where people want to live, work and do business.

Regeneration will have regard to the changing role of the town centre and the requirement for innovation this brings. The role of a well-managed town centre as a central gathering place both day and night will be strengthened to ensure that retail activities are complemented by cultural, dining, and leisure facilities as well as a wide range of accessible events, public spaces, and activities. Colchester's unique heritage will be presented proudly and distinctively, while new development will set high standards for design, sustainable construction, renewable energy and accessibility.

Objectives

There are a number of key objectives which underpin the Supplementary Planning Document. They are all inter-related as illustrated by Figure 1. They are listed below together with their links to the Better Town Centre project [link to BTC website when it goes live again].

Sustainability – Promoting sustainability in its widest sense, including prioritising reductions in the town centre's carbon footprint, enhancing the resiliency of Town Centre commercial and social businesses, and promoting social inclusion and accessibility.

Innovation – Ensuring that development in Colchester Town Centre promotes and secures innovation in new techniques for enabling sustainable growth, including encouraging the local business community to implement them.

Better Town Centre theme links

- Creating Quality Public Places and Spaces
- Bringing New Buildings

Activity – Supporting uses for a lively 21st century town centre;

Diversity – Ensuring a healthy mix of retail, leisure/culture, business and residential uses.

Retail: Retail is the key driver of the town centre economy, and maintaining an appropriate balance between different types of successful retail uses (including both national chains/independent retailers and market traders) and between other activities in the main Town Centre shopping areas will be critical to securing its future vitality.

Leisure/Culture: Expansion of leisure and cultural offerings appropriate to different areas of the Town Centre (ie arts-related activities in St. Botolph's Quarter, entertainment/restaurants in the Shopping Core) outdoor spaces offering multi functional areas for informal recreation and relaxation, and use of traditional, new and social media to publicise and promote these attractions.

Offices and Residential: Supporting the provision of office and living space based on the Town Centre's high quality environment, accessibility, and state-of-the-art digital connectivity.

Creating welcoming spaces and events through the day and into the evening – Providing a wide range of accessible facilities and spaces for events and activities that bring people into the town centre throughout the day and year. Developing the evening economy so that the town feels safe and inviting after dark.

Better Town Centre theme links –

- Improving Colchester for You and Your Family
- Supporting and Growing Business and Retailers
- Promoting Colchester
- New Things to See, Do and Visit
- Changing Colchester After Dark

Heritage and Design – Enhancing the old, creating tomorrow's heritage;

Identity and Unique Character – Reinforcing, interpreting and safeguarding the distinctive character and identity of Colchester and its rich heritage, including its Roman core street grid, unique views, changes in elevation, historic buildings, green spaces, and street scenes. Enriching the existing environment using a creative and dynamic approach to new spaces and buildings.

Amenity – Providing a safe, attractive and accessible town centre that is well maintained.

Quality – Providing a set of design principles for all new development within the town centre to promote a continuous and consistent high quality well-maintained environment.

Better Town Centre links

- Creating Quality Public Places and Spaces
- Bringing New Buildings
- Ensuring Clean, Safe Places and Spaces

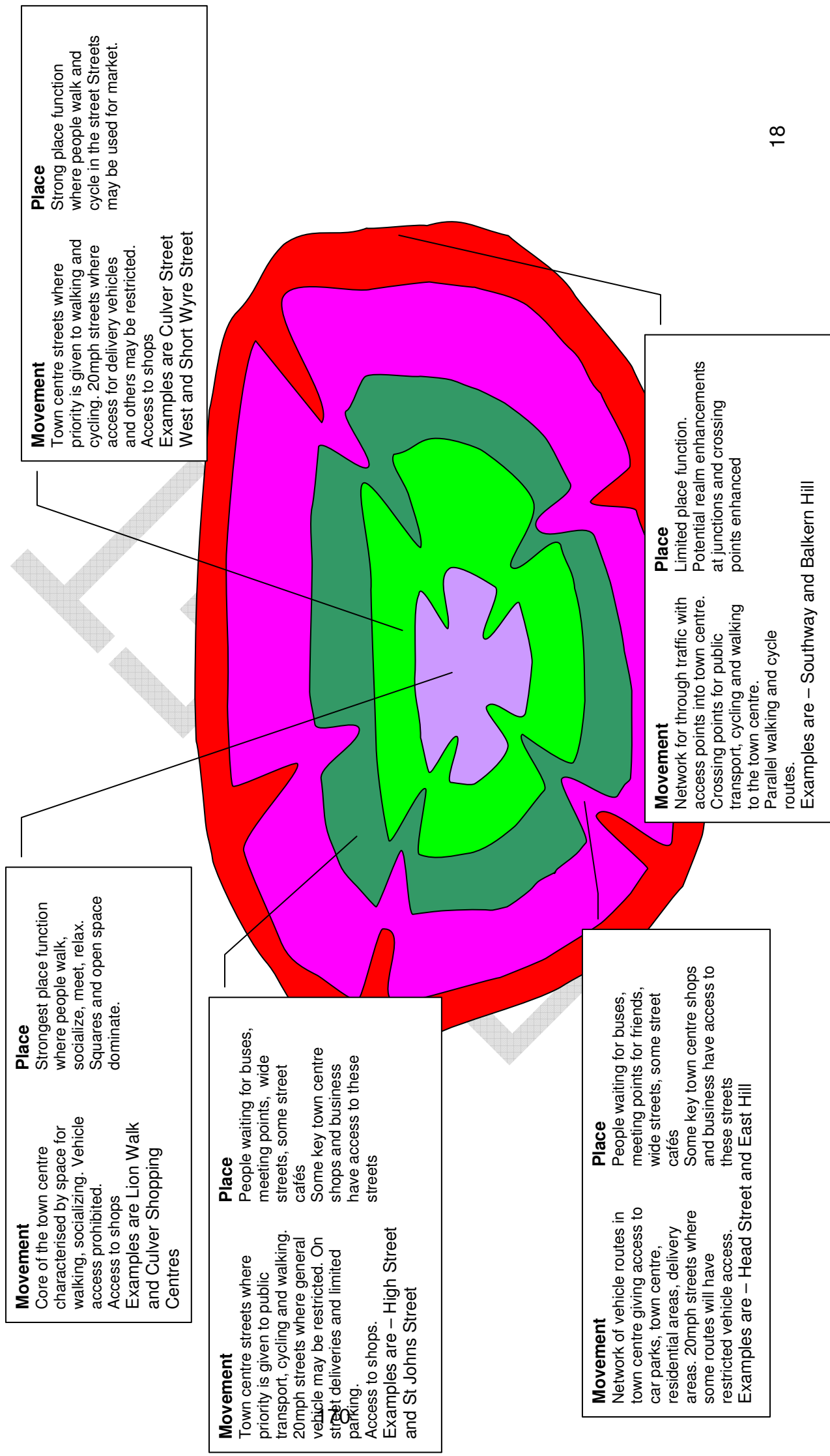
Movement – Creating a safe and accessible town centre;

- Managing unnecessary through traffic in the town centre, enhancing pedestrian priority
- Provide priority to more sustainable modes of transport including public transport, cycling and walking
- Improve use and operation of public transport with facilities for a 21st century service
- Deliver a sustainable transport infrastructure to accommodate future growth and enable a vibrant strong economy

Town centres should be the most walkable part of the network, and should accommodate public transport services, cycle routes and cycle parking, while remaining accessible by private car. As centres of public life, town centres must actively enable access by all in society, as well as supporting efficient access by delivery, service and emergency vehicles. At the same time they should be attractive places to shop, eat, drink, work, play, do business, meet, study, hang around in and look at.¹ Through a range of measures greater priority is given over to more people orientated forms of movement. This approach is generally accepted to help strengthen the economy of a street or area. This approach is being applied to Colchester town centre. Figure 1 illustrates the priorities to be given to different transport modes in different parts of the Town Centre.

