



Colchester
City Council

Local Plan Committee Meeting

**Grand Jury Room, Town Hall, High Street,
Colchester, CO1 1PJ
Thursday, 22 February 2024 at 18:00**

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

Information for Members of the Public

Access to information and meetings

You have the right to attend all meetings of the Council, its Committees and Cabinet. You also have the right to see the agenda (the list of items to be discussed at a meeting), which is usually published five working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published. Dates of the meetings are available here:

<https://colchester.cmis.uk.com/colchester/MeetingCalendar.aspx>.

Most meetings take place in public. This only changes when certain issues, for instance, commercially sensitive information or details concerning an individual are considered. At this point you will be told whether there are any issues to be discussed in private, if so, you will be asked to leave the meeting.

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COLCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
Local Plan Committee
Thursday, 22 February 2024 at 18:00

The Local Plan Committee Members are:

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

The Local Plan Committee Substitute Members are:

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

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

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

Live Broadcast

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

[\(107\) ColchesterCBC - YouTube](#)

1 Welcome and Announcements

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

2 Substitutions

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

3 Urgent Items

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

4 Declarations of Interest

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

5 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Councillors will be invited to confirm that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2023 and 15 January 2024 are a correct record.

2023-12-11 CCC Local Plan Committee Minutes 7 - 18

2024-01-15 CCC Local Plan Committee Minutes 19 - 26

6 Have Your Say! (Hybrid Council meetings)

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

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

7 Amendments to Colchester Conservation Area No 4: North Station Road and Environs, Character Appraisal & Management Proposals 27 - 176

The Committee are invited to approve the proposed extension to the boundary of Colchester Conservation Area No 4: North Station and Environs to include a further 6 terraced houses in Causton Road.

Further to this the Committee are invited to adopt the revised draft Character Appraisal and Management Proposals and to agree to commence the statutory process for the making of the Article 4 Directions.

- 8 **Colchester Local Plan Review: Issues and Options Update** 177 -
208
The Committee are invited to note the progress made in the Local Plan Review, agree to publish the placemaking questionnaire including the themes set out in appendix 1, to agree to the approach outlined for the engagement on the Health and wellbeing theme being primarily with the health professionals and partners, working together with the Alliance and other relevant stakeholders. Further to this the Committee are invited to agree to publish Essex County Council's recommended Climate Change Policies, included in appendix 2, for engagement.
- 9 **Colchester Local Plan Review - Evidence Base and Call for Sites Update** 209 -
416
The Committee are invited to note the submissions received through the Call for Sites Process and to note the updates for the evidence base documents required to support the Colchester Local Plan Review.
- 10 **Exclusion of the Public (not Scrutiny or Executive)**
In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example confidential personal, financial or legal advice), in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) can be decided. (Exempt information is defined in Section 100I and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).
- Local Plan Committee Background Information Version 2 July 2022** 417 -
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Part B
(not open to the public including the press)

LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE

11 December 2023

<i>Present: -</i>	Councillors T. Young (Chair), Barber, Burrows, Dundas, Kirkby-Taylor, Pearson, Scordis, Smith, and Spindler
<i>Substitute Member: -</i>	Cllr Dundas for Cllr Sunnucks Cllr Pearson for Cllr Rippingale
<i>Also in Attendance: -</i>	Cllr Harris Cllr Lilley Cllr Smalls Cllr Warnes

287. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 24 May 2023 and 2 October 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

288. Have Your Say!

Councillor Michael Lilley addressed the Committee as a visiting Councillor. The Committee heard that the proposals for housing on Middlewick were contentious and that they were concerned by the latest statement from the Ministry of Defence (MOD) which had published a brochure for development with additional land shown for development outside of the Local Plan allocation. The Committee heard that they had changed their view on the site following this new information from the MOD and detailed that there was a need to remove Middlewick from the Local Plan and that they did not trust what the MOD were telling them. The Visiting Councillor detailed that there was a need to protect the grassland on site and that the extension of the site was moving towards a woodland which might have to be removed if development continued. The Committee heard that the site needed to be given to the people of Colchester as a nature reserve following the Councils climate emergency statement and that thousands of trees should be planted on the site. It was detailed that the homes that were proposed on site would not be affordable homes, and that even the affordable homes were no longer affordable, and would not be Council Houses. The speaker concluded by outlining that they did not trust the MOD, that the Middlewick allocation should be removed from the Local Plan and that the area should be protected from development.

Liz Austin addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5 (1). The Committee heard that the original Planning Application for the Riverside Development had been submitted in 2021, two days prior to the change in permitted development regulations and as such if it had been submitted later it would have been subject to far stricter regulations. The Committee heard that objections had been lodged with the Council by residents and Councillors detailing that there had been a long delay to start the work on site and that subsequently all work has stopped leaving building equipment across the site and insufficient security leading to vandalism and squatting. The Committee were asked to note that the company managing the site was facing bankruptcy and that they had a reputation for creating modern ghettos. The speaker concluded by requesting that the

Council find out if the owner of the site was able to complete the application and that those responsible for the site were held to account.

At the request of the Chair, Simon Cairns, Joint Head of Planning detailed that Officers were sympathetic to the issues that the Community was facing with the site and that the Council had undertaken a number of site visits with Community Safety, the Police and Building Control and confirmed that there were no actionable breaches on the site but that the site would be kept under review and that if an actionable breach did occur then the Council would investigate further. The Joint Head of Planning detailed that stalled sites were uncommon in Colchester but not elsewhere and that viability was becoming a more prevalent issue confirming that the Council did not have the resources to investigate further but would continue to monitor the site and confirmed that the details of the site had been passed to interested parties who may have an interest in developing the site.

Councillor Paul Smith Declared a non-registerable interest regarding the Riverside development as he had been quoted in a newspaper publication about the site.

Liz Austin and Fran Wagstaff responded to the points raised by the Joint Head of Planning that the route to the site had been cordoned off by the developers.

Sir Bob Russell addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5 (1). The Committee heard that they welcomed the comments from Councillor Lilley and that they wished to address the Committee regarding the Salary Brook allocation in the Tendring Colchester, Borders Garden Community Joint Committee (TCBGCJC). The speaker detailed that in the minutes of the meeting from February 2023 meeting had been signed off as a true record detailing the policy for salary brook which confirmed that the natural landscape would screen the development. The Committee heard that since the previous meeting a school had been proposed on the brow of the hill and that further to this a garden village consultation had taken place and the school had now been replaced with housing. The speaker raised concerns on who was running the project and whether it was Councillors, Officers or developers and outlined that it could not be right that elected Members had not made a decision on this and replaced the school and boundary with housing.

At the request of the Chair, The Place Strategy Manager, Sarah Scott, responded that they had not attended the meeting or reviewed the minutes but confirmed that and proposals put forward and agreed by the Committee would be subject to examination and that these would be subject to engagement and consultation.

Sir Bob Russell responded by detailing that the decision on this had been made on the site and that this should be changed and outlined that they needed to know who was making this decision and whether it was overruling the Committee and would raise their concerns at the next Committee meeting.

Dr Jeremy Dagley addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5 (1). The Committee heard that they were speaking as the Director of Conservation at the Essex Wildlife Trust and detailed that the enhancement of green networks and the ambition which linked in with the Colchester Local Plan Review proposed vision and engagement progress update as this relied on the designated site of Middlewick Ranges. The Committee heard that the Middlewick ranges site was an outstanding site for wildlife which encompassed tens of hectares of acid grassland and detailed that this asset had been underestimated and was of national importance. The Committee were asked to note that the UK was facing a biodiversity crisis and that the Trust's view was that the Wildlife on Middlewick Ranges was essential. The speaker concluded by detailing that they were

speaking for the Essex Wildlife Trust and Essex Ecology and requested and advised the Committee that the Middlewick Ranges be protected and removed from the Local Plan and that housing allocations are moved to alternate sites.

Richard Martin addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5 (1). The Committee heard that they had been sent a letter from the RSPB in relation to housing on Middlewick which related to the ecological evidence on a single case study based off of Minsmere in Suffolk and that mitigation of any harm from development must be effective and that the work in Minsmere should not undermine the Middlewick Biodiversity Value as they were not comparable. The Committee heard that the mitigation for the Middlewick Ranges was not a replacement for the sensitive nature of the site and species at Middlewick and that the decision to include the site in the Local Plan needed to be revisited.

Dougal Urquhart addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5 (1). The Committee heard that they were speaking as the Chair of the Colchester Natural History Society and detailed that they had been monitoring and surveying and outlined the response from the Essex Wildlife Trust insisting that Middlewick is taken out of the Local Plan and that the Council had been misinformed with the Stantec report which had been pulled apart by Members of the society. It was noted that some Members of the society had been allowed access to the site where they had found 1480 species of invertebrates as well as rare species finds and as well as double the species that had been found on site only 2 years previously. The speaker detailed that the ranges were one of the most ecologically important sites in the area and confirmed that Natural England had been informed of the findings from the group. The speaker concluded by detailing that the acid grassland on site could never be replicated.

Andrew Wilkinson addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5 (1). The Committee heard that they were speaking as a Member of the Save the Middlewick Campaign. The speaker detailed that the aforementioned letter from the RSPB was relevant and would be published and outlined that the Stantec report was out of date and used a biodiversity net gain metric that was not legal as they had made up their own one and now have to use the DEFRA metric. The speaker commented on the Councils Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and asked when the Climate Change SPD would be ready and whether this would be taken into account for all decisions. The speaker outlined that a number of Councillors had approached the group asking how they could get Middlewick removed from the Local Plan and the process and whether it would be possible to get the area into the Green and Blue network strategy and that they would talk directly to officers on this.

David Smith addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5 (1). The Committee heard that the speakers house backed onto the Middlewick Ranges and that they thanked Councillors who had changed their mind on Middlewick and detailed that the proposal to increase the number of homes on the site by the Ministry of Defence was not ok. The speaker detailed that they had concerns about the traffic in Colchester and accidents that had taken place on Abbots Road and Mersea Road and that the roads could not cope with the increased amount of traffic. It was noted that the current infrastructure could not cope and that any new development would put pressure on the sewage works in Haven Road. The speaker asked the Committee to remove the Middlewick Allocation from the Local Plan and that it should be preserved for future generations to enjoy.

Ted Benton addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure

Rule 5 (1). The Committee heard that the speaker had viewed the advertising images for the sale of Middlewick Site and this emphasised further the reasons why the site shouldn't be destroyed as it was such a wonderful piece of landscape and that it was irreplaceable. The Committee heard that there was a strong sense of feeling against the site with over 1000 objections and detailed that Colchester had had a military presence since the Crimean War. The speaker detailed that the Stantec report for the Middlewick site was incorrect and that it was an irreplaceable habitat and detailed that the Council had been misled by an independent consultancy and that should be sufficient evidence to take it out of the Local Plan.

Lisa Cross addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5 (1). The speaker referenced those that had just addressed the Committee and that Middlewick should not be built on and detailed that the mitigation land earmarked for Middlewick formed part of the buffer zone for a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Committee were asked to note that the environment of Middlewick could not be translocated and that the expectation that species would migrate to smaller designated areas would be destructive and counterproductive. The speaker detailed that they had a statement from renowned entomologist Stephen Forke which detailed their concern that acid grassland could be created via artificial means and that any details of this should be treated with suspicion and that further information should be sought. The Committee heard that there were other viable options on housing that could boost the ecology on the site. The speaker concluded by detailing that the Save the Wick campaign were willing to work with Colchester City Council and invited all Councillors to come along to a naturalist led walk across the land to view what would be lost if development took place.

Councillor Dave Harris addressed the Committee as a visiting Councillor. The speaker thanked Cllr Lilley for his comments and detailed how they had campaigned the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to take the Middlewick off the table and detailed that they had written to Grant Shapps MP, Secretary of State for Defence. The Committee heard that the letter included details that there was a lack of infrastructure to support the allocation, and the impact on the biodiversity of the site. The speaker detailed that they received a response detailing that the MOD would continue with selling the surplus land. The speaker continued by outlining that adding an extension to the site was not in the Local Plan and that there was not enough infrastructure in the form of schools, dentists and the road network. The visiting Councillor detailed that they echoed the comments made by previous speakers on the biodiversity of the site and that the Council could not allow this to happen. It was noted that the review process was a factor here and that they had been disappointed by the response from their letter to Grant Shapps. The Committee heard that a review needed to take place with residents on side and that there needed to be further conversations but the Middlewick allocation in the Local Plan needed to be removed immediately.

Councillor Fay Smalls addressed the Committee as a visiting Councillor. The visiting Councillor thanked all the previous speakers who had brought up Middlewick and detailed that they had only been a Councillor since May 2023 and detailed that they were speaking to ask that Middlewick was removed as an allocation in the Local Plan and that it be turned into a nature reserve that could be preserved for future generations. The Committee heard that they had not been part of the original process but detailed that it was controversial from the beginning and that what was agreed was damage limitation but that there was an increasing consensus that this needed to change. The speaker outlined that the Council needed to protect areas of ecological importance and that the local plan stipulated that there needed to be a 44% biodiversity net gain and that they had long held concerns over the viability of the project. The speaker noted that they had heard the comments from the speakers noting the Middlewick site was unique and that if it was destroyed it could not be

made elsewhere, and that the loss of space would have a detrimental impact on the community as some flats in the area did not have gardens and used the open space at Middlewick.

Councillor Martyn Warnes addressed the Committee as a visiting Councillor. The Committee heard that the process for reviewing the Local Plan was currently underway but that there was a flaw in the planning process whereby the site had been put forward then the developer had to provide the housing and that this site had been put forward at the eleventh hour. It was noted that the MOD was now trying to increase the size of the site and that it undermined people's ability to take them at their word. The Committee were asked to note that there were two distinct parcels of land and that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) framework enhancement of sites criteria had a red flag on it and that it was now realised that it had significant ecological importance. The speaker detailed that the last decade of Planning Policy had pitted Councils against local communities and that they were looking forward to the new town legislation which would look at everything in a more strategic level and not just affordable housing. The speaker concluded by detailing that if this piece of land was used as a woodland buffer between the current training area and Middlewick there was a fear that the Council would be looking at this again with another parcel of land in the future.

A statement from Councillor Martin Goss was read out by the Democratic Services Officer as follows:

"I am unable to attend tonight due to a pre-arranged Santa run in Mile End with the Round table. However, I appreciate the committee allowing this statement to be read out.

Middlewick Ranges has caused much distress and controversy since being mooted for sale by the MOD. It has also been used as a political football which of course doesn't resolve the worries or concerns of residents locally or more widely in Colchester The MOD have now decided to sell even more land which opens the risk to even more housing on the site – roughly another 700 at least.

It is time to take a fresh look at Middlewick and see whether the whole site can be removed legally from the local plan – or amendments are made to ensure all of the remaining land not designated for housing is added as a Country Park or protected Wildlife area only. This would afford the majority of the site protection in perpetuity including any new land for sale.

Ultimately no housing on the site would be the ideal goal but as a minimum we must protect the whole of the site and ensure it is added as protected land in the local plan. The local plan is there to protect areas we do not wish to be developed via the back door and now we can start to consider a review of the local plan within the 5 year period, removing Middlewick should be our ideal goal with a fall back position of ultimate protection for the majority of the site.

This will stop the MOD or future developer trying to come back with another desire for 2500 houses as opposed to 1000 or adding a further 700 to the newly included land.

Time is to act now!"

A statement from Councillor Andrea Luxford-Vaughan, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Environment and Sustainability was read out by the Democratic Services Officer as follows:

"Update on Middlewick

Some of you may be aware that the Ministry of Defence has recently put the site at Middlewick up for sale, and a sales brochure is now in the public domain.

In this brochure the allocation is bigger than the land that is shown in our local plan and therefore what is covered by local plan policy. Obviously, the MOD are entitled to sell whatever land they wish, and we have no control over that. But to be clear, there has not been any dialogue with the MOD regarding the marketing of the site or the inclusion of the additional land beyond that of the allocated site in the local plan. Officers have had meetings post the adoption of Section 2, to encourage the MOD to revise the allocation in order to best safeguard the area of greatest ecological value, but these discussions were unsuccessful. The council also has no influence over who the developer will be, or what the time scales involved in developing the plot will be.

The Local Plan allocation and Policy Requirements set out in Policy SC2 will continue to apply to any proposal at the present time despite the increased land area being marketed.

We do have a robust policy linked to a very strict land allocation (shown on the policies map) and any deviation from this would not be successful unless a developer provided conclusive evidence that a scheme could meet the strict ecological requirements set out in the plan. Therefore, we should be reassured that if it doesn't meet policy, it won't get built regardless of what is in the sales brochure.

Although I fully accept the limitations of mitigation and I personally think net biodiversity legislation is not fit for purpose, we are no worse off than when council first adopted the plan. Any developer will need to negotiate a legal agreement for both of these policy determined elements, and we control that process by being able to refuse planning permission. It is worth pointing out though that the exact location of any mitigation site is not set in policy.

The local plan review could take account of any new evidence submitted and therefore the council has agreed and budgeted to appoint an independent ecological specialist to do further work on the site. The brief was drafted following advice from Natural England, and in response to feedback from ecologists it was amended to extend the survey period. We also asked the Colchester Natural History Society to recommend suitably qualified ecologists. We have now requested that the survey area is increased to align with the site area now being marketed for disposal.

This work will involve information gathering throughout the seasons and is anticipated to supersede previous studies that were criticized at the section 2 hearings. It is also relevant that ecological survey data is time limited which for most if not all species updates from the earlier evidence will be required in any event. This evidence will then make the policy, via the local plan review, stronger in safeguarding ecology. The appointment has been delayed slightly because of discussions on budget allocations but someone is engaged with a view to commencing work in the very near future. At this point in time, I'm unable to confirm who that is because those unsuccessful in the tender process have not yet been informed.

The ecological work will feed into the policy requirement for master planning for the site. This work can't take place until a developer has engaged with the council so I can't give a time scale to that either but the policy requires a masterplan to be agreed with the Council prior to submission of an application. Officers are committed to working positively with members of the local community and elected members and an engagement plan will be prepared.

We have asked the MOD for an interim meeting to find out what they think the time scales of the sale may be. They are yet to respond to us."

At the request of the Chair the Place Strategy Manager responded to the points raised by the Have Your Say speakers. The Committee heard that the Council had started its review of the Local Plan and that a later item on the agenda referenced the approach that was being used to look at sites going forward including those that were currently allocated. The Place Strategy Manager detailed that that it was premature to consider the sites as all sites would be considered for review and that any sites in the Local Plan will need to be considered at the appropriate time as the Council could not simply roll forward unimplemented sites. It was noted that there would be an implement-ability test which included Middlewick which would be re-assessed and considered as part of the bigger picture for Colchester and if removed something else would need to take its place. The Committee heard that the marketing material for the Middlewick area did not change the allocation in the Local Plan or the rigorous policies that were in place and any development on site would need to accord with these. The Place Strategy Manager outlined their understanding of the alarm within the local community following the publication of the marketing material but confirmed that the only element that had any status was the site that had been allocated. The Committee heard that the comments raised regarding ecology and their merits were not a matter for discussion as they had been examined by the Planning Inspector when confirming the allocation of the site as were all other aspects including infrastructure which was set out in the Local Plan policies. It was confirmed that the Council was looking to commission some further ecological surveys that would be carried out by an independent ecologist and that officers were engaging with the Colchester Natural History Society on who to appoint but who this was could not be confirmed at the meeting.

At the request of the Chair, The Joint Head of Planning added to the response from the Place Strategy Manager that the site allocation policy for Middlewick was very detailed and that any proposal on site would need to meet this criteria. It was detailed that all allocations would need to be reviewed and that the evidence base would need to be refreshed including the ecological evidence which was out of date.

289. Approach to the Colchester Local Plan Review proposed Vision Engagement and Progress Update

The Place Strategy Manager presented the report to the Committee outlining that this report detailed how work was progressing with the review of the Local Plan in accordance with the iterative approach with a consultation starting on the Green and Blue Infrastructure. It was noted that the work needed to be appropriate and specific and a Member Workshop was held with the feedback from this contained within the report. A similar session was undertaken with Planning Officers in a Member / Officer Workshop. The Committee heard that from these discussions it was recommended that the consultation would be online and all would be invited to answer the questions within the report and appendices which would look up to 2041 with engagement beginning in the new year. The Place Strategy Manager concluded by asking that the Committee agree to public engagement in early 2024 to inform a vision for the Local Plan Review and to note progress made on the Local Plan Review.

In response to a question from the Committee regarding the practicalities of removing Middlewick from the Local Plan and liabilities associated therein the Committee heard that the review of the local plan would mean that all sites would be required to be evidence based including any decisions to remove and include any other allocations and would need to be examined by the Planning Inspectorate where all parties can make representations. It was detailed that reviewing Middlewick independently did not have any justification and needed to be looked at within the wider strategy of the Local Plan. The Place Strategy Manager

concluded by detailing that there was no advantage to reviewing Middlewick separately now as the review of the Local Plan had already started and that this would be the appropriate approach to review with an up-to-date evidence basis.

Members debated the report on issues including: that the Ministry of Defence had jumped the gun with the Middlewick and marketing of the site and that some Members felt that Middlewick should be at the top of the review process noting that any potential buyer of the site would be undertaking this at their own peril. Some Members added that the reasoning behind the proposal was due to treasury driven motives and that they felt from what had already been said that this was a unique site that should be preserved as a nature reserve and that further guidance should be taken.

Members raised questions on the scope of the consultation and how hard to reach groups would be included and what consultation would be undertaken with Parish and Community Councils.

In response to Members questions the Place Strategy Manager detailed that the consultation was very focussed on engagement and that they were trying to maximise engagement with all bodies including Parish Councils.

Members continued to debate the item noting that some other Councils had a public realm access group which were included in consultations and queried whether there were any groups like this in Colchester. The Place Strategy Manager responded that they were not aware of a group such as this in Colchester and that any such group would be included within the consultation and confirmed that the residents panel were included within the consultation.

Members continued to debate the proposals with some Members welcoming the views of Middlewick being removed from the Local Plan however there was concern raised from the statement from the Portfolio Holder for Planning Environment, and Sustainability on whether there could be two parallel strains of work that were not aligning. At the request of Chair, the Place Strategy Manager detailed the portfolio holder had been briefed ahead of the meeting and that this could be picked up after the meeting.

Members debated the proposal on issues regarding an online survey and whether this would catch all people and how people without access to the internet would take part in the consultation. Discussion continued with Members outlining that the debate on Middlewick showed the value of a Local Plan as developers would be on the site already with a presumption in favour of development if the Local Plan had not been adopted. It was added that focussing on one element only would undermine the plan and that the Council needed to be consistent with assessing evidence and queried whether the site could become a SSSI.

At the request of the Chair, the Place Strategy Manager responded that the responsibility of SSSI designation resided with Natural England and noted that they had received requests to designate the site but confirmed that this was not within the Committee's remit.

Members continued to debate the proposal with some Councillors commenting that the congestion and poor public transport links to Middlewick needed to be considered and that there should be a drop-in session for Members of the public and that there was a need to highlight the unparished areas.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) That the Local Plan Committee note the progress made on the Local Plan Review and that the Committee approved the proposal for public engagement in early 2024 to inform a vision for the Local Plan Review.

A short break was taken between the previous item and the following item.

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

Bethany Jones, Principal Planning Policy Officer presented the Report to the Committee and assisted them in their deliberations. The Committee heard that the Draft Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) Methodology had been subject to a consultation between the 20 October 2023 and 17 November 2023 in which time 12 representations were received which had been summarised in the officer report. The Committee heard that these responses had informed changes to the SLAA Methodology which included removing ambiguity, and using a RAG approach for each question of the assessment rather than a rating. The Principal Planning Policy Officer concluded by detailing that the evidence base from the SLAA would be used to make a spatial strategy and asked that the Committee agree the methodology as proposed.

In response to questions from the Committee the Principal Planning Policy Officer detailed that existing green spaces had been included as not all of the SLAA would be focussing on residential development but would also be looking at open space areas that had not been designated previously.

Members discussed the inclusion of Green and Blue infrastructure and it was confirmed that these would be reviewed in conjunction with the Settlement Boundary Review question within the SLAA. Members raised further points regarding the provision of Doctors surgeries and schools and whether only those that had capacity for students/ patients should be included. The Joint Head of Planning, Simon Cairns, responded that developer contributions to expansion should be considered as a mitigation but noted that this was not possible in all locations.

Members debated the role of utilities including concerns regarding the deliverability of services from Anglian Water including foul water and queried how much scrutiny could be applied to this. The Joint Head of Planning detailed that the servicing of foul water was a statutory duty which required them to connect a property to the network and provide foul water treatment.

A Member noted that it was projected that there would be a decline of 12% for primary education in the next 10 years.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) that the Local plan Committee noted the summary of consultation responses and agreed the Strategic Land Availability Assessment Methodology.

291. Adoption of Active Travel and Climate Change Supplementary Planning Documents

Shelley Blackaby, Planning Policy Officer (Environment) presented the report to the Committee outlining that the two Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) before the Committee were the last in the series looking to address the Climate Emergency. The Committee heard that the SPDs had been updated following consultation. The Planning Policy Officer concluded by detailing the contents of SPDs which were appended to the

report and asked the Committee to approve the SPDs and revoke the existing Cycling Delivery Strategy SPD.

The Committee debated the SPDs on issues including: that the Active Travel SPD did not contain a lot of information on inter-urban transportation and noted that the City area contained a large amount of rural areas and inter-urban travel was barely mentioned in the strategy. The Committee queried the use of EV strategy as it was an ever-growing problem that not all people had access to a charge point which was not helped by the fact that on many developments parking was not always adjacent to the house. In response to the points raised by the Committee the Planning Policy Officer (Environment) confirmed that the details of the EV Charging points locations could be reviewed during the Local Plan Design Review.

Members continued to debate the proposal on issues including: the referencing of other Local Government bodies and queries on the accuracy of their data, the number of representations received in the consultation, and how the policies would be reviewed to ensure that they were being complied to by developers and how they would be enforced.

At the request of the Chair, the Planning Policy Officer (Environment) detailed that the references contained within the SPD were government reports and Essex County Council (ECC) and confirmed that they were all based on further guidance from the Adopted Local Plan and its evidence base. Further to this the Committee heard that ECC were doing research on the Climate Emergency and were drafting model policies which were being added to the Essex Design Guide Website. Members heard that the responses to the consultation were low but detailed that Council had carried out a 4-week consultation and confirmed that Officers had proactively contacted the RSPB and Wildlife Trust. With regards to ensuring compliance the Committee heard that a checklist had been created and if adopted it could be finalised and used as part of planning applications to show how the documents had been complied to.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) that the Local Plan Committee adopted the Active Travel SPD and revoke the existing Cycling Delivery Strategy SPD with wording amendment as detailed in the Amendment Sheet

RESOLVED (NINE votes FOR, ZERO votes AGAINST, with ONE ABSTENTION) that the Local Plan Committee adopted the Climate Change SPD.

292. Infrastructure Funding Statement

Simon Cairns, Joint Head of Planning presented the report to the Committee outlining that the Council had received funds of £3.6 million and spent £4.8 million on projects within the City confirming that all details were contained within the report and that the item was for information only.

Members discussed the report with some Members noting that it was disappointing that such a low number of affordable homes had been built with a question being raised whether it met the 30% Affordable Housing target as well as whether the Council could ask for more contributions on developments.

At the request of the Chair, the Joint Head of Planning detailed that the purpose of the developer contributions was to mitigate growth and was not there to remedy existing deficiencies and confirmed that the Council maintained a list of potential projects and that officers asked for project suggestions. It was noted that the monies detailed are contained within the reports to the Planning Committee.

Members continued to discuss the information with some Members raising concern that there was a large amount of money unallocated whilst there were very deprived areas of the City with additional concerns raised that there was not a sound process to ensure that it was spent efficiently. Members requested that a session be held for Members regarding Section 106 training and the Joint Head of Planning confirmed that they would look at how to improve liaison between officers and Councillors regarding Section 106 proposals.

The discussion concluded with some Members questioning the large allocation of funding that was given to leisure facilities and asked whether a further breakdown could be provided regarding the spend on leisure facilities.

293. Authority Monitoring Report

Bethany Jones, Principal Planning Policy Officer presented the report to the Committee noting that the key findings were that the Council had achieved City Status, that the number of planning applications submitted had decreased slightly from the previous year and confirmed that the number of applications did not include the discharge of conditions. It was confirmed that the number of dwellings built was below the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) and that this was because the completion of student accommodation was delayed. The Committee heard that further progression had taken place with regard to Neighbourhood Planning with Great Horkesley designating their Neighbourhood Plan Area, Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan being made in 2023 as well as Myland and Braiswick which did not need a referendum and was approved in October 2023. The Planning Policy Officer concluded by detailing that the recommendation for the Committee was to approve the 2023 Authority Monitoring Report for publication on the Council's website.

Members discussed the report noting that there were 26,000 Economically inactive people in the City and that there was a concern regarding the number of empty properties with Members asking for further details on the breakdown of these figures by ward. The Joint Head of Planning confirmed that they would look into these figures and provide them to the Committee outside of the meeting.

Members continued to discuss the increase in people who were over 65 people which had increased by 7% and what the breakdown would be for the need for different types of accommodation and for those getting onto the housing ladder.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) that the Local Plan Committee approve the 2023 Authority Monitoring Report for publication on the Council's website.

LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE

15 January 2024

<i>Present: -</i>	Councillors T. Young (Chair), Barber, Burrows, Laws, Scordis, Smalls, Smith, and Spindler
<i>Substitute Member: -</i>	Councillor Smalls for Councillor Rippingale Councillor Laws for Councillor Sunnucks
<i>Also in Attendance: -</i>	Councillors Cox, Harris and McLean

294. Colchester City Centre Masterplan – Supplementary Planning Document

At the beginning of the meeting the Chair outlined that they were changing the order of the items on the agenda and would be considering the Colchester City Centre Masterplan – Supplementary Planning Document prior to the General Have Your Say item.

Chris Smith addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5 (1). The Committee heard that there were concerns regarding the status of Britannia Car Park and its possible closure as it had a lot of value in the community especially to those with reduced mobility. It was noted that there would be a benefit to the Council to have houses on the land however it was agreed by residents that the flat car park provided a unique offering especially for elderly people that was different to the other enclosed car parks in the City. The speaker concluded by asking whether the City Centre Masterplan could be modified to keep it intact.

Nick Chilvers addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5 (1). The Committee heard that there had been claims of thousands of responses when in fact there had only been just over a hundred with 26 people going on record with 92 people opposing the proposal and 14 people supporting with the negative points being rebutted and therefore not being up for discussion. It was heard that there were no physical contributions from Councillors within the report and queried whether the Cabinet decision on this was behind closed doors and queried whether Ward Councillors knew what was happening. The Committee heard that the usual comments would be made and congratulations would be given to all involved and asked that Councillors are properly consulted on the issues.

Sir Bob Russell addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5 (1). The Committee heard that none of the consultants from We Made That were in attendance at the meeting and that this was shameful. The Committee heard that the speaker had spent 12 hours reviewing the original draft masterplan and final one that was now in front of the Committee which had cost £130,000 and endorsed the previous speakers and detailed that no financial impact assessment had been submitted with the report. The Committee heard that the report was anti-car and noted that 65% of people who visited Colchester travelled by car and only 4.9% travelled by bicycle and that if Britannia car

park was lost then there would be a loss of over £800,000. The speaker detailed that the Membership of the bingo club was greater than any of the political parties in Colchester and asked that the Committee defer the item so that an economic impact assessment could be undertaken.

Clare Marsh addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5 (1). The Committee heard that they had concerns about the proposals at St Botolphs Circus and that the proposals there would cause massive disruption with the outcome being a series of compromises and questioned whether the Committee really wanted to sign something off that wasn't right. The speaker detailed that the Masterplan had been validated by pseudo consultants and detailed that the responses had been universally negative and asked Members of the Committee not to confuse levelling up with gentrification and not take the temptation of funds with many strings attached. The speaker concluded by detailing that the proposal could create a large mess, discourage cars and be less efficient for all with trees in planters and detailed that there needed to be an inclusive duty to be careful with the City.

Sam Good (Colchester BID) addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5 (1). The Committee heard that they were grateful for the changes that had been made in the City Centre Masterplan including a more important stance on retail and referenced the future research vision as there was a lack of detail regarding the Rapid Transit System. The Committee heard that at a recent meeting it had been raised that employees in low paying jobs were struggling and that if the City centre was inaccessible then employers would not be able to recruit and sustain businesses as they will travel elsewhere. The Committee heard that if there was excess parking within Colchester then it should be viewed as how to fill the spaces.

John Burton (Civic Society) addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5 (1). The Committee heard that the Civic Society had been disappointed with the result that was being presented to the Committee and detailed that there needed to be a better financial assessment and asked that the item be deferred to review the financial implications further. The Committee heard that the plan had not looked at the City as a whole and detailed that the Civic Society believed that the whole city needed to be master planned. The Committee heard that the speaker had seen the objections to Crouch Street and East Hill and queried the cycle path usage and why that route had been chosen. The Committee were asked not to approve the proposal before them until a comprehensive masterplan of the entire city had been completed.

Dorian Kelly addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5 (1). The Committee heard that the proposal before them was a masterplan in everything but name and detailed that Colchester received a large amount of income through tourism and that Colchester was the biggest settlement in the region apart from Norwich. Concern was raised regarding the employment in the city and that it had been assumed incorrectly that there was a framework for the future in the document and that it only contained additional bus lanes and cycle lanes and that more needed to be added to encourage people to visit Colchester.

Councillor Dave Harris addressed the Committee as a visiting Councillor. The Committee heard that the masterplan referred to the proposed Middlewick development on p14 of the document and referred to it in passing as part of the jigsaw of development within the City and detailed that it should not be included in the plan and confirmed that they had appealed to the Ministry of Defence (MOD). The speaker concluded by asking the Committee to review the document and not include Middlewick into the Masterplan.

Councillor Sam McLean addressed the Committee as a visiting Councillor. The Committee heard that the outline of the proposals were good but there needed to be a proper vision for the Roman Circus and raised concerns over sight lines not being protected in the city for historic buildings such as Jumbo. Further concerns were raised by speakers on the 4-storey limit of buildings and whether that their dream was that Colchester could have a tram system. The speaker detailed they welcomed cycling routes and would like to see these expanded and asked officers to be ambitious such as other cities in Europe where they had pedestrianised areas.

Councillor Pam Cox addressed the Committee as a visiting Councillor. The Committee heard that the City centre masterplan created a framework for future development detailed their concerns regarding the Roman Circus and the Painters Yard and that more needed to be made of these areas.

Simon Cairns, Joint Head of Planning, presented the report to the Committee outlining that the masterplan was unique to Colchester and was designed to promote economic growth and to create a multi modal way to enter the City Centre. The Joint Head of Planning detailed that the proposal was not anti-car and that its overall aim was to enhance the city's economy. The Committee heard that there was a need to steward sustainable development and that this had been achieved through partnership working. It was noted that the responses to the consultation were contained with the report and that there had been a lot of engagement but asked Members to note that this document was a guide and not an action plan, that the transport plan was not being considered for adoption, and that the plan needed to be read in the context of other plans and the whole of the historic City Centre. The Committee heard that the document included biodiversity enhancement and greening of the city centre, as well as references to the Active Travel Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and the Colchester Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. The Committee heard that further work was required concerning the detail of future redevelopment sites but confirmed that the Masterplan had been amended to support the key retail uses of the area and confirmed that development on Britannia car park was a long-standing commitment and that neutral effects of that development on car parking provision needed to be demonstrated. It was noted that planning applications would need to justify their approach to development and that there was a danger that a design guide could be a blunt instrument and detailed that individual assessments would be required. The Joint Head of Planning detailed that the changes to contraflows in the High Street and any future proposals would require further transportation assessments and modelling and confirmed that references to the River Colne were shown as biodiversity enhancements. It was noted that the St Botolphs Circus junction and roundabout proposal would have improved crossing points and connectivity with the southern hinterland and that further clarification was provided on the proposed Roman Wall Park. The Joint Head of Planning concluded by detailing that the Supplementary Planning Document added value to the planning process and ensured that the best form of new developments came forward whilst supporting sustainable growth in a transparent manner.