¹ Manual for Streets 2

Fig 1 – Principles of Movement and Place in and Around the Town Centre



LEARN

Better Town Centre links

- Getting around Colchester
- Creating Quality Public Places and Spaces
- Ensuring Clean, Safe Places and Space

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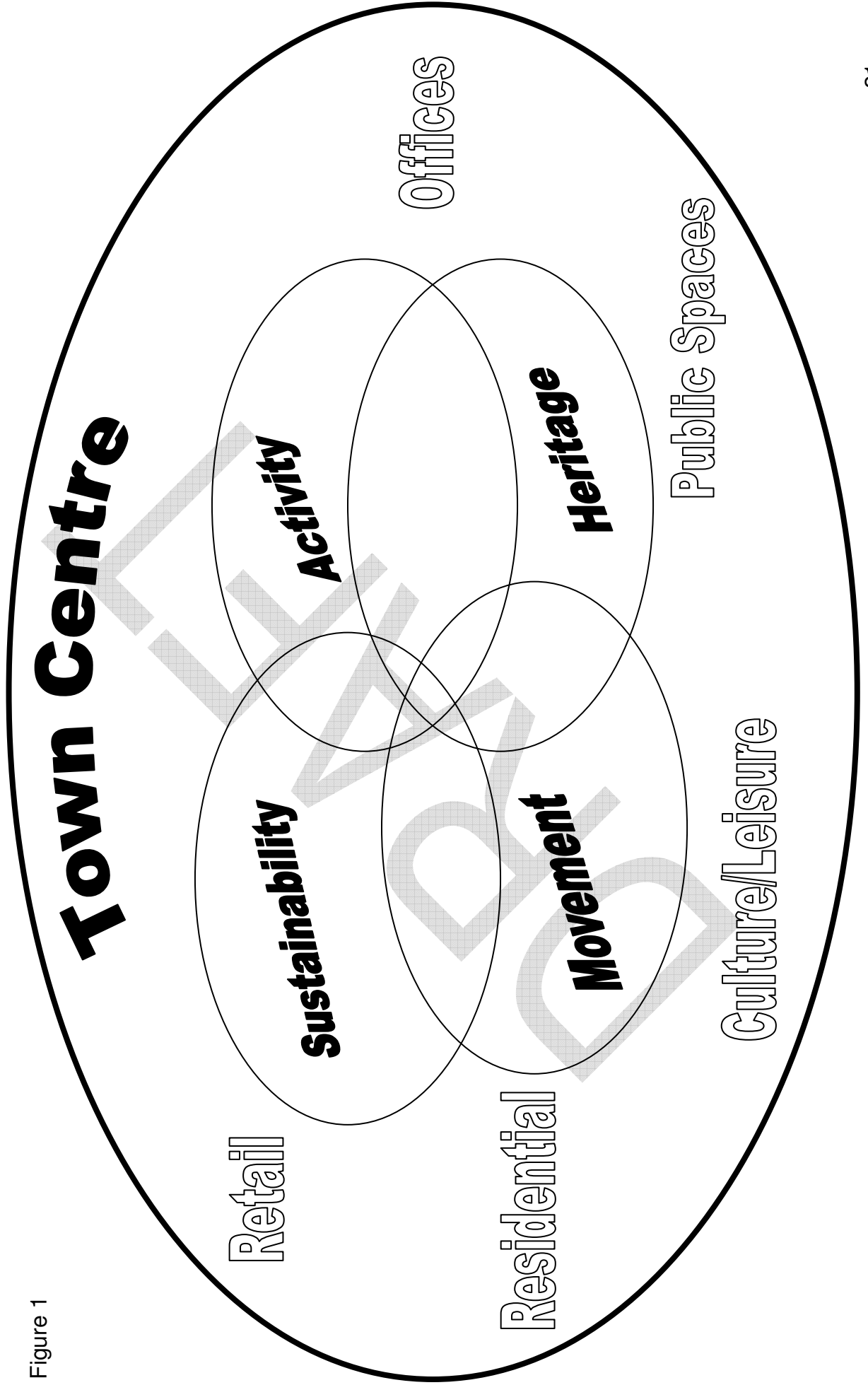


Figure 1

Chapter 7 – Planning Policy in the Town Centre

The Supplementary Planning Document expands on but does not duplicate policies found in national policy (National Planning Policy Framework) or in local policy as set forth in the Core Strategy, Development Policies and Site Allocations Development Policy Documents. The relevant related policies are listed below alongside the The following section explains how the 4 main objectives listed above will be delivered in the Town Centre.

Sustainability Policy Base

National Planning Policy Framework
Core Strategy Policies SD1- Sustainable Development and ER1- Energy, Resources, Waste, Water and Recycling
Development Policy DP25- Renewable Energy
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD

Sustainable Design and Construction

All development in the Town Centre will be expected to meet the highest possible standards of sustainable design and construction. Major new commercial development should seek to achieve a minimum BREEAM level of 'excellent'.

The Council has adopted a Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document ([link](#)) which highlights the national commitment to increasing standards of sustainable construction, with progressively higher standards over time for both residential (Code for Sustainable Homes) and commercial (BREEAM). New developments in the Town Centre will be expected to meet and where possible exceed these standards.

The following sustainable design and construction measures feature in two case studies of best practice retail development²:

- Effective procurement and locally sourced materials
- Use of local labour
- High recycling rates
- Natural ventilation
- Use of high efficiency lamps and intelligent lighting controls
- Rainwater harvesting
- Exceeding Building Regulations on insulation
- Ecological enhancement
- Car parking policies

Whilst the Council encourages a flexible approach to BREEAM and the Code for Sustainable Homes and does not want to be prescriptive in terms of which

² Case studies are available on the BREEAM website. The case studies are Cabot Circus and White River Place retail developments, which were both awarded BREEAM 'excellent'.

credits should be achieved, applicants should consider incorporating the above measures into proposals.

There is a two stage approach to sustainable energy; reducing energy demand and providing energy sustainably. Development should be designed to reduce energy demand through passive design and energy efficiency measures. For example, buildings should be orientated to make maximum use of daylight and designed to make the best use of natural ventilation to provide cooling in summer; this is particularly important for retail and office developments.

Proposals for new buildings in the Town Centre should include information on the energy performance of the proposed building. For minor development it will be acceptable for information to be included in the Design and Access Statement. Applications for major development should be submitted with an Energy Strategy. Energy Strategies should include, but not be limited to, a description of the development, commitment to carbon reduction and sustainable design, description of how the energy hierarchy has been followed, and what is being done above current Building Regulations. Where different renewable energy technologies have been considered and dismissed this should be explained in the Energy Strategy.

Proposals for the re-use of existing buildings will also be expected to incorporate sustainable design measures. However, it is vital that the unique characters of historic buildings and the Town Centre conservation area are not put at risk by unsympathetic alterations, unnecessary intervention, or changing environmental conditions. Opportunities for improving energy efficiency and incorporating renewable energy may be limited for historic buildings and proposals should focus on other sustainability measures such as reducing water consumption, introducing landscaping, promoting sustainable travel and effective waste management.

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

The Council will expect new development to incorporate renewable and/or low carbon energy technologies. The delivery of an integrated Combined Heat and Power and District Heating and Cooling network will be supported to enable existing and new development to achieve significant carbon savings.

Whilst individual schemes to deliver renewable energy schemes will help address climate change, over the longer term it will be important to develop integrated Combined Heat and Power (CHP) and district heating and cooling to enable existing and new development to achieve significant carbon savings. The Council considers that gas CHP would be preferable to other sources as whilst the carbon savings are not as great gas CHP does not result in transport or air quality issues. Applicants of large scale schemes, particularly schemes that can act as anchor loads³, will be encouraged to

³ Anchor loads are buildings that have a large heat demand and act as a catalyst for district heating schemes. Heat demand is often steady over the course of the day.

work with the Council to initiate district-wide energy schemes, especially where there is an opportunity to link to existing development. Large schemes with a mixture of phases should consider the need to provide space for an energy centre and for buildings that come forward as part of the early phases to be capable of connecting to a district heating at a later date.

The Vineyard Gate retail development provides a good opportunity to develop a CHP district heating network. The proposed mix of uses will ensure a diverse energy density. The Council will discuss the opportunity for CHP district heating early on in pre-application discussions for this site and if it is not viable evidence should be submitted as part of the planning application to demonstrate this.

Solar photovoltaics (PV) is particularly suitable to the Town Centre. Unlike some other renewable technologies solar PV panels do not take up land (if mounted on the roof), which is a key consideration in town centres. Solar PV also does not require frequent deliveries of raw materials, another key consideration in a town centre site, and is viable on a small scale basis. All new buildings in the Town Centre should consider orientating the roof to face South East to South West with a pitch of 30 to 50° to maximise the potential for solar PV. However, this should not be at the expense of good design principles and the protection of the historic environment. [add ref here to town centre Conservation Area and use of PV panels in terms of visual impact]

Adding to Green Infrastructure

The Council will encourage development proposals which add to the Town Centre's green infrastructure and enhance its biodiversity through such means as green roofs and walls, tree planting and the provision of green links.

Green infrastructure provides a multitude of functions. It protects and enhances biodiversity, provides space for water, encourages healthy living and promotes sustainable modes of transport. It has a key role to play in climate change adaptation by making places more resilient to the impacts of a changing climate.

Every development provides opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. Green roofs and walls, which convert a roof or a wall into an area where plants can grow, are examples of an enhancement whose benefits could serve as a Sustainable Urban Drainage system (SuDS), a biodiversity habitat, an open space (for a green roof) and an insulation source as well as being an attractive design feature.

Colchester Borough Council's Comprehensive Climate Risk Assessment (March 2010) [link] looked at climate projections for Colchester and identified numerous risks that are or will be facing the Borough as a result of a changing climate. Of particular relevance to this SPD are an increased risk of flooding, water resource shortages, higher temperatures and the urban heat island effect, and managing ground conditions. The Risk Assessment highlighted a number of adaptive actions that could reduce the identified risks with the

expectation that these actions would be progressed into an ongoing Adaptation Action Plan. The delivery of green roofs, green walls, tree planting, SuDS, open space, and sustainable design and construction are all identified as adaptive actions. Development proposals for the Town Centre provide opportunities to implement some of these adaptation measures.

Air Quality

New development will have regard to the need to improve air quality in the Town Centre.] Applicants may be required to carry out assessment into the air quality impact of their development and implement mitigation measures if required.