Matthew Brown, Economic Regeneration Manager continued the presentation and outlined that the SPD would improve the city centre and drive the vibrancy around the City's assets of its heritage as well as making safer kerb-less streets and improving the journey into the City Centre from rail links. It was noted that there were other improvements around the City which included the proposals at Holy Trinity Church to restore the building and ensure its future. The presentation concluded with the Economic Regeneration Manager detailing that there was a focus on St Botolphs as it needed the most rejuvenation.

At the request of the Chair, Ian Turner, Principal Transportation and Infrastructure Planner for Essex County Council detailed that the St Botolphs junction was a highway dominant

area and did not provide an attractive gateway into the City and was as a barrier to movements. The Committee heard that the new scheme would look to address the public open space and connectivity for all users and provide a foundation for further bus travel changes. The speaker detailed that it was proposed works would be within Highways owned land which would include planting areas as well as full signalisation which would help improve air quality in the area. It was noted that the Rapid Transit System (RTS) would connect up different areas of the city and would aid shoppers and employees and provide better links across the city to areas including Greenstead, the Garden Community development and the University.

The Committee queried the highways proposals and whether this would take into account the growth across the City, the need for a bus station, the proposed layout of St Botolphs junction, and that there was concern that the project at St Botolphs could be shelved like a previous proposal in Crouch Street.

At the request of the Chair the Principal Transportation and Infrastructure Planner responded that there were concerns regarding a loss of parking and confirmed that there was an intention to look at those locations in further detail. The speaker detailed that there was funding in place to secure the proposal and to remove the barriers that did discriminate with regards to accessibility as well as promoting safety. The Principal Transportation and Infrastructure Planner concluded by detailing that there was a good level of commitment to the project so it was unlikely to be shelved.

Members debated the proposal with some of the Committee detailing their disappointment that the RTS to the University and Greenstead had started works and that local Councillors had not been informed of this as planting was being removed which would lead to increased flooding. Additionally it was raised that the link road did not properly link into the network.

At the request of the Chair the Principal Transportation and Infrastructure Planner responded that the new RTS Bus Lane would not be linked to the RTS system and currently advanced works were taking place and detailed that letters had been sent to residents and that the webpage had been updated and confirmed that there was an intention to improve the communications strategy and that there was a plan to brief Councillors ahead of the main works taking place.

At the request of the Chair the Joint Head of Planning (Simon Cairns) responded to questions and detailed that the development of Britannia Car park was not based on financial return and that there was a longstanding commitment to enhance the setting of the area and a sense of arrival. It was confirmed that policy TC3 stated that there should be a neutral effect on car parking.

At the request of the Chair Head of Parking (Richard Walker) detailed that there were many variables in the historic core of the City and that the Council had access to data back to 2007 and detailed that every surface car park was a development in waiting and that Britannia Car Park was part of the parking strategy as it did put traffic onto St Botolphs junction. The Committee heard that getting the mixture of parking across the City right was a challenge and detailed that the new strategy for parking would be circulated in February or March of 2024. It was confirmed that most of the vulnerable parking would remain and that a proportion would be reserved for accessible spaces with the anticipation that new car parks would be coming on stream as part of the regeneration process. It was confirmed that part of the modelling was to get the balance and mix correct with the placement of long stay and short stay in the right places.

At the request of the Chair the Joint Head of Planning (Simon Cairns) detailed that with

regards to engagement, an extremely comprehensive approach had been undertaken as part of the Masterplan Strategy and this detail is set out in the Masterplan involving (pages 24-27) collaboration during the drafting phase and upon the draft document with stakeholders. Further engagement had also been undertaken following closure of the consultation period to address perceived shortcomings. Committee Members were asked to note that an exceptionally large amount of engagement had taken place with a 6-week consultation period undertaken on the draft involving both in person and digital channels. Diverse and comprehensive engagement had been undertaken with hard-to-reach groups including youth groups as well as involving the sixth form college, the Alzheimer's society as well as the Civic Society with a silent majority supporting the proposal. Further to this it was noted that Members had been consulted through a direct steering group and addressed the concerns regarding the Financial Impact Assessment and confirmed that it had received input from economic specialists and did not seek to create new policies but hung from existing ones in the adopted local plan.

At the request of the Chair the Joint Head of Planning (Karen Syrett) detailed that the masterplan would be a newer document and that different sites had been mentioned and confirmed that when these came forward there would be specific project appraisals.

At the request of the Chair the Joint Head of Planning (Simon Cairns) detailed that the SPD had an emphasis on retailing and that it was car-lite but was not a complete pedestrianisation with the RTS providing relief to congestion whilst redesigning the parking provision to ensure it is optimally located and scaled to drive footfall. It was noted that any changes to Tollgate would need to be looked at as part of the Local Plan Review and detailed that Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP) 4 had been subject to its own public consultation and was not part of the document that was before the Committee. The Committee heard that the masterplan was not just a list of stuff and that there was a large amount of detail and that there was further work to do with regards to tourism and the granularity of the issues that the SPD mentioned. The Joint Head of Planning detailed that the Council had a duty to deliver housing and that Middlewick was outside the scope of the document. It was noted that the plan included a strategy to knit the City centre back together and that the protection of skylines would rely on individual site assessments and that storey height limits would be proposed instead of height limits. The Committee heard that further analysis needed to be undertaken on cycle routes and that wayfinding for areas of interest could be looked into further.

Prior to the break the Joint Head of Planning (Karen Syrett) detailed that the Council had never done so much consultation and engagement and said that it was disappointing that some speakers had felt that this wasn't the case and that there had been calls to defer. The Joint Head of Planning concluded by detailing that they had not heard anything from speakers that would require a deferral and that there was no requirement to shut Buzz Bingo.

A short break was taken between 19:47-19:55.

Members debated the proposal before the Committee on the issues including: that cycling numbers were low but further infrastructure was needed to encourage cycling and provide people a choice of transport, that the document would be making the most of Colchester's Heritage and queried what could be done to protect roman mosaics from contractors, as well as what could be done with Middlemill since its collapse.

At the request of the Chair The Joint Head of Planning (Simon Cairns) responded to the points raised and detailed that utilities had statutory rights and did not have to get consent for works and would be within the remit of Historic England to raise concerns over underground mosaics. With regards to Biodiversity and Middlemill it was noted that there

were options of what could be done and that officers could consult with the Colchester Natural History Society on a level of activity that is acceptable.

Members continued to debate the proposal on issues including: that the proposal was a compromise of all views across the Council as well as a foundation going forward, that the Council did not own all the assets and could not shut down businesses, that some Members felt that there should be more emphasis on a transport interchange. Members continued to debate the junction capacities across the City as well as further pedestrianisation of areas and noted that the Council did not own all the car parking spaces in the City.

Debate continued with some Members detailing that they had had bad experiences cycling in Colchester with a Member detailing that they had been hit off their bike and others having near misses. Members detailed that there were transport problems with some issues arising from bus companies, that there would be improvements to accessibility to St Botolphs, and that Britannia Car Park was a site allocation in the adopted Local Plan. It was noted by some Members that a bus station interchange would be preferable.

Members discussed the feedback from the consultation regarding cycling and how it could be made more inclusive within the City as well as how the car parks could be used and adapted. At the request of the Chair, the Head of Parking detailed that Priory Street Car park had won awards and that it was a challenge to find different sites and that officers were looking to see what could be done to enhance them.

The Committee continued to debate the proposal on issues including the need for a cultural shift and the need to make venues more accessible within the City in conjunction with the use of blue badge parking. The Head of Parking detailed that they would take away the points from the meeting.

RESOLVED (UNANIMOUSLY) That the Local Plan Committee adopted the City Centre Masterplan as a Supplementary Planning Document.

And

That the Local Plan Committee revoked the St Botolphs Quarter Masterplan (2005) and the Better Town Centre SPD (2012) as both were superseded by the City Centre Masterplan. These also predated national and local planning policy.

295. Have Your Say!

Richard Kilshaw addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5 (1). The Committee heard that the evidence base for Middlewick was outdated and included examples that were incorrect such as references to Minsmere. The Committee heard that there were other omissions in that the mitigation land proposed for the biodiversity was not arable and detailed that they would like to see the Middlewick site removed from the Local Plan. The speaker outlined that the flawed Stantec report should mean that the Middlewick site should be removed on the basis of flawed information and asked how it could be removed from the development plan based on these reasons.

At the request of the Chair the Joint Head of Planning (Karen Syrett) responded that the Council had received a lot of information on biodiversity issues and that this deserved proper consideration and a comprehensive response. The Committee heard that there was a plan

making process that the Council had to follow and that there could be a focussed review but that would not be straightforward and detailed that there was little merit in doing one for Middlewick as the best avenue was through the Local Plan review. It was noted that further Ecological surveys would be taking place and that officers had been taking suggestions from the En-Form group regarding ecologists.

In response to a follow-up comment from Richard Kilshaw the Joint Head of Planning Confirmed that the Middlewick allocation could not just be removed from the Local Plan.

Dougal Urqhart addressed the Committee pursuant to provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5 (1). The Committee heard that the importance of the statement read at the meeting last month regarding Middlewick and detailed that there were 30 reasons why the original plan for the site and the Stantec report were not credible. The committee heard that the statement was signed by the Essex field club who had undertaken some survey work and that the speaker had also surveyed some of the site. The speaker concluded by detailing that Members should have due regard for the letter from Natural England and queried whether it could be classed as an SSSI and that it was an important local amenity space.



Local Plan Committee


Item

7

22 February 2024

Report of

Eirini Dimerouki
Historic Buildings and Areas Officer

 5346

Title

Amendments to “Colchester Conservation Area No 4 : North Station Road and Environs” Character Appraisal and Management Proposals

Wards affected

Castle

1. Executive Summary

1.1 The Council’s Local Plan Committee previously resolved to approve the following with regard to “Colchester Conservation Area 4: North Station Road and Environs”:

- Public Consultation on a proposed small extension to the boundary of the Conservation Area.
- Public consultation on the revised draft “Character Appraisal” which provides an updated analysis of the Conservation Area and “Management proposals” which include the use of two Article 4 Directions (one Direction for dwellinghouses and a separate Direction for commercial properties).
- Instigate the Statutory process for the making of the Article 4 Directions. These remove certain permitted development rights (the right to carry out certain development without seeking permission from the City Council).

1.2 This report seeks Committee approval to the extension to the boundary of the Conservation Area designation, the adoption of the revised “Character Appraisal and Management Proposals” and the making of the Article 4 Directions.

1.3 This Report provides a summary of the consultation and of the public responses received. Additionally, the report addresses the main concerns raised in responses, illustrating that these issues are addressed by the Character Appraisal. No amendments are proposed to the Character Appraisal and Management Proposals (including the proposal to extend the boundary of the Conservation Area and the making of the Article 4 Directions) as the result of the public consultation. The document can be adopted without further changes and the statutory process for making the Article 4 Directions (as described in Par.5.17 of this report) can be initiated.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To agree to the proposed extension to the boundary of “Colchester Conservation Area No 4: North Station and Environs” to include a further 6 terraced houses in Causton Road (shown in Map included in Appendix I).
- To adopt the revised draft “Character Appraisal and Management Proposals” (as shown in Appendix II);
 - to agree to commence the statutory process for the making of the Article 4 Directions (draft Directions included in Appendix III).

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The revision to the boundary of Colchester Conservation Area 4 and the updated “Character Appraisal and Management Proposals” will enable more effective protection of its special character and appearance. Section 69(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that Local Planning Authorities shall determine areas which it is desirable to preserve and enhance and designate them as Conservation Areas. According to Section 69(2) of the Act, Local Planning Authorities are required to review their past activities in their area, including existing Conservation Areas, and to designate more Conservation Areas. Section 71(1), (2) and (3) place a duty upon Local Planning Authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas and consult the public in the area in question, taking account of views expressed. The actions now proposed would carry out these statutory duties.
- 3.2 The use of the Article 4 Directions will give more effective control over alterations that could otherwise erode the character and cohesive quality of the Conservation Area.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Committee could decide not to proceed with the small extension to the Conservation Area or adopt the proposed revisions to the “Character Appraisal and Management Proposals” (including the proposed Article 4 Directions). However, such a decision would not take opportunities to secure the most effective preservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the Conservation Area.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 Following approval by the Local Plan Committee the consultation period commenced on 17 November 2023 and was completed on 10 January 2024. The Public Consultation sought views on the proposed extension to the Conservation Area (to include a further 6 terraced houses in Causton Road) as shown in Appendix I, the revised draft “Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals” (Appendix II to this report) and the making of the Article 4 Directions (Appendix III). The proposed changes to the Management Proposals have been drawn up to reflect the opinions expressed by the North Station Road Residents Group concerning the perceived threats to the special qualities of the area.
- 5.2 The public were notified and given the opportunity to participate in the consultation exercise in two ways:
- A. Via the Council’s Planning Consultation webpage, which provided information on the consultation process, a link to view and download all relevant information and a response form.
 - B. The owners or occupiers of the properties within the boundary of the proposed Conservation Area were notified with letters sent by post on 17 November 2023. One Hundred sixty (160) letters were sent to residential addresses and one hundred twelve (112) letters were sent to commercial addresses. The letters explained the implications of the proposed Article 4 Directions and invited them to participate in the consultation process.
- 5.3 The Council received three (3) responses in total. All were sent by email and included comments in the body of the message. Twenty-two (22) letters were returned as undelivered.
- 5.4 The comments can be summarised in five categories:
- a. comments of support.
 - b. comments and concerns about the Conservation Area in general.
 - c. objections and concerns about the Article 4 Direction (residential properties)
 - d. concerns and enquiries about the Article 4 Direction (commercial properties).
 - e. miscellaneous queries and comments.
- 5.5 The comments which discussed the Conservation Area and its management in principle are summarised as follows:
- The Conservation Area does not deserve its designated status; it is not aesthetically pleasing and includes properties that have been altered by past development.
 - Concerns were expressed regarding North Station Road, in terms of appearance, quality of the public realm, security etc.
 - Unlawful works have been carried out to residential and commercial properties since the designation of the Conservations Area which indicate that the additional controls would not be effective.

- There is lack of vision regarding the viability of the Conservation Area or any action plan for restoring its character.
-

5.6 The summary of the comments that relate to the commercial Article 4 Direction is as follows:

- The Article 4 Direction would deter owners from maintain their properties and/or add an onerous cost to maintenance works.
- The Article 4 Direction would be onerous to homeowners who want to maintain their properties whereas there is no mechanism to ensure that owners of neglected properties would do the same.
- The Article 4 Direction would prevent homeowners from improving the energy efficient of their properties and add an onerous financial burden to the current fuel and cost of living crisis.
- The introduction of the Article 4 Direction comes too late to have any real impact and does not address wider issues (poor air quality, poor quality of public realm, loss of green spaces and crime levels).

5.7 The summary of the comments that relate to the commercial Article 4 Direction is as follows:

- Clarifications were requested as to whether the proposed Article 4 Direction would affect residential and commercial properties.
- Concerns were raised regarding the residential conversion of former office buildings (Midlands House, Seatrade House and Riverside Office Complex) in terms of accommodation quality and pressures generated on the area (from increased accommodation, parking and waste).

5.8 The responses include some miscellaneous comments and queries as follows:

- The Article 4 Direction will be onerous to properties within the Conservation Area whereas properties located outside, but adjacent to the boundary, are not subject to the same controls.
- Concerns were expressed that the area of the former Open Air Swimming Pool at Colne Bank Bridge is used for parking despite the Belle Vue parking which should serve this purpose.
- Clarifications requested regarding the cost of planning permission applications.

5.9 With regard to the general comments about the Conservation Area, it should be noted that, although the public consultation did not query on the status of the Conservation Area, the revised “Character Appraisal” reviewed its condition, summarised anew its significance and confirmed that it is an area of sufficient architectural and historic interest to merit its designation as a Conservation Area. Additionally, the “Character Appraisal” identified various threats to the quality of its character and appearance, including issues that relate to North Station Road. Although, some of the problems identified by the commentators (crime levels, sense of danger, lack of air-quality etc) cannot be solely addressed with planning initiatives, the revised Management Proposals set out the vision for the Conservation Area and the necessary action for its protection

and enhancement. Although there is no planning mechanism for reversing past unsympathetic works or development, the “Management Proposals” (including the use of the Article 4 Directions) aim to prevent further harm and ensure that future development would not have a harmful impact on the significance of the Conservation Area. Unlawful works carried out since the designation of the Conservation Area in 2019 which have come or brought into the attention of the Council have been addressed by the Council’s Planning Enforcement Team, as appropriate. The fact that such incidents occur despite the status of the Conservation Area does not demonstrate that its designation is ineffective. However, the use of the Article 4 Directions would ensure that additional authority is vested in the Council to require applications for changes of use or operational development that are potentially harmful to the special qualities which justify the designation of the Conservation Area. Applicants would still have recourse to appeal if the council resolved to refuse permission for the works.

- 5.10 In terms of the residential Article 4 Direction, it is worth noting that its use generates the requirement for an application for planning permission for specified categories of development that would otherwise benefit from permitted development rights under the provisions of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. Its provisions do not generate this requirement for maintenance works or like-for-like repairs. Although there is not a planning mechanism for enforcing owners to carry out maintenance works in their private properties (other than an s.215 notice), the Article 4 Direction would not prevent homeowners who wish to carry out standard maintenance works or add an extra cost to them. Similarly, the Direction would not prevent owners from improving the energy efficiency of their properties but would ensure that the works for securing such improvements are done sympathetically to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. As noted in the previous paragraph, as a planning initiative, the Article 4 Direction would not resolve wider and complex issues raised by the commentators but is aimed at preventing the further erosion of the Conservation Area’s quality from the cumulative effect of minor uncontrolled changes.
- 5.11 The making of two separate Directions for dwellinghouses and commercial properties is included in the revised “Management Proposals”; the Council’s intention to introduce the two Directions was also set out in the Public Consultation webpage and the letters sent to owners/ occupiers. However, separate letters were sent to dwelling houses and commercial properties, each one contains the respective Article 4 Direction and supporting information, which may account for the commentators’ confusion as to whether the Direction would affect dwellinghouse only or commercial properties as well. The concerns raised regarding the residential conversion of former office buildings on North Station Road (Seatrade House, Midlands House and Riverside Office complex) are covered in the “Character Appraisal” (Section 4.3) and the use of the proposed commercial Article 4 Direction seeks to prevent wholly unacceptable adverse impacts arising from the permitted change from non-residential use to residential use. A planning application would be required for such changes of use and if refused, a right of appeal exists.

- 5.12 The summary of the responses and the consideration of the issues raised by the respondents indicates that the public consultation exercise did not call for any revisions or amendments to the revised draft “Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals” (including the proposal for an extension to the boundary of the Conservation Area and the making of two Article 4 Directions).
- 5.13 The process for making an Article 4 Direction is prescribed in Schedule 3 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/596/schedule/3/made>) and involves formal notification and advertisement of the Direction.

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Local Plan, and is available to view by clicking on this link:-
<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/article/12745/Policy-and-Corporate>.
- 6.2 The changes proposed to the boundary of the designated Colchester Conservation Area 4 and associated supporting documents will not have adverse impact on equality, diversity and human rights as the property owners were notified and offered the opportunity to participate in the consultation process. Their opinions were carefully considered and reported back for consideration by the Committee in Section 5.0 of this report.

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 The Council’s Strategic Plan 2023-2026 includes “Celebrate our city and culture.” as one of its key objectives ‘by making our city a better place to live, work and visit’. The management proposals for Colchester Conservation Area No 4 will contribute to this achieving this aim.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 The six-week public consultation was carried out between 17 November 2023 and 08 January 2024. Details on the process and a summary of the responses are included in Section 5.0 of this report.

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 The introduction of the Article 4 Directions may generate publicity for the Council. As the consultation responses demonstrate, there may be some concerns regarding the implications for property owners and possible financial implications, but the limited number of responses indicate that the initiative will be well-received and demonstrates the Council’s proactive approach to heritage protection and enhancement of the historic environment.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 The amendment to the boundary of the Conservation Area and the adoption of the revised Character Appraisal and Management Proposals will not have financial implications for the Council. The making of the Article 4 Directions involves costs arising from the notification in writing to the property owners and advertisement of Directions.
- 10.2 If a local planning authority makes an Article 4 Direction, it can be liable to pay compensation to those whose permitted development rights have been withdrawn, but only if it then subsequently:
- refuses planning permission for development which would otherwise have been permitted development; or
 - grants planning permission subject to more limiting conditions than the General Permitted Development Order.
- 10.3 The grounds on which compensation can be claimed are limited to abortive expenditure or other loss or damage directly attributable to the withdrawal of permitted development rights. It should be noted that Article 4 Directions already exist in several locations within the borough and there have been no successful compensation claims.

11. Health Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 No Health Wellbeing and Safety implications are associated to the actions covered in this report.

12. Risk Management Implications

- 12.1 No Risk Management implications are associated to actions covered in this report.

13. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

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

Appendices

Appendix I: Proposed Amended Conservation Area Boundary

Appendix II: Draft “Conservation Area Statement and Management Proposals.”

Appendix III: Draft Article 4 Directions (for residential and commercial properties)

**Appendix I: Proposed Amended Conservation Area Boundary
(extension marked in red dotted line)**



Appendix II: Revised Draft “Conservation Area Statement and Management Proposals.” Attached

Appendix III: Draft Article 4 Directions (for residential and commercial properties)

Article Direction for Residential Properties

DRAFT

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (GENERAL PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2015 (AS AMENDED) DIRECTION MADE UNDER ARTICLE 4(1)

WHEREAS Colchester City Council being the appropriate local planning authority within the meaning of article 4(5) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (“The Order”) is satisfied that it is expedient that development of the description set out in in the First Schedule below should not be carried out on the land described in the Second Schedule below and shown edged black on the plan annexed hereto unless planning permission is granted on an application made under Part III of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

NOW THEREFORE the said Council in pursuance of the power conferred on them by article 4(1) of the of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) hereby directs that the permission granted by Article 3 of the said Order shall not apply to development specified in the First Schedule below in respect of the land specified in the Second Schedule below and edged black (for identification purposes only) on the plan annexed hereto.

FIRST SCHEDULE

- (i) Development permitted by Class A of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Order, more particularly the enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwellinghouse.
- (ii) Development permitted by Class B of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Order, more particularly the enlargement of a dwellinghouse consisting of an addition or alteration to its roof.
- (iii) Development permitted by Class C of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Order, more particularly any other alteration to the roof of a dwellinghouse.
- (iv) Development permitted by Class D of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Order, more particularly the erection or construction of a porch outside any external door of a dwellinghouse.
- (v) Development permitted by Class G of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Order, more particularly the installation, alteration or replacement of a chimney, flue or soil and vent pipe on a dwellinghouse.
- (vi) Development permitted by Class A of Part 2 of Schedule 2 of the Order, more particularly the erection, construction, maintenance, improvement or alteration of a gate, fence, wall or other

means of enclosure.

- (vii) Development permitted by Class B of Part 2 of Schedule 2 of the Order, more particularly the formation, laying out and construction of a means of access to a highway which is not a trunk road or a classified road, where that access is required in connection with development permitted by any Class in this Schedule (other than by Class A of this Part).
- (viii) Development permitted by Class C of Part 2 of Schedule 2 of the Order, more particularly the painting of the exterior of any building or work.

SECOND SCHEDULE

The residential properties within the boundary of Colchester Conservation Area No.4 – North Station Road and Environs, Colchester, County of Essex which include:

- 19 and 19a Middleborough;
- 5-7 Riverside Walk (consec);
- 1 Market Close;
- 1-18 Causton Road(consec);
- 29, 39-43 and 139-157 North Station Road (odd);
- 50, 60-64, 70-82, 108-130 and 136-140 North Station Road (even);
- 1-6 John Harper Street (consec);
- Morten Road, Orchard Road and St Paul's Road;
- 3-9 Colne Bank Avenue (odd);
- 8-42 Colne Bank Avenue (even);
- 1-33 Belle Vue Road (odd);
- 6-8 and 10-16 Belle Vue Road (even).

Article Direction for Commercial Properties

DRAFT

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (GENERAL PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2015 (AS AMENDED) DIRECTION MADE UNDER ARTICLE 4(1)

WHEREAS Colchester City Council being the appropriate local planning authority within the meaning of Article 4(5) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (“The Order”) is satisfied that it is expedient that development of the description set out in in the First Schedule below should not be carried out on the land described in the Second Schedule below and shown edged black on the plan annexed hereto unless planning permission is granted on an application made under Part III of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

NOW THEREFORE the said Council in pursuance of the power conferred on them by article 4(1) of the of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) hereby directs that the permission granted by Article 3 of the said Order shall not apply to development specified in the First Schedule below in respect of the land specified in the Second Schedule below and edged black (for identification purposes only) on the plan annexed hereto.

FIRST SCHEDULE

The development referred to in Class MA of Part 3 of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), not being development comprised within any other class, that is to say:-

Development consisting of a change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from a use falling within Class E (commercial, business and service) of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) (“the UCO”) to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of Schedule 1 to the UCO.

SECOND SCHEDULE

The commercial properties within the boundary of Colchester Conservation Area No.4 – North Station Road and Environs, Colchester, County of Essex which include:

St Peters Court, Middleborough
Middleborough House, 16 Middleborough
18 and 22 Middleborough
Century House, North Station Road
Fairfax House, Causton Road,
Digby House, Causton Road
25 , 27 , 27A , 31,33, 33A, 35 -37, 45-47, 47A, 49-53, 53A, 57, 59B, 61-65, 69, Rear of 69, 75-79, 103 and
115 North Station Road,
Anglia House, Albert Street,
89 North Station Road,
89 Albert Street,
Midland House, 26 North Station Road
28 ,30-32,34,34A, 36-40, 66-68 and 68A North Station Road



Colchester Conservation Area 4: North Station Road and Environs Character Appraisal and Management Proposals

February 2024



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Executive Summary

The report begins with a general introduction which explains the context for the preparation of this study and its purpose, followed by an overview of the statutory and policy framework for the designation, management, and protection of Conservation Areas, a account of the Conservation Area's designation and a note on the methodology for the preparation of the study.

Part One of the study comprises that Character Appraisal which is set out in five Chapters. The first Chapter provides an overview of the Conservation Area with some key information that assist its identification in its wider context. A longer section reviews its history and development which is fundamental for the analysis that follows. Chapter 2 includes the Character Analysis that examines the key components which define the appearance, character and quality of the Conservation Area.

For the purposes of the study, the Conservation Area is subdivided in five Character Areas whose selection reflects the pattern of the area's development and differences in character and appearance. Chapter 3 explores the topics of the previous chapter in detail for each Character area. The detailed review feeds into the summary

of each area's strengths and the identification of the main challenges and opportunities for the area. Chapter 5 that uses the information from the previous sections to assess the special interest of the Conservation Area, summarise its significance and appraise its condition.

Part Two presents the Managements Proposals that were informed by the analysis in Part One. These are measures to conserve the special qualities of the area.

Summary of Special Interest

Colchester Conservation Area 4: North Station Road derives its special interest from its diverse character which illustrates its rich history. North Station Road that forms its backbone was historically the main access road into Colchester from the north. Evidence of occupation to the north of the Colne dates back to the Late Roman Era. In the following centuries, the southern end of the study area was one of the main areas of extramural expansion, comprising dwellings and industrial uses associated with the river. The arrival of the railway in 1843 triggered further expansion to the north and on new roads laid either side of North Station Road. The area was greatly affected by the construction of highways infrastructure and pressure for new development in the 20th Century.

The pattern of its development is evidenced in the eclectic mix of its building stock which comprises examples dating from the Fifteenth to the late 20th Century. The mix of commercial and residential uses and their distribution within the study area illustrate further its history and result in discernible character areas with different ambience and appearance. Various historic uses (hotels and pubs), institutional and communal buildings and

infrastructure (North Primary School, former Railway Mission, former Open Air Swimming Pool) provide evidence for socioeconomic history of Colchester in the 19th Century and the role of the study area in this development. Finally, the area has great potential for regeneration that can better reveal and enhance its special interest.

1.0.Introduction

1.1. Background and Purpose

Conservation Areas were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act 1967 when it was recognised that whole areas could merit special protection, in the same manner that individual buildings were protected by listing. This legislative framework was further enhanced by the Local Government 1972 and Town and Country Amenities Act 1974.

In 1990, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas became for the first time the subject of a separate Act under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Act defines Conservation Areas as “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.” (Section 69) and provides the statutory framework for their designation and management.

Section 69(1) sets out that Local Planning Authorities shall determine areas which it is desirable to preserve and enhance and designate them as Conservation Areas. According to Section 69(2), Local Planning Authorities are required to review their past activities in their area, including existing Conservation Areas, and to

designate more Conservation Areas. Section 71(1), (2) and (3) place a duty upon Local Planning Authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas and consult the public in the area in question, taking account of views expressed. Section 72(1) prescribes that, in the exercise by Local Planning Authorities of planning functions within the Conservation Area ‘special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area’.

The established practice for the designation and management of a Conservation Area is based on a two-stage approach that includes:

- a. Conservation Area Character Appraisal which includes an analysis of the area, to define its special interest that merits its designation, as well as describe and evaluate the contribution made by the different features of its character and appearance.
- b. Conservation Area Management Proposals which use the conclusions of the Character Appraisal to set out policies and practical steps that enable the Local Planning Authority and the

local community to protect and to enhance the special interest of the Conservation Area.

Normally, these documents are prepared once a new area is identified for potential designation, to demonstrate that the area meets the criteria and inform future decision-making.

To conform with their statutory duty to review their past activity regarding Conservation Areas, Local Planning Authorities must revisit, update and expand on these documents on a regular basis or when special circumstances arise. This review should confirm or redefine the special interest that warranted the Conservation Area's designation, identify the requirement for potential boundary revisions and inform a revision of the Management Proposals.

North Station Road and Environs Conservation Area (Colchester Conservation Area 4) was designated as a Conservation Area in April 2019. A Consultation Draft Character Appraisal and Management Proposals was prepared prior to the designation, supplemented by an Addendum that covered an additional area that were included in the proposed boundary. The designation of

the Conservation Area was approved on the basis of these documents that were formally adopted in the process.

Section 1 of Colchester Local Plan 2017-2033 was formally adopted on the 1 February 2021, followed by Section 2, adopted on 4 July 2022. Section 2 Includes Local Plan Policy NC2: North Station Special Policy Area whose objective is the regeneration of the area through the enhancement of the public realm, the improvement of its connectivity to the surrounding areas and the balanced mix of uses. The effective protection and management of the Conservation Area can play a key role in the delivery of these objectives.

The adopted Management Proposals prescribed the review of the Conservation Area reports every five years after the formal designation. The process was expedited in response to the adoption of the Local Plan and the launch of a wider set of projects and initiatives that promote growth and urban regeneration for the city of Colchester. Moreover, the experience from the management of the Conservation Area in these first years after its designation provided the Council valuable insights into the pressures and

opportunities for the area which warrant a review of the Management Proposals.

The aim of the present report is to:

- merge, incorporate and expand on the reports that informed the designation of the Conservation Area in 2019, to present a comprehensive analysis of the study area which was previously examined in two stages.
- review the adopted boundary and propose an amendment where it is regarded pertinent.
- re-assess the condition of the study area on the basis of a new survey and re-examine its strengths, challenges and opportunities.
- confirm its special interest that justifies its designation;
- update and expand on the Management Proposals, including the recommendation for an Article 4 Direction.

1.2. Statutory and Policy Framework

1.2.1. Legislation

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Acts 1990 provides the statutory framework for the designation and protection of Conservation Areas.

Other legislation that prescribes additional controls includes:

- The Town and Country Planning Act 1990: sets out the requirement to obtain planning permission for the demolition of unlisted buildings (that meet certain criteria) in Conservation Areas (Section 196D).
- The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 which restricts certain permitted development rights (works that can be carried out without Planning Permission) .
- The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 restricts certain categories of advertisement which have ‘deemed consent’ restricted within Conservation Areas.

More information on these planning controls can be found in Appendix I.

1.2.2. National Policies and Guidance

Further context is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), Section 16, Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment Par. 189 -208 and the Planning Policy Practice Guidance Par. 001 -021.

1.2.3. Local Policies

- Section 2 of Colchester Local Plan 2017-2033, i Policy NC2: North Station Special Policy Area and;
- DM16: Historic Environment;
- Colchester North Station Master- plan SPD [July 2009];
- Fixing The Link [2017].

1.2.4. Article 4 Direction

As discussed in Section 1.2.1, certain permitted development rights are restricted within Conservation Areas. Other rights can be removed by a mechanism known as an “ Article 4 Direction”. An Article 4 Direction is specifically tailored to protect key features that contribute positively to the Conservation Area’s special

interest. The use of the Direction is not intended to prevent the execution of the works covered by its provisions. It generates the requirement for a planning application prior to the execution of these works (which normally would not require permission) so their details can be considered in the context of an application and assessed for their potential impact on the character of the Conservation Area. When a Local Planning Authority decides that an Article 4 Direction should be made, then it must consult the public and take into account the views of residents and property owners prior to deciding whether to pursue the Direction.

1.3 History of Designation

In 2018, a Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals was prepared in support of the proposal to designate the Conservation Area under the title of the “Colchester Conservation Area No 4: North Station and Environs”. Colchester Borough Council’s Local Plan Committee approved a public consultation on the Consultation Draft of the report on March 2018. The Committee also suggested the extension of the proposed Conservation Area boundary, to include Belle Vue Road, the northern end of North Station Road (between The Albert Roundabout and The Essex Hall Road Roundabout), Digby House and the Riverside Walk immediately to its east. A Character Appraisal that covered these areas was drafted and became available for the public consultation exercise as an Addendum to the main report (“Belle Vue Road, Northern end of North Station Road and Digby House and adjacent Riverside Addendum”).

The six-week formal public consultation commenced on 30 April 2018 and was completed on 10 June 2018. The results of the public consultation exercise did not call for any amendments and the designation of the Conservation Area was approved on the basis of the draft Consultation Reports by the Local Plan Committee on 8 April 2019 with the boundary shown on Map 01.



1.4_Methodology

The reports that informed the designation of the Conservation Area were finalised in February 2018, following research and surveys carried out in December 2017 / January 2018. The present report was drafted in November 2022, using research and data collected in September / October 2022.

The study was carried out in accordance with the methodology that is set out in Historic England’s guidance “Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1 (Second Edition, 2019)”.

Additional relevant Historic England guidance documents that were useful for the study include:

- Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessments (2019);
- The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition,2017);
- Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage: Historic England Advice Note 7 (Second Edition, 2021).

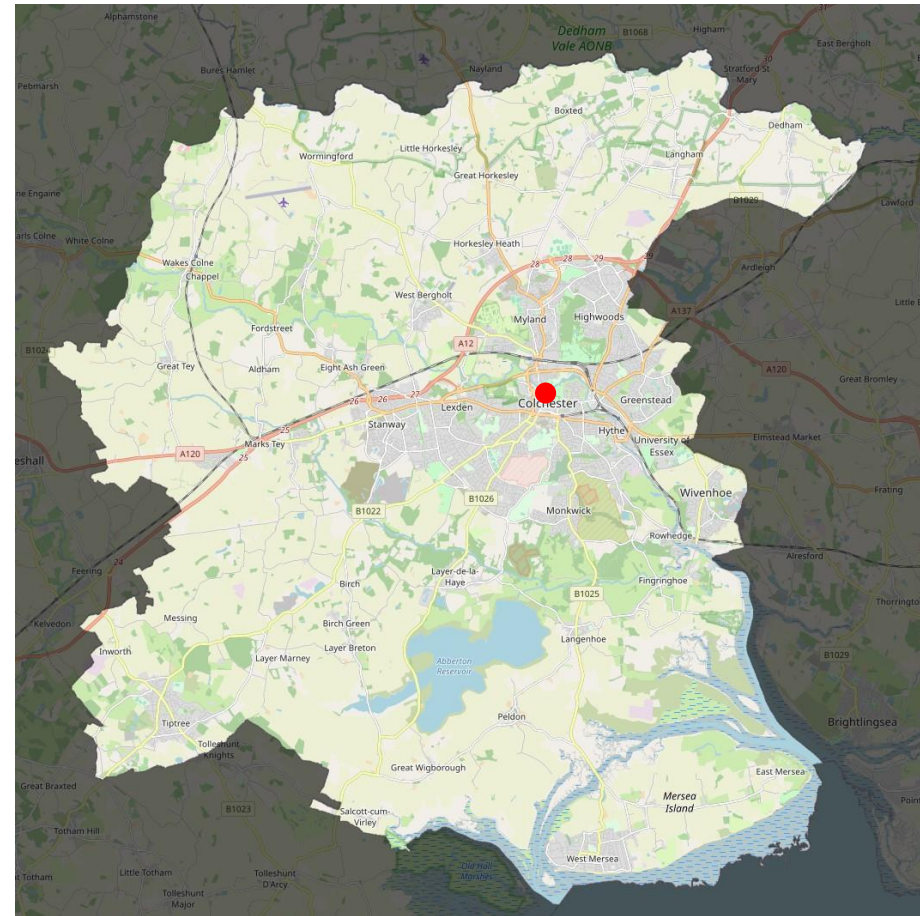
Part One: Character Appraisal

2.0.Overview

2.1. Location and Setting

North Station Road and Environs Conservation Area is an urban conservation area to the north of Colchester city centre (Map 02). Set in north-east Essex, Colchester is built on the river Colne and to the south of the A12 trunk road which links the city to London and Chelmsford to the south-west and Suffolk to the north.

North Station and Environs Conservation Area is a linear Conservation Area that covers an area of **X hectares** between the historic town centre and Colchester's main Railway Station (North Station) (Fig.01). To the south, its boundary meets the northern boundary of Colchester Conservation Area No.1 (Town Centre). The stretch of North Station Road between Middleborough and Essex Hall Roundabout forms the "spine" of the Conservation Area, intersecting with the river Colne and the northern bypass (Colne Bank Avenue and the Albert Roundabout). The easternmost end of the Conservation Area meets Castle Park, while the western end encloses the former Open Air Swimming Pool on the Colne and terminates before the Colne Avenue Roundabout.



Map.02: The location of the Conservation Area in the Borough marked by the red dot (Map data © OpenStreetMap).



Fig. 1: Aerial view of the Conservation Area in its context(©Google Maps)**Boundary to be added.**

The Conservation Area is situated within modern Colchester that has developed around the historic walled town. North Station Road has been historically the main northern road corridor into Colchester. Until the first half of the 19th Century, development within the study area was limited to its southern end. The arrival of the railway in 1843 and the opening of North Station triggered the expansion to the north end of the road and on new streets laid behind the street frontage. The construction of the northern bypass (Cymbeline Way, Colne Bank Avenue, Cowdray Avenue and St Andrew’s Avenue) in 1933 was another notable change which prompted further growth to the east, outside the boundary of the Conservation Area. After World War II, the city expanded beyond the railway line towards Mile End and Braiswick but not in the land between Cymbeline Avenue and the railway line known as Cymbeline Meadows.

The Conservation Area is set immediately to the north Colchester’s historic city centre. Castle Park extends to the southeast. To the east, the study area is bound by post-war residential development either side of Cowdray Avenue with retails parks further to the north and north-east. Two post-war residential estates are located

between its northern boundary and North Station The A134 creates a boundary with Cymbeline Meadows to the northwest. The river encloses the Conservation Area to the west and south-west with modern residential development that lines its banks.

2.2.Geology and Topography

The surface geology of the zone comprises primarily Alluvial Deposit with small areas of London Clay at the north and south end. The Colchester Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2005) notes that the Borough's rivers and their valleys lie on alluvium composed of clay, silt, sand and gravel which are products of subsequent post-Anglian fluvial erosion by the rivers and the diversion of the river Thames from through the Mid-Essex Depression and Colchester to its present location,

For most of its part, the boundary of the Conservation Area follows North Station Road running in a north-south direction. The river Colne traverses the southern end of the study area in the east-west direction. Historically the area along the banks of the river further up and down-stream was, and remains, flood plain.

The Conservation Area extends over a broadly flat land which rises towards North Station and Mile End (beyond its northern boundary) and North Hill (outside the southern boundary). These changes in the topography are mainly appreciated from certain viewpoints that afford open views towards these areas .

Within the Conservation Area, the only notable changes of level result from the combination of the natural landscape and man-made infrastructure. At North Bridge, there is a level change between the pavement and the Riverside Walk which enhances the sense of departure from the busy road towards the tranquil environment of the river path. At the opposite end of the Conservation Area, the sunken level of the former Open Air Swimming Pool on the bank of the Colne creates a sense of enclosure and seclusion from the adjacent busy roads .

2.3 History and Development

2.3.1. Early History

North Street, later renamed North Station Road, has been historically the main northern access road to Colchester. The road led northwest through Mile End to Nayland and by the Middle Ages continued to Sudbury (Suff.) and Bury St. Edmunds.

North Bridge, first recorded in 1189, stood on the site of a Roman bridge or ford. Masons were to build a new bridge, perhaps North or East bridge, in 1394, but the medieval North and East Bridge were later said to have been made of timber. While minor bridges were maintained and repaired by inhabitants of the parishes in which they lay, North and East Bridge, together with Hythe bridge, were in the care of the Borough. Repairs to North Bridge were recorded in 1580, 1631 and 1737. Eventually part of the Bridge collapsed in 1775 and was rebuilt in brick by 1781.

By c. 1500, the town had grown with extramural expansion in ribbon developments along the major roads, notably East Hill and East Street, Middleborough and North Street, and Magdalen Street, and in more compact suburbs outside South gate and Head gate.

Although there are records of houses outside North gate c. 1242, and beyond North bridge by the 1270s, as well as various records of building activity and property sales from the 16th, 17th and 18th century, the evidence from historic maps suggests that the development at North Street was limited to Middleborough and the area immediately to the north of the Bridge until the late 18th century.

Whilst John Speed's 1610 map records densely developed frontages on East Street and Magdalene ("Maudlyne") street, the map stops shortly to the north of North Bridge, marking a cluster of building between North Gate and the bridge (Fig.04). The Map of the Siege of Colchester also shows the group close to North Gate and a cluster of buildings to the north of the bridge (Fig.05).



Fig. 2:Extract from John Speed's Map (1610), showing the north west corner of the walled town, North Gate, Middleborough and North Bridge (©.....).



Fig. 3:Extract from the Siege of Colchester Map (1648), showing the north west corner of the walled town and the area between North gate and Mile End Church (©.....).

Chapman and André's 1777 maps show development either side of Middleborough and a number of properties spread along North the southern end of North Street (Fig.06,07); some of these buildings survive and can be identified on North Station Road today, while excavations have revealed the location of demolished 17th century houses at the site of 3, 7 and 9 North Station Road. The 1777 map also marks two buildings on the thoroughfare that became Snake Lane (now Serpentine Walk) which are shown in 19th century maps but were lost when the northern bypass was opened in 1933.

Additional historic information for the area relates to the presence of various industries took place between North Gate and the River Colne. At least seven pottery kilns, probably late Twelfth or early Thirteenth century, stood behind the street frontage at Middleborough, immediately outside North gate. Fullers, dyers, and tanners, whose activities require the use of flowing water, worked along the Colne between North bridge and Middle mill to the East. Tanneries were recorded in the mid -fourteenth Century and the activity continued well into the 18th century when breweries were also active.



Fig. 4: Extract from Clapman and André's map (Plate IV, 1777),
(©.....).



Fig. 5: Extract from Clapman and André's map (Plate IX, 1777) (©.....).

2.3.2. First half of the 19th Century (1800-1845)

In 1843 the Eastern Counties Railway extended its line from London to Colchester and the first railway station (Colchester North) was built at the northern end of North Street where the road splits towards Mile End and West Bergholt. The Railway Hotel, of white brick in Italianate style, was built immediately south of the station in the same year but did not prove a profitable undertaking and was converted into a hospital for the mentally handicapped, mainly children at first, in 1850. Initially known as “Essex Hall Asylum (For Idiots)” subsequently became the “Eastern Counties Asylum for Idiots, Imbeciles and the Feebleminded” and then the “Royal Eastern Counties Institution for Mental Defectives” until 1985 when it was closed and demolished.

In 1820, one of the western arches of North Bridge and the east wing and side were repaired, and the east side was widened. The bridge was taken down in 1843 and replaced with a cast iron bridge of three arches built by the town council in anticipation of the increased traffic because of the new railway station.

The land within the boundary of the Conservation Area fell within three parishes. A stretch of land that included the east frontage of

North Street up to Serpentine Walk and the west frontage approximately adjacent to Victoria Chase belonged to the Parish of St Peter’s at North Hill. The rest of the street northwards was divided between the Parish of St Michael Mile End to the east and Lexden Parish to the west.

The tithe maps of the three parishes show new buildings that had been added between the pre-19th century properties on North Street (Fig.08, 09). The east front appears more consolidated but there were still gaps on the west frontage. The buildings did not extend behind the street frontage; The northern-most building on the street was the Albert Inn on the junction with Serpentine Walk (demolished when Colne Bank Avenue was opened and rebuilt to the north of the road). Beyond that point, the land was rural with a number of isolated cottages, two farms – Poplar Hall and Merce’s Farm to the east of North Street and a brick field further to the north, later bisected by the railway line.

Additional cartographic evidence comes from Cole and Roper’s 1805 Town Plan and Monson’s 1848 map which record buildings on both sides of North Street in the vicinity of the Bridge but not further to the north.

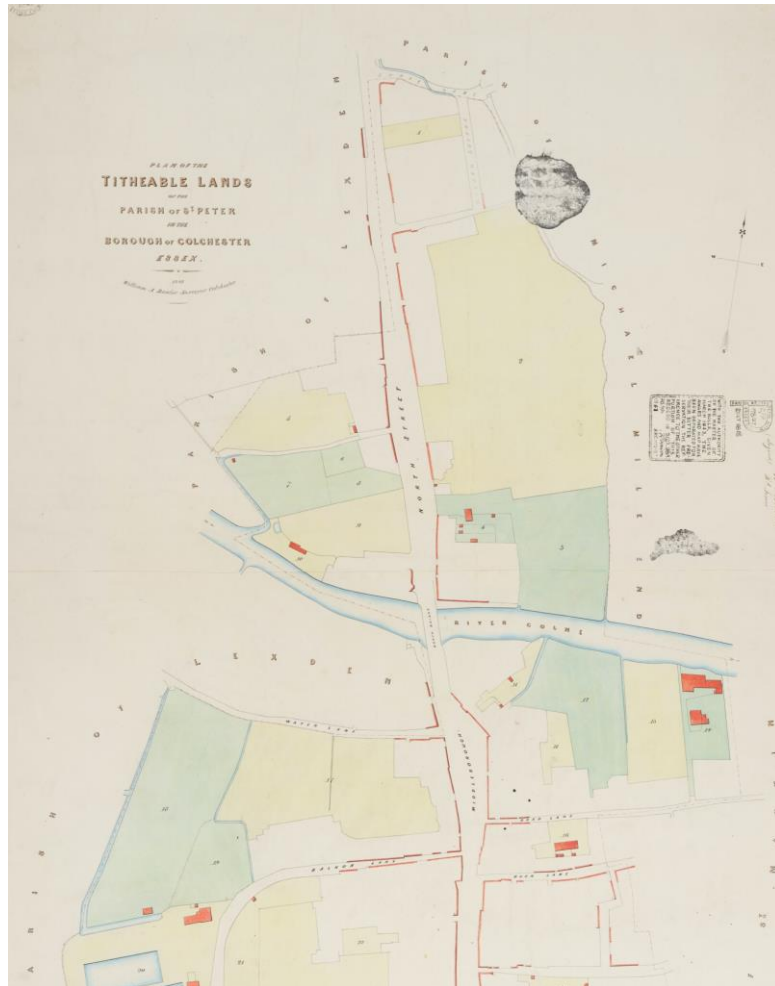


Fig. 6: Extract from the Tithe Map of the Parish of St Peter, North Hill (1849) (©.....).



Fig. 7: Extract from the Tithe Map of Lexden Hill (1839) (©.....).

2.3.4. Third quarter of the 19th Century (1845-1876)

Two new railway stations were opened in Colchester in this period; Hythe Station in 1847, to serve the port, and a small central station at St. Botolph's (now Colchester Town) on the Wivenhoe -Hythe line in 1866. However, North Station remained the main railway station and was expanded with refreshment facilities, a new telegraph office, and extra sidings in 1854. In 1865, it was rebuilt, and then extensively remodelled and rebuilt in 1894. By 1848, a private horse-drawn omnibus ran between North Station and the Cups and Red Lion hotels.

By the early 19th century, the Saturday livestock market held in High Street had become an obstruction and a nuisance. When the attempt to move it at Balkerne Hill in 1819 failed, the town council set up a cattle market removal committee in 1857 which experimented with holding the market in the castle bailey and examined other possible sites. In 1861 a public inquiry recommended a site at the bottom of North Hill, and the market moved there in 1862. The new market at Middleborough had permanent pens for animals and an octagonal settling house or office to which a small clock turret was added in 1898. The cattle

market remained in that location until 1975 when it was moved to a new site in Severalls Lane.

The relocation of the Cattle Market added another significant activity in the area, enhancing thus the importance of North Station Road as the key road that linked Colchester to the North Station and the countryside to the Cattle Market and the town centre. This significance was reflected in the residential growth within the study area. By the time the 6-inch Ordnance Survey Map was prepared in 1876 (Fig.08), the street frontage was further built up, although there were still some undeveloped plots on the west front. Development on the street expanded beyond the junction with Serpentine Walk but was limited to the west front. To the east, a nursery was opened by the family of Isaac Bunting, a successful nurseryman who had founded a flower nursery in Lexden Road in 1819.

New streets had been constructed off and behind North Street. In 1845 new streets on Golden Acre field, on the east side of the road were laid out for houses, including Albert Road (now Causton Road), Albert Street and also New Street (off Serpentine Walk, subsequently joined up with, and part of Albert Street). Golden Place Terrace was built on the east side of New Street and Fenton

Place Terrace was erected on the east front of Albert Street. The OS Map shows three detached buildings on Albert Road.

To the west of North Street, Princess Street (today John Harper Street) was opened. T. Morland and C. Wilkinson who had laid the plots in Castle and Roman Road in the 1850s, laid out a small estate west just south of the Eastern Counties' asylum in the 1860s, consisting of Belle Vue, Colne Bank, and Essex Hall Road.

The church of St Paul's was built between 1869 and 1879 on the west side of Belle Vue Road. The church was the chapel to the nearby Essex Hall asylum; the graveyard was used for the burials of the hospital's residents but ceased to be used some time before 1900. The church was demolished in 1998 when it was deemed unsafe due to damage from subsidence towards the riverbank.

A day school for 150 infants was built in 1875 by subscription and grant in Belle Vue Road (on the junction with Colne Bank Road), to serve the growing population in the area. The school received annual government grants from 1880, when it was attended by 31 children but numbers more than doubled to reach 193 by December 1891. In 1894, when North Street Board school opened, numbers dropped, the school began to decline until it was closed in

1901; the building was demolished when Colne Bank Avenue was opened in 1930.



Fig. 8: Extract from the 6-Inch Ordnance Survey Map (Essex Sheet XXVII, Surveyed: 1875 to 1876, Published: 1881)(©Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland).

2.3.5. Final Quarter of the 19th Century (1876-1900)

By the turn of the century, North Street had become North Station Road. In 1892, a school board of 11 members was formed at the request of the Borough Council, consisting at first of 6 Churchmen, 2 nonconformists, and 3 representatives of the Co-operative society and the trades council. The first school opened by the board was North Street school at the west end of Princess Street in 1894 for 872 mixed and infant children. Princess street was renamed after John Harper who was the first headmaster of the school and remained in this position until his retirement in 1922. The main school building is listed at Grade II but has been extended with consecutive additions, outbuildings and sports facilities.

At that time, the Council gradually widened its range of municipal activities with the provision of public open spaces, including an open-air public bathing place on River Colne in 1883, the Old Heath Recreation Ground in 1885, and the Castle Park in 1892. The Public Bathing Place was initially located within the grounds of Lower Castle Park but in 1883, it was re-located to privately owned land leased to the Council close to the boundary of the study area, approximately in the location where Colne Bank Avenue Intersects with the river Colne today. Initially the facilities were located on the

east bank and accessed through a thoroughfare opposite Colne Bank Road but were later extended in 1887 and 1896 with a footbridge over to the west bank of the river.

The development on North Station Road did not extend further than the areas shown in the previous OS Map, but some undeveloped plots were built up, mainly a section to the north of Princess Street. The street frontages on Albert Row Causton Road) were consolidated and the west side of Albert Street was built up as well.

The 6-inch and 25- inch 1896 Ordnance Maps (Fig.11) record the continuing expansion to the west of North Station Road when Morten Road, Orchard Road and St Paul's Road were laid to the south of Colne Bank Road; the maps also record additional development on Belle Vue Road and the south front of Colne Bank Road.

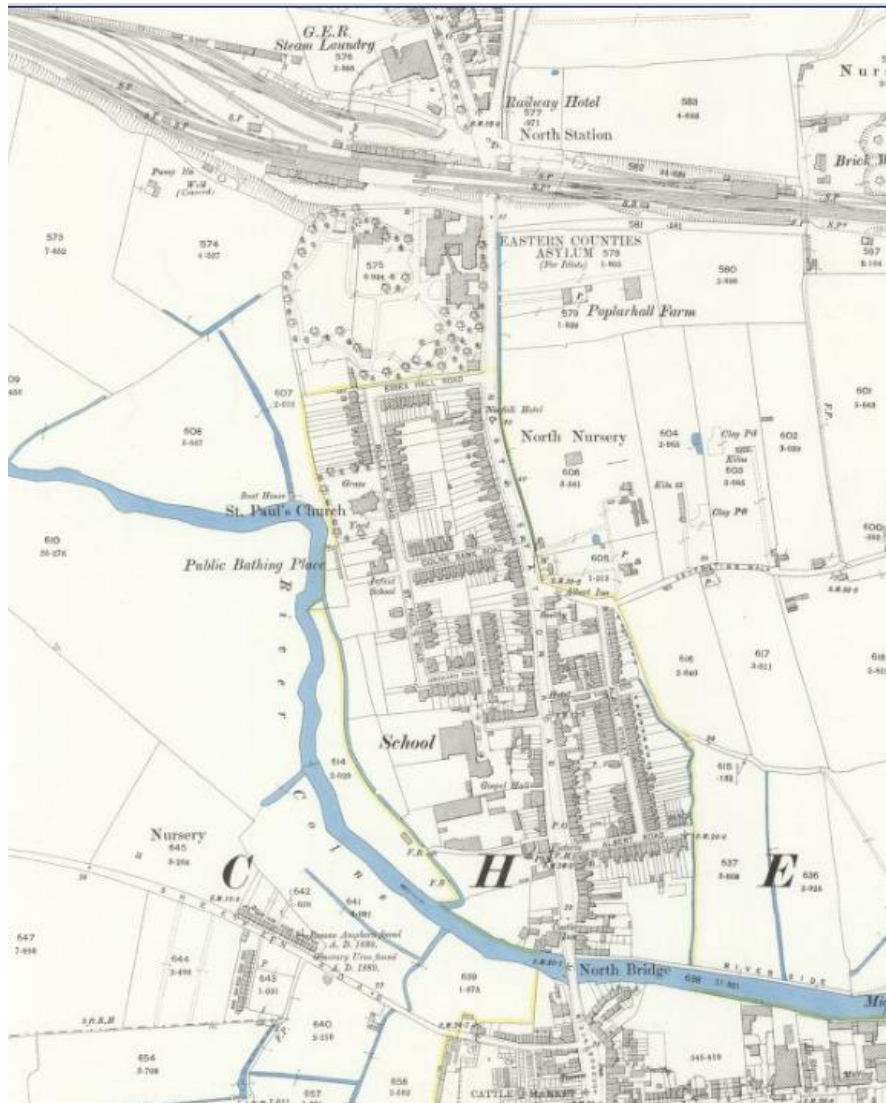


Fig. 9: Extract from the 25-Inch Ordnance Survey Map (Essex Sheet XXVII.8, Revised: 1896, Published: 1897), (©Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland).

2.3.4. The early 20th Century (1900-1920)

The horse drawn omni-bus service that linked North Station to the town centre was superseded by trams in that period. Preparations for steam trams were made in 1882 and the track was laid from the Station to Middleborough, but the scheme was abandoned for lack of funds. The Council bought the remaining materials, removed the track and in 1901, with its own electricity supply available, obtained an Act to provide its own trams. A municipal electric tramway system was opened in 1904 with a fleet of 16 trams from the depot in Magdalen Street operating on double tracks from Colchester North railway station to High Street, and from there to Lexden, the Hythe, and East Street. North Bridge was widened by 17 ft. 6 in. (5.3 m.) on the east side to accommodate the line. The trams ran at a loss, except during the First World War, but were maintained as a public service until 1929.

A Railway Mission Hall, seating 250, was built in North Station Road, to accommodate meetings previously held in an old carpenter's shop no. 1 Colne Bank Road and in rented rooms. The hall was erected in the only undeveloped plot on the west side of the road between the river and the thoroughfare that because Victoria Chase.

The 1920 Ordnance Survey Map (Fig.12) records fewer changes in the study area in comparison to the previous decades. The west side of St Paul's Road was built up and development appears for the first time on the east front of North Station Road north to the junction with Serpentine Walk, in the form of four pairs of semi-detached houses that survive today and a larger building that has been replaced by a modern office block.



Fig. 10: Extract from the 25-Inch Ordnance Survey Map (Essex Sheets n XXVIII.15 and n XXXVII.3 , Revised: 1921, Published: 1923), (©Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland).

2.3.7. The interwar years (1920-1938)

In 1933, the construction of Colne Bank Avenue which forms part of the Colchester Northern Bypass (Cymbeline Avenue - Colne Bank Avenue- Cowdray Avenue) represented a major alteration which transformed the character of the area within and around the Conservation Area boundary.

Within the study area, a new bridge over the river Colne 50 ft. in width was built of reinforced concrete. The opening of the new avenue essentially consisted of widening Colne Bank Road. The Victorian properties on the north side were lost in the process and were replaced by new buildings on the relocated north frontage, including a Church Hall for St Paul's Church on the junction with Belle Vue Road and two pairs of semi-detached houses. The new avenue intersected with North Station Road and continued eastwards running parallel to Serpentine Walk (as Cowdray Avenue).

As the construction of the bypass interfered with the Public Bathing Place, the facilities were moved to the north of the river bend and consisted of an open-air public pool (lido) set under the new bridge. The lido, complete with changing facilities and a café, was a popular public leisure space until its closure in 1978.

The construction of Colne Bank Avenue is the main change recorded in the 1938 Ordnance Survey Map (Fig.13). Development on North Station Road and the surrounding secondary streets had been consolidated by then and there are few additions since 1920s OS Map. The 1938 map suggests that the block on the east front of North Station Road between Globe Inn and Serpentine Walk was cleared off for redevelopment. The demolished buildings included Albert Inn that was recorded in the 1840s tithe maps and the subsequent OS Maps. The map also marks the new residential expansion to the east of the Conservation Area, triggered by the new bypass. New roads were laid off Serpentine Walk (Margaret Street, Mercers Way) and buildings are shown under construction one either side of the new Cowdray Avenue. Albert Street (now Causton Road) was also extended eastwards but this new section falls outside the boundary of the study area.



Fig. 11: Extract from the 6-Inch Ordnance Survey Map (Essex Sheets nXXVIII and , nXXXVII. Revised: 1938, Published: ca 1946),(©Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland).

2.3.8. Post -1938 to the date

Further highways interventions affected the Conservation Area in the second half of the 20th century. The Albert Roundabout on the junction of North Station Road and Colne Bank Avenue was opened in 1972. The roundabout was initially constructed with tyres to allow buses to cross the junction directly through the centre of the roundabout, an experiment that soon ceased. At present, it is much wider and landscaped, while a Memorial Wall that commemorates the fallen of the First World War was opened to its south-west in 1997.

The next major highway intervention that affected the area was the construction of an inner relief road (A134). Its southern section was opened in 1973, and the western section over Balcerne Hill to the northern bypass was built in 1976-81, cutting through existing road patterns and neighbourhood areas.

Within the study area, its construction resulted in the loss of Essex Hall Road and the demolition of some properties on Belle Vue Road. The road joined Colne Bank Avenue close to the former Open Air Swimming Pool, enclosing its site from the north and west.

Another major change was the relocation of the Cattle Market from Middlesbrough to Severalls Lane in 1975. The development of the vacant site triggered additional changes in the area with the demolition of timber framed buildings and their replacement by commercial development. Similar changes happened to the north of the river, where modern office blocks and other commercial premises were erected in demolition sites.

Other notable changes in the area include the closure of the Open-air public pool (lido) set under Colne Bank Bridge in 1978 and The lido, complete with changing facilities and a café, was a popular public leisure space until its closure in 1978.



Fig. 12: Extract from planning Historical Plotting Sheets (Plan TL9925NW and TL9926SW (Surveyed : 1951, Revised: 1964), ©Crown Copyright, Colchester City Council).

2.4 Archaeology

No significant archaeological remains are present along North Station Road that date prior to the Roman period. However, the area clearly became an intensively occupied part of the Roman town along a main road leading out of the North Gate, with two apparent phases of masonry buildings.

Archaeological investigations at 26 North Station Road in 1965 and 1976 revealed the remains of a substantial masonry courtyard house of Roman date (Colchester Historic Environment Record no. 1260), the foundations of which consisted of trenches 1m deep filled with Septaria (mudstone) and mortar. Enough excavation took place to partially reconstruct the plan of the building, with a range of two rooms and a cross passage flanked by passages or narrow ranges of rooms on either side. The floor of the western passage appeared to be of red tessellation. Perhaps related is a mosaic pavement discovered by workmen in 1880 while digging foundations at the back of the Victoria Inn (CHER no. 1052). This appeared to be substantial, but ran under the roadway and some buildings, and therefore its full extent could not be ascertained.

An archaeological evaluation and subsequent watching brief in 2001/2002 immediately to the south of the Victoria Inn discovered another large high status Roman house, with an unusual sunken feature containing large quantities of painted wall plaster surrounded by robbed out walls, and adjacent to a mosaic pavement (CHER no. 5428). Two further mosaic floors and a herringbone floor were revealed during the later watching brief.

This was replaced by at least one larger building which was believed to have had a public function due to the massive width of its foundations (CHER no. 2946). This has tessellated floors and was believed to date to the late 3rd century.

The second major archaeological investigation along North Station Road revealed a similar pattern. The remains of a high-status Roman townhouse were discovered at the Globe Hotel during trial trenching in 2003 (CHER no. 3026). Demolition debris showed evidence that this structure had a heating system, tiled roof and painted walls. As at the Victoria Inn the townhouse was replaced by a later building, believed to be a large, high status public structure

(CHER no. 3027). As with the townhouse, this had a heating system, a tiled roof and painted walls, but the width and depth of one of the foundation trenches suggested that it was for an exterior wall of a Roman public building of at least two storeys. Pottery recovered from the site indicated use during the 2nd and 3rd centuries, and demolition in the 3rd or 4th century.

The foundations of a further masonry building of Roman date were revealed at the Old Poultry Market site in 1998, in roughly the same alignment as the Victoria Inn structures (CHER no. 4957).

No archaeological evidence exists for the occupation of this area between the Roman and medieval periods. 25-27 North Station Road is an extant 15th century open hall house. A 16th century house at 45-47 North Station Road was recorded by the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England in 1922. A range of seven tenements at 12-24 North Station Road (CHER no. 142), also demolished since the 1922 survey, may have also been 16th century in date. The former 3 North Station Road (CHER no. 137), no longer extant, was a house and shop of 17th century origin, which is also true of the former 7 & 9 North Station Road (CHER no. 138). Part of a brick building was found during evaluation at the Old

Poultry Market in 1998, with two intact brick floors (CHER no. 2440). Dating of the bricks indicated the structure was 17th century or earlier in date.

2.5. Designation and Boundary

2.5.1_The Present Boundary

The existing boundary is primarily drawn around the properties that line the east and west frontages of North Station Road (Map.04).

The Conservation Areas includes North Bridge and extends to the south, to include the section of Middleborough between the Bridge and the north boundary of Colchester Conservation Area 1. The section was added in recognition of its historic association to North Station Road as the main areas of extramural expansion to the north of the historic walled town from the medieval times until the early Victorian era.

The boundary also encloses the two residential areas that date from the Victorian expansion behind the North Station Road frontage, St Paul's Road, Orchard Road and Morten Road to the south of Colne Bank Avenue and Belle Vue to the north

Two significant open spaces were included at the opposite ends of the Conservation Area. To the east of North Bridge, the Riverside Walk on the north bank of the Colne links the study area to Castle Park. To the north of Colne Bank Avenue, the site of a former



communal facility, the Open-Air Swimming Pool, has become a natural habitat that serves as a transitional zone towards Cymbeline Meadows. The boundary was drawn round the south front of Causton Road (up to no 8), a residential street to the east of North Station Rd. Previously known as Albert Road, its development started around the same time when Belle Vue Road was laid. However, the boundary did not extend to include Albert Street which dates from the same phase of development. The extent of alterations to the terraces that front the street has affected significantly their character to the point of compromising their legibility as typical development of their era.

2.5.1_Proposed boundary amendment

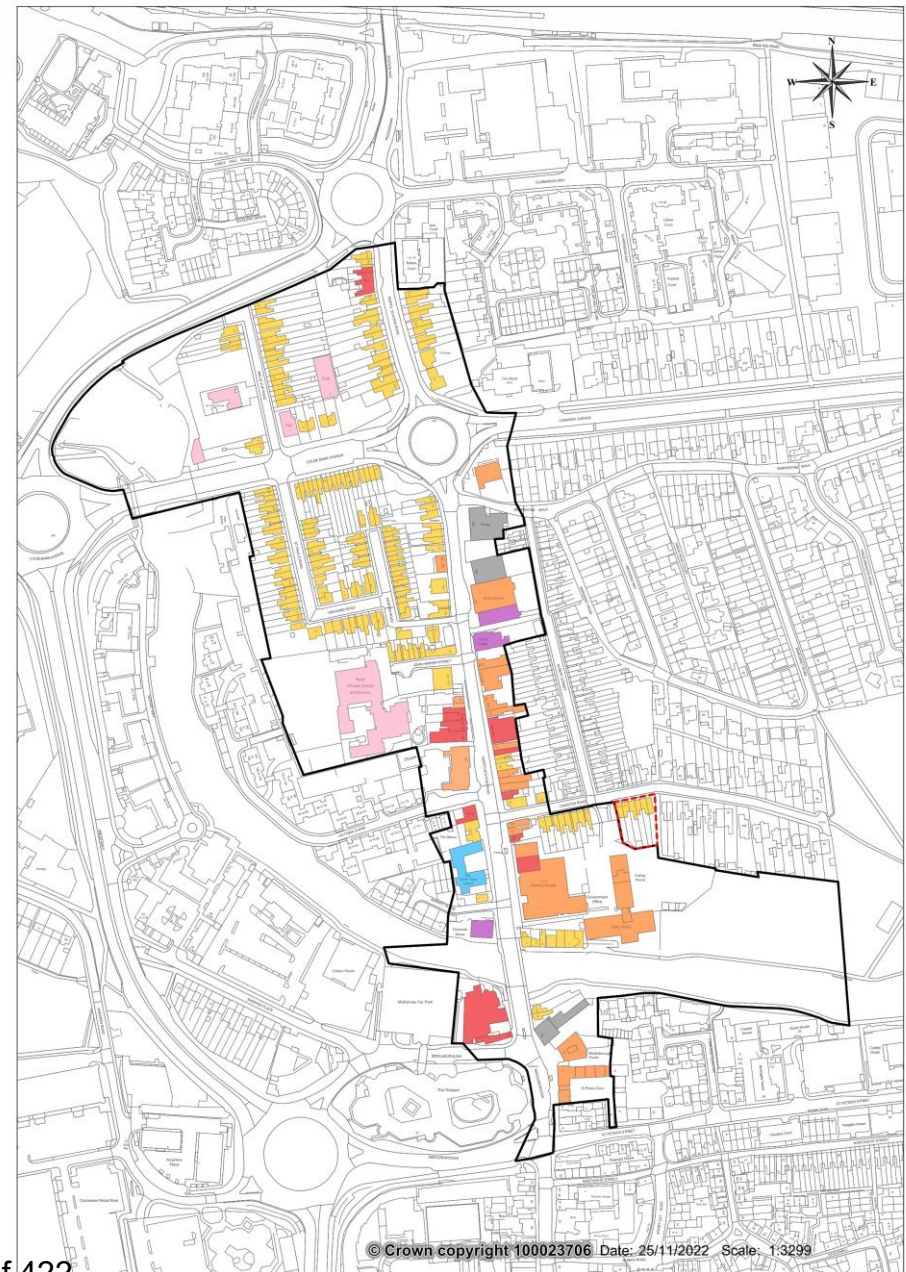
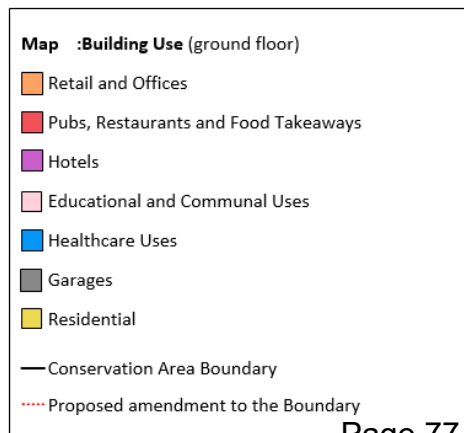
The present report proposes the amendment of the boundary on Causton Road, to include the terrace of nos. 12 to 18 Causton Road. By virtue of its date, style and quality, these properties form a group with the buildings on Causton Road within the existing boundary despite the disruption from the access to the site of the Riverside Office Complex that interrupts the continuity of the street frontage (Fig.13).



Fig. 13: View of Causton Road (south front) , with the terrace of nos. 12 to 18 in the foreground

2.6. Land Use and Economy

The Conservation Area is a mixed-use area. The distribution of residential and commercial uses reflects its historic development (Map.04). The majority of the commercial activities are found in the southern half of North Station Road, the oldest section of the street. Its role as the main access road into Colchester is reflected in the concentration of historic hotel uses. Globe Hotel and the Riverside Hotel (former Castle Inn) continue in the same use. The former Riverside Hotel at 20-21 Middleborough, Victoria Inn and the Norfolk Hotel (the only commercial premises north to the Albert Roundabout) have been converted into pubs or restaurants. Another historic hotel, the Albert Inn on the corner with Serpentine Walk, was demolished when Colne Bank Avenue was opened but a more recent hotel use is found in the 20th century Anglia House to the north of the historic Globe Hotel.



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The street frontage from North Bridge to John Harper Street comprises modest commercial units on ground floor level which accommodate a variety of retail, restaurants and food takeaways and other services (hair salons, tattoo parlours etc.). Although some chains can be found as well, the fact that the majority of businesses are independent attributes a diverse character to the area, further enhanced by their rich ethnic background. Whilst some of them have an established presence, others have a rather transient character which accounts for frequent changes to the use and appearance of some units. The upper floors are auxiliary to the ground floor use or accommodate residential use.

A number of office blocks were erected in the second half of the 20th Century in various demolition sites, the majority of them with commercial units at the ground floor. However, the office use has subsided leaving a vacuum that needs to be managed in a manner that preserves a balanced mix of uses in the area.

A few sites in close proximity to busy road junctions accommodate garages. The former Railway Mission is used as a healthcare facility and North Primary School remains the main institutional use in the study area.

Residential use is predominant in the remaining part of the Conservation Area which corresponds to the Victorian expansion after the opening of the North Station. The commercial uses are incidental and limited at the former Norfolk Hotel and nos. 66-68 North Station Road. There is also a small cluster of communal/ educational uses around Belle Vue Road, consisting of the Belle Vue Social Club, a Performing Arts School at the former Church Hall of St Paul's Church, a care home at the bungalow that replaced the Church and a canoe club at the former Open Air Swimming Pool.