Many of the main streets within and leading to the Town Centre have been designated as Air Quality Management Areas, reflecting their high levels of traffic congestion. The affected streets are shown on the Sustainability Map. The Council is developing an Air Quality Management Plan for these areas which will incorporate a range of measures, including traffic management; improvements to public transport, pedestrian and cycle networks, technological innovations and continuous monitoring. New development in the Town Centre will be evaluated for its effect on the air quality of the area, and required to implement appropriate measures to improve air quality, in line with Development Policies DP1 and DP2 as well as specific guidance on air quality assessments for new development published separately..

Digital connectivity

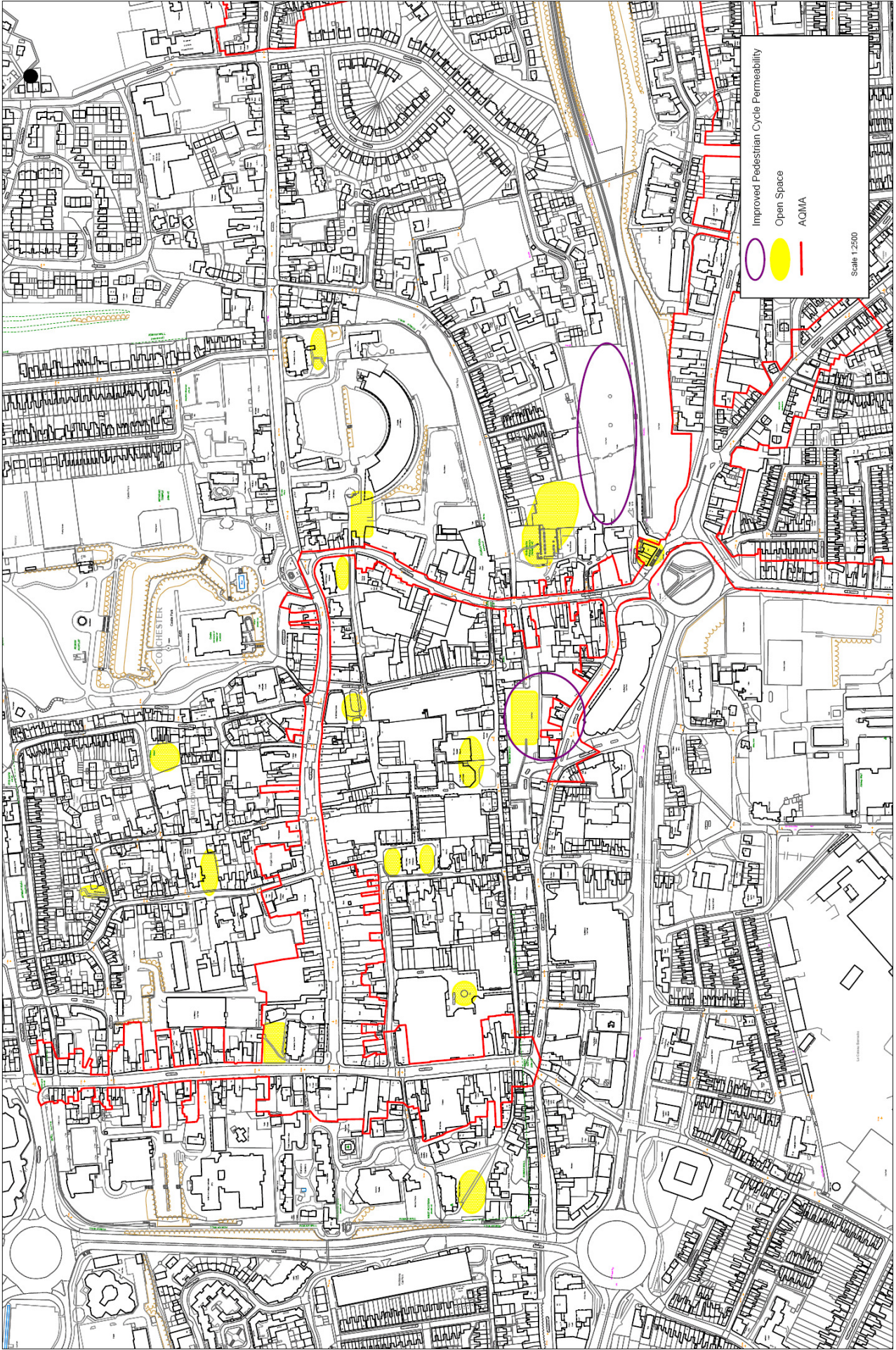
New development will be encouraged to capitalise on the advantages being provided by the expansion of the Town Centre's digital network outlined in the Council's Digital Strategy [[link](#)].

Colchester is pursuing development of a next-generation broadband network using its existing CCTV network which will put it in the forefront of technological innovation. New development will benefit from this enhanced access and will be encouraged to develop innovative approaches to design and provision of facilities which capitalise on this feature.

Evidence Base

Air Quality Management Plan
Digital Strategy

SUSTAINABILITY



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Activity

Policy Base

National Planning Policy Framework
Core Strategy CE Policies (Centres and Employment)
Dev Policy DP6 (Town Centre Uses)
Site Allocations SA TC1 (Appropriate Uses within the Town Centre and North Station Regeneration Area)

Mix of Uses

The Town Centre will incorporate a mix of uses to promote a distinctive identity, maintain street activity, and support economic vitality. In accordance with Core Strategy Centres and Employment policies, the town centre will be the primary location for retail, office, leisure and entertainment uses.

Development in the regenerated St. Botolph's Quarter will reflect the focus on culture with the Firstsite gallery at its heart.

The balance between retail and non-retail uses will be guided by the approach in Development Policy DP6 which provides for at least 85% retail frontage in the Inner Core, 50% retail in the Outer Core. A more flexible criteria based approach is applied in the outlying Mixed Use Areas which allows for a wide range of uses as long as they contribute to the area's design quality, activity levels and character and have no significant adverse impact on neighbourhood amenity.

A focus on diversity of use that capitalises on Colchester's unique offer will drive initiatives to invigorate the Town Centre. This emphasis is also found in the Creative Colchester Strategy, which provides a framework for capitalising on the town's creative industries. (link) As the Mary Portas review of high streets observes, town centres should 'become places where we go to engage with other people in our communities, where shopping is just one small part of a rich mix of activities'. A flexible approach to uses in Mixed Use areas is intended to support this rich mix and increase the attractiveness of the Town Centre as a destination for a range of activities.

Basic Overall levels of development and types of use in the Town Centre are set forth in the adopted Core Strategy as follows:

Residential use – Core Strategy Table H1a lists that the Town Centre and fringe area will accommodate 2000 additional units over the period 2001-2021.

Offices – In accordance with Core Strategy Policy CE2a, the Town Centre will seek to deliver 40,000 sqm of gross office floor space in the Town Centre, Urban Gateways and Town Centre Fringe in the period 2006-2021.

Leisure – The Council will promote a wide range of leisure activities and cultural events in the Town Centre, in particular supporting use of the public realm as a space for art, music, markets, socialising, recreation and relaxation.

This mix of uses is designed to provide a sustainable central focus of activity which can be easily accessed by non-car means of transport.

Street Markets

The Council will promote and sustain the town's historic street markets and will allocate additional areas as needed for expansion, development and/or relocation of the market on selected days.

Colchester Charter Market has been in place in some form since 1189 and it is currently situated in various pedestrianised areas of the town centre, including Culver Street West, Long Wyre Street and Culver Street West on a Friday and Saturday. An additional trading day of Thursday has also been suggested. In addition to the official Charter Market, there are further opportunities to expand specialist markets to new locations and times.

Colchester's current market arrangements needs to be set within the wider local and national consideration of the role markets play in contributing to the social, environmental and economic well-being of communities. Recent studies have identified the role markets play in:

- Providing a sense of place
- Being part of the nation's cultural heritage
- Remaining an important element of the economy, particularly in relation to independent retailing, local employment and business start-up opportunities.
- Offering local access to fresh produce and other commodities
- Reducing environmental impacts e.g. by eliminating excessive packaging/waste.

(Markets 21, A Policy and Research Review of UK Retail and Wholesale Markets in the 21st Century, Retail Markets Alliance, Nov. 2009)

Given the restrictions on the availability of Council funding, securing more investment in markets, will require the Council to pursue innovative new approaches to funding and partnerships. Under any scenario however, the Council would retain control over the location of markets. It is accordingly important for new locations to be identified to address the longer term operational and expansion needs of the markets. Sites will accordingly be developed to meet the need for market development based on the following criteria:

- Central to other Town Centre retail facilities
- Adequate facilities and space to accommodate stalls based on stall holder input
- Potential for integrating with related activities and events to create an active public space
- Potential for public realm enhancement and improved streetscape
-

The final location for market development will be agreed through a Market Strategy to be approved by the Council following consultation with stall holders and the public, and linked to this document on the website when adopted.