Character Analysis

3.1. Townscape Character

The centrepiece of the Conservation Area is North Station Road, a wide street that retains its historic role of a principal access corridor into the historic city centre. The pattern of its development is reflected on its diverse character and appearance.

For the stretch from North Bridge to the Albert Roundabout, this pattern consisted of 19th century development between earlier timber framed buildings and their subsequent replacement by 20th century commercial blocks. The result is an eclectic mix of buildings of varying age, scale, form, materials and design.

The concentration of commercial uses in that section is another defining aspect that differentiates it from the stretch to the north of the Albert Roundabout (Fig.15). At the northern end of the road, the almost exclusive residential use and the lack of commercial activity result in a different ambience. Although the width of the street and the open views towards the city centre (looking southwards) or North Station Bridge (looking northwards) are a constant reminder that the street is a main artery which serves an important link between the North Station and the city centre, the bustling activity of the southern half gives way to a more muted atmosphere (Fig.16).



Fig. 15:North Station Road. Views of the southern half of the street (east front).



Fig. 14: North Station Road. Views of the northern half of the street (east front).

Still, there is diversity to be found in the character of the frontages of this section which were developed with an interval of forty years. The west front that dates from the first phase of the Victorian expansion displays some variety in the design of the individual buildings, together with the aspiration to transfer here the scale and character of the three-storey buildings seen to the south of the Roundabout (Fig.17)

In contrast, the east side is characterised by stylistic coherence and uniform scale by virtue of the early 20th Century terrace that occupies most of its length (Fig.18).

The architectural variety and busy character of North Station Road contrast the quieter environment of the narrow Victorian residential side streets. These are characterised by the use of more coherent architectural language, consistent scale and sense of enclosure (Fig.18).



Fig. 16: North Station Road. West front to the north of the Albert Roundabout, developed in the third quarter of the 19th century.



Fig. 17:North Station Road. East front to the north of the Albert Roundabout, developed between 1895-1935.



Fig. 18: St Paul's Road. View from the east end looking westwards.



Fig. 19: Riverside Walk. The path towards Castle Park with river Colne to the right.

Such vivid contrast in the townscape character can be experienced elsewhere in the study area, more notably on its southern end. The intense character of Middleborough that is dominated by over-scaled modern development close to the boundary of the Conservation Area, heavy traffic and cluttered public realm makes way for the tranquil and picturesque setting of the North Bridge and the nearby Riverside Walk (Fig.19).

The latter is an important green/ blue space which offers a repose amid the busy urban environment and links the study area to a greater green infrastructure, Castle Park to the east. At the north-

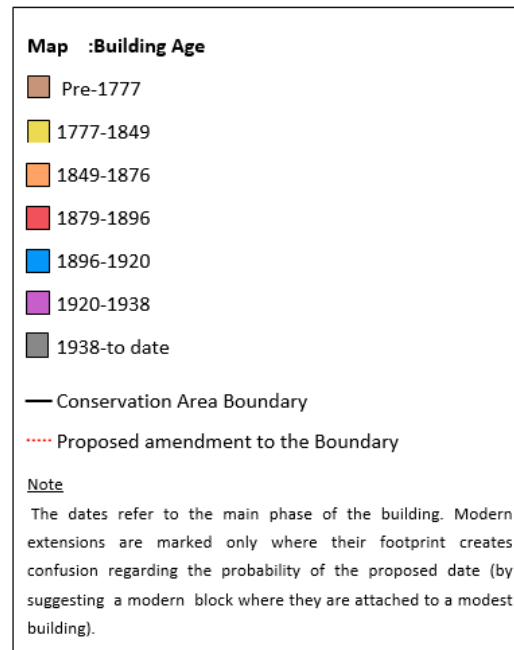
west end of the Conservation Area, the site of the former Open Area Swimming Pool on the Colne makes a similar contribution to the townscape character as a green oasis between two busy main road arteries that serves the transition from the urban environment into the rural hinterland beyond the A134.

Finally, the other significant element that define the townscape character of the study area is the highways infrastructure. Besides the disruption of the urban fabric from their construction, they have a lasting effect in the urban landscape and the way it is experienced today. The northern bypass wedged its way between

the two Victorian estates at Bellevue Road and St Paul's/ Orchard/Morten Road; the former was further truncated by the construction of the A134 inner relief road. The Albert Roundabout exacerbated the impact; its construction and consequent enlargement required the loss of more properties and disrupted the continuity of North Station Road, setting a barrier between the north and south half that amplifies, and to a certain degree accounts for, the contrast in their land use and character.

3.2. Architecture

As discussed in the previous section, a key characteristic of the Conservation Area is the offer of diverse mix of buildings that span various eras and illustrate its history and development. The Map of approximate building age (Map.05) records their distribution and provides a snapshot of the area’s development from the late 18th century onwards.



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The earliest surviving buildings are timber framed and many are now refaced in brick. These are perhaps best illustrated by the picturesquely located Riverside Hotel (Fig.20) with other more anonymous examples on the eastern street frontage. The Carolean architecture of the Victoria Inn with its distinctive hipped roof, large axial stack and heavy dentil eaves cornice is a formal and refined feature of the area (Fig.21). The Globe Hotel presents a later Georgian-styled formal commercial façade in Suffolk White bricks with large multipaned sashes and a shallow slate roof. This actually dates from the dawn of the Victorian era (1843)(Fig.22).



Fig. 20: The Riverside Hotel, North Bridge.



Fig. 21: The Globe Hotel, North Station Road.



Fig. 22: The Victoria Inn, North Station Road.

The North Primary School is an exceptional example of a later Victorian Board School with eclectic freestyle elevations in a Queen Anne derived style with elevations faced in red brick with terracotta aprons below the windows and panels of moulded terracotta tiling inset into the peaks of the gables. The whole composing a lively roofscape featuring a terminating faceted turret (Fig.23).



Fig. 23: North Primary School, John Harper Road.

The richest contribution to the defining character of the area is undoubtedly derived from the mid and later Victorian commercial and residential buildings that form most of the surviving frontages and residential hinterland. These buildings are conventional and mostly quite subdued architecturally. They use conventional mainstream materials with red facing brick work, contrasting masonry sills and lintels and large paned sash windows. These are mostly found in runs of short terraces with occasional more substantial semi-detached and rarely detached villas forming smaller higher status groups towards the northern end of the area. The turn of the century artisan homes in Morton Road (ca 1890) are distinguished by the applied use of moulded terracotta tiling employing motifs of the fashionable Aesthetic Movement (especially Sunflowers).

3.3. Green/Blue Spaces

The river Colne characterises two of the principal access points into the Conservation Area at Colne Bank and North Colchester Bridge and as such is the principal green/blue landscape feature influencing, and with the power to influence, the soft landscape structure and layout of these parts of the Area.

The river constitutes the underlying and constant historic landscape feature that underpins the dominant green/blue landscape structure of the Conservation Area and its environs, helping connect it with the ecologically rich and rural Cymbeline Meadows floodplains to the west and, to the south, the riverside walks that follow the River Colne's continuous corridor as it meanders its way through the City of Colchester. Beyond the riparian character of the river Colne, the late Victorian development turns it's back on the river, with only the earlier grade II C17 Riverside Hotel and listed and unlisted properties along Riverside Walk facing onto and forming part of the rivers setting.

Although the Victorian development architecturally turns its back on the River Colne, the Belle Vue Road Graveyard and North

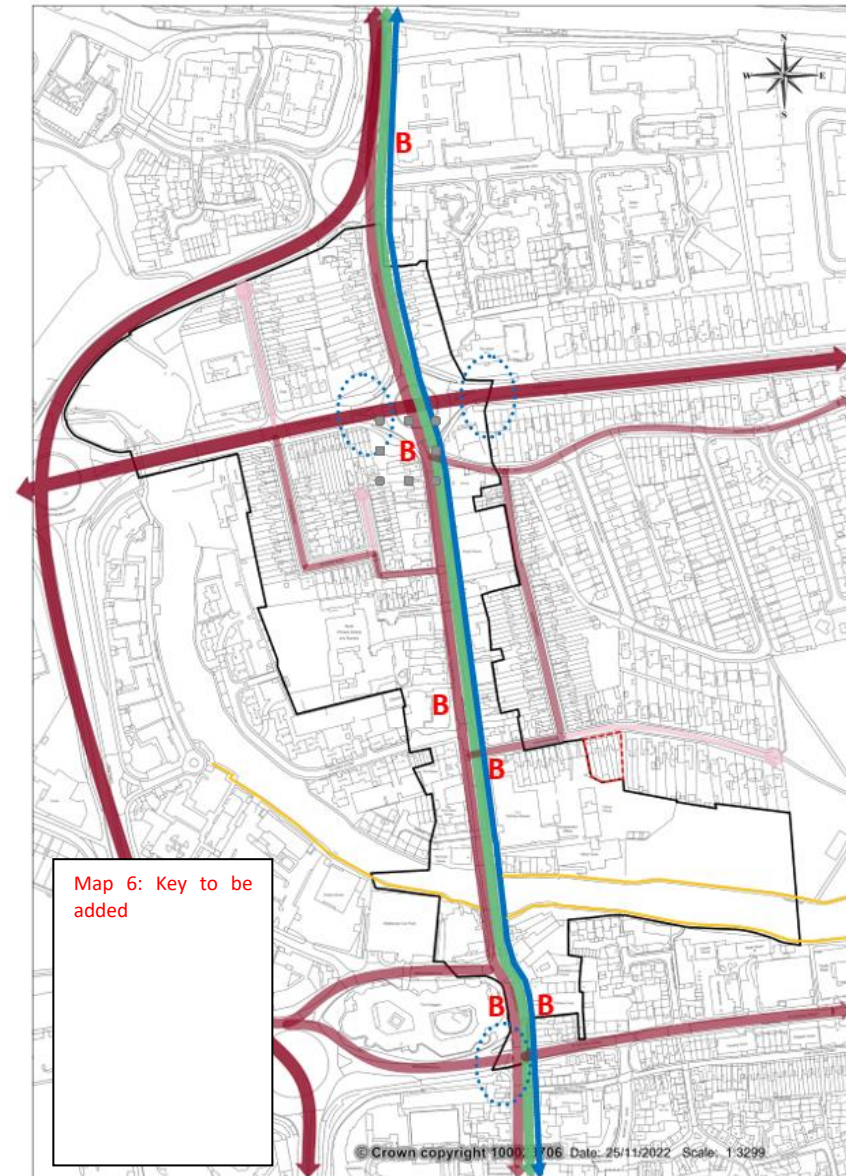
Primary School play area extend down and out toward the river, affording, historically at least, an informal interconnection between the river, with its rural connections, and the tight formality of the Area's Victorian townscape.

3.4.Traffic and Movement

The study area comprises a road network branching from main arteries (Colne Bank Avenue, A134), principal roads (North Station Road, Middleborough), secondary residential streets (St Paul's Road, Orchard Road) and three streets that terminate as cul-de -acs (Belle Vue Road, Morten Road and Causton road outside the study area).This hierarchy streets results in sub-areas of different character, from areas dominated by heavy traffic, street clutter and highway engineering to quiet , secluded residential streets.

North Station Road is on the route of various bus services that connect the city centre to North Station, the villages to the north of the Borough and Sudbury.

It is also the main pedestrian link between the city centre and North Station, However, the highways infrastructure within the study area hinders pedestrian traffic. The Albert Roundabout disrupts the pedestrian flow on North Station Road while Colne Bank Avenue forms a barrier between Bellevue and the residential are of St Paul/ Orchard and Morten Road to the south. The unattractive environment of the Roundabout and Colne Bank Avenue deter visitors from exploring the area to the west of the roundabout.



The site of the former Open Air Swimming Pool and the Riverside Walk, the two key green areas within the study area, are not connected. With an improved pedestrian route between them as part of a wider public realm enhancement scheme, the Conservation Area could serve as a link between Castle Park and Cymbeline Meadows.

3.5. Views and Building Heights

3.5.1. Views and Focal Points

There are a number of views within the study area that contribute significantly in the way that the area is experienced and appreciated. At the same time, there are views into and across the Conservation Area that illustrate its present and historic relationship with its setting, including the rural landscape and urban townscape of the surrounding areas.

As discussed in the previous section, the Conservation Area comprises a grid of roads that vary significantly in size and significance. They range from main arteries to quiet residential streets and cul-de-sacs. By virtue of their geometry and location, these streets enable the appreciation of different types of views. Some of these views are dynamic and unfold as the visitor moves, others are fixed and experienced from a specific viewpoint. Examples of both types can be experienced on North Station Road; but there are other locations within the study area that offer significant views.







The present section does not attempt to identify each and every view into and across the Conservation Area. Instead, it seeks to

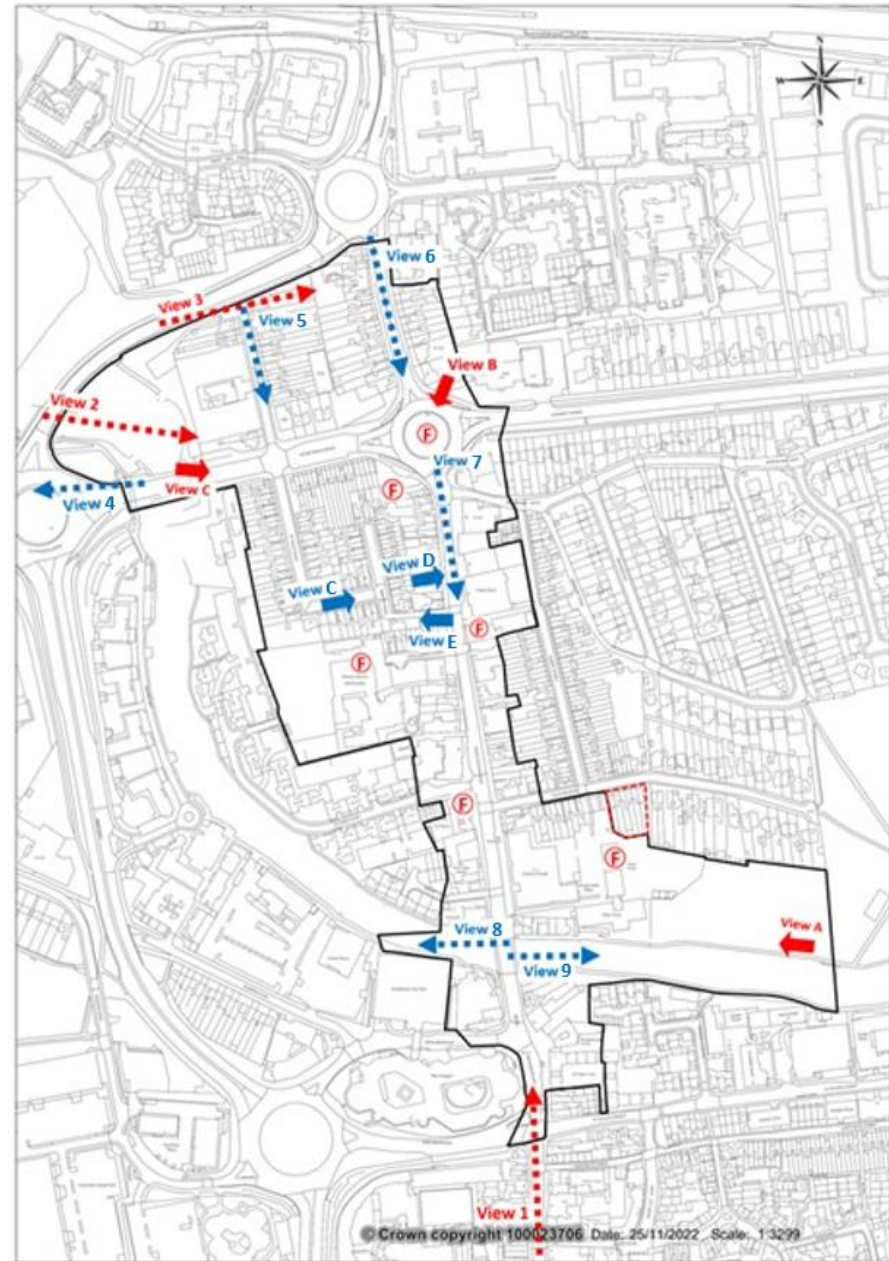
categorise them in key types and illustrate this classification with some representative examples.

The main types of views within and towards the Conservation Area include:

- a. Long distance views of the Conservation Area from the surrounding Areas;
- b. Long Distance Views from the Conservation towards the areas that form its immediate and wider setting.
- c. Long Distance views within the Conservation Area, usually towards a focal point.
- d. Local Views within the Conservation Area.

Map : Key Views

-  **View 1** Long Distance View towards the Conservation Area
-  **View 2** Long Distance View from the Conservation Area
-  **View A** Long Distance View within the Conservation Area
-  **View D** Local View within the Conservation Area
-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Proposed amendment to the Boundary



View 1

Dynamic view of the Conservation Area from North Hill. Although this impression would have been different prior to the removal of the North gate, today the uninterrupted view of North Station Road illustrates its role as the main access road into the historic walled town from the north.



Fig. 24:View of the Conservation Area from North Hill.

View 2

Fixed View down into the River Colne's former Outdoor Swimming Pool (The Lido), from Station Wy (A134) that, being largely intact, offers a historically relevant view of this important connecting feature linking and interconnecting the rural landscape and urban townscape.



Fig. 25: View of the former Open Air Swimming Pool form the north-west.

View 3

Dynamic views of the Conservation Area, unfolding along the elevated south sidewalk of Station Way (A134). They mainly reveal the unattractive rear views of the buildings that front onto Belle Vue Road and North Station Road but also afford glimpses of good fronts on the east side of Belle Vue. (Parked cars and the railings of the car park that interfere with these views would benefit from some local landscaping that would improve the north end of Belle Vue Road.)



Fig. 26: View of the Conservation Area from Station Wy (A134).

View 4

Dynamic views from the west end of Colne Bank Avenue out of the Conservation Area across Cymbeline Meadows and down the Avenue of Remembrance, that help visually connect the Area with the rural landscape of the River Colne's riparian floodplain.



Fig. 27: View from the Conservation Area towards Cymbeline Meadows and the Avenue of Remembrance.

View 5

Fixed view from the north end of Belle Vue Road looking southwards. The Jumbo Water Tower is the focal point that helps to place the Victorian estate in relationship to the historic city centre, while the graveyard to the acts as a discreet connection with the rural hinterland to the west. The protected tree in the foreground is a significant feature of the street scene. St Paul's Road is viewed in continuity to Belle Vue Road, but the link is only visual; Colne Bank Avenue disrupts their physical connection.



Fig. 28: View form the north end of Belle Vue Road towards the city centre.

View 6

Dynamic view from the north end of North Station Road towards the city centre. The tower of the Town Hall is the focal point, although its prominence is challenged by the Telephone Exchange building. This is the first sighting of a key Colchester landmark on the route from North Station that helps visitors to navigate their way towards the city centre.



Fig. 29: View from the north end of North Station road towards the city centre.

View 7

Dynamic view towards the city centre, now directed towards North Hill where St Peter's tower is the focal point to the south, and the Jumbo Water Tower to the south-west. The view illustrates the historic link of the Conservation Area to the city centre, the role of North Station Road as the key road into Colchester from the north and the form of early suburban expansion and its relationship to the walled city. As the viewer moves south, the views of North Bridge unfold, bisected by the distinct riparian character of the River Colne with its riverside trees, this demonstrating the subtle dominance and softening influence of the River Colne over this historic crossing point.



Fig. 30: View from the south of the Albert Roundabout towards the city centre.

View 8

Fixed view from North Bridge looking eastwards which illustrates the role of Riverside Walk that links the Conservation Area to Castle Park. The views of the park at the backdrop are framed by the belt of mature trees on the south bank and the Riverside Cottages to the north. The modern dwellings to the south of the cottages and Digby House detract from the view but the main offender is the six-storey volume of Fairfax House, topped with telecommunication poles that exacerbates its adverse visual impact.



Fig. 31: View from North Bridge towards Castle Park to the East.

View 9

Fixed view from North Bridge, looking westwards. The volume of the Multistorey Car Park intrudes in the picturesque views of the river but the protected trees on the south bank soften the impression.



Fig. 32: View from North Bridge looking westwards.

View A

Dynamic view towards North Bridge that unfolds along the Riverside Walk. The tranquil and picturesque setting of the Colne is marred by the views of Digby and Fairfax House, the latter being the most intrusive element by virtue of its height and bulk that can be better appreciated as the viewer approaches the site.



Fig. 33: View from the Riverside walk towards North Bridge to the West.

View B

Fixed view from the north-east of the Albert Roundabout towards the south-west. The roundabout affords open views from various viewpoints in different directions from the junction. In this view, the Memorial Wall serves a focal point, but the view serves to illustrate the busy character of the roundabout with



Fig. 34: View from the north-east of the Albert Roundabout towards the Memorial Wall.

View C

Fixed view from the west end of Orchard Road towards Morten Road. The properties either side of the street frame the views of the locally listed terrace at 1-17 Morten Road. There is a sense of enclosure and a tranquil backwater in contrast to the North Station Road corridor.



Fig. 35: View from the west end of Orchard Row towards Morten Road.

View D

Fixed view from the west end of Morten Road towards North Station Road. This view illustrates the transition from the quiet residential streets to the busy environment of North Station Road.



Fig. 36: View form the west end of Morten Road towards North Station Road.

View E

Fixed view from the east end of John Harper Street that frame the listed North Primary School. Seatrade House has a volume that detracts from the views of the North Primary School that is seen from the east end of John Harper Street.

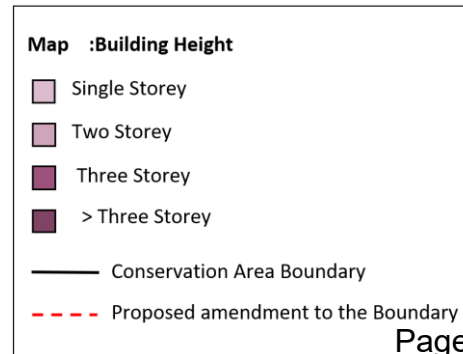


Fig. 37: View from the east end of harper Street towards North Primary School.

3.5.2. Heights

The study area comprises mainly two storey buildings. There is a number of three storey buildings, mainly found on the southern half of the Conservation Area. These are mainly the 20th century commercial buildings but there are some 19th century examples as well, including the Victoria Inn, Globe Hotel, no 41-43 and no 59-61 North Street. Some buildings dating from the first phase of the Victorian expansion to the north end of the road are of similar scale, including no 108-110, 112-114 and 124-126 whose height adds some variety on the west front after the Albert Roundabout.

The only example above three storeys is the six storey Fairfax House of the Riverside Office Complex. Its visual impact is somewhat mitigated by its location that is set back from the surrounding streets; still, it is visible from various vantage points and intrudes into some key views, as discussed in the previous section.



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Character Areas

4.0_Character Areas

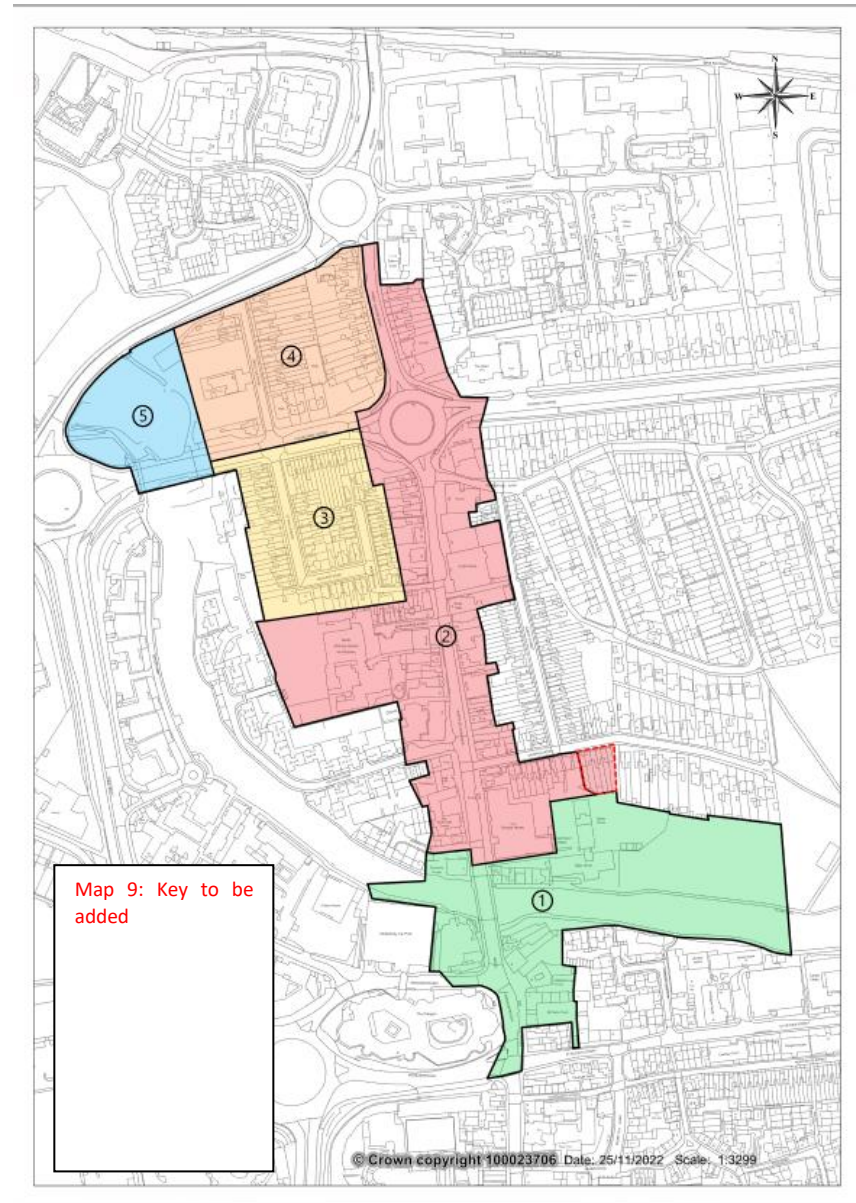
4.1_Introduction

For the purpose of this study, the Conservation Area was divided in five Character Areas:

1. Colne Riverside
2. North Station Road Frontages
3. Late Victorian Suburb
4. Belle Vue Road
- 5.Colne Bank and the former Lido

Their boundaries were drawn by considering the historical function and development of the area, as well as the present townscape character and predominant uses. For that reason, the west frontage of North Station Road from the Albert Roundabout to Essex Hall roundabout was grouped together with Belle Vue Road which dates from the same phase of development rather than the east frontage whose later date is expressed in the different character of the street frontage.

The section expands on the general Character Analysis in Chapter 3 and examines the same topics in detail for each Character Area.



4.2. Character Area 1: Colne Riverside

4.2.1_Historic Development

North Bridge, together with East Bridge, have been historically the main crossing over River Colne which led to the walled town via North Gate. The present cast iron Bridge dates from 1843 with subsequent alterations in 1903-04 when it was widened by 17 ft. 6 in. (5.3 m.) on the east side to accommodate the tram line. A cottage at the west end of the extant Riverside cottages had to be demolished to facilitate widening of the North Bridge over the Colne River. The jettied elevations and hipped roof is typical of later 15th century timber framed buildings (compare with the Stockwell Arms in East Stockwell Street in the Dutch Quarter)(Fig.38).

Middleborough's present appearance dates mainly from its post-war redevelopment. Historically the area accommodated houses and industrial uses traditionally found in extramural locations and near river streams, such as kilns, tanneries and breweries etc. The relocation of the Cattle Market from High Street in 1862 added a significant use in the area that enhanced North Station Road's role as the key link between the town centre, the North Station and the countryside(Fig.39).Its relocation in 1975 left a gap in the urban



Figure 38: a (L). View of North Bridge and the Riverside Cottages in 1880 , prior to demolition of the westernmost cottage. b (R). The cottage that was demolished for the widening of the Bridge.



Figure 39:North Station Road at the beginning of the 20th century with the tram in operation and sheep bound for market.

Fabric which was infilled by the imposing Octagon (formerly Royal Insurance Offices) in 1982(Fig.40).

The east front of Middleborough within the study area comprises post war development that replaced a row of demolished buildings recorded by the Royal Commission of Historic Monuments (RCHME) in the 1921 survey of Colchester. The group included a 15th century house of three tenements and shop with cross-wings at the N. and S. ends on the location of no 18 (National Tyres and Autocare garage) and 17th century houses with shops at no 16 and St Peter's Court (Fig.41 a,b,c) . A jettied 17th century house was removed from the south bank of the Colne in 1903 and replaced by the present semidetached pair of 19-19a Middleborough.



Figure 41: The site of the Cattle Market when it was cleared for the erection of the Octagon. The Market Tavern in the foreground was demolished as well.



Figure 40:(L-R)a. nos 10-15 Middleborough in 1951 (©National Buildings Record & Historic England),b. approximately the same view in 1965, c. the same view in 2022.

he 17th century Riverside Cottages on the north bank were truncated when North bridge was widened (see Fig.38), and two dwellings replaced a modest house to their east (Fig.41 and 42). The two office blocks further east, three storey Digby House and six-storey Fairfax House are part of the Riverside Office Complex that was erected in the later 1960's.

4.2.2_Uses and Character

The area accommodates a mix of uses, including residential, two restaurants, a hotel, a garage and two office blocks.

The character area serves as the entry/exit point to the Conservation Area. It meets the boundary of Colchester Conservation Area No.1 to the south and extends to Castle Park to the east, enclosing the Riverside Walk that provides the pedestrian link to the park

The Character Area comprises a cluster of listed buildings, grouped around North Bridge. The river Colne which forms Colchester's principal Green/Blue link, interconnecting the City along its dominant meandering course with the rural landscape beyond its settlement boundary, makes a major contribution to the character of this zone. The river bisects the Character Area and brings elements from that rural landscape, introducing open water,



Figure 42: The Riverside Cottages in 1951((@National Buildings Record & Historic England),



Figure 43: The Riverside Cottages in 2022.

mature and comprehensive tree cover, soft embankments and open green spaces that all in all bring a marked sense of tranquillity and diversity to the locality. The quality of the riparian setting combines harmoniously with North Bridge and the nearby historic buildings; the result is a picturesque and attractive area which, despite being compromised by the over-scaled post-war development within and adjacent to its boundary, makes an important contribution to the quality of the Conservation Area.

4.2.3_ Designations and notable buildings

There are four designated and one non-designated heritage asset in the Character Area, including:

1. Nos 20-21 Middleborough (listed as “Bridge House, The Moorings”, NHLE List Entry Number 1123560, Grade II);
2. North Bridge (NHLE List Entry Number 1278579, Grade II);
3. Riverside Cottages, 1, 3 And 4, North Station Road (NHLE List Entry Number, 1123543, Grade II);
4. Riverside Hotel (listed as “Market Café”, NHLE List Entry Number, 1306568, Grade II);
5. Trotters Bar, 22 Middleborough (HER ref.no DCC25502)

To the south, the boundary meets the boundary of Colchester Conservation Area No.1 that covers the historic centre. Noteworthy

trees include the trio at the site of Nos.20-21 Middleborough, two further trees south of the Riverside Hotel and a cluster of trees to the North of Riverside Cottages are protected by TPOs. There is no other building of architectural or historic merit.

4.2.4_Character Area Analysis

The southern approach to the Conservation Area is dominated by the post-war development at Middlesborough. The Octagon fronts onto the road with a octagonal two storey volume that does not appear overbearing in context. However, the scale gradually steps up to four and five storeys and is punctuated by massive towers at the corners. When seen from the north, the complex dominates the views to and from the south end of the Conservation Area and dwarfs the group of 20-21 and 22 Middleborough (Fig.44) .

No 20-21 dates from the 17th century, altered with Georgian fenestration. Formerly two houses (at the time of its listing), now a restaurant extended with consecutive single storey extensions that threaten to overwhelm the original building. No.22 Middleborough (The Trotters Bar) is a picturesque modest early 19th century building that forms a group with the listed building to provide an idea of the area’s appearance prior to its redevelopment (Fig.45).

On the east side, a three-storey office block in gault brick (St Peter’s court) replaced a garage that had been erected on the location of the demolished 17th century tenements. The street facing blocks are designed to evoke the appearance of townhouses with pedimented door surrounds and regular fenestration with sliding



Fig. 44: Views of the Octagon from the north east (photo to be replaced)



Fig. 45: 20-21 and 22 Middleborough.

sashes and stone sills but the double-height arch strikes a false note and overall the complex fails to leave a memorable impression and is weakly proportioned and detailed.

Built with a concrete frame, and brick infill panes, the office block at no 16 declares its age but fails to represent a notable example of its era by virtue of its squat proportions and the lack of modelling. The scale and form of the two-storey brick garage at no 18 does not look out of context in that location but its appearance is very compromised by the garish signage; early photographs of the building with its original fenestration and signage show its potential to make a better contribution if these unsympathetic alterations are reversed.

As the visitor moves northwards, the views of Colne River with North Bridge and the nearby listed buildings come into focus and, the townscape character changes notably. After the busy junction at Middlesborough, the river offers a pleasant repose whose effect is enhanced by the quality of the listed assets in its vicinity. The positive impression is most effective when the visitor arrives on North Bridge and takes in the views of the river either side of the bridge. Although the jarring sight of the post-war development interferes with these views, the quality of the scenery makes an



Fig. 46: The Riverside Hotel (then Castle Inn, unknown date).

impactful impression that serves as a positive introduction or last impression of the Conservation Area.

To the north of the river, Riverside Hotel, built in the 17th century and altered in the 18th, is marked in historic maps as the Castle Inn (Fig.46). The removal of the plaster from the south elevation of the Riverside Cottages is a historically inaccurate alteration that should be reversed in the interest of restoring their historic appearance and protect their timber frame. The dwellings adjacent to the listed cottages are of appropriate scale and form but their design that includes irregular fenestration, flat roof dormers and conspicuous solar PV panels detract from their appearance and their

contribution to the views of the north bank as seen from the Bridge. Digby and Fairfax House are concrete, brick and glass office blocks. Whilst the scale of Digby House is not contextually sympathetic, the crisp lines of the design creates sculptural and architectural interest. Sadly, the sheer scale and mass of Fairfax House precludes successful integration into the area.

A flight of stone steps either side of the bridge provide access to the riverside paths; the Riverside walk to the east linking the area to Castle Park. The lack of level access and infrequent pedestrian traffic account for the lesser popularity of this route as an access point to Castle Park. However, the visitor who ventures away from North bridge and past Digby House is rewarded with the experience of the tranquil river setting.

4.2.5_ Traffic, movement and public realm

The southern end of the Conservation Area covers an area busy with traffic. Middleborough, North Hill and St Peter's Road converge on the south boundary and a small roundabout to the north channels the traffic towards North Station Road. The bus stops on Middleborough serve frequent bus services and attract pedestrian traffic; the volume of pedestrians becomes especially

high when the students of the nearby Sixth Form College and Colchester Institute move in groups toward the bus stops.

Street clutter is abundant, including traffic lights, railings, traffic signs, cameras, lighting columns, bus stops, bins and bollards. Zebra crossings, road markings yellow lines and the painted bus lane exacerbate the junction's appearance. The pavements comprise different materials in variable condition. The attempts at improving the appearance of the junction with planters and some poorly kept planting on Middleborough lack a coherent design approach and rather exacerbate the issue of visual clutter.



Fig. 47: Pedestrian junction at Middlesborough. View from south-east.

Moving further north after the roundabout, a key feature of the public realm are the historic railings that line the pavement before and after the North Bridge. Their state of repair is poor and detracts from the appearance of the area and the setting of the heritage assets in that location. The railings before nos.20-21 Middleborough are seen in conjunction with the railings at the riverside walk to the north of the building (Fig.48). The railings of the bridge are also in need of repairs and maintenance.



Fig. 48: The historic railings at nos.20-21 Middleborough.

4.2.6_Open spaces and Views

The Character Area includes the Riverside Walk on the north bank of the river; this area is the eastern end of Castle Park which is outside the boundary of its area that is designated as a Registered Grade II Park. This is key green space that links the Conservation Area to the main green infrastructure of the city centre.