Supporting the Evening Economy –

The Council will seek to create a welcoming Town Centre after dark by encouraging a diverse range of uses that provide activity without compromising amenity. The Council will work to achieve and maintain

‘Purple Flag’ status in recognition of a well-managed town centre at night in order to encourage a high quality and diverse evening and night time economy. This will entail pursuing strategies which cover both the early evening hours after shops currently shut when there are opportunities to provide more activities and uses catering to families, older people and town centre workers as well as the provision of bars, clubs and restaurants which predominate in the late evening hours.

The late evening economy is currently most visible along Head Street and the High Street and Queen St/St Botolph’s Street. This concentration is considered to amplify problems of noise and anti-social behaviour rather than to allow them to be minimised and controlled. The Council will accordingly promote the dispersal of evening economy uses to a somewhat wider area in the commercial parts of the town centre, bearing in mind impact on residential uses. However, the Police and other night time services have pointed out the value of having such a concentration of activity as resources can be more effectively focused. There will be a focus on the creation or redefinition of spaces for evening economy uses, which diversify the evening/night time offer rather than replicate existing activities in the following areas, including improvements to lighting specified in the Lighting Strategy -

Existing areas - Head Street, North Hill, High Street

New areas - St. Nicholas Square, Firstsite and associated open space/related uses, Mercury Theatre area

Research has been commissioned which aims to provide a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of Colchester’s night time economy among users; perceived issues among non-users as well as the economic impact in terms of spend and employment [link].

Colchester town centre is a relatively small geographical area so visitor management principles are being adopted by a variety of town centre stakeholders in order to manage anti-social behaviours, facilitate safe and effective movement through the town centre and encourage a more balanced use of the town centre in the evening and into the night-time.

Supporting Tourism –

The Council will pursue innovative approaches in interpreting the town’s rich heritage for visitors and the local community. New attractions and visitor accommodation in the Town Centre will be supported subject to their compliance with other planning requirements in line with DP10’s focus on urban areas of Colchester.

Evidence Base

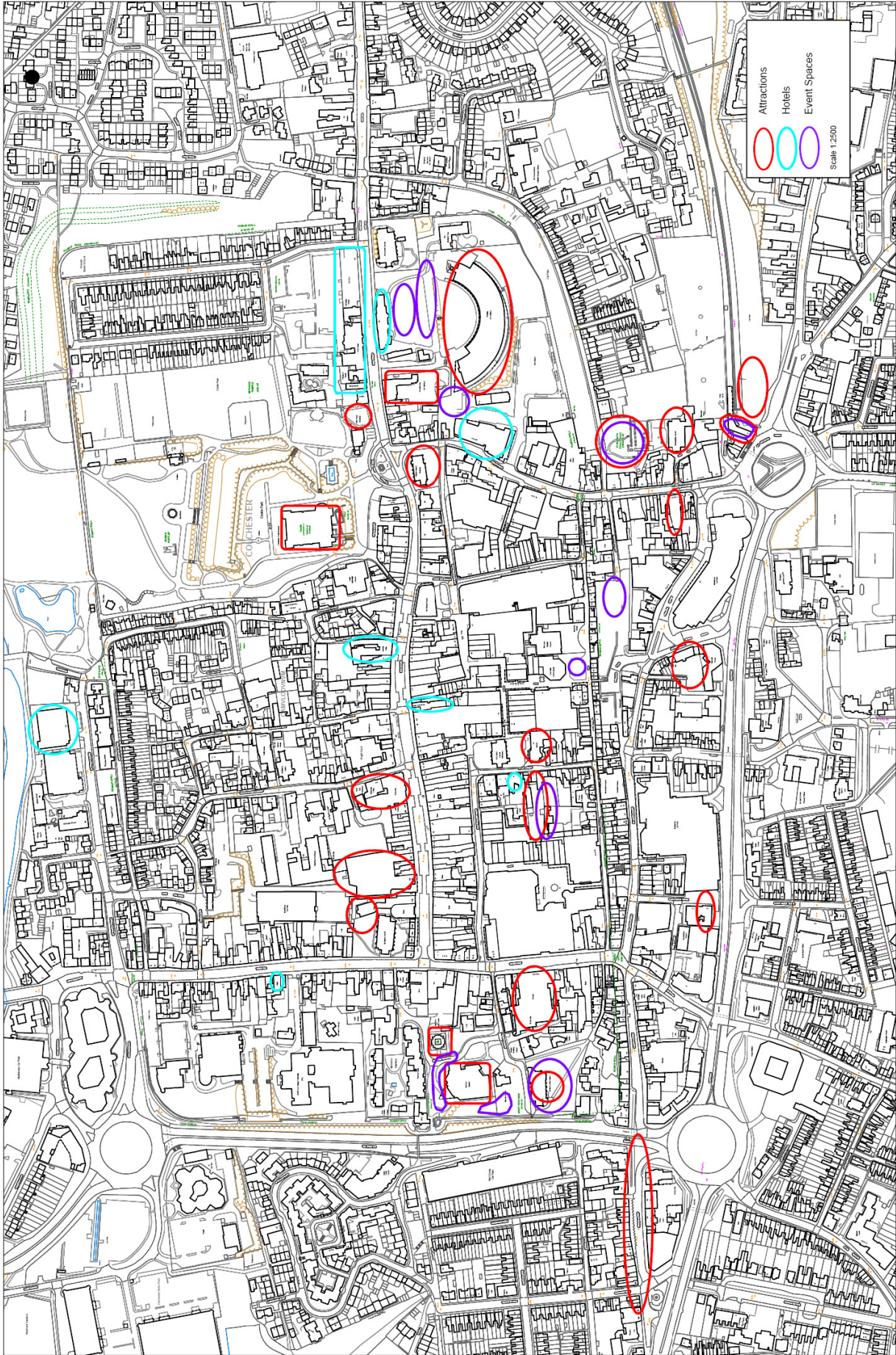
2011 Retail Study

Cambridge Model to Estimate the Economic Impact of Tourism on Colchester Borough (collected annually)

Destination Benchmarking Visitor Opinion Surveys

Local Distinctiveness Audit, Heritage Economic and Regeneration Trust, Norwich, April 2012

ACTIVITY



Heritage and Design

Policy Base

National Planning Policy Framework
Core Strategy Policies UR1 Regeneration Areas, UR2 Built Design and Character, PR2 People-Friendly Streets
Development Policy DP14 Historic Environment Assets
Shopfront Design Guide SPD

Public Spaces

The Council will work with landowners and stakeholders to make the most of spaces in the town, including the spaces managed by the Council. The Council will support rejuvenation of the key public spaces listed below through a series of linked designs that reflect the historic ties between spaces and yet gives each space a special, unique identity.

Key spaces –

**St. Nicholas Square
Eld Lane Baptist Church/United Reform Church open space
St. Botolph's Priory
Trinity Church Yard
Mercury Theatre/Balkerne Gardens
Firstsite open space
Vineyard Gate open space**

Spaces are distinct from pavements and movement corridors and provide the opportunity to stop and enjoy the surrounding activities and environments. Town centre developments should provide spaces as appropriate which should be available for all people and which generate interest through the quality of the landscaping, public art; interpretation of heritage features as well as commercial opportunities for street markets, cafes and restaurants.

There are a number of underused spaces in the town centre, some of very poor quality. Many are gated churchyards, with restricted hours of opening. All, however, have the potential make a better contribution to amenity in the town centre and the Council will seek to secure funding for their improvement through associated development, its Community Infrastructure Levy, and grant funding. Further detail on design, materials and maintenance of public spaces is contained in the Public Realm Strategy. ([link](#))

Enhancing the historic environment

The Council will work with Town Centre businesses and residents as well as statutory bodies and interest groups to secure preservation, interpretation and enhancement of the wide range of the Town Centre's rich historic and archaeological heritage, including the Roman Wall, numerous listed buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and landscape/streetscape features. The Council will pursue a co-ordinated and innovative approach to the interpretation of the historic environment.

The Council and its partners pursue a number of strategies and projects to safeguard and promote Colchester's unique heritage, including the following: Roman Wall Management Plan [[link](#)], in partnership with Friends of the Roman Wall

Town Centre wayfinding and links

The Council is developing integrated solutions to access to the Town Centre to reduce congestion and facilitate access by public transport and cycling. Within the historic core, access and movement by pedestrians will be prioritised. Any additional waymarking signs will be evaluated in terms of their appropriateness to the existing system. New wayfinding measures will be informed by the findings of research involving older people's use of Colchester town centre which highlighted the importance of landmarks in navigating through the town as well as the correct positioning of signage and its limitation on the pavement.

The Council will develop the following routes to highlight their historic/environmental importance and to link key areas of the town centre;

- **The Walls – Historic Town Walls, parts of which date back to Roman times, encircle many parts of the Town Centre. The route leading from St. Botolph's Priory to the Hole in the Wall pub, includes many small independent retailers atop the walls. The Council will work with these retailers to develop designs, interpretation and related branding to capitalise on this unique area in terms of offering new opportunities for businesses along this route, new visitor experiences and engender a sense of civic pride by highlighting one of the town's greatest historic assets. The Council commissioned a Local Distinctiveness Audit to initiate the project which identifies the opportunities for improvement in the area along with options for delivering them.**
- **Tree Trail – The Town Centre includes a number of large and unique trees, with many in Castle Park and other fine specimens associated with other historic buildings, churchyards and streets in the Town Centre.**

Attractive streetscapes – Please also refer to the Public Realm Strategy for specific details ([link](#))

1. **Reducing clutter - All schemes affecting the public realm will be reviewed to ensure they maximise opportunities to reduce clutter, including the hazard to movement it can represent. A rationalisation of the town's signage and street furniture will add to the quality of the environment by reducing pavement clutter and freeing up space for movement.**
2. **Materials - New developments and public realm schemes will be required to use high-quality materials which enhance the surrounding environment.**

3. **Local Distinctiveness** – The Council will support the provision of unique street furniture for Colchester which will highlight its local distinctiveness; enhance the space around it; encourage use; and interpret historic events and characters.
4. **Maintenance** - New public realm improvements will be designed for ease of maintenance and longevity, and the responsibility for maintenance will be clearly delegated to the appropriate body.
5. **Lighting** - Proposals for new lighting will be expected to comply with the Town centre Lighting Strategy[link].
6. **Banners** – Banners for public events will only be permitted, subject to appropriate approvals, when suitably designed and in locations supported by adequate infrastructure.
7. **High-quality shopfronts** - Applications for new shopfronts will be required to comply with the requirements set out in the Council’s adopted Shopfront Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) [link]. This includes sympathetic signage. The SPD provides that A-boards outside shops will be discouraged since they tend to obstruct the highway.
8. **Incorporation of public art to enhance interpretation** – The Council will identify key opportunities and locations for public art in appropriate town centre locations, including temporary projects such as hoardings around building sites. Art projects will provide visual interest; stories about people and places; and prompts for contemplation or conversation. The Council will seek contributions for public art through Section 106 agreements and through other funding sources.
9. **Pavement cafes** –Pavement cafes will be welcome to add activity to the street in appropriate areas. The extent of areas occupied by tables and chairs will be regulated through a co-ordinated approach with licensing and highways to ensure pedestrian accessibility is not compromised. A map will be made available showing areas where pavement cafes will be encouraged as well as areas which are not considered appropriate for pavement cafes based on the following criteria:
 - **Pavement width**
 - **Street slope**
 - **Health and safety issues including air quality**
 - **Accessibility**

Pavement cafes for other town centre areas will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

An attractive streetscape involves a number of inter-related elements, including unifying design themes alongside unique architectural statements; clear but non-obtrusive signage and advertising; well-managed activity levels and high quality street furniture. The above guidelines are intended to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the individual components that together support a successful urban environment. Further details on streetscape design, materials and maintenance is contained in the Public Realm Strategy. (link)

Integrating new developments into the town

New developments in the town centre should be designed to integrate seamlessly into the existing fabric. Street connections and new streets must provide continuity, accessibility, and legibility for desire lines from existing quarters whilst expressing the significance of new primary attractors.

New developments need to respect their context, but that does not mean they need to be anonymous. There will be opportunities for them to enhance their surroundings by contributing new public spaces to add to the variety of environments on offer in the Town Centre and the ability to support a range of events and exhibitions available to all. They can also enhance strategic green links. Whilst additional trees are not appropriate in the established street pattern of the historic core, new developments can create opportunities for a softer, green public realm although regard needs to be paid to archaeology and other constraints. New trees and plant material can be placed in containers to address such constraints. New development sites are the only large sites where the public desire for more trees in the town centre can be realised.

Policy and Evidence Base

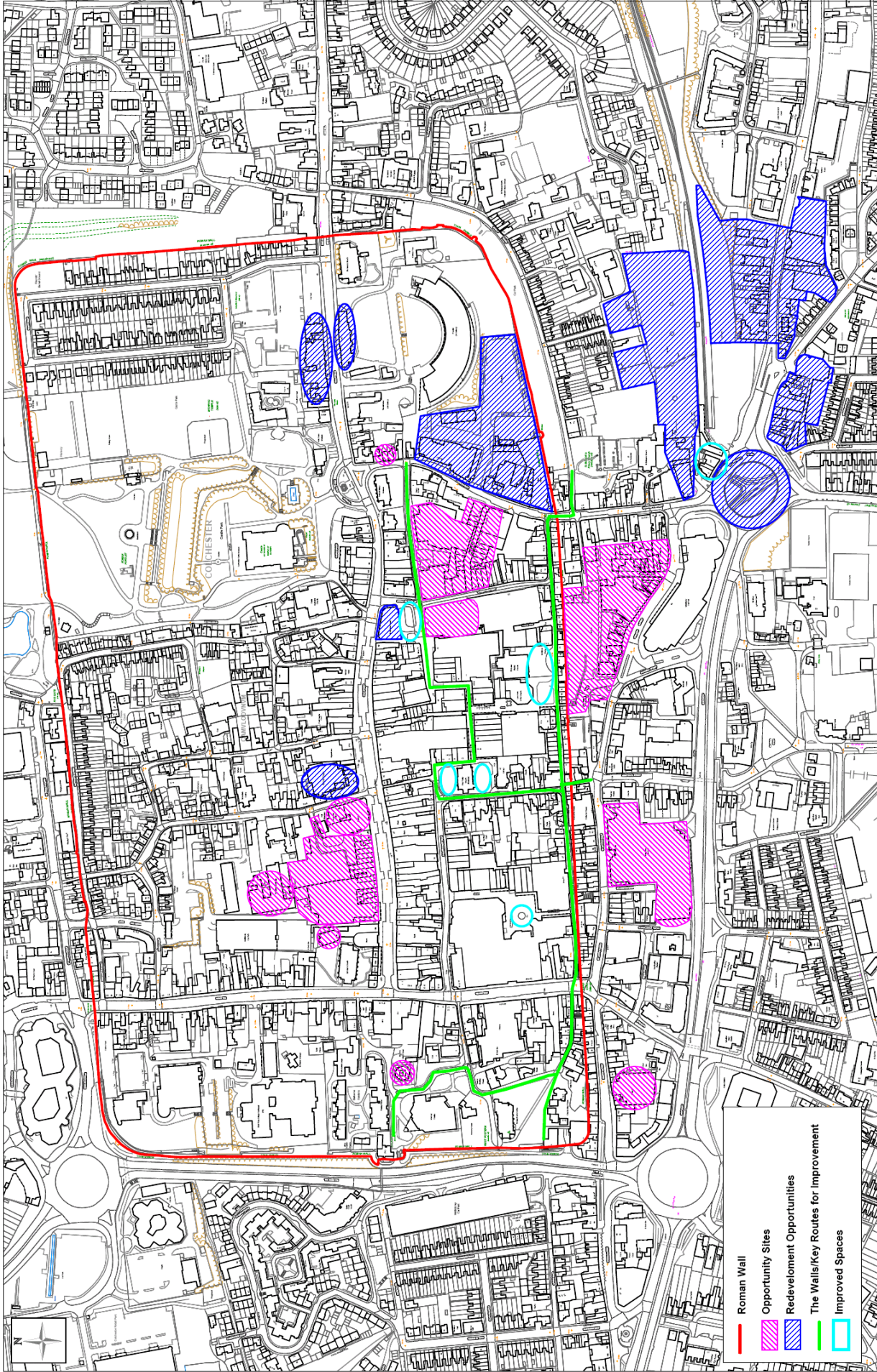
Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal [[link](#)]

Study on Older People's Use of Space (OPUS) 2010 – looked at older people's experience of navigating Colchester Town Centre

Local Distinctiveness Audit, Heritage Economic and Regeneration Trust, Norwich, April 2012

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HERITAGE & DESIGN



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Movement

Access to and within the town centre

Policy Base

National Planning Policy Framework

Core Strategy Policies TA1 Accessibility and Changing Travel Behaviour, TA2 Walking and Cycling, TA3 Public Transport, TA4 Roads and Traffic, TA5 Road Network Improvements

Development Policies DP17 Accessibility and Access, DP19 Transport Infrastructure Proposals, DP19 Parking Standards

Colchester is becoming an even better place to live, work, learn and visit with more people being attracted to the town centre. Making it easier to get around is vital to help support these aims.

Transport improvements in the town centre are designed to enhance the pedestrian environment and reduce unnecessary traffic across the town centre. This will boost the town's vitality and economic prosperity, improve air quality at key locations and the reliability of public transport. The changes will also support the park and ride service.

Successful towns are those that are busy with people. The challenge is to bring as many people as possible to the town centre and once there will hopefully enjoy the experience. There have been a number of towns and cities that have reduced the level of motor vehicles in their centres such as Oxford, York, Chester, Nottingham and Lincoln following the principles of giving space to people in the town centre. In these towns vehicles can still access the centre but is either controlled by time or access restriction where through movement is not possible in the town centre streets. Through movement is possible on routes around the town centre.