4.2.7_ Strengths, challenges and opportunities

Strengths

- Group of listed buildings around the historic North Bridge that combine with the river to create a memorable scene
- Riverside Walk and link to Castle Park

Challenges

- Poor quality of the public realm, including condition of pavements and railings.
- Street clutter on Middleborough.
- Poor quality 20th century development that detracts from the area.
- Consecutive additions to Nos.20-21 Middleborough that threaten to overwhelm the 17th century building.

- Unsympathetic signage on the garage at No.18 Middleborough that detracts from the building and exacerbates the adds visual clutter in the area.
- Vacant Digby and Fairfax House -plans for residential conversion

Opportunities

- Public realm improvements and removal of unnecessary clutter.
- Replacement of inappropriate signage at the garage (18 Middleborough).
- Landscape enhancement with strategic planting to mitigate the visual impact of unsympathetic development.
- Repair and maintenance of the historic railings at North Bridge.
- Rendering the Riverside Cottages to reinstate their historic appearance.
- Enhancement of the Riverside walk with lighting, street furniture etc to increase pedestrian traffic.
- Removal of telecommunication poles and equipment from the roof of Fairfax House.



Fig. 49: Historic photograph of riverside walk (unknown date).

4.3_Character Area 2: North Station Road Frontages

4.3.1_Historic development

Character Area 2 comprises the main body of the Conservation Area which includes the stretch of North Station Road from North Bridge to the Albert Roundabout. The section of Causton Road that falls within this boundary, North Primary school and the east front of North Station Road between the Albert and Essex Hall roundabout.

North Station Road was historically the main access road into Colchester from the north. As the town expanded with ribbon development along main routes like East Hill, and Magdalen Street, the southern end of the road was developed. The arrival of the railway and the construction of North Station triggered further development, with infill buildings in available gaps, expansion to the north and on new roads laid out behind the street frontage. The earliest section of the street accommodated commercial uses but its role as main link to the railway station is reflected in the number of historic inns and pubs, including Coach and Horses Inn(on the south boundary , approximately where the Drinking Fountain is located, demolished in 1970) , Market Inn (at Middleborough , demolished when the area of the Cattle Market



Fig. 50: The Albert Inn, demolished in 1932.

was redeveloped) , the Spread Eagle Inn (at 11 Middleborough , use ceased in 1920 , building demolished in the 1970s), Castle Inn (now Riverside Hotel), Victoria Inn, Globe Inn , Albert Inn (demolished in 1932 and moved to the north of Cowdray Avenue-Fig.50) and Norfolk Hotel.

Two institutional buildings, North Primary School and the Railway Mission were two significant additions at the turn of the 19th century.

In the 20th century, various early buildings at the south section of North Station Road were demolished and replaced by modern office blocks and other commercial buildings. The RCHME 1921 survey recorded a 17th century house with shop at 3 Station Road(Fig.51) and two tenements of the same era at no 7-9 (where Century house was subsequently erected), a range of seven tenements dating possibly dating from the 18th century at nos 12-24 (replaced by Midland House – Fig.52 and 53) and a range of four 17th century tenements at No.52-58 (on the junction with Morten Road ,now a vacant site with two dwellings set back from the road-Fig.54 and 55). Other demolished sites include a row of six houses from the south-west corner of the Albert Roundabout (where the Wall of Remembrance is situated) and the block bound by North Station, Serpentine Walk, Albert Street and the lane north to Globe Inn Hotel, currently occupied by Anglia House and the two nearby garages.

The latter was cleared for development after the northern by-pass was opened in 1933. Its construction, together with the subsequent enlargement of the Albert Roundabout had a major adverse impact on the Character Area forming a barrier to pedestrians and fragmented townscape.



Fig. 51:17th century house with shop at 3 North Station Road in 1921 – now demolished and replaced by Century House.



Fig. 52: Range of seven tenements at 12-24 North Station Road in 1964 -now demolished.



Fig. 53: The same view in 2022.



Fig. 55: 17th century range of four tenements at No.52-58 in 1921 -now demolished.



Fig. 54: The same view in 2022.

4.3.2_Uses and Character

The Character Area is a mixed-use area. Most buildings that front onto North Station Road accommodate commercial uses on the ground floor; upper floors are auxiliary to the ground floor use or in residential use. There is a mix of independent businesses, including convenience stores, greengrocers and butchers, drycleaners electronics, hair salons, food takeaways and restaurants (Fig.56). The majority of the shop units are modest in size and correspond to the properties that host them. The only example where two units have been merged into a larger one can be seen at no 49-51, its scale contrasting the size of the adjacent shops. Other uses on North Station Road include hotels (the historic Globe Hotel and a hotel at the adjacent Anglia House), a pub at the former Victoria Inn, two garages near the Albert Roundabout. The area has historically accommodated institutional uses including North Primary School and the Railway Mission; today the latter houses healthcare services.

The office use has subsided, leaving the Riverside Office Complex, Midland House and Seatrade House vacant. The management of these considerably sized blocks represents a challenge. Their conversion into residential use seems to be the prevalent option;



Fig. 56: North Station Road. East front with ground floor commercial uses.

Seatrade House was recently converted and there are similar plans for the Riverside Office block. However, that trend is not without risks. Under current legislation, the conversion from Office Use Class E to Residential Class (C3) use can be carried out under permitted development rights. However, when the amount of these changes which are carried without the opportunity to consider their planning implications in the context of an application reaches a critical point, there is the risk of their combined effect having a significant impact on the character of the Conservation Area and the amenity of the residents.

Causton Road is a residential street. There are no commercial uses on the east frontage of North Station Road to the north of the Albert Roundabout which accounts for its quieter character in comparison to the busier stretch to the south.

The commercial character of North Station Road defines its ambience and appearance. The presence of commercial activities is critical for the vitality and economic viability of the Conservation Area. However, the type of retail and the transient character of some businesses (hot food takeaways, hair salons etc) often translate into poor quality shopfronts and signage which detract from the quality of the Conservation Area.

Besides the land uses, the historic development of the street also reflects in its diverse character and appearance. There is a stark contrast in the scale of the surviving historic buildings and the 20th century blocks. By virtue of their size, form, design and materials, the latter failed to integrate successfully in the urban grain and serve as the main detractors in the study area.

4.3.3_ Designations and notable buildings

There is a number of listed and locally listed buildings within the Character Area, including:

1. 25 and 27 North Station Road (NHLE List Entry Number 1110913, Grade II);
2. The Victoria Inn (NHLE List Entry Number 1123544, Grade II);
3. 30 and 32 North Station Road (NHLE List Entry Number 1123545);
4. North Primary School (NHLE List Entry Number 1123581);
5. Globe Inn (NHLE List Entry Number 1169340, Grade II);
6. Former Railway Mission Hall (HER ref.no DCC25929);
7. 29 North Station Road (HER ref.no DCC25560);
8. 39-57 North Station Road (HER ref.no DCC25624);
9. 28 North Station Road (HER ref.no DCC25555);
10. 34 & 36 North Station Road (HER ref.no DCC25598);
11. 38 North Station Road (HER ref.no DCC25617);
12. 61-65 North Station Road (HER ref.no DCC26082);
13. 60-62 North Station Road (HER ref.no DCC25728);
14. The Norfolk, 132 North Station Road (HER ref.no DCC25388);
15. One enamelled sign (on 27a North Station Road) and two ceramic street signs (on 60 and 140 North Station Road) (HER ref.no DCC26099).

The trees at the Memorial Wall to the south-west of the Albert Roundabout are protected under the TPO covering the trees that line the northern By-pass.

4.3.4_Character Analysis

East side

The south end of the Character Area is dominated by the alien scale and massing of Century House (Fig.57). The 1960s block relates very poorly with the nearby buildings in terms of scale, form, design and materiality. The contrast is notable when the block is viewed from the south in conjunction with the former Railway Mission on the opposite side but is even more striking when the office building is seen together the modest Fifteenth century timber framed 25-27 North Station Road from the northwest; the impact is further aggravated by the glimpses of the six-storey Fairfax House at the backdrop (Fig.58). Some localised tree planting only serves to screen the jarring effect from certain viewpoints to the south but does not effectively mitigate the overall impact of the block.

The Grade II listed timber framed 25-27 North Station Road comprises the former jettied cross wing of a 15th century hall house (No 27) and the gabled 17th or 18th century no 25 which replaced the former open hall. The third gable to the north is probably an 18th century addition as well. The appearance of the building is altered by the 20th century windows and shopfronts which detract from the remaining historic character of the group (Fig.59 and 60).



Fig. 57: View of north Station Road from North Bridge with Century House in the foreground.



Fig. 58: View of 25-27 North Station Road from the north-west.



Fig. 59: 25-27 North Station Road in 1921.



Fig. 61: Same view in 2022.

The locally listed no.29 North Station Road is a well-preserved large corner house built in the last quarter of the 19th Century (Fig.61). The use of gault brick reflects the use of gault brick at the Globe Inn and enhances its landmark quality as a prominent corner building

To its north, the east front comprises modest two storey terraced properties with modillioned eaves, corbelled window heads (no 31-37) or corbelled cills (no 49- 55); the latter retain original two-over two sashes on first floor. The two terraces are interrupted by the three storey no 41-43 which stands out for its decorative details, original fenestration and original form of the ground floor that has



Fig. 60: 29 North Station Road. View from the south-west.

not been altered with shopfronts. The adjacent timber framed no 45-47 dates from the 16th century (Fig.62). The gabled elevation of the no 57 bookends the terrace before the three storey 59-61, now much altered by the unsympathetic shopfronts, thick cement render and uPVC replacement windows.

No 63-65 was originally a single storey building designed by architects Goodey & Cressall in 1924 to provide three shop units for the Colchester Co-operative Society, for grocery, confectionary and

butchery. The front façade is clad in creamy coloured faience, mimicking stone. The pilasters have art-deco decoration, matching the original shopfront which survives intact, including the inset entrance doors with canted flank walls. The large fascia signage area is currently covered with an unsympathetic plastic fascia sign, but the surround appears to be partially present behind (Fig.63).



Fig. 62: 41-43 North Station Road (three storey) and the 16th century 45-47 to its left.



Fig. 63: 63-65 North Station Road.

A modest two storey building, marred by uPVC shop windows and doors and an overwhelming fascia sign, is located between no 63-65 and the historic Globe Hotel. The three-storey gault brick building serves as a landmark on North Station Road both by virtue of its height and prominent location but also for its continuous historic use as a hotel. The impression of the building from the south is compromised by the services on the flank wall which is visible through the gap with no 67-69.

The section up to the Albert Roundabout comprises 20th Century development. The scale of Anglia House challenges the prominence of Globe Hotel. The signage of the ground floor commercial units exacerbates the adverse impact. The two garages between Anglia House and Serpentine Walk are significant detractors. The buildings appear incongruous in that location and their negative effect is amplified by elements that are usually associated with this type of business, including the brush signage and tarmac parking and the picket fence at Kwik Fit.

Between Serpentine Walk and The Albert Roundabout, a detached single storey commercial building fails to make a positive contribution.



Fig. 64: Globe Hotel (unknown date).



Fig. 65: Anglia House to the right and the garages to the north.

The appearance of this section (from North bridge to the roundabout) is compromised by the modern development at each end. However, the character of the surviving section between 29 North Station Road and Globe Hotel has eroded by unsympathetic alterations, including the introduction of modern shopfronts and unsympathetic signage, painting of brickwork, the loss of original architectural details and the replacement of the timber fenestration by uPVC windows. The loss of the chimneys is also a notable change that detracts from the street scape (Fig. 66 and 67).

The east frontage after the Albert roundabout comprises two interwar houses on the corner with Cowdray Avenue, followed by an early 19th century row of semidetached properties in red brick and slate roofs with prominent chimney stacks at either end. Each semi-detached pair has its main recessed entrance centrally positioned in a side-by-side arrangement. The entrance alcoves have a decorative masonry arch with voussoir and a rectangular two storey brick bay with paired windows and gabled roof at each end. Typically, the front boundary to each property is enclosed by a low brick wall



Fig. 66: North Station Road. East side from No 29 to the Globe Hotel (unknown date).



Fig. 67: The same view in 2022.

with metal gates corresponding to each entrance and hedges behind. There is a uniformity of floor plan and consistent external appearance that makes this group such an important part of the street scene

West side

The former Railway Mission is the first notable building on this frontage. Built by William Willett in 1896 in stock brick with red brick dressings, arched windows and doorway, the building is part of Colchester railway heritage. The main block and the Sunday School, to the north were linked with a reception block of c. 1998 to accommodate healthcare services. The boundary wall of the Railway Mission contributes positively to the street frontage but a close boarded timber fence behind the street boundary and the tarmac parking forecourt are negative features.

The locally listed building is flanked by modern, rather nondescript development. The dwelling to the south is part of the development of 13 dwellings at the Old Poultry market. The building to the north dates from the development of the land adjacent the Victoria Inn c.2001 with 12 flats distributed in two blocks, to the south and west of the listed building. The height of the southern block could have been made more subordinate, to enable a smoother transition



Fig. 68: The former Railway Mission on North Station Road.

between the three storey Victoria Inn and the single storey Railway Mission and preserve the prominence of the listed building which is challenged by the three-storey gable elevation.

The height of the three storey Midland House reflects the height of the listed building but its design fails to make a positive contribution. The solid mass at the south end that intended to create a strong corner element is too imposing and the mansard roof is alien in this context. The relationship with the adjacent historic group at no 28 – 40 is also problematic.

The frontage from Midland House to Seatrade House comprises the listed 30-32 North Station Road, a rendered brick 18th century two storey house. The building forms an important group with the adjacent locally listed building. To the south, no 28 is a timber framed rendered two-storey building dating from the 17th century or earlier, its appearance compromised by the modern shopfront and unsympathetic first floor windows. At no 34-36, a two-storey timber-framed house, also dating from the 17th century, is divided in two properties; no 34 has a shop front from c.1900 and faux timbers on first floor that may correspond to the original frame.

The modest two-up, two-down red-brick house at no 38, is also included in the local list. Built circa 1860-1870, has an original double two-pane sash window with horns at first floor and an early 20th century shopfront(Fig.69).

Seatrade house to the north is another modern block whose construction eroded further the character of the street. A mid 19th century building 19th survives on the opposite corner with John Harper Road but the demolition of the tenements at nos.52-58 left a gap on the street frontage.



Fig. 69 : no 28 to 38 North Station Road (to be replaced with better resolution).

The front from the junction with Morten Road to the Albert Roundabout comprises 19th century buildings. Some stylistic variations indicate their date of construction but overall, the character of the frontage is coherent and contrasts notably with the opposite side that is dominated by the two garages. The earliest building of the section appears to be no 66-68 (a hair salon); although the building retains its original fenestration of eight over eight sliding sashes on first floor, as well as a margin-light glazed window to the appended side volume, its appearance is altered by the use of conspicuous green paint throughout, the loss of the shopfront and relocation of the central door.

At no 60-62, the pair of red brick two-storey semis with bay windows and with stucco quoins, dentilled eaves, lintels and corbelled cill in included in the local list although it has lost its original fenestration and railings. The pair of semis at no 78- 80 has good details in polychrome brick, modillioned eaves and original margin glazed windows that survive at no 80.

4.3.5_Traffic, movement and public realm

North Station Road is busy two-way traffic street. It is also the main pedestrian link between the city centre and Nort Station, and a main bus route with a number of bus stops along its length that



Fig. 70: 66-68 North Station Road.



Fig. 71: 60 -62 North Station Road.

serve several bus services. However, whilst the northern by-pass and the Albert roundabout were constructed in order to facilitate vehicular traffic, they have the opposite effect on pedestrian circulation; the visitor has to negotiate a number of traffic lights, traffic islands and pedestrian crossings amid heavy traffic.

The width of North Station Road allows for spacious pavements either side of the street but the quality of the public realm is poor. The pavements comprise a mix of materials, mainly tarmac with some localised inconsistent use of paving. The quality and state of repair of the materials together convey an impression of neglect. The use of railings along some stretches of the street makes a negative impression and adds visual clutter in an area which is blighted by poor shopfronts and signage. The localised planting does little to improve the quality of the public realm; the area is in need of more generous gestures and a coherent public realm strategy.

The Albert Roundabout suffers from similar abundance of street clutter as seen at Middleborough, further exacerbated by the extent of the area it covers and the heavy traffic on Colne Bank Avenue that create an intense environment that is not particularly pedestrian friendly (Fig.72).



Fig. 72: Pedestrian crossing on the Albert Roundabout.

4.3.6_Open spaces

The main open space within this character area is the Wall Memorial on the south-east corner of the Albert roundabout. The site is an important marker of Colchester's history. Each tree on the Avenue of Remembrance to the west of the Conservation Area was originally planted to commemorate the fallen of the Great War, incorporating a plate with the corresponding name at the foot of each tree. As these plates corroded, that record was gradually being lost. In 1996, the Memorial Wall was built to incorporate plaques with the names previously engraved on the plates at the Avenue of Remembrance. The wall was complemented by a



Fig. 73: The Memorial Wall to the southwest of the Albert Roundabout.

landscape scheme with tree and shrub planting, benches and bollards(Fig.73).

When the terrace of nos. 52-58 was demolished on the corner of North Station Road and Morten Road, the replacement dwelling was set back from the North Station Road frontage. Until a few years ago, the vacant plot was used for billboard advertisement that were very detrimental for the character of the area. That use has now ceased and should never be reintroduced but the redundant structure that supported the billboard on Morten Road remains in situ and should be removed.

4.3.6_Strengths, challenges and opportunities

Strengths

- diverse architecture with examples that date from the 15th to the 20th century and illustrate the history and development of the study area,
- vibrant commercial character with independent businesses.
- good connectivity with frequent bus services.

Challenges

- Poor quality of the public realm, including condition of pavements and railings.
- Street clutter on the Albert Roundabout.
- Poor quality 20th century development that failed to integrate well into the area.
- Incompatible uses (garages) that detract from the street scene
- poor quality shopfronts and unsympathetic signage.
- unregulated external changes, including the loss of chimneys and other architectural features, replacement of roofing materials, loss of original fenestration and replacement with uPVC windows and composite doors, external painting (of previously unpainted surfaces) with inappropriate colours.
- management and use of vacant commercial properties.

Opportunities

- Scheme of public realm improvements and removal of unnecessary street clutter.
- Removal of incompatible uses and redevelopment with appropriate scale and design that will reinstate the continuity of the street front
- shopfront and signage improvements in accordance with the Council Shopfront Design Guide SPD
- Introduction of Article 4 Direction to control unregulated external alterations and changes of use that fragment the commercial street frontages

4.4. Character Area 3: Late Victorian Suburb

4.4.1. Historic Development

Morten Road, Orchard Road and St Paul's Road were laid between 1876 and 1896. The 1920 OS Map records additional growth with the development of the west front on St Paul's Road.

This part of the study area underwent fewer changes in the 20th century compared to the other Character Areas. The Northern bypass that was constructed in 1930 -1933 created a barrier that severed the link with Belle Vue Road to the north. However, when Colne Bank Road was widened to become Colne Bank Avenue, its north front was moved northwards, but the south side was unaffected. The construction of the Albert Roundabout resulted in the loss of the buildings on the south-west corner of Colne Bank Avenue and North Station Road but the frontages on St Paul's Road, Orchard and Morten Road were consolidated in the 1920s with very few changes in the recent years (erection of 18a and 27-28 Morten Road)

4.4.2_ Uses and Character

The Character Area is exclusively residential and there are no buildings in different use. Although there are two vehicular access points, though St Paul's Road from Colne Bank Avenue and though Morten Road from North Station Road, the latter is a cul-de-sac and the area is characterised by a sense of enclosure and

4.4.3_ Designations and notable buildings

There are no designated heritage assets within the Character Area but there are two locally listed sites:

- 1-17 Morten Road, Colchester (HER ref.no DCC25363)
- 25 Morten Road, Colchester (HER ref no DCC25534)
- Five ceramic street signs are locally listed as well (HER ref.no DCC26099).

4.3.4_Character Analysis

Starting at no 8 Colne Bank Avenue on the junction with North Station Road and moving westwards, Colne Bank Avenue affords wide views of its north frontage and glimpses of Colne Bank Avenue Bridge with the trees of the former Lido and Cymbeline Meadows at the backdrop. The south frontage comprises two terraces that survived from demolition when Colne Ban Avenue was opened. The busy character of the avenue and poor quality of the public realm with the sterile tarmac sidewalks do not make this an attractive walk.

The character and quality of the street scape changes upon turning south onto St Paul's Road. The street comprises a mix of semi-detached and terraced two storey properties, the east front pre-dating the west (Fig.74). The half-timbered gables at the bookended terrace of no 7-13 are repeated in detached properties; despite their irregular distribution in the street frontage, these gables accentuate the roofline and add some interest to the street scape. Despite being developed in different phases, there is a coherence in the use of materials and architectural details. The material palette comprises polychrome brickwork with slate roofs



Fig. 74: View of St Paul's Road(east side) from the junction with Orchard Road.

originally, although there are piecemeal replacements of the roofing material. The windows would have been timber vertical sliding two over two sashes, but their vast majority have been replaced by uPVC windows. There are surviving examples of three over three at no 34 and 36, while the terrace of no 7-13 has pairs of narrow sashes, all uPVC replacements. The architectural details include stone cills and plain, flat stone lintels or brick gauged arches and simple geometric brick apron details below cills. The properties have shallow, soft and ornate front gardens enclosed by low brick walls which preserve the underlying Victorian landscape character

of the Character Area. A close boarded fence encloses the rear garden of 42 Colne Bank Avenue that fronts onto St Pauls' Road, The same boundary treatment is used to the long and narrow gardens of the adjacent properties of this terrace.

As the visitor enters into Orchard Road and moves towards the centre of the Character area at its junction with Morten Road, there is an increasing sense of enclosure, and the character becomes quieter and more intimate. Orchard road is lined with two storeys detached and semidetached properties. Some properties are built in polychrome brickwork, but the use of red brick prevails on the south side (Fig.75). There are some architectural details also seen in St Paul's Road (half-timbered gables, cill aprons) but the fenestration which comprises tripartite windows with multi-pane upper sashes over single-light low sashes hints at Art and Crafts influences and a later date of construction. These properties also have shallow front gardens, originally enclosed by low brick walls. Their removal or replacement by inappropriate means of enclosure (rock faced concrete block wall, picket or close board timber fences) detracts from the appearance of the street.



Fig. 75:View of Orchard Road (south side)from the junction with St Paul's road.

Continuing west on Morten Road, the character of the street is defined by the good quality locally listed terrace of nos. 1-17 Morten Road (east side- Fig76). The terrace is decorated with picturesque details, including as string course with guilloche pattern, terracotta plaques, fluted and sunflower keystones (. The raised parapet walls add interest to the roof but the replacement of the original slates by concrete tiles detracts from the appearance of the terrace, together with the loss of the original windows and doors and the modification or replacement of the low garden walls.



Fig. 76: 1-17 Morten Road, view from the north-west.



Fig. 78: 25 Morten Road. North elevation (to be replaced with west elevation)



Fig. 77: 1-17 Morten road. Decorative details , including tile with the year of construction (1890) and initials for builder A. Diss.

No 25 Morten Road is included in the Local List for decorative relief tiles and original windows and doors. Morten road then turns to the east and terminates on North Station Road. This short stretch is lined by an L-shaped house that incorporates some modest decorative details , followed by a modern pair of semis in roughcast render that would make a better contribution with a different external finish and better fenestration.

4.4.5_ Traffic, movement and public realm

The Character Area comprises quiet residential streets low in traffic and pedestrian circulation. The condition of the public realm is does not differ from the other Character Areas. The streets comprise mainly tarmac pavements with concrete kerbs, their surface in poor condition with patch repairs. However, the section of Morten Road before the junction with North Station Road has a granite sett drainage channel on the south side.

4.4.6_ Open spaces

There are not open spaces or vacant plots within the character area.

4.4.7_ Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities

Strengths

- Quiet residential area with coherent character.
- Design variations and architectural details evidence the dates of construction and suggest influence from the Arts and Crafts & Aesthetic Movement.

Challenges

- Unregulated alterations that erode the character of the area by virtue of their cumulative effect.

- Poor quality of the public realm, including material and condition of pavement
- Lack of connection to the residential area to the north (Belle Vue Road) and the site of the former Open Air Swimming Pool

Opportunities

- Introduction of Article 4 Direction to control unregulated external alterations.
- Scheme of public realm improvements and removal of unnecessary street clutter.

4.5. Character Area 4: Belle Vue Road

4.5.1. Historic Development

The small estate consisting of Belle Vue, Colne Bank Road, and Essex Hall Road was laid out in the 1860s. The North Station Road was fully developed by 1876 whilst the frontages of the secondary streets were consolidated gradually until 20th century. St Paul's Church was built in 1869 and a school was erected on the junction of Belle Vue Road and Colne.

The character of the area was altered significantly by three key changes, the construction of the Northern by-pass in 1933, the opening of A134 in the late 1980s and the demolition of St Paul's Church in 1998. The new avenues obliterated the two side roads that defined the estate, Essex Hall Road to the North and Colne Bank Road to the south. This loss affecting the cohesion of the character area and disrupted the connection of Belle Vue to the adjacent streets. The demolition of St Paul's Church (Fig. and its replacement by a modern care home removed had a regrettable effect on the character of Belle Vue Road but the graveyard that remains as a green space makes a positive contribution.



Fig. 79: St Paul's Church (unknown date) -now demolished.

4.5.2. Uses and character

The area is predominantly residential. Non-residential uses include the Norfolk Public House, a performing arts school at the former St Paul's Church Hall on the corner of Belle Vue Road and Colne Bank Avenue and Belle Vue Social Club which is housed in a building set back from the street boundary on Colne Bank Avenue. Permission for the erection of an office block to the rear of the Norfolk pub (with access from the A134) has been granted in 2021 and is being implemented.

Belle Vue is a quiet residential street. The opening of the A134 has essentially transformed Belle Vue Road into a cul-de sac. Colne Bank Avenue also disrupted its link to St Paul's Road and Morten Road to the south. St Paul's graveyard that serves as a transitional green space towards Colne River and the Cymbeline Meadows contributes to the quiet character of the street.

The quiet character of Belle Vue Road contrasts the busy Colne Bank Avenue that is dominated by traffic. The section of North Station Road within the Character Area is quieter compared to the southern half.

4.5.3. Designations and buildings

There are no designated heritage assets within the Character Area. The Norfolk Pub is included in Colchester's adopted Local List (Fig.80). The cast iron street sign on 6 Belle Vue Road was also added in the Local List together with other historic in Colchester. There are two trees and a group of trees protected under TPO's in St Paul's Graveyard.



Fig. 80: The Norfolk Pub, North Station Road.

4.5.4. Character Area Analysis

Starting at the north end of Belle Vue Road, the street can be accessed on foot via the pedestrian lane on the south side of A134 but there is no vehicular access at this point. A tarmac parking area is located at the north end of the road, enclosed by metal railings to the north due to the drop of level between Belle Vue Road and the A134. The spot affords a key view towards the city centre with the Jumbo visible at the backdrop. The East side comprises two pairs of semi-detached properties, followed by two terraces (the southern



Fig. 81: Belle Vue Road. View from the north end (east side).

one pre-dating the other) and the former church hall of Ste Peter's Church (Fig.81). On the west side, the road starts with a detached house and continues with a short terrace, the site of St Paul's Church with the modern bungalow amidst the graveyard and a pair of semi-detached properties that survived demolition when Colne Ban Avenue was opened.

With the exception of the bungalow and the former Church Hall, all buildings are two storey. The roof ridges run parallel to the street, with the exception of no27 and 29 Belle Vue whose double gable

front disrupts the continuity of the front. The materials palette comprises red brick and slate roofs. Most windows have been replaced by unsympathetic uPVC models where the original windows would have been timber vertical sliding two over two sashes, although there are some examples margin-light glazing. The Church Hall has original Crittall windows. Architectural details include modillioned eaves (Byculla Cottages/no 31-33), fretted decorated barge boards (no 27-29), a variety of lintels, stone quoins, decorative elements in gault brick (string courses, keystones, jambs). Chimneys are rather low and plain. The front gardens of the properties are enclosed with low brick garden walls with a pedestrian metal gate corresponding to the house entrance, accessed through a few steps for the properties on the east side whose gardens are slightly elevated above street level. A low close board fence with hedge encloses St Paul's churchyard with a low picket fence around the house; The former Church Hall is enclosed by a taller brick wall and close boarded fences are used on non-street facing boundaries. but also, on Colne Bank Avenue on the corner with Belle Vue Road.

The character changes when the visitor turns left on Colne Bank Avenue. The north front was redeveloped when the avenue was constructed and comprises that former St Paul's Church Hall on the west end, a pair of semi-detached properties and the tarmac car park of Belle Vue Sosial Club. The single storey club building is set deep back from the street boundary and makes a limited contribution to the street scene. The front elevation of the Church Hall and the boundary wall and railings add character to the street frontage. The adjacent semi-detached properties are built in brick with clay tile roofs and simple flat lintels, without other decorative elements. These properties have deeper front gardens enclosed by low brick walls but close board fences are found on the side boundaries as well.

Although they make an interwar group with former Church Hall that provides evidence for the development of the area, they are rather non-descript buildings that have little inherent merit.

There is a green area on the corner with North Station Road that is poorly landscaped and maintained but helpfully serves to screen the car park of the Belle Vue Sosial Club. With an improved landscape scheme, that area could reflect and complement the site

of the Memorial Wall to the south, framing nicely the east end of Colne Bank Avenue.

The west front of North Station Road comprises a mix of two and three storey terraced or semi-detached properties built in brick with slate roofs. With the exception of the Norfolk Pub, the use is predominantly residential, and this lack of commercial activities attributes a different character to this section of North Station Road that contrasts the busier ambience of its southern part. The west front was developed between 1845 and 1876 (when it appears built up in the OS survey map) but lacks cohesion in the form and design of the properties. Besides the Norfolk Pub, other buildings have good architectural details, including stone string courses and canted ground floor bay windows, gault brick quoins and corbelled window heads and cills. The properties have shallow front forecourts enclosed by low brick walls but there are some examples with railings or combination of low walls and railings.

4.5.5_ Traffic, movement and public realm

The street is subject to traffic restrictions that discourage private cars, and this does helpfully serve to reduce the traffic flow. This

section of carriageway forms a link between the roundabouts to the north and south and has busy footways with major peaks at rush hour in the morning and evening as commuters access the station on foot.

4.5.6_Open spaces

The key open space for the Character area is the graveyard of the demolished St Paul's church; today the open graveyard encloses the modern bungalow that replaced the church. The open aspect of the graveyard lends a sense of openness to Belle Vue Road. Despite being a cul de sac, the street does not feel truncated with a visual open link to the A134 Station Way. The former graveyard forms an extension of the key green space where the River Colne turns south towards the city centre and enters the built-up area after leaving the tranquillity of Cymbeline Meadows. The former Lido is now largely reclaimed by nature and is a key piece of green/blue infrastructure.

The tarmac car park to the south of the Belle Vue Social Club is largely concealed from views from Colne Bank Avenue and it is

important that this screening is maintained to protect visual amenity on this key main thoroughfare.

4.5.7_Strengths, Issues and Opportunities

Strengths

- Belle Vue is Quiet residential backwater with coherent character and modest terraced artisan housing.
- The green spaces to the east and west of Belle Vue Road provide a green oasis and a transition from the denser urban development to the south/east and the verdant water meadows to the west
- Design variations and architectural details evidence the dates of construction and suggest influences from the Arts and Crafts Movement.
- The west side of North Station Road is rich in mid and late Victorian villas and terraced development predating the final quarter of the C19 century.

Challenges

- Unregulated alterations that erode the character of the area by virtue of their cumulative effect.

- Poor quality of the public realm, including material and condition of pavements
- Lack of connection to the residential area to the north (Belle Vue Road) and the site of the former Open Air Swimming Pool

Opportunities

- Introduction of an Article 4 Direction to control unregulated external alterations.
- Scheme of public realm improvements to include landscaping of Albert Roundabout
- Removal of unnecessary street clutter from the Albert Roundabout.
- Introduce pedestrian links on Colne Bank to improve connection to Belle Vue Road and the site of the former Open Air Swimming Pool.
- Landscaping of the car park to the north end of Belle Vue Road to improve its views from the street and the A134.
- Landscaping and maintenance of the north-west corner on the Albert Roundabout

4.6. Character Area 5: Colne Bank and the former Lido

4.6.1_Overview

This Character Area includes the bend of River Colne between Colne Bank Avenue and Station Wy(A134). When Colne Bank Avenue was opened in 1933, its route disrupted the Public bathing Space that had relocated to the area from Castle Park in the 1890s. The facilities were moved to the north of the new Colne Bank Bridge and consisted of an open-air swimming pool (lido) with changing facilities; a café was added later, and the site was a popular leisure facility until it was closed in 1975 (Fig.82). The area was changed further when Station Way (A134) was constructed in the 1980s, enclosing the site of the former Lido from the north.

4.6.2_Uses and Character

The only building in the character area is a flat roof outbuilding that originally accommodated changing rooms and a café. It is currently used by Colchester's Canoe Club. Colne Bank Avenue forms the boundary between the City of Colchester and its rural hinterland. The Lido site serves to very sensitively soften that interface, with its sunken aspect, open water, lawned areas and mature tree cover

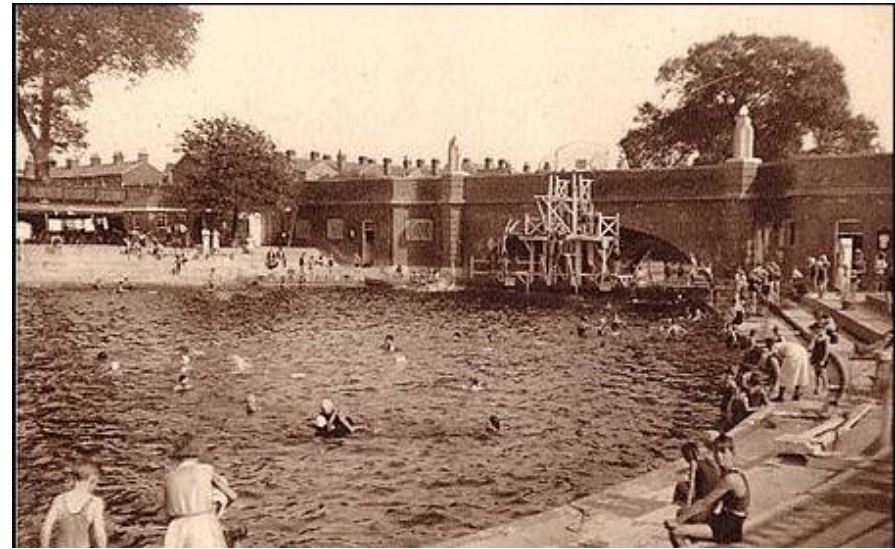


Fig. 82: The open air swimming pool (unknown date).

that comprehensively screens the Belle Vue development beyond. It is an important green and blue infrastructure which mirrors the Riverside walk in Character Area 1 at the opposite end of the Conservation area, both serving as areas of repose from the busy environment of North Station Road. In the case of the former Lido, this contribution is somewhat undermined by the highways works that have disrupted its connectivity with the surrounding areas.

4.6.3_ Designations and notable buildings

Besides the non-descript changing rooms, the only built structure within the character area is the Colne Bank Bridge. The bridge is constructed of reinforced concrete and according to the Victoria County Record, it is believed to be the first two-hinged arch bridge in the country. A hinged arch bridge has hinges incorporated into its structure to allow movement. Contrary to the fixed arch bridge which lacks such hinges and stresses caused by change of temperature or shrinkage of concrete have to be taken up by the arch, a two-hinged arch has a hinge at the base of each arch (the springing point), to prevent structural stresses from being transferred to the bridge abutments. The bridge also has Art Deco inspired lamp post bases, although the lamps do not survive. A commemorative plaque on the north side marks its opening in 29th June 1933.

4.6.4_ Character Area Analysis

The Character Area comprises the site of the former Open Air Swimming Pool that is bound by the graveyard of St Paul's Church to the east, the A134 to the north and west and Colne Bank Avenue

to the south. The site can be accessed via a number of footpaths and via a flight of steps to the west of the bridge. A pedestrian underpass under the A134 links the site to the Cymbeline Meadows to the west.