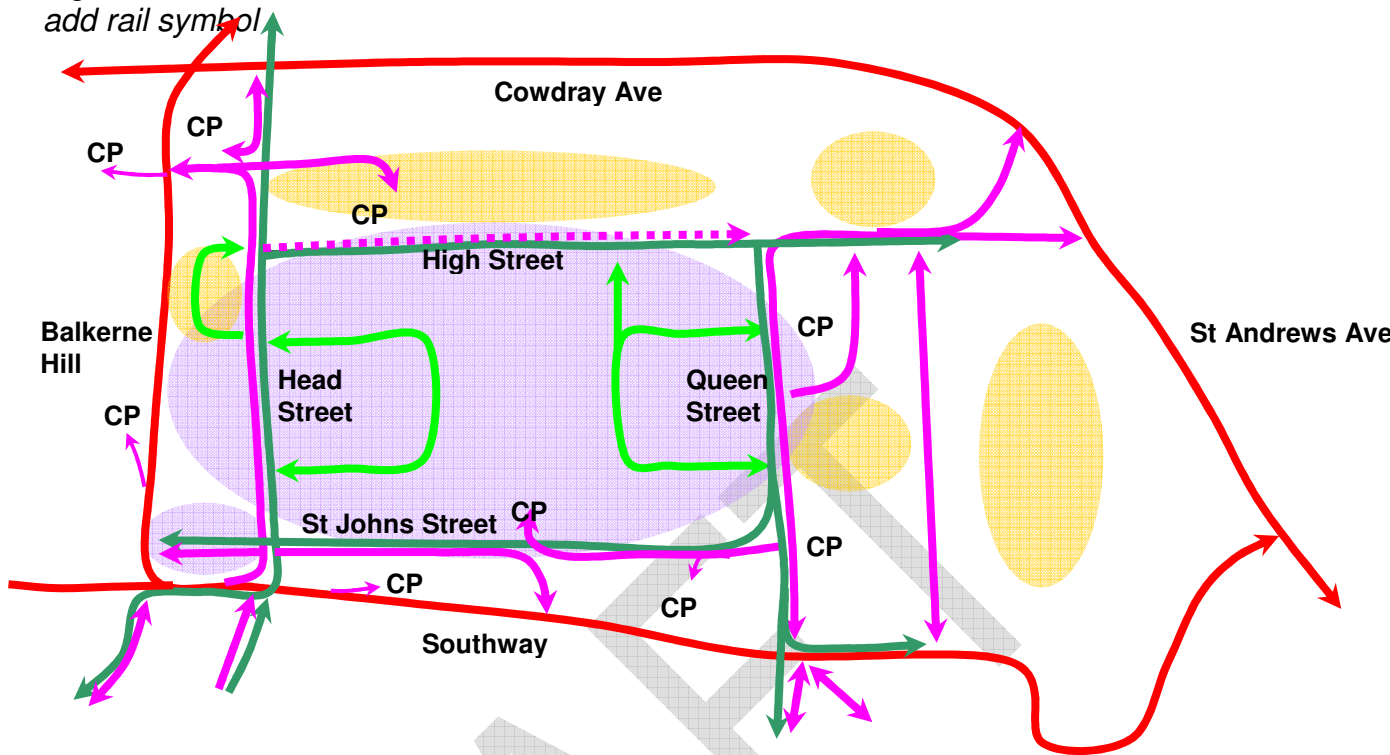
The Borough Council has been seeking to reduce traffic in the town centre to create a more people friendly environment for many years as the Planning Policy History section above explains.^{4 5 6}. The aspiration back in 1968 included the construction of Balkerne Hill and Southway dual carriageways for through traffic and loops to allow those vehicles needing access to the town centre to do so.

⁴ Colchester Town Centre Report (1968)

⁵ Colchester's New Transport Strategy (2001)

⁶ Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2008 – policy PR2 People Friendly Streets, policy TA2 Walking and Cycling, policy TA3 Public transport

Fig 2 Schematic – Movement and Access to the Town Centre
add rail symbol



Key

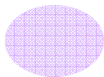

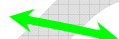
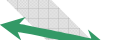



-  Main retail area, mixed with some residential, business and leisure uses – pedestrian movement has priority in squares, shopping malls and passageways
-  Town centre residential areas
-  Streets for walking, cycling, market and timed deliveries
-  Main passenger transport access and streets in the town centre
-  Restricted vehicle access street
-  Vehicle access street into town centre
-  Main vehicle routes around the town centre
- CP Car parks

Figure 2 illustrates how greater priority is to be given to people in Colchester town centre. It is not intended to be a detailed plan of all routes.

The centre of town is characterised by squares and shopping malls where the priority movement is on foot. There are a number of narrow streets and lanes which give access to the central areas of shops, cafes and bars. These streets act as shared spaces where priority is for walking and cycling movements with part of the streets being used for market stalls, pavement cafés, where appropriate, timed deliveries and residential access.

Linking these narrow streets to the main passenger transport streets are small passageways, steps and routes through shops giving good permeability from the box of streets around the town centre.

High Street, Queen Street, Osborne St, St Johns St and Head Street form the main box around the core of the town centre and will become the main passenger transport drop off, pick up and interchange areas in the town centre. General vehicle access will be restricted in the High Street throughout the day resulting in a significant improvement in the environment for people whether they are shopping, waiting for a bus, socializing or passing through. In the morning and evening, traffic will be allowed into the High Street for deliveries, pick up and drop off in parking bays and through movement.

Vehicles will still be given access to Head Street, North Hill (via Head Street), Queen Street, Osborne Street and St Johns Street throughout the day. These streets give access to the car parks which are located on the edge of the town centre. The underground delivery areas serving Lion Walk and Culver Square will continue to be accessible. On street disabled parking and delivery bays will be available. The residential areas remain accessible from St Peter Street, St Johns Street, St Nicholas Square, Priory Street and Head Street.

The main vehicle routes (red) – A133 Colne Bank Ave/Cowdray Ave/St Andrews Avenue, A134 Westway/Balkerne Hill/Southway/Magdalen Street are the main routes for traffic not needing to enter the town centre area. Movement patterns to access inside of these main routes may need to change.

The principle is similar to Essex County Council's Traffic Management Strategy Functional Route Hierarchy⁷, but in the town centre area recognises that the people and place function have an important role in the vitality as well as the movement function of a street.

The Council, in partnership with Essex County Council, will seek to improve access to the Town Centre by non-private car means including bus priority lanes, reconfigured road arrangements and improved cycle/pedestrian links across Southway and Balkerne Hill.

⁷ The Essex Traffic Management Strategy 2005

The most sustainable way to access the town centre is to either walk or cycle. New and improved routes will be considered to encourage these modes, for example removing the no cycling order on subways, improving crossing points on roads which sever the town centre from its neighborhoods, and giving better access by bike on routes which lead to the town centre. Walking will similarly be encouraged by an improved walking environment and clearly marked routes.

Buses bring many people into the town centre and bus priority will be made, where appropriate, on the main access routes, to allow them fast access into the town. Colchester Town rail station allows access into the heart of the town centre from the mainline rail network. The station forms an important function for the number of people working and visiting the town centre and the council will encourage the rail operators to maintain and improve, where appropriate, services to this station.

Movement networks and priorities within the Town Centre

The Council will develop and maintain new and existing links for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles as illustrated by Figure X. On some roads this may be achieved by sharing the road space for all users. Some roads may have differing priorities for different modes according to the time of day to maximise pedestrian space during the day and allow for deliveries outside main shopping hours. Vehicular movements will be regulated to minimise their negative effect on air quality and congestion and give priority for buses.

Pedestrians and cyclists

Reducing unnecessary traffic in the town centre will improve the street environment and will make more space for other uses for example for pedestrians to stop, browse and mingle; and more space for cafes, stalls and events.

Access within the town centre by bike will be improved by allowing cyclists to travel through one way and access only points as well as investigating new routes into the town centre. Suitable cycle parking must be provided where there is a need, either on street or within buildings (i.e. a cycle centre)

Public Transport Users

The Council will seek to support efficient interchanges between public transport routes, pedestrian links and key Town Centre facilities. The Council will work with public transport providers to promote the frequency, duration, speed, reliability, and capacity of services.

Bus circulation within the town centre core is important to serve those shopping, working, living or visiting the town centre. Reducing congestion in the town centre helps buses' reliability, thereby making travelling by bus more

attractive. It is anticipated that Park and Ride will be available in 2013 and dedicated P&R buses will serve the town centre. Traffic management measures which assist with the circulation of buses also helps the park and ride buses.

Part of encouraging people to use buses is the provision of quality bus information. This applies to information before they travel so they can make informed choices, information at stops telling them where they have to wait and real time information so they have confidence in knowing how long they have to wait. Whilst waiting the bus user will need quality waiting facility by way of shelters or waiting areas.

Car Users

The Council will provide appropriate levels of short-stay parking in the Town Centre during the day, evening and overnight, to support commercial activity commensurate with its restricted vehicular access points and good public transport service.

The provision of P&R will enable some long stay car drivers who currently park in the town centre core to park in the P&R site, thereby not having to access the core by car. As well as the P&R facility, the multi storey car parks will still be available to car users and can easily be accessed via the road network.

The parking pricing strategy will help ensure the town centre is kept viable and vibrant by offering attractive prices to those that need to park in the town centre. The strategy will encourage car traffic to use the most appropriate car parks, therefore helping to manage congestion and demand.

Motorcycle parking will continue to be provided within car parks and on street where appropriate, to help encourage this mode.

Disabled parkers will be allowed designated bays in the car parks, as well as suitable on street provision where appropriate.

Taxi and Private Hire Users

Taxis form an important part of the public transport system and should be allowed good access to the town centre at all times. Taxis will be allowed in roads where private vehicles are restricted and ranks provided where possible for dropping off and picking up passengers.

Access for Deliveries

Deliveries to the shops in the town centre as well as other service vehicles are the lifeblood of the town. Suitable access must be made available for them. However due to conflicting demands for the roadspace, deliveries will be timed on some roads.

Motorcycle Users

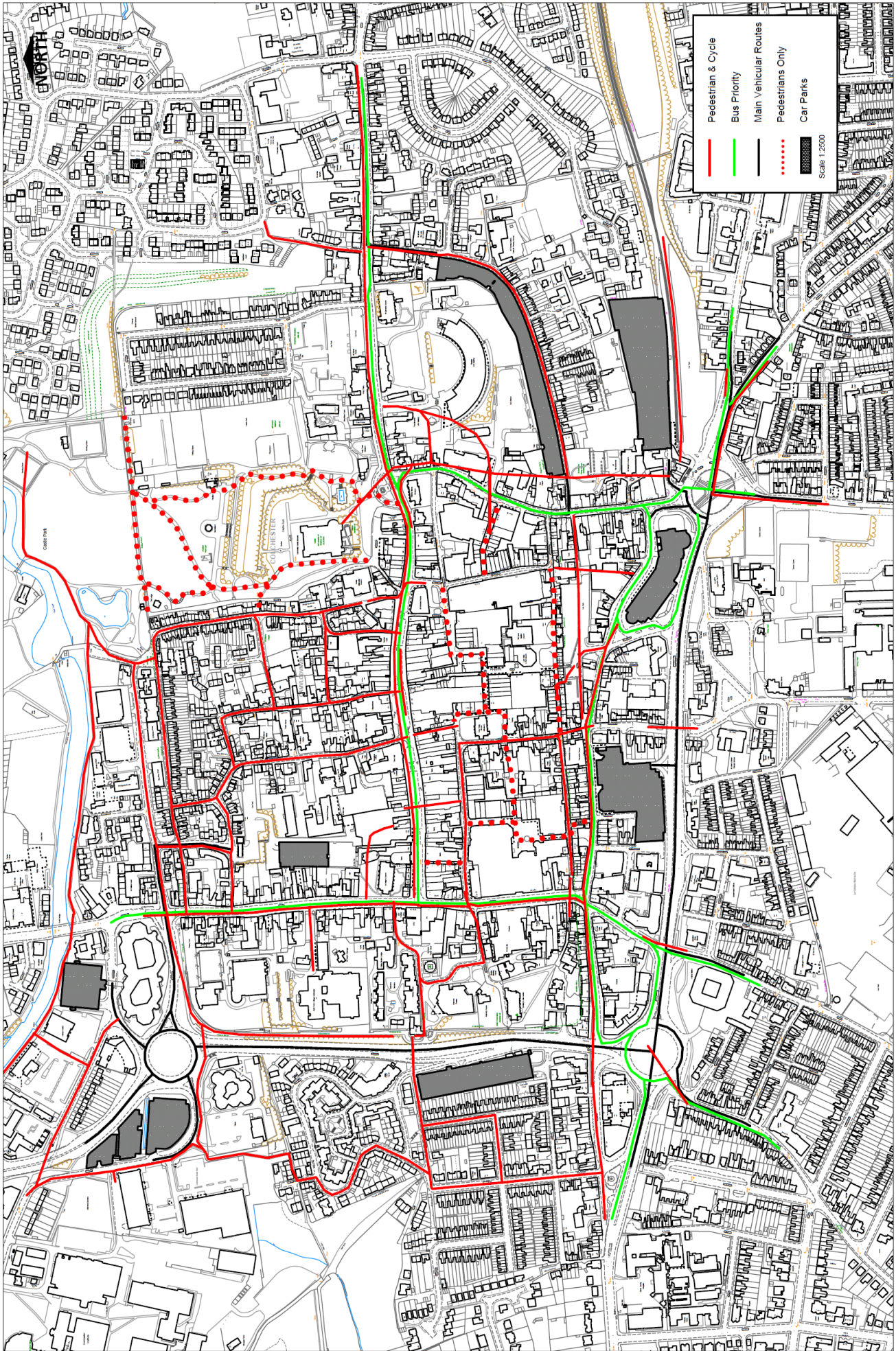
Motorcyclists will be allowed to access the town centre via the bus lanes. This will help encourage this mode of transport.

Behavioural Change and working with others

We will work with organisations in and adjacent to the town centre, to help them manage their travel. This could be by way of travel planning for staff and visitors of town centre businesses and attractions.

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MOVEMENT



Chapter 8

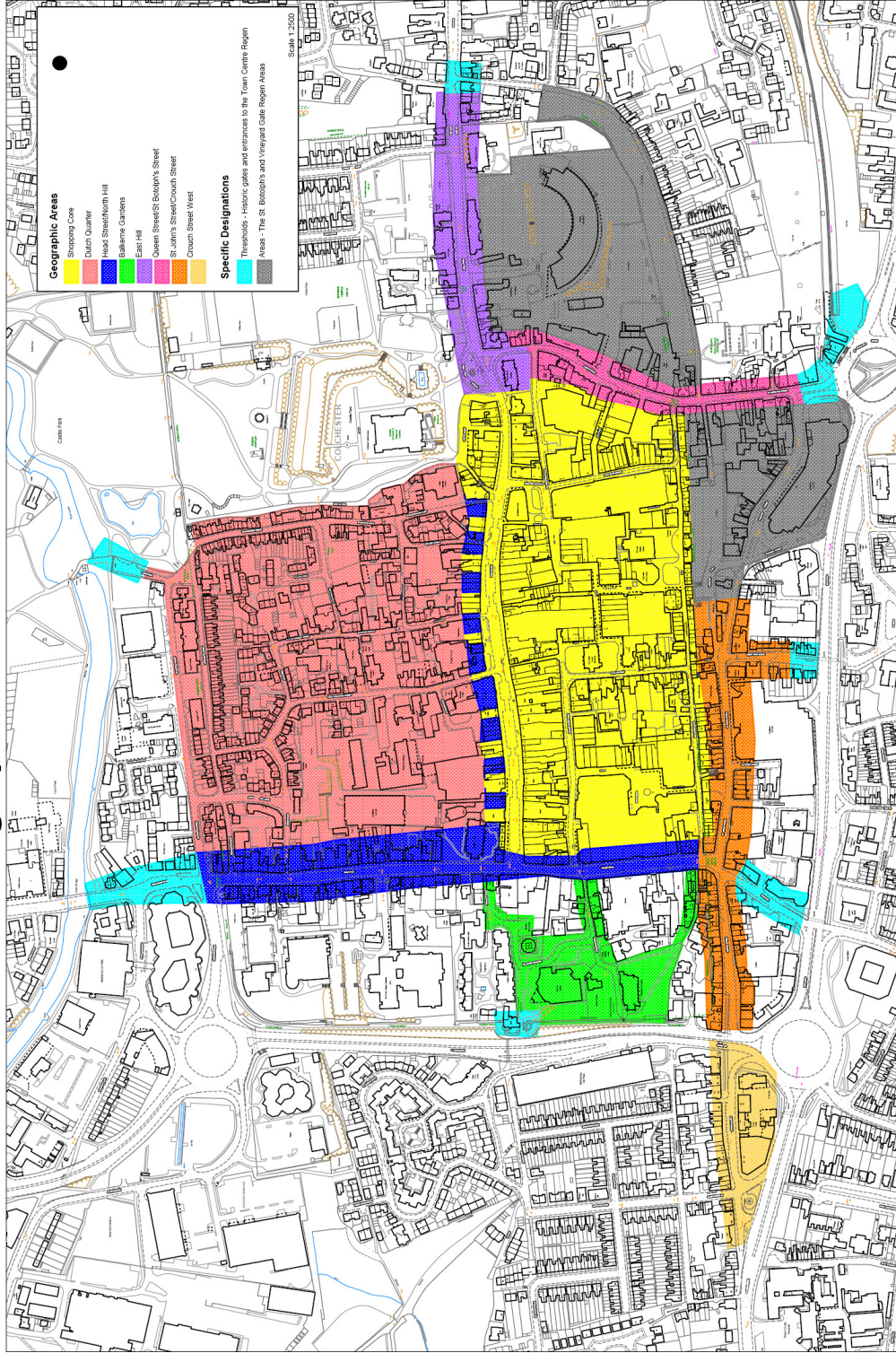
Character Areas and Opportunity Sites

The Town Centre contains within it a number of areas with a unique identity and function. The following maps illustrates these areas as well as proposals and guidelines to retain and enhance the areas' locally distinctiveness buildings, spaces and functions. Further detail on the Character Areas is contained within the Public Realm Strategy ([link](#)) which provides guidelines for uses, materials and urban design.