The area of the open area swimming pool has become a tranquil natural habitat amidst a very busy environment blighted by highways engineering and heavy traffic (Fig.83). However, this infrastructure affects its connectivity to the surrounding areas; without an anchor communal or leisure activity, the site's potential to serve as key green space within the study area is undermined by the weak link to the main body of the Conservation Area and the rest of Colchester. Colne Bank Avenue and Station Way are not pedestrian friendly environments. Although they benefit from wide pavements and various access points to the site, the public realm is unattractive and does not encourage visitors to venture west of the Albert Roundabout and discover the site of the former Lido.



Fig. 83: The site of the former Open Air Swimming Pool.

4.6.5_ Traffic, movement and public realm

The site is bound by the north by-pass (Colne Bank Avenue) and the inner relief road A134 (Station Way) and as such, the traffic is particularly heavy. The volume of pedestrian traffic is moderate and oriented mainly towards the residential streets either side of the Colne Bank Avenue. The quality of the public realm is poor. The

wide tarmac pavements with concrete kerbs are in a varying state of condition and lack planting, street furniture or lighting that could mitigate the impact of the heavy traffic. The galvanised barriers to the east of the bridge are not sympathetic additions and add to the dominance of motorised traffic.

4.6.6_Open Spaces

The former lido set within an elbow of the river Colne sits a lower level from the adjacent Station Way and the canopies of maturing trees engender the whole with a dell-like quality providing a link with the Cymbeline Meadows to the west. The levels help to reduce intrusion from traffic on Station Way/Colne Bank Avenue.

4.6.7_Strengths, Issues and Opportunities

Strengths

- The naturalised former Lido basin with associated trees;

Issues

- The busy major roads that bisect the conservation area and act as a barrier to pedestrian desire lines.

Opportunities

- Explore the feasibility of refurbishing original lighting columns on the bridge and adding appropriate light fittings to restore the original art deco character.
- Explore the feasibility on improving surveillance around the former swimming pool to enhance a sense of safety for users and actively manage and promote biodiversity.

- Work with the local highway authority to encourage the softening of the visual impact of the recently installed galvanised safety panels which have improved highway safety but have introduced a harsh 'fortress like' visual element into the street scene

Significance and Assessment of Condition

5.1. Buildings of Merit

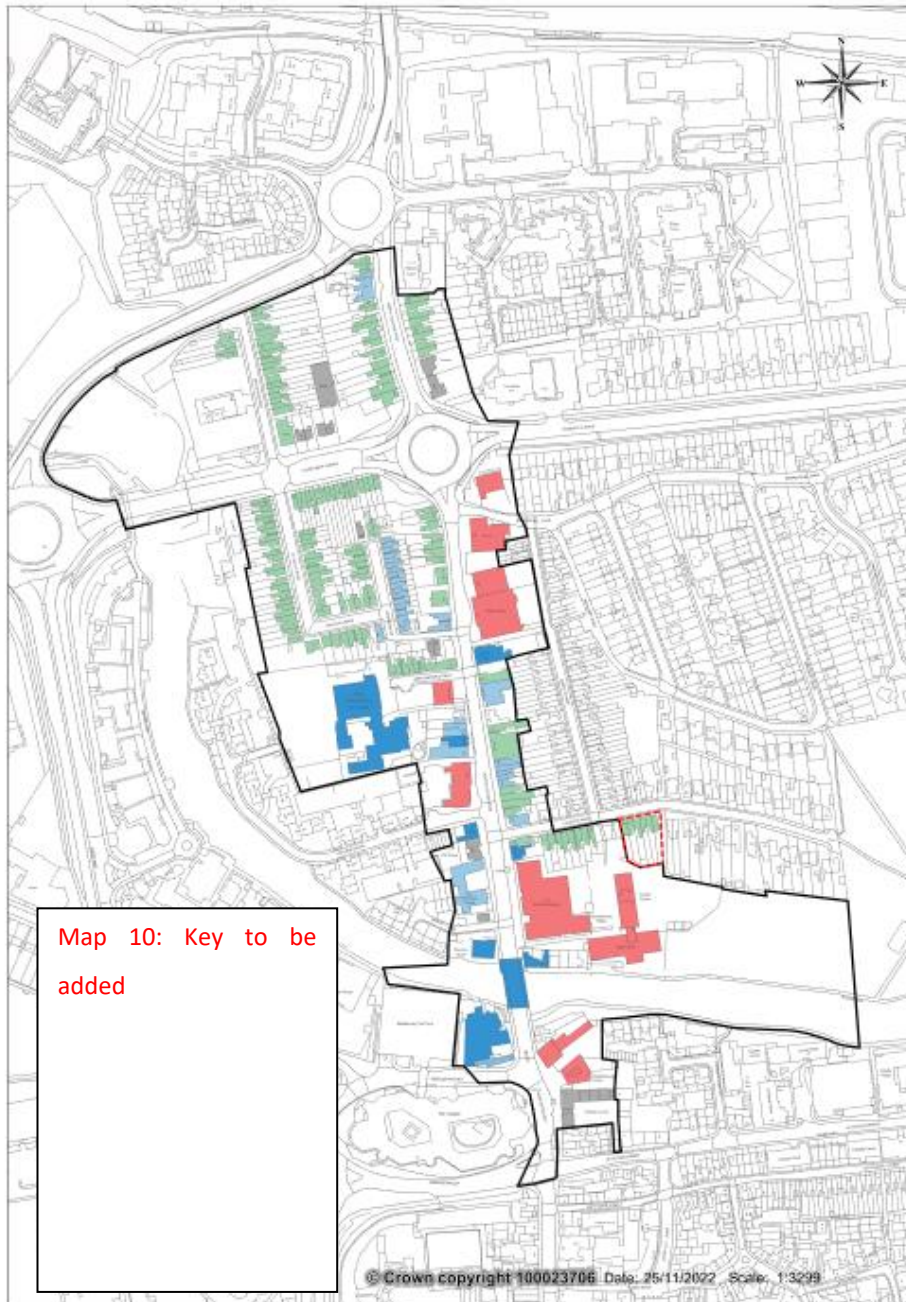
The Character Analysis identified three main groups of buildings that contribute positively to the character and quality of the Conservation Area:

a. Listed and Locally listed buildings: buildings which whose national or local heritage significance is recognised through their designation or their inclusion in Colchester's List and make by definition a positive contribution

b. Buildings of Townscape Merit: buildings that have group value with the adjacent properties, either as parts of a designed group or by virtue of stylistic similarities. Individually, the appearance of these building may have been eroded by unsympathetic changes but as a group, they make a positive contribution to the townscape character and illustrate the development of the Conservation Area. Moreover, in most cases, these changes are reversible and have not altered the intrinsic architectural character.

c. Individual Buildings of Merit: buildings that make a positive contribution as stand-alone examples or stand out within a group of stylistically similar buildings by virtue of more elaborate design, better details, materials and execution. Besides their architectural

and aesthetic merit, other attributes may ascribe additional interest to these buildings, such as historic, townscape and or communal significance. The Selection Criteria of Colchester's Local List are a useful tool for their identification; buildings that meet these criteria will be considered for inclusion on the List.



5.4. Buildings that Detract

The study identified buildings in the Conservation Area that detract from its character and appearance. These detractors are identified on Map 10 on the previous page and are listed at the end of the report in Appendix III. The redevelopment of these buildings will be encouraged to enhance the special character of the area.

The determining factors for their selection are:

- **Design:** poor design includes inappropriate scale and form that clashes with the prevalent scale and architectural language in the area, generic style that does not represent an original architectural expression, poor quality materials and/or detailing.
- **Location:** detractors can be situated on prominent locations that exacerbate their adverse impact on their surrounding or poorly positioned in locations where they clash very notably with adjacent buildings, affect the impact of a listed building or intrude in important views.
- **Age:** the identified detractors date from the later 20th century. Their age does not warrant this assessment by default as there are examples of contemporary buildings, mostly in residential use, that have integrated better into the area. However, the lack of any

historic, associational or communal interest signifies that their negative impact on the townscape is not mitigated by any positive contribution in other respects that could justify their retention.

5.5. Buildings at Risk

The survey that was carried out for the purposes of this study did not identify any buildings at immediate risk. However, there are buildings which demonstrate signs of neglect that detracts from their appearance and contribution to the street scene. Moreover, a number of vacant or underused buildings and properties show signs of deterioration. Although their vacancy does not pose a threat to their condition per se, it could become an issue, if prolonged. Many buildings have inappropriate interventions such as cement render, poorly maintained timber windows, fascias and the substitution of traditional materials such as cast iron rainwater goods and timber windows by poorly detailed plastic alternatives. Slate and clay tiled roofing is often poorly maintained and redundant chimney stacks removed. The lack of routine maintenance and ill-considered, but well intended, alterations cumulatively rob the area of its traditional detailing and hasten the decline of historic character.

5.6. Erosion of Character

Three principal types of threats were identified to the character of the Conservation Area:

- a. Unsympathetic alterations to individual premises that have an adverse cumulative impact on the quality of the area;
- b. Poor quality specification and poor condition of the public realm;
- c. Incompatible uses and vacant sites.

a. Unsympathetic alterations to individual sites that have cumulative impact on the quality of the area.

The main categories of alterations comprise:

- Loss of timber windows, doors and/or decorative barge boards where these exist.
- Removal of chimney stacks and pots.
- Removal of existing boundary walls and/ or railings.
- Erection of inappropriate boundary walls or fences.
- Parking in front gardens
- Addition of porches.
- Painting of original brickwork.

- Use of non-matching bricks (colour and texture), bond and mortar in wall repairs.
- Poorly executed repointing with ribbon/struck cement jointing buttered over the brick face
- Removal of decorative terracotta tiles.
- Removal of clay plain tiles or real slates.
- Use of concrete roofing materials.
- Installation of Solar PV panels on street facing roofs.
- Installation of microwave antennas and satellite dishes.
- Poorly designed extensions erected under permitted development.

b. Poor quality specification and poor condition of the public realm;

- Removal of traditional shopfronts and inappropriately designed replacements.
- Excessive shop signage and internally illuminated box signs and projecting signs.
- Non-traditional shop blinds/canopies [e.g., 'Dutch balloon blinds'].

- Unauthorised illuminated commercial signage.
- Installation of uncoordinated street furniture.
- Use of road markings other than conservation type (especially yellow lines and bus stops).
- Excessive road signage.
- Enclosed parking and servicing areas on the street frontage.

c. Incompatible uses and vacant sites.

- Garages at Middleborough and the near the junction with Severalls Lane.
- Vacant site on the junction of North Station Road and Morten Road.
- Vacant former office buildings.

5.7. Public Realm

The quality of the public realm has been identified as a key issue for the Conservation Area that detracts from its character and quality.

There are two key areas of concern:

- the overall condition of the public realm, including the maintenance regime, the quality of materials and condition of ground surfaces, the quantity and quality of street furniture and equipment (including the condition of historic features) and the amount and condition of street tree planting and lighting [figures with examples].
- areas of specific concern, mainly on busy junctions which suffer from abundant street clutter. The most problematic areas are Middleborough and the Albert Roundabout.

These issues cannot be addressed with localised interventions and short-term solutions. Isolated actions and initiatives can exacerbate the situation by generating new issues rather than resolve the existing (e.g., by impeding access, creating visual clutter in congested areas etc). A typical example of such piecemeal attempts

at improvement includes localised planting, patch pavement repairs and the addition of street art.

Historic England has produced guidance titled “Streets for All” (2018), supplemented by “Street for all” regional documents, that provide practical advice for planning and implementing highways and other public realm works in sensitive historic locations with the aim of securing public realm improvements without compromising their valued character. The document provides specific recommendations for works to surfaces, street furniture, new equipment, traffic management infrastructure and environmental improvements. This advice is very relevant and useful for the Conservation area that would benefit from a holistic approach to the treatment and management of the public realm.

5.8. Shopfronts and Signage

Where the commercial uses in the area are a key aspect of their character, the quality of the street scene depends largely on the quality and condition of the shopfronts and associated signage. This is the case of the southern section of North Station Road where the majority of the commercial uses within the Conservation Area cluster.

Although some examples of good traditional shopfronts have been identified in the study area, including no 33 and 63-65 (east side) and 34 and 38 (west side), the majority are of inferior quality with oversized fascias and garish internally illuminated signage. Their design is utilitarian, lacking modelling and decorative details, and relates poorly to the age and appearance of the parent buildings. Fascia signs are often oversized and overwhelm the modest elevations that accommodate them. The use of unsympathetic materials (plastic, aluminium), intense colours, internal illumination of box signage and lettering style exacerbate the poor impression.

Part Two: Management Proposals

2.1. Introduction

2.1.1. The need for Policy Guidance

The Character Appraisal identified a set of challenges and pressures that threaten the special interest of the Conservation Area. The area has a fragile character that deserves to be carefully managed to secure enhancements to reinforce the special qualities that justified designation as a conservation area.

The identification of Character Areas in Section 4 above and the specific challenges that exist in each (4.2.7, 4.3.6, 4.4.7, 4.5.7 and 4.6.7) together with sections 5.6 Erosion of Character, 5.7 Public Realm and 5.8 Shopfronts and Signage have identified a series of vulnerabilities and threats that need to be addressed through the development process and, resources permitting, proactive interventions to promote positive change.

2.1.2 Legislative background

The designation and appraisal of any Conservation Area is not an end in itself. The purpose of Part Two is to present proposals to achieve the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation

area's special character and to consult the local community about these proposals. The special qualities of the area have been identified as part of the appraisal process in Part One of this document and both will be subject to monitoring and reviews on a regular basis. This guidance draws upon the themes identified in the negative features and issues section of this document.

The document satisfies the statutory requirement of Section 71(1) of the Planning (listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Namely: "It shall be the duty of the local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas."

The document also reflects national policy as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

It is recognised that within the conservation area there is likely to be demand for new development including infill and replacement buildings. It is therefore important that the Development Management process ensures the preservation of special character

and that opportunities are taken to identify and implement enhancements.

The designation process has several associated statutory provisions aimed at assisting the ‘preservation and enhancement’ of the area. Demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area generally requires planning permission. Permitted Development rights are also reduced for extensions and alterations and there are greater restrictions on advertisements/ Prior notice is required for works to trees.

MP1: The Council will ensure that new development within the conservation area preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area. Development that fails to achieve this will be refused in conformity with Policy DM16 of the Adopted CB Local Plan 2017-2033.

2.2. Protecting the historic environment

2.2.1. Buildings of Townscape Merit

The Townscape Appraisal Map identifies properties (non-listed) as ‘Buildings of Townscape Merit’ which, it is considered, make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and these are marked on the Townscape Appraisal Map. These properties are now considered to fall within the policy ambit of DM16 of the CBLP 2017-2033.

Any application for the demolition of Buildings of Townscape Merit will require exceptional justification need to be accompanied by a reasoned justification statement explaining why the building cannot be retained and adapted for re-use. The provisions of the NPPF and relevant local plan policies should be addressed.

The Council will expect an applicant seeking the demolition of a ‘Building of Townscape Merit’ to demonstrate that:

- The building is beyond economic repair;
- The building has been offered on the open market at a realistic price reflective of its condition;
- If vacant, that alternative uses have been sought

Furthermore, the Council will expect all applications for extensions and alterations to Buildings of Townscape Merit to be particularly carefully considered and only well detailed schemes, using the appropriate traditional materials, will be approved.

MP3: Buildings identified as having local interest will be further assessed for statutory listing once a detailed inspection has been undertaken. In the event that they are not listable then an Article 4 Direction removing all domestic PD rights will be considered.

MP2: The Council will seek to ensure that all Buildings of Townscape Merit are protected from inappropriate forms of development or unjustified demolition. Furthermore, there must be satisfactory proposals for the re- development of any site before consent will be granted for demolition.

2.2.2. Erosion of character and the need for additional planning controls

The Character Appraisal has identified the following alterations that pose a threat to the special character of the area:

- Loss of timber windows, doors and/or decorative barge boards where these exist.
- Removal of chimney stacks and pots.
- Removal of existing boundary walls and/ or railings.
- Erection of inappropriate boundary walls or fences.
- Parking in front gardens
- Addition of porches.
- Painting of original brickwork.
- Use of non-matching bricks (colour and texture), bond and mortar in wall repairs.
- Poorly executed repointing with ribbon/struck cement jointing buttered over the brick face
- Removal of decorative terracotta tiles.
- Removal of clay plain tiles or real slates.
- Use of concrete roofing materials.
- Installation of Solar PV panels on street facing roofs.

- Installation of microwave antennas and satellite dishes.
- Removal of traditional shopfronts and inappropriately designed replacements.
- Excessive shop signage and internally illuminated box signs and projecting signs.
- Non-traditional shop blinds/canopies [e.g., ‘Dutch balloon blinds’].
- Unauthorised illuminated commercial signage.
- Installation of uncoordinated street furniture.
- Use of road markings other than conservation type (especially yellow lines and bus stops).
- Excessive road signage.
- Enclosed parking and servicing areas on the street frontage.
- Poorly designed extensions erected under permitted development

2.2.3. The case for an Article 4 Direction

Dwellings

The erosion of the character of domestic buildings through cumulative change is a particular concern and can be brought

under greater control through the use of an article 4 direction to remove permitted development rights. This requires the submission of a planning application for works that could otherwise proceed. It is proposed that all single family dwellinghouses (not flats which do not benefit from these rights) are consulted on a potential direction to remove the following classes of permitted development (Schedule of Addresses included in Appendix III):

Schedule 2, GPDO (2015 as amended)

Part 1 Development within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse

Class A: Enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwellinghouse

Class B: Alterations etc. to the roof of a dwellinghouse

Class C: Other alterations to the roof of a dwellinghouse

Class D: Porches

Class G: Chimneys, flues etc. on a dwellinghouse

Part 2 Minor operations:

Class A: Gates, fences, walls etc.

Class B: Means of Access to a highway

Class C: Exterior painting of previously unpainted surfaces

MP4: The Council will seek to control permitted development to ensure that the special qualities of the conservation area are not eroded by cumulative changes to both homes and commercial premises. The council will consult the community on the draft Article 4 Directions and make informed recommendations for action based on the consultation responses received.

MP5: The Council will ensure that unauthorised development is subject to timely and effective enforcement action, to ensure that the special qualities and character of the conservation area are pre- served. Untidy sites may be the subject of the service of S215 Notice/s by the Council.

Commercial premises

The principal street frontage at the southern end of North Station Road remains characterised by commercial uses that line the street and provide vital services to the local community and beyond. The loss of these services and further fragmentation of the commercial

frontages through the operation of permitted changes of use from use class E (includes offices, retail, hot food and drink, professional services but excludes public houses and takeaways) to residential would harm the vitality and viability of the area through the loss critical mass and active frontage. It is consequently proposed that an Article 4 Direction is imposed following public consultation to remove the permitted change of use under Class MA commercial, business and services uses to dwellinghouses of Part 3 Schedule 2 from relevant commercial premises fronting North Station Road (Schedule of Addresses included in Appendix III).

2.2.4. Trees

Within conservation areas, six weeks written notice must be given to the Council before starting work of lopping or felling a tree greater than 100mm, in diameter at 1.5 metres above the ground .P provides the Council with an opportunity of assessing the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area., in which case a Tree preservation Order [TPO] may be served. Whilst this appraisal identifies a number of significant trees which should be retained and further detailed Arboricultural survey is required to make a

proper assessment of the public amenity value of the many trees within the Conservation Area.

The loss of street trees from the area and erosion of its former leafy quality has served to erode the environmental quality of the area significantly and the council will seek opportunities to reverse this decline in concert with the highway authority.

MP7: The Council will consider the use of TPO's in appropriate circumstances where a tree has significant amenity value and is under threat. This will include trees both within and outside the conservation area or views identified in this appraisal. In addition, the reinstatement of street trees to recreate a boulevard character will be encouraged.

2.2.5. Setting and Views

The setting of the Conservation Area is very important and any development that would have an adverse impact upon the immediate setting and long distance views, into and from the

Conservation Area, will be resisted. The important views are identified on the Views Analysis Map of Section 3.5.1, although the list is not exhaustive and other, equally significant views can be identified elsewhere. The Council will ensure that all development serves to respect and where possible, enhance these important views.

MP8: The Council will ensure that all development respects the important views within, into and from the conservation area as identified in the appraisal. The Council will ensure that these remain protected from inappropriate forms of development. Regard will be given to the Colchester LCA [2005] when determining planning applications.

2.2.6. Shopfronts and signage

The Council will encourage the retention of traditional shopfronts as these contribute positively to the special qualities of the area and furthermore on the basis that this complies with the Councils Adopted Shopfront Guidance SPD.

Traders will be encouraged to replace unsympathetic shopfronts and to comply with the Adopted Shopfront Guidance SPD when considering replacement.

MP9: The Council will robustly apply its Shopfront Guidance SPD when considering the merits of any proposal to replace a shopfront within the Conservation Area. The council will seek to retain all surviving traditional shopfronts and to ensure that the detailed form and materials proposed are harmonious with the host building

The Council will encourage the use of sensitive shop signage that is subdued in nature but that is sufficient for the purpose of reasonable announcement and promotion. Internally illuminated box signs will not be supported in the Conservation Area. All fascia and projecting sign advertisement displays should be non-illuminated lettering applied to a flat non internally illuminated surface. Where illumination is required then external illumination

or halo effect illumination may be considered appropriate. Internally illuminated signage will be resisted.

MP10: Control will be exercised in respect of proposed commercial signage displays on premises to ensure that that character of the Conservation Area is preserved or enhanced. Excessive and extraneous signage will be resisted where it will harm visual amenity or result in unnecessary visual clutter or over-illumination. Traditional applied individual lettering and sign painted facias will be encouraged.

2.2.7. Enhancements

Having recognised the heritage value of the area within the defined boundaries and having analysed and demonstrated its special historical and architectural value the Council will seek to positively intervene where feasible to enhance the character of the area. It will also encourage its partners to join in that ambition.

Wherever possible the Council will seek to secure external funding for enhancement projects and initiatives that will help it to deliver

on these management proposals. It is recognised that in a time of economic restraint and austerity funding is not always as available. The Council believes that a holistic approach to improving the wellbeing of the City and the people that live, work and visit it holds out the best chance of delivering real improvements that can embrace heritage assets.

For example, much of the City Centre is an Air Quality Management Area [AQMA] but it is also a major tourist attraction. Environmental enhancements in North Station Road (a principal pedestrian corridor) should encourage greater use of public transport, increase dwell time in the proposed Conservation Area, encourage greater spend which owners can then re- invest in their buildings.

2.3. New Development in the Historic Environment

2.3.1. The design of new development

The Conservation Area Statement in part 1 above identifies the strengths, weaknesses and harm caused by insensitive development in the 20th century, through the introduction of over scaled and contextually inappropriate development. Opportunities for the removal of these developments rarely arise and for this reason it is important that new development has a positive and harmonious response to context. In particular, though the careful consideration of:

- i) Form: Frame spaces and create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of the setting
- ii) Scale: Respect the scale of neighbouring buildings
- iii) Details: Use traditional architectural features that are commonly found in the area
- iv) Materials: Use materials and building methods which are as high quality as those used in existing buildings
- v) Spaces: Sit happily in the pattern of existing development and the routes through and around it

2.3.2. The Public realm

Highways and groundscape

Within the Character Area 'Challenges' sections and Section 5.7 Public Realm above of this appraisal it has been noted that the character of the conservation area is being harmed by piecemeal, inconsistent and inappropriate pavement repairs along with a clutter of street signs in prominent locations. As a consequence, the action plan will be supplemented here in the Management Proposals by a commitment to tackle these issues with the local highway authority and the North Essex Parking Partnership [NEPP]. The reinstatement of traditional paved footways and appropriate street furniture with street trees (see above) is highly desirable.

Street furniture

The many hot food takeaways, restaurants and convenience stores create a high demand for waste bins to provide for the easy disposal of packaging. Littering is a significant problem in the area and the provision of more frequent bin facilities is an objective along the main street corridor. The strategic importance of this

pedestrian link between the town centre and North Station necessitates the provision of seating in strategic locations and these should respond to the prevailing character of their location and provide opportunities to linger.

Street Clutter

The presence of over scaled street signs, large advert hoardings, pedestrian guard rails on the footway to prevent street crossings and fly tipping needs to be addressed to improve the environmental quality of the main street and to encourage investment in homes and businesses. These are important issues as they have a bearing on the vitality and viability of the commercial

MP13: The Council will seek to work in a coordinated and collaborative manner with other statutory agencies and internally to ensure that issues that detract from the quality of the public realm are addressed where possible to improve the environmental quality of the streetscape in order to encourage inward investment in the fabric of the Conservation Area and engender community pride.

frontages and the quality of businesses attracted to the area.

Greening the Public Realm

Historic photography evidences the loss of former Edwardian boulevard street trees that formerly graced the main throughfare. The wholesale loss of this defining feature has robbed the street of its sense of enclosure and scale. Accordingly, reinstatement of large scaled street trees such as London Planes should be encouraged as a high priority along this key gateway to the historic town. This may not always be possible due to the presence of underground services in the footway but resources permitting, every effort should be made to reinstate the lost boulevard planting.

2.3.3. The Community

People make places. Although the Council has planning powers it can exercise over development and may, when funds are available, carry out enhancement works, ultimately the quality of any place depends on all the people who affect the area. In residential areas the owners of property play a key role in affecting how the area looks. It is clear from the current appraisal that in Birch great pride is taken in the look of the place by the people who live there. Good

communication between local residents and the Council is one way of helping owners to directly input into the management of the area.

2.3.4. Opportunities for new development

The townscape analysis within the above statement has identified a series of sites hosting unsympathetic buildings or uses where redevelopment would be encouraged to reinforce the special qualities of the area. Most notably, these include the large car tyre garage premises on the eastern side of North Station Road, located immediately to the south of the Albert Roundabout. All redevelopment opportunities should seek to create an appropriate scale of development, including a robust street frontage of domestic scale and massing. The proposals should achieve compliance with relevant place making, housing and design policies in the adopted CBLP 2017-2033 including SP7, ENV1, DM9, DM10, DM12, DM15, DM16 and NC2 North Station Road Special Policy Area. Proposals should not exceed three storeys in height and should incorporate effective enclosure of the front boundary with street trees, boundary walling and planting.

APPENDIX I: Planning Controls in Conservation Areas

Planning Permission

The protection of a Conservation Area's character is mainly carried out through the development management application process, the use of good design and managed change.

Planning Permission is required for new development such as the erection of new buildings or extensions within the Conservation Area. Under Section 72(1) of the Planning (*Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas*) Act 1990, Local Planning Authorities have a duty to "pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area" when considering these applications. The proposals will also be advertised more widely than usual with adverts placed in the local paper and a site notice placed outside the property. Their impact on the special architectural and historic character of that area will be a material consideration for decision of the application.

Planning applications in Conservation Areas should be accompanied by sufficient details to enable the impact of the proposed

development on the character of the conservation area, to be assessed. This includes details of scale, massing, design and materials of buildings and their relationship to existing buildings and the impact on their setting. Applicants are required to describe the significance of all assets affected by development, proportionate to the proposal. This should be done through Heritage Appraisals and Impact Assessments or as part of a Design and Access Statement.

Permitted Development Rights

Permitted development rights (works that can be carried out without Planning Permission) are slightly different in Conservation Areas when compared to other areas. According to the *Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015*, planning applications are required for some forms of development which would not need such applications outside Conservation Areas, such as some residential changes like two-storey extensions, addition of stone cladding, insertion of dormer windows etc. Further restrictions apply to properties that are non-domestic buildings, flats or listed buildings.

Article 4 Direction

Other rights can be removed by a mechanism called “Article 4 Direction”. An Article 4 Direction is specifically tailored to protect key features that contribute to the Conservation Area’s special interest. The use of the Direction is not meant to prevent the execution of the works covered by its provisions. It generates the requirement for a planning application prior to the execution of these works (which normally would not require permission) so their details can be considered in the context of an application and assessed for their potential impact on the special interest of the Conservation Area. When a Local Planning Authority decides that an Article 4 Direction should be made, then it must consult the public and take into account the views of residents and property owners prior to deciding whether to pursue the Direction.

Restrictions on outdoor advertisements

Certain categories of advertisement which have “deemed consent” under the *Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007* are restricted within Conservation Areas. Further clarification and advice can be obtained from the Planning Department.

Trees in Conservation Areas

Within Conservation Areas trees are given special protection. Written application for consent must be made to the Council giving six weeks prior notice of intent to top, lop, or fell a tree over 75mm (3 inches) in diameter, measured at 1.5 metres above ground. This period of six weeks must be given for the council to either approve the application or to serve a Tree Preservation Order

Control over Demolition

Unlisted buildings, in groups or individually, can often contribute towards the character of a conservation area and the loss of these buildings can be detrimental.

For this reason, planning permission is required for the substantial or total demolition of certain buildings exceeding 115 cubic metres and the demolition of a boundary wall or fence over a metre high where it fronts a highway, or two metres in height to the side or rear of the property. Exceptions apply and therefore advice should be sought from the Council prior to making an application.

APPENDIX II: Gazetteer of Listed and Locally Listed Buildings

Listed Buildings

1. Former Riverside Inn - Bridge House [no 20] & The Moorings [21]

C17 brick house with late Georgian windows, 2 storeys and attics, cellars and tiled roofs. South front has 6-windows range of double hung sashes with glazing bars, segmental heads, pointed heads to glazing bars in upper sashes, ground floor 3-light windows, 4 oval brick panels divide the upper storey into pairs. Brick band. Upper storey Georgian oriel window east side.

2. North Bridge

Road bridge. Plaque on west side shows that it was erected in 1843 when R R Dunn, MD was mayor and a plaque on the east side commemorates the widening of the bridge by 17 feet 6 inches by Henry H Elves, JP, Mayor on 22 October 1903. Cast iron bridge on substructure of brown brick in flemish bond having 3 piers with pointed stone cutwaters. Three cambered cast iron arches with blank spandrels and cast iron balustrading above of 11 sections with arched pattern and buttresses. There are 2 dividing cast iron piers and the ends have cemented brick piers with tooled stone coping. East side has attached flight of stone steps to riverside path with ornamental footscrapers and handrail. Approaches to the bridge have cemented revetments with stone coping and cast iron railings.

3. Former Riverside Hotel (former Castle Inn)

Built in the C17, much altered in the C18, picturesque position on north bank of the river west of North Bridge. 2 storeys and attics, the roofs tiled, 2 gables on the front. 1 C18-C19 oriel bay windows on river side, one facing east.

4. Riverside Cottages

Picturesque C17 timber-framed and plastered cottages, restored. On north bank of river east of North Bridge. 2 storeys, tiled and pantiled roofs. Timber framing exposed on the front.

5. Victoria Inn

Second half C17, altered early C19 and later. 3 storeys, 2 windows, blind flank. Brick now cemented; hipped, tiled roof with sprocketed eaves and modillion cornice. Central chimney

6. No. 25 & 27 North Station Road

Shops, C15 and later. Timber framed and rendered with 2 parallel gabled pantiled roofs, at right angles to frontage. Front elevation of No 25 has 20-pane double hung sash window, on first floor over C20 shopfront. No 27 has C20 two light casement over C20 shopfront. First floor of No 27, now forms ancillary accommodation for No 25. No 27 is former, jettied, 'high-end' cross wing of C15 merchant's house.

The south flank wall had a high-end bench recess and moulded bressummer, over which survives intact and exposed to interior of 25. The flank wall over has tension bracing (infilling missing) and remnants of 2 windows, one over jetty and one to rear. The cross-wing was formerly of 3 or more bays and has been truncated at rear. No 25 is gabled timber framed structure of C17 or C18 over site of former open hall.

7. No 30 & 32 North Station Road

C18. Brick and rendered. 2 storeys, one window, canted bay below, No 32 has glazing bars, sashes above. Paired panelled doors with panelled reveals. Tiled roof rebuilt brick stack.

8. North Primary School

Circa 1900 by Goodey and Cressall. Red brick, tiled roof. Single storey. Front has 3 triangular gables; 3-light windows with round-arched centre; panels of patterned brickwork, Small octagonal tower to north with steep concave roof and lantern. Rear relatively plain. Addition to south.

9. Globe Inn

Early/mid C19. Plain, 3 storeyed building of painted brick; slated roof with eaves. 4 windows, curved corner and 3 windows to return; strip pilasters; 3 doors with coarse cornice-hoods on brackets.

Locally listed Buildings

A. 22 Middleborough

Trotters Bar near North Bridge. Small 2-storey brick building with hipped slate roof. A 16-pane sash window on the 1st floor. c.1825-60. The shop-front may be original or at least reflect its original (c late C19) form. The building is a survivor from old Middleborough and was saved when Middleborough was redeveloped.

B. Former Railway Mission Hall

By William Willett, 1896. Stock brick with red brick dressings. Arched windows and doorway, the latter with columns. Gabled front with lettering '1896 RAILWAY MISSION'.

An interesting survival and part of Colchester's rail- way heritage. The hall was built for the Colchester Branch of the National Railway Mission; contractor, Robert Beaumont of Lexden. Plans in Essex Record Office (D/B 6 Pb3/987); see also 'The Builder', vol. 71 (29 Aug 1896), p. 178. [JB].
Date: 1896

C. No 29 North Station Road

Large gault-brick house. Good corner building. Well preserved with original windows. Date: late C19

D. 39-57 North Station Road, including:

A group of buildings with a strong street value.

Nos 41-43: Most important building of the group. Pair of brick three-storey houses with slate roof. Each with single window on each floor. Mostly double six-pane sashes with at least one wooden replacement. Frames flush with wall. A vertical band of brick at either side of the facade typical of the period 1825-50. Both ground floors retain their original form, ie no shop fronts. A rare survival of this kind of building which should be protected.

Nos 45-47: Two-storey building with peg-tile roof. Timber framed and C16; includes moulded C16 joists [RS]. Contains moulded beams. Needs investigation.

No 57: Two-storey brick house. Painted upper storey masks stucco details. Plaque: 2 initials and 1878

Nos 39-57 form a group.

E. 61-65 North Station Road

Designed by Architects Goodey & Cressall in 1924, who also designed the similar (already locally listed) 23 Drury Road in 1926. This is a single storey building designed to provide three shop units for the Colchester Co-Operative Society, for grocery, confectionary and butchery. The front façade is clad in creamy coloured faience, mimicking stone. The pilasters have art-deco enrichment, matching the original shopfront which

survives intact. The inset entrance doors with their canted flank walls give additional interest to the shopfront. The large fascia signage area is currently covered with an unsympathetic plastic sign but the surround appears to be partially present behind. It is unlikely that the original raised lettering or divisions across the fascia survive but the building is nevertheless well preserved, and its quality is worthy of recognition.

F. 28 North Station Road

Currently the Raj Palace restaurant. Two-storey rendered building with peg-tile roof. Timber-frame. Modern shop front. C17? or earlier. Needs investigation. Adjacent to listed building nos 30-32. Nos 28-38 form a group. Date: C17 or earlier.

G. 34-36 North Station Road

Two-storey building with peg-tile roof. Presumably timber-framed and C17 or earlier. Currently two properties. No 36 (on the right) has a double eight-pane sash window on the first floor. Shop front c 1900. Mock Tudor look of no 34 may reflect something of the original frame. Adjacent to listed building nos 0-32, Nos 28-38 form a group (nos 30-32 is a listed building).

H. 38 North Station Road

Two-storey two-up, two-down red-brick house. Upstairs window (double two-pane sashes) with horns. Brick lintels. Thin stucco cill. Date c 1860-70. Shop front? Edwardian.

Nos 28-38 form a group (nos 30-32 is a listed building).

I. 60-62 North Station Road

Plaque: 1883. Pair of two-storey semi-detached houses with attics lit by original dormer windows. Red brick with cavity walls. Stucco details: quoins, dentilled eaves, lintels and corbelled cills. Bay windows. Replacement windows detract. Not original railings. Important site. Date c 1890.