The Character Areas include both functional areas such as the Shopping Core; and single streets such Head Street/ North Hill. Each Character Area includes a number of strengths and weaknesses which form the basis of enhancement proposals. Key sites for redevelopment/reuse are identified for each Character Area as appropriate and are illustrated on the maps that follow along with the area specific proposals and issues identified on the Key Themes maps (Sustainability, Activity, Movement and Heritage and Design). The Character Areas are:

1. Shopping Core
2. Dutch Quarter
3. Head Street/North Hill
4. Balkerne Gardens
5. East Hill/High Street
6. Queen's Street/ St. Botolphs Street
7. St John's Street/Crouch Street East
8. Crouch Street West
9. Vineyard Gate/ St Botolphs Quarter.

Geographic Areas



Delivery Strategy and Schedule

Partnership Working

Delivery of the plan relies on an integrated and coordinated approach. Within the Council, the Town Centre Steering Group will coordinate delivery of the Action Plan associated with the AAP. This group will coordinate with a wide range of public, private sector and third sector partners including:

Public Sector

Essex County Council
Essex Police
NHS and Primary Care Trusts

Business

Colchester Retail Business Association (CORBA)
Chamber of Commerce
Individual Town Centre businesses
Colchester Business Group

Cultural

Firstsite Gallery
Slack Space
Mercury Theatre
Colchester Castle Museum
Headgate Theatre
Colchester Arts Centre

Other Institutions

University of Essex
Garrison

Residents Associations and Amenity Groups

Colchester Tourist Guides Association
Friends of the Roman Wall
Destination Colchester

Funding

Commitments within this plan will be delivered through a variety of public and private funding sources. Key among these will be:

- Community Infrastructure Levy charges
- Section 106 payments linked to specific developments
- Grant opportunities at national and European level.

Delivery plan

Co-ordinated and updated by the Council's Town Centre Steering Group containing:

- I Projects and programmes to be delivered

Phasing
Funding
Partners

A Plan for the first period of plan implementation will be published along with the final version of the SPD.

Monitoring

The success of Town Centre SPD will be monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR monitors all Local Development Framework policies. It was first published in 2005 and has been continually published each December. Each AMR looks back over the previous year and assesses how the adopted documents have performed in relation to the aims and objectives set out. The success of this SPD will accordingly be measured through the indicators set for the LDF policies that underpin it.

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Appendices

Appendix A – List of LDF policies

The Local Development Framework in its entirety provides the overall strategic guidance for the Borough of Colchester, including the Town Centre. The following policies are of particular relevance

Core Strategy

- SD1 – Sustainable Development Locations ([link](#))
- SD2 – Delivering Facilities and Infrastructure ([link](#))
- CE1 – Centres and Employment Classification and Hierarchy ([link](#))
- CE2a – Town Centre ([link](#))
- H1 – Housing Delivery ([link](#))
- H2 – Housing Density ([link](#))
- H3 – Housing Diversity ([link](#))
- H4 – Affordable Housing ([link](#))
- UR1 – Regeneration Areas ([link](#))
- UR2 – Built Design and Character ([link](#))
- PR1 – Open Space ([link](#))
- PR2 – People Friendly Streets ([link](#))
- TA1 – Accessibility and Changing Travel Behaviour ([link](#))
- TA2 – Walking and Cycling ([link](#))
- TA3 – Public Transport ([link](#))
- TA4 – Roads and Traffic ([link](#))
- TA5 – Parking ([link](#))
- ER1 – Energy, Resources, Waste, Water and Recycling ([link](#))

Site Allocations

- SA TC1 – Appropriate Uses within the Town Centre and North Station Regeneration Areas ([link](#))

Development Policies

- DP1 – Design and Amenity ([link](#))
- DP3 – Planning Obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy ([link](#))
- DP6 – Colchester Town Centre Uses ([link](#))
- DP11 – Flat Conversions ([link](#))
- DP14 – Historic Environment Assets ([link](#))
- DP16 – Private Amenity Space and Open Space Provision for New Residential Development ([link](#))
- DP17 Accessibility and Access ([link](#))
- DP18 Transport Infrastructure Proposals ([link](#))
- DP19 – Parking Standards ([link](#))
- DP25 – Renewable Energy ([link](#))

Appendix B – List of LDF Evidence Base documents

National Planning Guidance

Department of Communities and Local Government, *National Planning Policy Framework* (March 2012)

Department for Transport, *Manual for Streets 2*, September, 2010

Essex Level Documents

Essex County Council, *Integrated County Strategy*, December 2010

Essex County Council, Essex Design Initiative, *Urban Place Supplement*, May 2007

Colchester Policy Documents

Colchester 2020, *Sustainable Community Strategy*, October 2007

Statement of Community Involvement (adopted 2006, amended in October 2008 and June 2011)

Annual Monitoring Report (December 2005 and annually thereafter)

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Affordable Housing – August 2011

Community Facilities – September 2009)

Cycling Delivery Strategy – January 2012

Shopfront Guidance – June 2011

Sustainable Construction – June 2011

Vehicle Parking Standards – November 2009

Adopted Core Strategy, December 2008

Adopted Development Policies, October 2010

Adopted Site Allocations, October 2010

Digital Strategy (June 2012)

Equality Impact Assessment for the Local Development Framework, revised 2012

Colchester Studies

Cambridge Model to Estimate the Economic Impact of Tourism on Colchester Borough (collected annually)

Chris Blandford Associates, *Townscape Character Assessment*, June 2006

Chris Blandford Associates, *Assessment of Open Countryside Between Settlements in Borough of Colchester* (July 2009)

Destination Benchmarking Visitor Opinion Surveys

Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch, *Colchester Borough Historic Environment Characterisation Project*, June 2009

Fordham Associates, *Strategic Housing Market Assessment*, February 2008

GVA Grimley, *North Essex Retail Study, Stage Two Report, Colchester Borough*, February 2007

Heritage Economic & Regeneration Trust (HEART), *Colchester Town Centre Project, Local Distinctiveness Audit*, March 2012

Humberts Leisure, *Hotel Market Demand Appraisal and Sequential Site Assessment*, April 2007 and update June 2009
J Mansell Jagger, *Colchester Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal*, 2007
King Sturge, *Colchester Town Centre Retail Study*, Nov. 2011
Lambert Smith Hampton, *Employment Land Study*, May 2007
PMP Consultants, *Colchester Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study*, November 2007
Roger Tym and Partners, *Strategic Housing Land Availability Study*, November 2007 and June 2008 update
Royal Haskoning, *Colchester Appropriate Assessment*, November 2007
Scott Wilson, *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment*, November 2007
University of Swansea, *Study on Older People's Use of Space (OPUS)* 2010

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Glossary

Better Town Centre – The Better Town Centre programme is a Colchester Borough Council initiative providing a co-ordinated approach to Town Centre working based on the following nine inter-related themes:

- Improving Colchester for You and Your Family
- Creating Quality Public Places and Spaces
- Bringing New Buildings
- Supporting Business and Retailers
- Making it Easier to Get To and Around Colchester
- Promoting Colchester
- New Things to See, Do and Visit
- Ensuring Clean, Safe Places and Spaces
- Changing Colchester After Dark

These themes have been integrated into the key objectives of this document.

Core Strategy - The Core Strategy, adopted in December 2008, sets out the long-term vision for the sustainable development of Colchester and the strategic policies required to deliver that vision. It provides for the enhancement of the environment, as well and defines the general locations for delivering strategic development including housing, employment, retail, leisure, community and transport, which are then given precise boundaries in the Proposals Map.

Community Infrastructure Levy – The Community Infrastructure Levy is a charge which local authorities may impose on new development to help fund new strategic infrastructure.

Development Policies – The Development Policies document forms part on the Local Development Framework. It provides further details to assist the delivery of the strategic objectives and policies found in the Core Strategy. The Development Policies will affect allocations and designations set by the Site Allocations document and shown on the Proposals Map.

Evidence Base – The Evidence Base for Colchester's Local Development Framework 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 links on the Council's LDF website page.

Integrated County Strategy – The document sets out infrastructure and investment opportunities for Essex. It was produced by the Essex Chief Executives Association with agreement from all fifteen county, unitary and district authorities in Essex. In particular, it highlights the role of Colchester Town Centre as a key focus for sustainable growth.

Local Development Framework (LDF) - This is the term given to the portfolio of documents which provide the framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for the area.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – The NPPF sets out the Government’s planning policy including the primacy of Local Plans and the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

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.

Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD)– The Site Allocations document sets out the criteria for the boundaries shown on the Proposals Map and provides area and use specific allocations.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – A document produced by the Council to add further detailed guidance and information on a particular subject such as Sustainable Construction or Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities. An SPD is subject to a formal consultation period and then is used as a material consideration when determining planning applications.

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

Town Centre –The extent of Colchester’s Town Centre is still defined by the walls first built by the Romans two thousand years ago. The precise boundary is illustrated by the Proposals Map and includes the built-up area surrounded by the Walls as well as the St. Botolphs quarter to the east and a further commercial area to the south bounded by Southway. Colchester planning policies place the Town Centre at the heart of its policies for sustainable development.