J. 1-17 Morten Road

Well-preserved terrace of two-up, two-down houses. Dates AD 1889 and 1890. Yellow brick with relief-decorated brick. Double three-pane sash windows. Monogram on wall for builder A Diss. Date: 1889-90

K. 25 Morten Road

Large well-preserved brick house with original windows and doors. c

1890. Incorporates decorative relief tiles. Corner building with two houses, one in Morten Road (no 25) and the other in Orchard Road (no 2). Date: c 1890.

L. 132 North Station Road (The Norfolk)

Original pub on the left presumably enlarged with the addition of the house on the right. Good fenestration presumably dating to the enlargement. Original building with slate, hipped roof. Date probably c.1860-70 (1873-4??). Addition C20.

Formerly the Norfolk hotel.

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Sources of Figures (to be added)

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Local Plan Committee

Item
8

22 February 2024

Report of	Sandra Scott, Place Strategy Manager	01206 282975
Title	Colchester Local Plan Review: Issues and Options Update	
Wards affected	All wards affected	

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Officers have commenced work on various aspects of the Local Plan Review. The committee agreed in October 2023 to work on the Review with a focus on enhancing the green network and creating a better environment.
- 1.2 This report provides an update on work undertaken as part of the Issues and Options stage and seeks agreement for the next stages of engagement.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 Members are asked to note progress made as part of Issues and Options for the Local Plan Review.
- 2.2 Members are asked to agree to publish a placemaking questionnaire, including the themes set out in appendix 1, following the close of the vision engagement.
- 2.3 Members are asked to agree to the approach outlined for the engagement on the Health and Wellbeing theme being primarily with the health professionals and partners, working together with the Alliance and other relevant stakeholders.
- 2.4 Members are asked to agree to publish Essex County Council's recommended climate change policies, included in appendix 2, for engagement.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The Local Plan Committee oversees work on the Local Plan, and it is essential that the Committee is kept up to date with progress.
- 3.2 Placemaking and Health and Wellbeing are important themes that encompass many issues, and it is important to get views on what the Local Plan Review should cover under these themes, including early input from health professionals.
- 3.3 Section 19(1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to include in their Local Plans: *“policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in the local planning authority’s area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change”*.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The alternative is to not consult with communities and stakeholders at this stage as part of placemaking, health and wellbeing or climate change. However, these are important themes that encompass many issues, and engagement at this stage will help to ensure that the Local Plan is genuinely shaped by communities and stakeholders.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 Local Plan Committee considered reports about the Local Plan Review at the June, August, October, and December 2023 meetings. The June report included a reminder of the current position with the development plan and the further work needed to review the Local Plan. The August report included a high-level programme for the Local Plan Review, including proposing an iterative Issues and Options engagement comprising multiple themed engagements rather than one composite Issues and Options consultation. The October report set out the approach to the Local Plan Review of using the green network and waterways and the 'creating a better environment' agenda as the starting point and key purpose of the Local Plan Review. The December report provided an update of work to date and asked the committee to agree engagement on the Vision for the Local Plan Review early in 2024, which has now commenced.

Issues and Options

- 5.2 Officers have previously recommended iterative engagement on the key themes of the green network and waterways; vision for the Colchester Local Plan Review; climate change mitigation and adaptation; call for sites; design and place; and health and wellbeing. This report provides an update on these themes.
- 5.3 A separate report is presented to the Committee summarising progress on the evidence base, which includes an update on the Call for Sites and next steps for the Strategic Land Availability Assessment.

Green Network and Waterways

- 5.4 Engagement on the green network and waterways took place from 9 November 2023 – 5 January 2024. Stakeholders were asked to comment on how they use existing green spaces and waterways, views about the current condition of spaces and suggest any improvements which could be made; and to suggest ideas for new green spaces.
- 5.5 The majority of comments (373 comments) received were about the existing green network. A further 13 comments were made about waterways. 82 comments were made suggesting ideas for new green spaces. All of these ideas will be considered as work progresses on the Local Plan Review. All comments can be viewed on the consultation portal.
- 5.6 A vast number of comments were about Middlewick Ranges and the adjacent Birch Brook and Weir Lane Grasslands. The Local Plan Review provides the opportunity to reflect on the implications of the latest evidence available to support plan making at the time. Consideration will be given to the appropriate approach to the Middlewick allocation, and other existing, unimplemented allocations, as part of the comprehensive review of the plan.

- 5.7 Colchester's green network and waterways provide multiple benefits and are multifunctional. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines green infrastructure as:

'A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity.'

Some comments to the consultation make the criticism that ecology was not listed in the multiple-choice options for how you use the space. The options were not intended to be exhaustive. Benefits for nature are part of the NPPF green infrastructure definition and Officers recognise that the multifunctional green network and waterways network is important for biodiversity. The October 2023 Approach to the Local Plan Review committee report states that: *'green network and waterways has multiple benefits including for wildlife, active travel, health and wellbeing, climate change adaptation, air quality, flood and water management'*. Officers recognise that an evidence base is needed regarding ecology and biodiversity, prepared by suitably qualified ecologists, and more details about this is included in the evidence base committee report.

- 5.8 Planning Policy Officers are working on the green network and waterways engagement with Officers from the Parks team and Sustainability team – recognising that the importance of the green network and waterways is much wider than planning and some of the comments made as part of the engagement will be best addressed by other teams. All comments have been shared and, where relevant, will be considered as part of their work. The Parks and Open Spaces team welcome the feedback from the engagement and will consider the comments and suggestions received regarding existing sites under our management. If appropriate, these will be incorporated into future management plans for the sites as these come up for review. Comments will also be shared with Essex County Council as the Highways Authority as many comments relate to Public Rights of Way. Planning Policy Officers will take into account all comments that can be actioned through the Local Plan Review and consider all ideas for new green spaces.
- 5.9 The Local Plan Committee agreed in October 2023 to the approach to the Local Plan Review of using the green network and waterways and the 'creating a better environment' agenda as the starting point and key purpose of the Local Plan Review. The part of the engagement most relevant to this approach, is the part of the engagement that asked for opportunities for new green spaces. All comments can be viewed on the consultation portal.

Vision for the city

5.10 Vision workshops took place with Members, Planning Officers, and Senior Leadership Board at the end of 2023. In December 2023, Local Plan Committee agreed public consultation on the vision. This consultation will use three of the questions used in the vision workshops:

- What 3 things do you like best about Colchester City (Local Authority Area) as a Place?
- What do you think are the most important opportunities for Colchester looking ahead to 2041?
- What 3 things would you most like Colchester to be known for in 2041 and beyond?

Officers have engaged with the Comms Team to help ensure this consultation reaches as many people as possible and is clear and understandable. A video has been prepared to explain the purpose of the Vision engagement and encourage the public to engage. The link to this can be widely shared to promote interest in participating in the engagement ([video](#) link).

5.11 Consultation commenced on 8 February 2024 and will close on 21 March 2024. All comments received will be reviewed, together with comments from the early engagement on the vision and will help to draft a Vision for the Local Plan. The Vision will serve as a golden thread through the entire Local Plan, with policies and allocations linking directly to delivering the outcomes set out in the Vision. A draft Vision will be presented to a future Local Plan Committee meeting.

Health and Wellbeing

5.12 Health and Wellbeing crosses many aspects of planning. Other themes including Green Networks, Climate Change and Placemaking are all intertwined with issues which relate to health and wellbeing. For the purpose of considering the issues and options at a high level to help inform the Local Plan Review, engagement will be focused on two key elements recognising the distinction between the two for planning considerations.

1. Health and Wellbeing through design and placemaking;
2. Planning for Healthcare infrastructure.

5.13 The Government's Planning Practice Guidance recognises that planning and health need to be considered together. Paragraph 001 of that guidance summarises the two ways planning can contribute to healthier communities;

- in terms of creating environments that support and encourage healthy lifestyles, and

- in terms of identifying and securing the facilities needed for primary, secondary and tertiary care, and the wider health and care system (taking into account the changing needs of the population).
- 5.14 The Planning Practice Guidance defines a healthy place as one which supports and promotes healthy behaviours and environments and a reduction in health inequalities for people of all ages:
- It will provide the community with opportunities to improve their physical and mental health, and support community engagement and wellbeing;
 - It is a place which is inclusive and promotes social interaction;
 - It meets the needs of children and young people to grow and develop, as well as being adaptable to the needs of an increasingly elderly population and those with dementia and other sensory or mobility impairments.
- 5.15 The Government's Planning Practice Guidance sets out the approach to engagement between relevant organisations in plan making. Working with the Director of Public Health it is necessary to involve the key groups in the local health and wellbeing system. The Integrated Care System approach brings together the Clinical Commissioning Groups responsible for planning and commissioning of healthcare services and facilities. These are now brought together for the Colchester City Council area under the North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance.
- 5.16 The primary focus for engagement on this theme is therefore proposed to be through the North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance. This will provide the opportunity for the health care professionals to be engaged at an early stage and throughout plan making to ensure the Local Plan adequately plans for healthcare infrastructure and shapes and influences placemaking for the benefit of health and wellbeing. The Board has agreed in principle to support engagement in this way as a vehicle to inform the Local Plan subject to the Local Plan Committee agreeing to this approach. It is also proposed to invite other key stakeholders such as Sport England to engage directly to help inform the issues and options linked to this theme.
- 5.17 Engaging with wider stakeholders and local communities on health and wellbeing matters is also important. Within the recommended Placemaking engagement (referred to below), it is proposed that question(s) are included to cover health and wellbeing under the topic of social and community. This will provide an opportunity for specific engagement on this topic from wider stakeholders including local residents, whilst recognising that focused engagement through the Alliance and other key stakeholders will help to balance the issues with the options, developing evidence and considering solutions which can potentially inform policy and place making in the Local Plan Review.

Placemaking

- 5.18 Officers previously referred to a 'design and place' theme. However, this theme is broad and encompasses multiple issues and Officers suggest renaming this theme to 'placemaking'.
- 5.19 Placemaking is about the pattern, scale, character and design quality of places. It includes the following:
- housing (including affordable housing)
 - employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development
 - infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat)
 - community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure)
 - conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- 5.20 Appendix 1 includes some example questions that Officers would like to publish to seek a wide range of views about placemaking. These will be developed further ensuring language is suitable to engage widely with all.

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

- 5.21 Officers previously advised members that Essex County Council has drafted [recommended climate change policies](#) and recommended publication of these early in the new year and seek views on whether they should be incorporated in the Local Plan Review. These recommended policies reflect best practice and refer to the Low Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) definition of net zero, which is the net zero standard recommended in the recently adopted Colchester Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document.
- 5.22 In December 2023, government issued a [Parliamentary Statement 13th December 2023](#), which effectively attempts to stifle the innovation and ambition of local government in setting planning policy on energy standards by imposing more hurdles to navigate, including the step of requiring policy to be expressed as a % reduction in a building's 'target emissions rate' rather than the LETI approach of using energy targets which are absolute, simple and effective. Essex County Council is working with a team of technical and legal experts, and the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), LETI and other Councils, to help understand the full implications of the Parliamentary Statement and advise on options for a way forward. Officers will continue to work with Essex County Council Officers and seek to understand the implications from the Parliamentary Statement.
- 5.23 Your Officers and Essex County Council are of the view that the policies are evidence-led and align with climate targets. Furthermore, the Written Ministerial Statement is only a material consideration and is subservient to

primary legislation. Approval is requested to publish the policies for Issues and Options engagement and ask the question: *are these policies suitable and appropriate to include in Colchester's Local Plan Review?*

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

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

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

7. Strategic Plan References

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

8. Consultation

- 8.1 Public consultation has commenced on initial engagement to inform a draft vision for the Local Plan Review. Future engagement and consultation will be undertaken as outlined at appropriate stages on preparation of evidence and plan making in accordance with the Planning Regulations and Statement of Community Involvement.

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 None at this stage.

10. Financial implications

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

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

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

12. Health and Safety Implications

12.1 No direct implications.

13. Risk Management Implications

13.1 No direct implications.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

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

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

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Placemaking Questionnaire Example

Appendix 2 – Proposed Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption Policies

Appendix 1 Draft Placemaking questionnaire - Examples

It is proposed that questions along these lines under the themes identified will be asked of all stakeholders, focussing on local communities across the Colchester area. It is suggested that these be a mixture of open and closed questions. More focussed engagement on some elements with key audiences may also be carried out - such as on Design- with representatives of the development industry (agents, housebuilders etc)

Themes and examples of Questions to be asked;

Generic – Place

- What do you think makes a good place?
- What do you like about where you live and what can be improved?
- What is locally distinctive about where you live?

Homes

- What features do you expect from new homes and new, modern housing estates?
- What types and tenure of housing do you want to see?
- Do you think housing should be directed to urban or rural areas or a combination of both?
- What do you think about high density housing? Are there some places where you think high density housing would work well – if so where?

Community

- What do you think makes a good community?
- What social and leisure facilities make a community?
- What does a place need to promote healthy and active lifestyles?
- At what scale do you perceive your community?

Jobs

- Where do you think jobs should be created?
- What sort of jobs do you think are needed?
- How far would like to have to travel to work?

Environment

- What do you want to see from public spaces
- What elements of the existing environment should be conserved as a priority?
- How do you think heritage assets can best be enhanced|?
- How do you think the natural environment can best be enhanced?

Design

- What do you think is good design? (upload egs?)
- What does beauty mean to you?

City Centre

- What do you want from the City Centre?
- How do you think the City should evolve?
- Do you have any thoughts about building heights and density within the City Centre?

November 2023

Climate and Planning Unit

Planning Policy Position for

Net Zero Carbon

Homes and Buildings
in Greater Essex



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1. Net Zero Carbon Development

The built environment (in operation) is estimated to account for 23%¹ of the UK’s greenhouse gas emissions. This proportion is substantially higher when emissions embodied in the materials and construction process of new buildings is included. The UK has a statutory target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 (as set out in the Climate Change Act 2008, as amended). The Climate Change Act also sets, through the Sixth Carbon Budget², a further legal target of a 78% reduction in emissions by 2035, which builds upon the commitment to reduce emissions by 68% from 1990 levels by 2030. The Climate Change Committee³ warns that the UK is off target and rapid and deep cuts to emissions must be made in all sectors.

It is therefore imperative that new build development is built to be net zero carbon in operation from the outset and minimises embodied carbon emissions through all stages of a building’s life cycle. Embodied emissions include those related to raw material supply, manufacturing and transport, construction processes and demolition and disposal (see Figure 1). For a building to be net zero carbon in its operation then it must be an ultra-low energy building that meets high building fabric and energy efficiency standards, does not use fossil fuel and maximises renewable energy generation to achieve operational energy balance (see Figure 2).

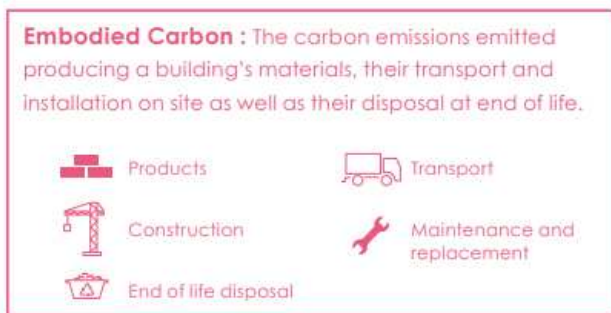


Figure 1 – Embodied Carbon

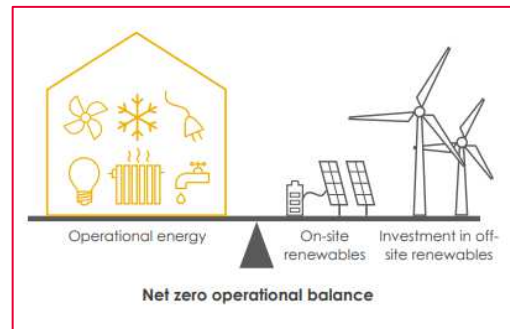


Figure 2 - Net Zero in Operation

Source: [LETI Climate Emergency Design Guide](#)

Retrofitting buildings is more disruptive, costly and time consuming than designing buildings to be net zero carbon in the first place. In Essex, a target for all planning permissions for new buildings to be net zero carbon by 2025 and carbon positive by 2030 was recommended by the Essex Climate Action Commission (ECAC) in July 2021⁴ and endorsed by Essex County Council (ECC) in November 2021. The ECAC recommendations form the basis of the ECC Climate Action Plan⁵ and are relevant to all Essex Local Planning Authorities (LPAs).

¹ In 2019, includes direct and indirect emissions, page 6 of <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Sector-summary-Buildings.pdf>

² Carbon Budget order 2021 - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/carbon-budgets#setting-of-the-sixth-carbon-budget-2033-2037>

³ <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Progress-in-reducing-emissions-2022-Report-to-Parliament.pdf>

⁴ https://www.essexclimate.org.uk/sites/default/files/DS21_7178%20ECAC_Commission_Report-Final.pdf

⁵ [Essex Climate Action Plan](#)

Evidence commissioned by the ECAC, led by ECC on behalf of all the Greater Essex Local Authorities, demonstrates that building to the net zero carbon (in operation) standard set out in **Policy NZ1** is:

- **Technically feasible** (*Report 1: Essex Net Zero Policy – Technical Evidence Base by Introba, Etude, Currie & Brown, July 2023*);
- **Financially viable** (*Net Zero Carbon Viability Study for Essex by Three Dragons, August 2022; to be supplemented by each LPA's local plan viability study using costs from Report 1: Essex Net Zero Policy – Technical Evidence Base (Introba et al, July 2023) or later updates*); and
- **Legally justified** (*Essex Open Legal Advice – Energy policy and Building Regulations by Estelle Dehon KC, Cornerstone Barristers, April 2023*).

The Net Zero Carbon Development evidence base for Essex is available on the [Net Zero Evidence page](#) of the Essex Design Guide (EDG) and is supplemented by each Essex LPA's local plan evidence base.

To complement this evidence, [practical design advice](#) is provided (and being added to) on the EDG which focuses on how to design developments (of all scales and types) to meet the net zero carbon and energy standards, mitigate potential overheating risk and to address other inter-related sustainability issues. The aim is to ensure new development mitigates, adapts and is resilient to a changing climate.

Alongside reducing carbon emissions that arise from the use or occupation of a new development to net zero (known as operational carbon), it is important to address the carbon emissions associated with the processes and materials used in construction and eventual disposal of buildings (known as embodied carbon). Together, both operational carbon emissions and embodied carbon emissions form the Whole Life Carbon impact of a development. As a first step, the carbon emissions from a proposed development should be calculated by using a nationally recognised Whole Life-Cycle Carbon (WLC) assessment methodology (for example, the RICS Guidance)⁶ and measures taken to reduce emissions with reference to best practice targets.

Evidence is being commissioned in Essex to provide further guidance on the preferred planning policy approach for reducing embodied carbon emissions, including the setting of specific targets. In the interim, **Policy NZ2** is a 'placeholder' policy for consultation purposes which sets out an approach that requires the assessment and reporting of embodied carbon in developments over a defined size threshold and identifies industry good practice benchmarks as targets to aim for. The policy will be updated as further evidence is produced.

The Building Regulations 2021 (including the proposed Future Homes Standard 2025) do not adequately address operational or embodied carbon emissions from new development. For example, operational carbon emissions come from 2 categories of energy use – Regulated and Unregulated (see Figure 3). About 50% of a building's total operational energy use comes from 'unregulated' uses, however Building Regulations does not address these uses. Furthermore, Building Regulations currently does not address embodied carbon emissions.

⁶ <https://www.rics.org/profession-standards/rics-standards-and-guidance/sector-standards/building-surveying-standards/whole-life-carbon-assessment-for-the-built-environment>

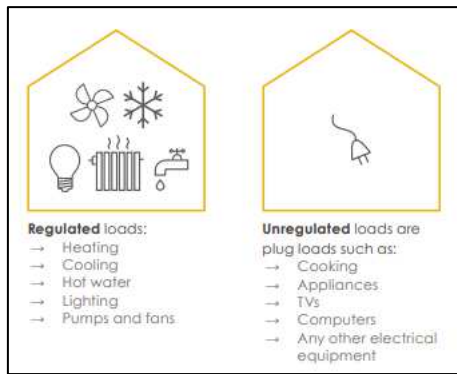


Figure 3 – Regulated and Unregulated Energy loads

Source: [LETI Climate Emergency Design Guide](#)

It therefore falls to the planning system, and local planning authorities through their local plans, to ensure new development addresses carbon emissions in operation (including those from both regulated and unregulated energy uses) and embodied carbon emissions, in a way that aligns with local and national climate targets and mitigates and adapts to climate change. This is supported through primary legislation and national policy which require local plans to include policies to secure development that mitigates and adapts to climate change. This will enable LPAs to take a proactive approach to climate change which is in line with the objectives and provisions, and hence legally binding targets, of the Climate Change Act (*NPPF, para 153, Footnote 53*).

2. Policy NZ1: Net Zero Carbon Development (in Operation)

POLICY NZ1: NET ZERO CARBON DEVELOPMENT (IN OPERATION)

A) New build development (residential and non-residential)

All new buildings must be designed and built to be Net Zero Carbon in operation. They must be ultra-low energy buildings, fossil fuel free, and generate renewable energy on-site to at least match annual energy use.

All new buildings (1 dwelling and above for residential; 100m² and above for non-residential) are required to comply with requirements 1 to 5 as set out below:

1. Requirement 1: Space heating demand limits

- a. Residential buildings (apart from bungalows) and non-residential buildings must achieve a space heating demand of 15 kWh/m² GIA (gross internal floor area)/year or less.
- b. Bungalows must achieve a space heating demand of 20 kWh/m² GIA/year or less.

2. Requirement 2: Fossil fuel free

- a. No new buildings shall be connected to the gas grid; and
- b. Fossil fuels must not be used on-site to provide space heating, domestic hot water or cooking.

3. Requirement 3: Energy Use Intensity (EUI) limits

- a. Residential buildings (Use Class C3 and C4) must achieve an Energy Use Intensity (EUI) of no more than 35 kWh/m² GIA/yr.
- b. The following non-residential buildings must achieve an Energy Use Intensity (EUI) of no more than the following (where technically feasible) by building type or nearest equivalent:
 - Offices – 70 kWh/m² GIA/year
 - Schools – 65 kWh/m² GIA/year
 - Light Industrial – 35 kWh/m² GIA/year
- c. For other residential and non-residential buildings, that are not covered by a) and b) above, applicants should report their energy use intensity but are not required to comply with a certain limit.

4. Requirement 4: On-site renewable energy generation

Renewable energy must be generated on-site for all new developments by whichever of the following results in the greater amount of solar PV energy (electricity) generation:

- a. The amount of energy generated in a year should match or exceed the predicted annual energy use of the building, i.e. Renewable energy generation (kWh/m²/year) = or > predicted annual energy use (kWh/m²/year)*; or
- b. the amount of energy generated in a year is:
 - at least 80 kWh/m² building footprint per annum* for all building types; and
 - at least 120 kWh/m² building footprint per annum* for industrial buildings.

*For development proposals where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority that meeting Requirement 4 is not technically feasible then renewable energy generation on-site should be maximised and the residual amount of renewable energy generation (equivalent to the shortfall in meeting the annual energy use of the building in kWh/year) must be offset by a financial contribution (to cover the administration, purchasing and installation of a solar PV

renewable energy (electricity) system elsewhere in the plan area, which is able to generate a similar amount of energy) and be paid into the Council's offset fund.

The offset price is set at £1.35 per kWh or the most recent updated version and the contribution shall be calculated at the time of planning application determination.

5. Requirement 5: As-built performance confirmation and in-use monitoring

- a. All developments must submit as-built performance information at completion and prior to occupation; and
- b. In-use energy monitoring is required on a minimum of 10% of dwellings for development proposals of 100 dwellings or more, for the first 5 years of operation.

Alternative routes to meeting policy requirements.

Proposals that are built and certified to the Passivhaus Classic or higher PassivHaus standard are deemed to have met Requirements 1 and 3. Requirements 2, 4 and 5 must also be met to achieve policy compliance.

B) Extensions and Conversions

Applications for residential extensions and conversions affecting existing buildings (but excluding Listed Buildings) are encouraged to meet the minimum standards approach fabric specifications set out in Table 2 and maximise renewable energy generation where practical and feasible.

3. Supporting Text / Reasoned Justification – Policy NZ1

The policy requirements under Part A of Policy NZ1 apply to new build residential development (1 dwelling and above) and non-residential development (100m² floorspace and above). For the purposes of the policy ‘residential buildings’ means dwellinghouses and flats (C3), houses in multiple occupation (C4), and developments of self-contained residential units such as extra-care (C3). This also includes the residential element of any new mixed-use buildings. Non-residential buildings includes Use Classes C1 (Hotels), C2 /C2A (Residential Institutions) and those falling within use classes B, E, F and Sui Generis. For any other residential and non-residential buildings, the policy should be applied in a proportionate manner where relevant and appropriate through the Development Management process.

To meet the requirements 1- 5, developments will need to be designed in a way that prioritises a fabric first approach to building design and embeds the energy hierarchy (see Figure 4). This means improving building fabric standards and energy efficiency to ensure energy demand is minimised, and then installing renewable energy generation capacity to meet or exceed demand where possible, followed by offsetting residual energy (if required) as a last resort.

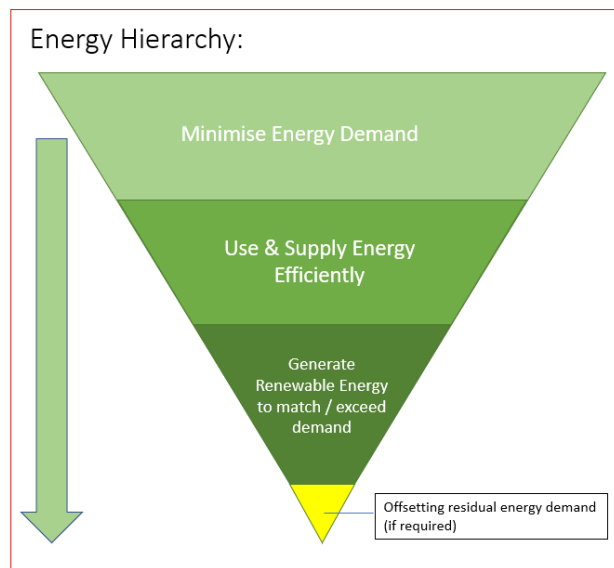


Figure 4: Energy Hierarchy

Designing new development to be net zero carbon in operation needs to be addressed at both building level and site level and at the earliest possible stage so that factors such as the orientation, built form, building fabric, site layout and landscaping measures can be taken into account to minimise energy demand. These factors also influence the renewable energy generation potential of a site and through good design, can help make a development more resilient to a changing climate, for example, through using landscaping measures and green/blue infrastructure to mitigate potential overheating risk to the comfort and well-being of occupants. It is important that designing for ‘net zero’ is done in a holistic manner at an early stage of the design process, and in a way that considers wider sustainability objectives and issues. *Report 2: Essex Net Zero Policy – Summary of Policy, Evidence and Validation Requirements (July 2023)* contains a 1 page high level design guide for a terrace block and low rise apartment block. Also the [EDG](#) contains practical advice on [good solar design](#) which focuses on balancing the needs of daylighting, useful solar gain and mitigating overheating risk.

3.1. Requirement 1: Space heating demand

The space heating demand is the amount of heat energy needed to heat a home or building over a year and is expressed in kWh/m²/year. It is a measure of the thermal efficiency of the building elements. Various design and specification decisions affect space heating demand including building form and orientation, insulation, air-tightness, windows and doors and the type of ventilation system.

Reducing space heating demand to the target levels identified is necessary to achieve a net zero carbon (in operation) building and aligns with recommendations from the Climate Change Committee, Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), Low Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) and the UK Green Building Council (UKGBC). It is also beneficial to residents and building users as it directly reduces energy costs.

Space heating demand in all buildings of major development proposals should be demonstrated using predictive energy modelling, for example Passivhaus Planning Package (PHPP) or the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) TM54. The space heating demand figure is an output of the modelling software once all data has been input.

The space heating target applies to all residential and non-residential buildings designed to be used by people (i.e. not agricultural buildings).

3.2. Requirement 2: Fossil fuel free

New buildings must not burn fossil fuels for heating, hot water and cooking if Essex, and the UK, is to stay within carbon budgets. Alternatives are available. For example, heat pumps can provide both space heating (and cooling) and hot water and can serve individual homes or communal heating systems. They use renewable heat sources such as air, ground or water. The key benefit of heat pumps is their efficiency. Efficiencies vary but are typically around 250- 400% for an Air Source Heat Pump. Direct electric heating systems are less efficient, typically 100%, and are therefore more expensive to run. Solar thermal panels, which turn solar energy into heat can help with space and water heating too.

Heating provided through wood burners and biomass boilers has a negative impact on air quality and are therefore discouraged.

3.3. Requirement 3: Energy Use Intensity

Energy Use Intensity (EUI), or metered energy use, is the total energy needed to run a home or building over a year (per square metre). It is a measure of the total energy consumption of the building (kWh/m²/year). Reducing total energy use of buildings to the target level identified is necessary to align with climate targets. It is also beneficial to residents and building users as it would directly reduce energy costs.

Energy Use Intensity in all buildings of major development proposals should be demonstrated using predictive energy modelling.

The EUI of a building covers all energy uses (regulated and unregulated): space heating, domestic hot water, ventilation, lighting, cooking and plug-in loads e.g. appliances, computers etc. However, electricity used for electric vehicle charging is excluded from the calculation. Whether the energy is sourced from the electricity grid or from onsite renewables does not affect the calculation.

The EUI target set in the policy for dwellings is based on modelling undertaken in the technical evidence base (*Report 1: Essex Net Zero Policy – Technical Evidence Base, July 2023*) and includes both regulated and unregulated energy uses. For clarity, the EUI target set out in 3a) applies to residential uses which include: dwellinghouses, flats, self-contained residential units (C3) and houses of multiple occupation (C4).

For non-residential buildings, the EUI's for the uses listed (office, school and light industrial) are based on gross internal floor areas (GIA) and include regulated and unregulated energy loads. Buildings which represent these generic typologies have been modelled in the evidence (*Report 1: Essex Net Zero Policy – Technical Evidence Base, July 2023*) and appropriate EUI limits identified.

For other residential and non-residential typologies (that are not covered under 3a or 3b), applicants are expected to comply with all other policy requirements, except Requirement 3: Energy Use Intensity limits. Instead, applicants are expected to only report their energy use intensity. However, applicants are recommended to seek to meet the limits being developed by the [UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard initiative](#).

3.3.1. District Heat Networks

Developments connected to a district heat network are expected to meet the proposed EUI limits. The limits set for EUI for each building should be the same irrespective of the heating system that is proposed, to allow a fair comparison between different heating options. The EUI calculations for a scheme connected to a district heat network would have to include the energy consumption of the district heating heat generation plant. This means that the EUI includes the heat losses of the district heating system.

3.4. Requirement 4: On-site renewable energy generation

New development presents opportunities for integrating renewable energy technology into a proposal, including renewable electricity generation. The evidence recommends that in Essex currently the most suitable and cost effective technology is rooftop solar photovoltaic panels.

Evidence (*Report 1: Essex Net Zero Policy – Technical Evidence Base (July 2023)*) shows that it is technically feasible for a building to generate sufficient renewable energy to match or exceed its predicted annual total energy use and thereby achieve an operational energy balance on-site. For clarity, the predicted annual total energy consumption of a building includes both regulated and unregulated energy uses, but excludes energy used for electric vehicle charging.

The policy sets out two options for calculating the renewable energy provision required from a development to be policy compliant. Option a) requires renewable energy generation to match the predicted annual energy use of a building. Option b) sets a minimum amount of renewable energy generation to be achieved in a year based on the building footprint. Whichever calculation results in the greater amount of solar PV renewable electricity generation is the route that must be achieved.

The *Report 1: Essex Net Zero Policy – Technical Evidence Base July 2023* sets out some worked examples, and guidance on roof design and orientation is provided in Appendix 2 of that report, which will help applicants maximise renewable energy generation. The renewable energy generation output should be calculated following the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) guidance⁷ method including the impact of shading.

Matching or exceeding predicted total annual energy use on site with renewable energy generation achieves a net zero carbon development in operation from the outset. As well as helping progress towards climate targets, there are other benefits for ensuring new build development maximises renewable energy generation. For example, it would generate 'free' electricity close to its point of use and help deliver significant energy cost savings for residents and building users. It would also aid the transition to a more

⁷ <https://mcscertified.com/standards-tools-library/>

sustainable energy system by contributing to the significant increase in renewable energy generation required between now and 2050 in the UK and make efficient use of land and resources.

3.4.1. *Renewable Energy Offsetting Mechanism*

There may be circumstances where it is not technically possible to match on-site renewable energy generation with annual average energy demand. An offsetting mechanism is therefore provided to enable these developments achieve policy compliance.

For the offset mechanism to be triggered, the applicant must justify and demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), why it is not technically possible for the development to achieve policy compliance with Requirement 4. To do this, applicants should refer to, and meet, the minimum information requirements for policy compliance set out in *Report 2: Essex Net Zero Policy – Policy Summary, Evidence and Validation Requirements (July 2023)*. The information will be critically reviewed by the LPA, particularly as evidence shows that it is technically possible to achieve all the policy requirements and at a reasonable cost in most development typologies.

If the offsetting mechanism is justifiably triggered by non-compliance with Requirement 4, then the development proposal must still meet the other Policy requirements 1, 2, 3 and 5, and maximise on-site renewable energy generation.

The offset mechanism is expressed as a renewable energy offset and the price is set in £/kWh, which will be reviewed at least every 3 years and updated for Essex. The price (as of July 2023) is set at **£1.35 per kWh** (published in the *Report 1: Essex Net Zero Policy – Technical Evidence Base, July 2023*) and has been calculated using a robust methodology based on the cost of providing roof top solar PV in Essex and incorporating an allowance for maintenance and administration. The calculation of the contribution required will be made at the point a planning application is determined using the most up to date offset price (£/kWh) for Essex.

The offset contribution will be used to fund additional renewable energy capacity elsewhere in the plan area or County. The aim is to make up for the shortfall in renewable energy that cannot be generated on-site. The offset mechanism is purposely limited in role and scope and is only intended for use as a last resort.

The offsetting mechanism meets the legal tests for Section 106 in that it is: (i) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; (ii) directly related to the development; (iii) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

Further information on how the offsetting mechanism will operate will be available in the Renewable Energy Offsetting Framework document that is in preparation. Current proposals are for a countywide funding mechanism to be administered by ECC. The Offset tariff will be collected as a single payment (via a direct payment / Section 106 / Unilateral Undertaking). It is initially envisaged that the payments will be used to provide roof top solar PV on public amenity facilities (to be determined). Spending of the offset fund is preferred to be within reasonable distance of the original development, and within the same plan area as the development. However, pooling may be necessary to enable installation of sufficient scale schemes.

3.4.2. *Other roof top uses*

There may be certain circumstances where it is considered more appropriate for uses other than solar PV on rooftops to be delivered. Consideration should be given to the co-benefits of this on a case by case basis in accordance with wider sustainability objectives, but it is envisaged to likely be only in exceptional circumstances.

3.5. Requirement 5: As-built performance confirmation and in-use monitoring

In order for the Net Zero Carbon Development (in operation) policy to be effective, it is important that new buildings deliver their intended performance.

Using predictive energy modelling, such as Passivhaus Planning Package or the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) TM54 (which is a requirement for major applications), will help improve accuracy of energy performance assessments and reduce the potential gap between the design and actual in-use energy. Also, excellent detailed design needs to be matched by high quality construction and commissioning in order for the ‘energy performance gap’ to be minimised.

The information that must be submitted at completion stage of a development (prior to occupation) to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the LPA that the building / development has been built to the approved design and energy standards, is set out in *Report 2: Essex Net Zero Policy – Policy Summary, Evidence and Validation Requirements (July 2023)* and includes the indicators listed in Table 1 below:

Table 1: As-built stage performance indicators (Required information to be submitted at completion, prior to occupation)	
1	Update parameters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use or typology • GIA (m²) • Energy supply (fossil fuel free?)
2	Update performance modelling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space heat demand using predictive energy model (kWh/m²/year) • Energy Use Intensity using predictive energy model (kWh/m²/year) • As Built stage EPCs (U-values and airtightness check) • Draft DEC for non residential (regardless of user)
3	Confirm renewable energy installation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installed solar PV (kW_p) • Any other installed renewable (i.e solar thermal)
4	Update offset contribution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess energy balance based on data supplied and confirm whether any offset payment is required, and how much
5	Confirm process for collecting ‘in use’ data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm if in-use monitoring and reporting will be carried out • If yes, state what monitoring strategy is in place and confirm how data collected will be published

**Note that for performance modelling (indicator 2), Minor applications following the “minimum standards approach” (without an energy model), do not have to report their space heat demand, energy use intensity and offset contribution at as-built stage. Applications instead need to re-confirm the specifications to which the development has been built to. Further guidance is provided below under ‘Reporting and Modelling’.*

In-use energy monitoring (also known as post occupancy evaluation) is recommended to be carried out on new developments so that a building can be evaluated to ascertain whether the energy targets aimed for in the design have been met in practice.

For residential development proposals of 100 dwellings or more, the Council requires in-use energy monitoring to be undertaken on a representative sample of at least 10% of homes for a period of 5 years. The information must be evaluated to understand how buildings are performing, minimise the performance gap, and to aid the learning, innovation and skills development in the design and construction industry.

Qualitative feedback from building users via occupant satisfaction questionnaires should also be undertaken to assess performance post occupation. This information can be used to enhance the training and advice given to residents / occupiers of new homes and buildings.

3.6. Reporting and Modelling

Policy compliance will need to be demonstrated through the submission of an appropriate energy assessment, which for major development proposals should be in the form of an Energy Strategy and for minor development proposals the applicable 'net zero spreadsheet' (which will be available to download from EDG). Minimum information requirements and checklists for Major and Minor development proposals at each stage of the planning process are set out in *Report 2: Essex Net Zero Policy – Policy Summary, Evidence and Validation Requirements (July 2023)*, along with the template spreadsheet.

Major Development proposals are:

- For housing development - where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more.
- Non-residential development - an additional floorspace of 1,000m² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more.

Minor Development is less than 10 dwellings or less than 1000m² of additional floorspace.

With regards major development proposals, predictive energy modelling, such as Passivhaus Planning Package (PHPP) or CIBSE TM54, should be used. This will provide the necessary assurance to the LPA of the accuracy of the energy assessment information and will help reduce any potential energy performance gap issues, which is where in-use energy does not match the design standard.

With regards minor development proposals, applicants may use predictive energy modelling or follow a 'minimum standards approach' which sets out the specifications that the development must be designed and built to. These fabric and systems specifications are presented in Appendix C of *Report 2: Essex Net Zero Policy – Summary of Policy, evidence and validation requirements (July 2023)*. By following this approach (i.e. without an energy model), minor applications do not have to report the space heating demand, energy use intensity and offset contribution, but they do need to re-confirm on completion the specifications that the development has been built to and the solar photovoltaic system installed.

3.7. Alternative routes to policy compliance

3.7.1. Passivhaus

Passivhaus⁸ is an international energy standard for buildings. It sets stringent standards on energy consumption for heating and overall energy demand and design requirements to control the quality of the internal environment.

In recognition of the high sustainability standards required to achieve a Certified Passivhaus Classic standard (or higher) scheme and the rigorous quality assurance process that must be followed to achieve certification, Passivhaus is considered an acceptable alternative route to compliance with policy requirements 1 and 3.

⁸ https://www.passivhaustrust.org.uk/what_is_passivhaus.php

Proposals seeking to follow this route will be required to provide evidence from an accredited Passivhaus Certifier that the proposed design would be capable of and is expected to achieve the full certified Passivhaus Classic standard (or higher). The proposals would still be required to meet policy requirements 2, 4 and 5.

3.7.2. BREEAM

The use of BREEAM⁹ is encouraged in terms of addressing broader sustainability objectives and providing a level of independent quality assurance for development. However, the use of BREEAM as an alternative approach to policy compliance will not be accepted.

3.8. Extensions and Conversions affecting Existing Buildings (except Listed Buildings)

Development proposals involving existing buildings offer an opportunity for measures to be taken to reduce energy use and carbon emissions, and also to generate renewable energy.

Encouraging proposals for extensions and conversions to be built to the minimum fabric standards (residential) set out in Table 2 (below), will improve the energy efficiency of the existing building and contribute to meeting climate targets. Incorporating and maximising renewable energy generation technology will enhance this further. However, there may be some circumstances where this is not practical and/or feasible, such as a small extension or where the building is overshadowed.

Table 2 – Minimum Standards Approach Fabric Specifications (Domestic)

Residential Developments		Block of Flats Low Rise	Terrace / Semi- Detached House	Bungalow
Fabric	Floor U-value	0.08 – 0.10	0.08 – 0.10	0.08 – 0.10
	External Wall U-value	0.10 – 0.14	0.10 – 0.13	0.09 – 0.12
	Roof U-value	0.09 - 0.11	0.09 - 0.11	0.09 - 0.10
	Windows U-value	0.80 – 0.90	0.80 – 0.90	0.80 – 0.90
	Windows G-value	0.45 – 0.55	0.45 – 0.55	0.45 – 0.55
	External doors U-value	-	0.90 - 1.2	0.90 - 1.2
	Thermal bridging	0.04 W/m ² K	0.04 W/m ² K	0.04 W/m ² K
	Air permeability	<1 ach	<1 ach	<1 ach

Source: Report 2: Essex Net Zero Policy – Policy Summary, Evidence and Validation Requirements (July 2023)

3.8.1. Heritage Assets

Retaining, reusing, refurbishing and retrofitting historic buildings can contribute to meeting climate targets. There are sensitive issues that need to be addressed when it comes to improving the energy efficiency and climate resilience of heritage assets, including potential impact on their setting. Any schemes should have regard to the specific advice and guidance provided in the Essex Design Guide - [Climate Change and the Historic Environment | Essex Design Guide](#).

⁹ <https://bregroup.com/products/breeam/>

3.9. Monitoring and Implementation

To support the implementation of the Net Zero Carbon Development (in operation) Policy in Greater Essex, the County Council will publish guidance so that meeting the requirements of the policy can be demonstrated efficiently, effectively and consistently. Arrangements for monitoring compliance of permissions granted will also be published, to give confidence that new homes and other buildings are built to the standards granted consent.

As a minimum, the following indicators will be monitored on new development proposals:

- Space Heating Demand – has the limit been met? (Policy Requirement 1)
- Fossil fuel – is the development fossil fuel free? (Policy Requirement 2)
- Energy Use Intensity – has the limit been met? (Policy Requirement 3)
- Renewable energy generation – is it maximised? And does it at least match predicted annual energy demand? (Policy Requirement 4)
 - Renewable energy offsetting mechanism – is this being used to achieve policy compliance? And has this been justifiably triggered?
- In-use energy monitoring – is this being carried out? What percentage of homes and for how long?

The use of assured performance standards (e.g. Passivhaus) that are accredited and certified independently will also be monitored.

3.10. Mitigating Overheating Risk

When designing new buildings, national planning policy also requires the potential for overheating risk from a changing climate, and the impact this has on the comfort, health and wellbeing of occupiers to be considered.

Overheating risk in new residential buildings has partly been addressed by amendment to the Building Regulations in June 2022 (Part O: Overheating Mitigation). Since the compliance tools for Building Regulations are not intended to accurately evaluate overheating, major development proposals are encouraged to use the CIBSE (Chartered Institute of Building Service Engineers) standards TM52 for non-residential development and TM59 for residential development.

Measures to mitigate overheating risk from both current and future climate should be incorporated into the design of the development to help ensure the future comfort, well-being and health of occupiers. Further advice and guidance on [good solar design](#) is provided on the Essex Design Guide¹⁰.

¹⁰ [Solar orientation | Essex Design Guide](#)

4. Policy NZ2: Net Zero Carbon Development – Embodied Carbon

POLICY NZ2: NET ZERO CARBON DEVELOPMENT – EMBODIED CARBON

Proposals for Large scale new-build developments (a minimum of 100 dwellings or a minimum of 5000m² of commercial floor space) must submit a Whole Life-Cycle Carbon Assessment that demonstrates the following buildings targets have been met:

- a) 'upfront' embodied carbon emissions;
 - i. Residential: <500kgCO₂/m²
 - ii. Non-Residential: <600kgCO₂/m²and
- b) Total embodied carbon
 - i. Residential: <800kgCO₂/m²
 - ii. Non-Residential: <970kgCO₂/m²

5. Supporting Text / Reasoned Justification: Policy NZ2

Total embodied carbon emissions are the greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the materials and construction processes through the whole life cycle of a building, including the demolition and disposal (RIBA stages A 1-5, B1-5 and C1-4). Upfront embodied emissions are the portion of total emissions associated with the Building Life Cycle stages A1 – A5 and include the following elements: substructure, superstructure, façade and roof, Mechanical Electrical & Plumbing (MEP) & internal finishes.

Embodied carbon accounts for a significant proportion of a buildings' whole life carbon and addressing embodied carbon is important to meet local and national climate targets. Currently, embodied carbon is not covered by Building Regulations and there is no Government policy requiring the assessment or control of embodied carbon emissions from buildings. The Environmental Audit Committee¹¹ (EAC) reported to Parliament in 2022 on this issue. The EAC highlighted that as a result, no progress has been made in reducing these emissions within the built environment. They go on to advise that the UK is slipping behind comparator countries in Europe in monitoring and controlling the embodied carbon in construction and that if this continues the UK will not meet net zero or its carbon budgets.

Local authorities are mandating Whole Life-Cycle Carbon (WLC) assessments of their own accord, and this is being done through the planning system. The EAC reported that evidence so far shows that the policy is achievable and is working, with few barriers to its introduction (EAC Report, Paragraph 73). The EAC encourages Local authorities to include embodied carbon assessments in their Local Plans ahead of the introduction of national planning requirements.

Policy NZ2 introduces a requirement to assess whole life cycle carbon emissions for all new build developments (residential and non-residential) over the threshold identified. The assessment and reporting of embodied carbon for the purposes of compliance with Policy NZ2 should follow a nationally recognised methodology. In the absence of an approved UK national methodology, the RICS Professional Statement on Whole Life Carbon Assessment (WLC) is the accepted industry methodology for WLC assessments (EAC Report, Para 70) and should be used for demonstrating policy compliance until a national methodology is in

¹¹ [Building to net zero: costing carbon in construction: Government Response to the Committee's First Report - Environmental Audit Committee \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/environmental-audit-committee/reports-and-publications/building-to-net-zero-costing-carbon-in-construction-government-response-to-the-committee-s-first-report/)

place. Further guidance and software tools have also been developed, such as one click LCA¹². The Government is working with industry to update the RICS methodology to develop it into a national methodology, and once approved then this will become the methodology that should be used for demonstrating policy compliance. The EAC considers that once the national methodology and requirement to undertake whole-life carbon assessments is in place, the cost of undertaking assessments is likely to be minimal (EAC Report, para 71).

In terms of targets for reducing embodied carbon, there is no nationally set standard but there are industry organisations that have worked together to align the best practice standards to ensure the scope and definition of targets are consistent. Specifically, LETI¹³ have worked with RIBA, GLA, IStructE and UKGBC to align the targets set out in the RIBA 2030 Challenge for Total Embodied Carbon Emissions and those of LETI for Upfront embodied carbon emissions. They have sought to develop a simple rating system to easily enable comparisons between different buildings / developments. The result is set out in the Embodied Carbon Target Alignment document¹⁴ – and the key table is replicated here:

Table 3: Upfront and Life Cycle Embodied Carbon LETI & RIBA Targets (Kg Co₂/m)²

Upfront Embodied Carbon, A1-5 (exc. sequestration)					
	Band	Office	Residential (6+ storeys)	Education	Retail
	A++	<100	<100	<100	<100
	A+	<225	<200	<200	<200
LETI 2030 Design Target	A	<350	<300	<300	<300
	B	<475	<400	<400	<425
LETI 2020 Design Target	C	<600	<500	<500	<550
	D	<775	<675	<625	<700
	E	<950	<850	<750	<850
	F	<1100	<1000	<875	<1000
	G	<1300	<1200	<1100	<1200

Life Cycle Embodied Carbon, A1-5, B1-5, C1-4					
	Band	Office	Residential (6+ storeys)	Education	Retail
	A++	<150	<150	<125	<125
	A+	<345	<300	<260	<250
RIBA 2030 Build Target	A	<530	<450	<400	<380
	B	<750	<625	<540	<535
	C	<970	<800	<675	<690
	D	<1180	<1000	<835	<870
	E	<1400	<1200	<1000	<1050
	F	<1625	<1400	<1175	<1250
	G	<1900	<1600	<1350	<1450

Source: [LETI Embodied Carbon Target Alignment document](#)

¹² <https://www.oneclicklca.com/>

¹³ <https://www.leti.uk/carbonalignment>

¹⁴ [Embodied Carbon Target Alignment - LETI](#)

Policy NZ2 sets out specific building targets for total and upfront embodied carbon which are currently based on Band C of the aligned targets tables from the RIBA 2030 challenge and LETI. The scope, threshold and targets – including the ratchetting of targets over time - for the policy will be updated as further information across the industry is developed and Essex specific evidence is commissioned.

Policy NZ2 is therefore a ‘placeholder’ policy for consultation purposes. The aim of the policy is to ensure whole life cycle carbon assessments are carried out using a recognised methodology and that measures are taken in new developments to significantly reduce embodied carbon emissions and meet the latest best practice targets.

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Local Plan Committee

Item
9

22 February 2024

Report of	Bethany Jones	01206 282541
Title	Colchester Local Plan Review – Evidence Base and Call for Sites Update	
Wards affected	All wards affected	

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the current progress of the Evidence Base required to support the Colchester Local Plan Review. The evidence is to be prepared through specific commissions to consultants and in house by the Planning Policy team, with input from other teams where required.
- 1.2 Officers have progressed work on a number of evidence base documents being prepared in house. The Settlement Boundary Review Stage One and Sustainability Appraisal Scoping work has commenced. The Call for Sites was launched on 20 October 2023 and closed on 5 January 2024. A total of 195 submissions have been received for consideration. In some instances, a site may have been promoted for multiple uses or the same site submitted by more than one individual.
- 1.3 For some evidence which requires specialist consultants, briefs have been prepared and will be put out to tender in the next few months.
- 1.4 In some instances, the evidence is not required until later in the plan making process, however the need for the evidence has been identified. Officers will keep this under review and seek to provide additional evidence if it is considered necessary, or review the need and scope as required.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To note the submissions received through the Call for Sites process.
- 2.2 To note the updates for the evidence base documents required to support the Colchester Local Plan Review.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 To keep Local Plan Committee informed of the progress of the evidence base for the Colchester Local Plan Review.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 No alternative options are proposed.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 A Local Plan is underpinned by an extensive evidence base which provides the justification for the policy approach taken and is considered as part of the Independent Examination which all Local Plans are subject to, as part of the Plan Making Regulations.
- 5.2 As work has progressed with the Local Plan Review, the table below sets out the evidence base that Officers currently consider necessary for the Local Plan Review and an indication of which are being, or likely to be undertaken in-house or whether specialist consultants are needed. An update for some of these individual evidence base documents is set out further in the report. In some instances, the evidence is not required until later in the plan making process. Officers will keep this under review and seek to provide additional evidence if it is considered necessary, or review the need and scope as required.

Evidence	Purpose	Inhouse, consultants or hybrid	Timetable/ Progress
Green and Blue Infrastructure Framework	To map the green network and waterways in the city and consider improvements to this as part of the spatial strategy	Inhouse	Ongoing – consultation on evidence complete in Winter 2023 Framework Spring / Summer 2024
Call for Sites	To identify potential sites for green infrastructure, Biodiversity Net Gain, housing, employment	Inhouse	Complete – Call for Sites undertaken Winter 2023
Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA)	To consider the suitability, availability and achievability of all sites proposed for development	Inhouse / hybrid / external input where required	Ongoing – Methodology agreed December 2023. Desktop Review commenced January 2024. Individual Assessments to commence February/March 2024.
Settlement boundary review	To review the boundaries of all settlements within the city and consider alongside the sites	Inhouse	Ongoing – Stage 1 commenced January 2024.

Evidence	Purpose	Inhouse, consultants or hybrid	Timetable/ Progress
	assessed through the SLAA.		Stage 2 to commence alongside SLAA
Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption	To justify policies and targets in relation to energy use and climate change.	Consultants commissioned by ECC	ECC have drafted recommended climate change policies supported by an evidence base for use across Essex.
Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)	To identify the need for gypsy and traveller plots/sites	Consultants – Essex wide commission.	Work underway, report due Quarter 2 of 2024.
Biodiversity Net Gain Study	To consider likely effects on biodiversity from potential allocations, and recommend mitigation and biodiversity net gain measures	Consultants	Brief prepared late 2023 / aiming to appoint a consultant February / March 2024
Local Housing Needs Assessment	To establish the housing requirement and mix of housing required. To establish and justify the affordable housing figure.	Consultants	Draft brief prepared and due to go out to tender imminently.
Infrastructure Delivery Strategy Including Infrastructure Audit	To document the infrastructure required to identify required mitigation to support the Plan. Initial work- Infrastructure Audit	Consultants	Work has commenced on the infrastructure audit. Brief prepared for consultants to go out to tender Feb/ March 2024. Needed during preferred options preparation & updated before submission
Employment study	To understand the amount and type of employment space needed in the plan period and help inform policy approach	Consultants	Brief being drafted with a view to going out to tender late Feb /early March
Town centre & retail study	To understand the quantum and policy	Consultants	Brief being drafted with a view to going

Evidence	Purpose	Inhouse, consultants or hybrid	Timetable/ Progress
	approach for retail and town centre uses needed in the plan period		out to tender late Feb /early March
Transport Evidence	To understand the transport requirements to support / inform the Local Plan Review	ECC / Consultants	Scope to be agreed Spring 2024. Required during Preferred Options preparation
Water Cycle Study	To demonstrate that water can be supplied, wastewater treated and development won't cause flooding	Consultants Potentially to be shared with neighbouring authorities	Brief to be prepared and advertised late Spring 2024. Required during Preferred Options preparation
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	To identify areas at risk of flooding	Consultants – possibly ECC	Brief to be prepared and advertised late Spring 2024. Required during Preferred Options preparation
Heritage Impact Assessment	To consider likely effects on heritage assets from potential allocations, and recommend mitigation measures where required to inform policy	Consultants	Brief to be prepared and advertised late Spring 2024. Required during Preferred Options preparation and potential updates to inform submission
Landscape Character Assessment Review	To include a review of the coastal protection belt & define valued landscapes	Consultants	Brief to be prepared to confirm the scope of evidence needed- Spring 2024
Design Code	To ensure the Plan can deliver on National Policy requirements on beauty and design	Potential options being explored to include hybrid if possible	To follow later, required during preparation of Submission Plan
Health Impact Assessment	To consider the health impacts of the plan	Inhouse utilising work / engagement with the North East Essex Health and	Draft to be prepared during Preferred Options preparation. Update and finalise before Submission.

Evidence	Purpose	Inhouse, consultants or hybrid	Timetable/ Progress
		Wellbeing Alliance	
Viability Assessment	To demonstrate that the Submitted Plan is viable	Consultants	Brief to be prepared in mid-2024 as required during preparation of Submission Plan.
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)	Legal requirement for all DPDs	Consultants to be confirmed - but scoping inhouse	Scoping report drafted early 2024. SA will be ongoing throughout plan preparation. Draft SA at Preferred options & SA at submission. Anticipate appointing consultants early March 2024
Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)	To confirm no adverse effects on the integrity of habitats sites	Consultants	Draft to support Preferred Options & final report at submission
Equality Impact Assessment	To determine if there is any adverse impact or illegal discrimination or any unmet need or requirements, in accordance with Equality Act 2010.	Inhouse	To be prepared prior to submission.

Green Network and Waterways Strategy / Framework

5.3 Engagement on the green network and waterways took place from 9 November 2023 – 5 January 2024. Stakeholders were asked to comment on how they use existing green spaces and waterways, views about the current condition of spaces and suggest any improvements which could be made; and to suggest ideas for new green spaces. 373 comments received were about the existing green network, 13 comments were made about waterways and 82 comments were made suggesting ideas for new green spaces. All of these ideas will be considered as work progresses on the Local Plan Review and all comments have been shared with the Parks and Open Spaces team, Sustainability team, and,

where relevant, Essex County Council. All comments can be viewed on the consultation portal: [Colchester City Council - Green & Blue Spaces \(oc2.uk\)](https://www.colchester.gov.uk/oc2).

- 5.4 In addition to incorporating these comments into the Local Plan Review and other Council workstreams, Officers are working with other Council teams to prepare guiding principles for Colchester's Green Network and Waterways. The Guiding Principles will be developed through an understanding of the city's green network and waterways baseline, the public engagement comments, and a review of Natural England's Green Infrastructure Principles, Essex County Council's Green Infrastructure Standards, and the objectives of the Colchester Woodland and Biodiversity Project. Once endorsed by Cabinet, the Green Network and Waterways Guiding Principles will inform all Council work related to green spaces and waterways.

Settlement Boundary Review

- 5.5 Officers have prepared a scope for the Settlement Boundary Review to be completed in house. The Review will be in two stages, the first providing an overarching profile of the existing settlement area and identify opportunities and constraints to growth. The second stage of the Review will include consideration of how the settlement boundary could logically be modified and a settlement level consideration of the sites assessed through the Strategic Land Availability Assessment.
- 5.6 The first stage of the Review has commenced and is scheduled for completion in February. Officers will be undertaking site visits to the settlements throughout March/April. The second stage of the Review will be progressed alongside the Strategic Land Availability Assessment throughout the next few months.

Biodiversity Protection and Biodiversity Net Gain Study

- 5.7 Officers prepared a brief in November 2023 for a study to support plan preparation by:
- identifying sites where development would significantly harm biodiversity;
 - making recommendations for mitigation and biodiversity net gain measures for potential housing, employment, and infrastructure sites; and
 - reviewing sites submitted as potential biodiversity net gain habitat banks.
- 5.8 It is hoped to appoint a consultant late February / early March 2024, and work will inform the Strategic Land Availability Assessment, green network work and the overall plan making process. This study will assist with ensuring a robust

evidence base for framing the plan around the creating a better environment agenda.

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 5.9 Sustainability Appraisals, incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessments, are a legal requirement for Local Plans. They are carried out alongside plan preparation and assess how sustainable the plan is and reasonable alternatives. Sustainability Appraisals are a useful tool to aid decision making and help justify the preferred strategy.
- 5.10 The first stage of the Sustainability Appraisal is scoping, and Officers are carrying this out inhouse. Scoping involves considering baseline information about the plan area, a review of relevant policies, plans and programmes, identifying sustainability issues that face the plan area and the establishment of a sustainability framework that will be used to assess the plan options as they emerge. The following stages of the Sustainability Appraisal work will need to be carried out by consultants which will be programmed with appointed consultants once confirmed.

Strategic Land Availability Assessment and Call for Sites

- 5.11 Following consultation, the updated Strategic Land Availability Assessment Methodology was revised and adopted by Local Plan Committee on 11 December 2023. In January 2024, Officers commenced the Desktop Review to identify sites in addition to those promoted through the Call for Sites for further assessment. Sites identified through the desktop study will be published as part of the Strategic Land Availability Assessment process.
- 5.12 The Call for Sites is an opportunity for the public, Members, landowners, developers and other stakeholders to promote sites for development across the City. This includes land for use of housing, employment, community facilities and/or infrastructure development. This also included a Green Infrastructure category to enable land to be promoted for offsite biodiversity net gain, country parks, open space and other green uses.
- 5.13 A total of 195 submissions have been received by a mixture of landowners, developers, agents, and members of the public. A full list of submitted sites is included in Appendix A below. The majority of submissions were promoting sites for residential uses; however some sites were promoted for other uses, including employment, open space, local nature reserve/local wildlife site and biodiversity. In some instances, a site may have been promoted for multiple uses. Similarly,

some sites have been promoted by more than one individual, for example Middlewick Ranges as a green use by several members of the public.

- 5.14 The list of sites is currently one composite list with brief details and map extract. These are ordered by Site ID reference rather than any geographical distribution. The easiest way to view the complete Call for Site coverage in any one geographical area, is using the [mapping tool](#). This enables the user to zoom in and out and identify further details as required.
- 5.15 The information provided in the Call for Sites as published is based on that which was submitted by the respondent/agent. As sites are assessed, it may be that further clarification needs to be sought in some cases. It is also worth noting that in some cases the site boundaries drawn cover the full extent of an area put forward for consideration, which may be larger the area intended for development i.e may include land within the same ownership or land available for biodiversity net gain, or an alternative supporting use.
- 5.16 The Call for Sites is an essential part of the plan making process, but it is only one part of the evidence base. It is important to remember that just because a site has been promoted through the Call for Sites, this does not necessarily mean that it will go forward as an allocation in the Local Plan or be supported for development of the proposed use.
- 5.17 Officers are currently comparing the list of sites generated from the Desktop Review and those submitted through the Call for Sites to remove any duplication. The next step is to commence the individual site assessments using the adopted Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) methodology. This will be ongoing for the next few months.

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

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

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

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 The current Local Plan provides a key strategic delivery vehicle for many Strategic Objectives in the Council's Strategic Plan (April 2023-April 2026). In particular the following Strategic Objectives are particularly relevant; Respond the Climate Emergency through policies which seek to conserve and enhance biodiversity; Improve health, wellbeing and happiness, through placemaking and provision of appropriate infrastructure; Deliver homes for those most in need, through housing targets, site allocations and policies providing for affordable

housing and a mix of evidenced housing needs; and Grow our economy so everyone benefits, through policy seeking to provide and manage economic growth throughout existing and new communities.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 Whilst no consultation on matters in this report is required at this stage, it is proposed to engage with the Town and Parish Councils and key stakeholders for focused engagement as required to help inform some of the evidence base. Engagement with the Town and Parish Councils will include the Call for Sites and informing the Settlement Boundary Review. Future wider engagement and consultation will be undertaken at appropriate stages of preparation of evidence and plan making in accordance with the Planning Regulations and Statement of Community Involvement.

9. Publicity Considerations

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

10. Financial implications

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

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

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

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 No direct implications.

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 No direct implications.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

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

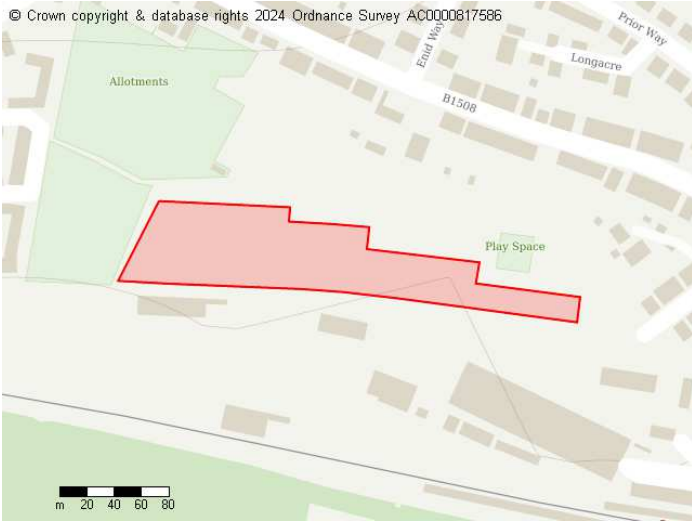
system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are economic, social and environmental objectives.

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

Appendices

Appendix A – Call for Sites 2023/24 Report

Site ID: 10082



Site details

Site address

Abellio (East Anglia) Ltd, The Hub, Colchester North Station, North Station Road, Colchester, CO1 1JS

Site area (hectares)

1.2961 ha

Site ID: 10083

No site plotted.

Site details

Site address

Eight Ash Green Colchester CO6 3PU

Site area (hectares)

Site ID: 10084



Site details

Site address

Spring Cottage, Lower Road, Peldon, Colchester, CO5 7PR

Site area (hectares)

0.22 ha

Site ID: 10086

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Site details

Site address

St. Marys Grange, Easthorpe Road, Easthorpe, Colchester, CO5 9HD

Site area (hectares)

0.207499999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10089



Site details

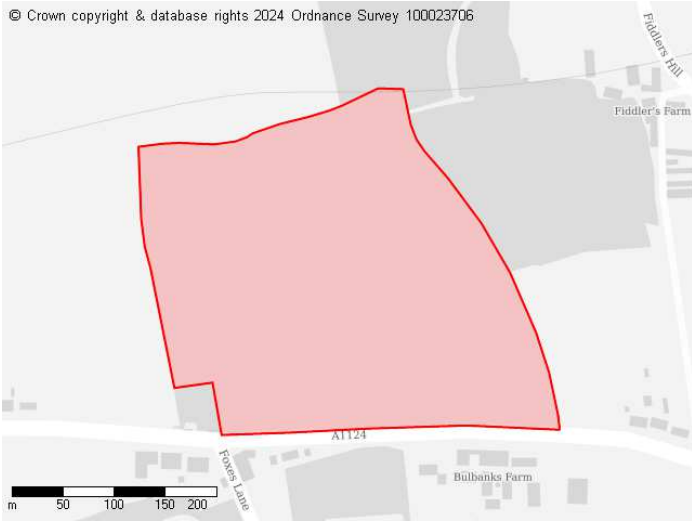
Site address

Land South of Woodhouse Lane, Great Horkesley, Colchester

Site area (hectares)

2.173500000000002 ha

Site ID: 10090



Site details

Site address

Land to north of Halstead Road, Aldham

Site area (hectares)

9.828099999999992 ha

Site ID: 10119



Site details

Site address

Paddock, Spring Gardens Road, Chappel, Colchester, Essex

Site area (hectares)

0.509000000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10120



Site details

Site address

Land to the rear of Abbots Croft, adjacent to Vernons Road.

Site area (hectares)

0.8075 ha

Site ID: 10121



Site details

Site address

Land at Birch Green, Mill Lane, Birch

Site area (hectares)

0.8485 ha

Site ID: 10122

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Site details

Site address

Old School, School Lane, Great Horkesley, Colchester

Site area (hectares)

0.5198000000000004 ha

Site ID: 10123



Site details

Site address

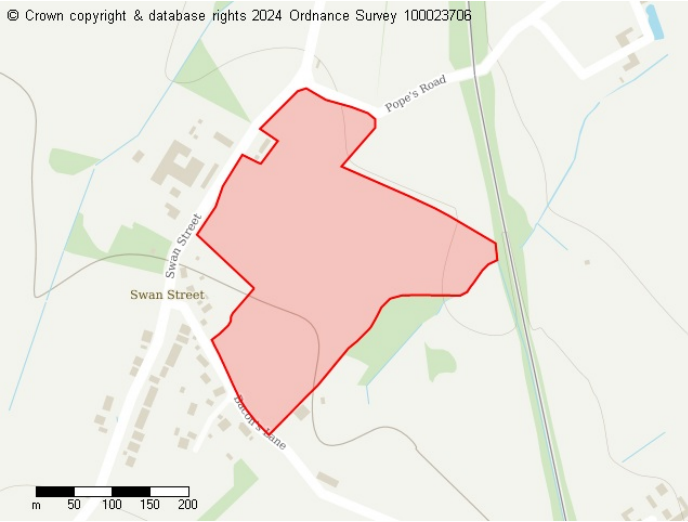
Site west of Chappel Hill, Chappel

Site area (hectares)

2.0034000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10124

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Site details

Site address

Swan Street, Chappel

Site area (hectares)

8.187699999999995 ha

Site ID: 10125



Site details

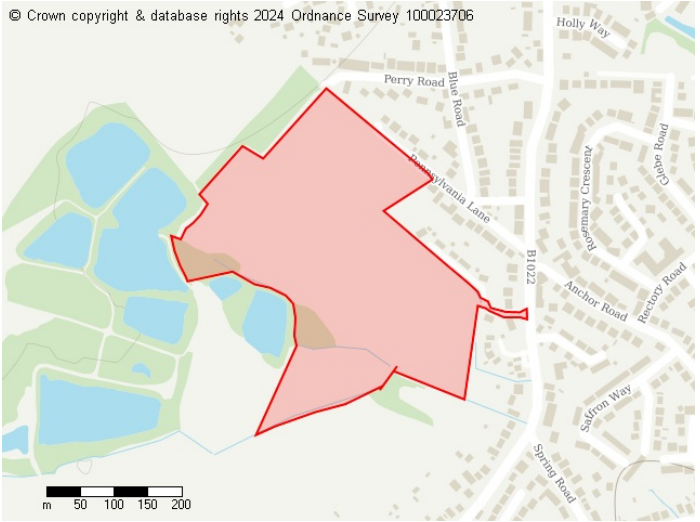
Site address

Cedar Brook, Terrace Hall Chase, Great Horkesley, Colchester, CO6 4HG

Site area (hectares)

0.7825999999999996 ha

Site ID: 10132



Site details

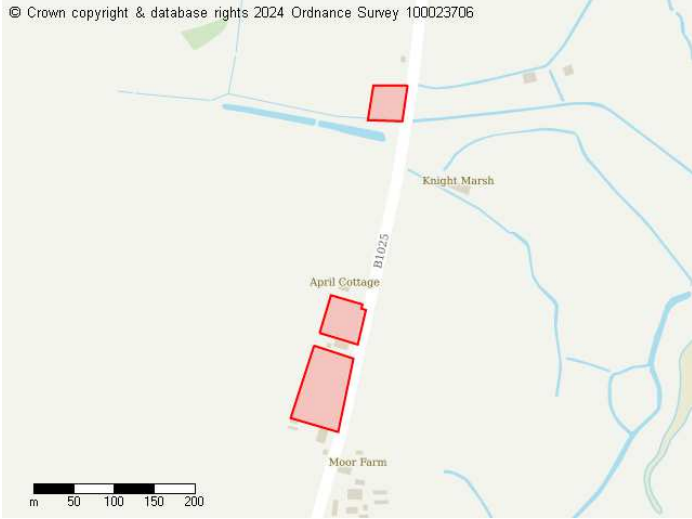
Site address

Land at Brook Meadows Tiptree

Site area (hectares)

11.648999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10138



Site details

Site address

Land west of Colchester Road Peldon Essex CO5 7QP

Site area (hectares)

0.936 ha

Site ID: 10154



Site details

Site address

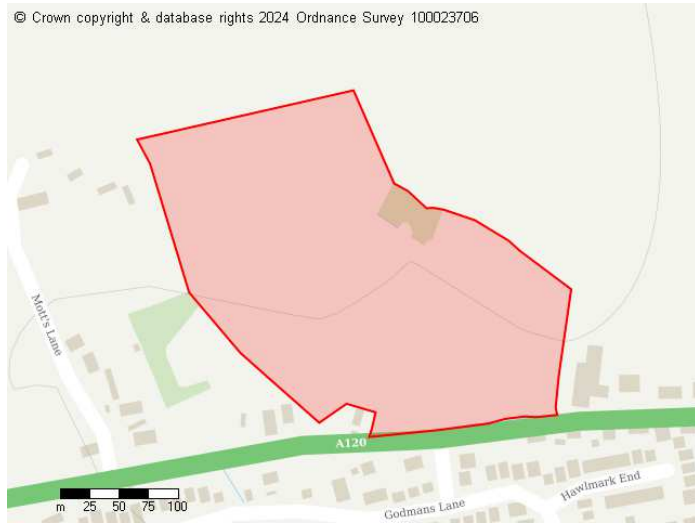
Land behind and adjacent to Topfield, Colchester

Site area (hectares)

1.4724999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10165

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Site details

Site address

North of Godmans Lane, Marks Tey, Colchester, CO6 1LU

Site area (hectares)

6.4406999999999996 ha

Site ID: 10171



Site details

Site address

124 School Road, Copford, Colchester, CO6 1BX

Site area (hectares)

0.3404 ha

Site ID: 10173



Site details

Site address

121a London Road, Marks Tey, Colchester, CO6 1EB

Site area (hectares)

2.9993 ha

Site ID: 10175

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Site details

Site address

Haycocks Yard Haycocks Lane West Mersea CO5 8SS

Site area (hectares)

1.7394000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10176

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Site details

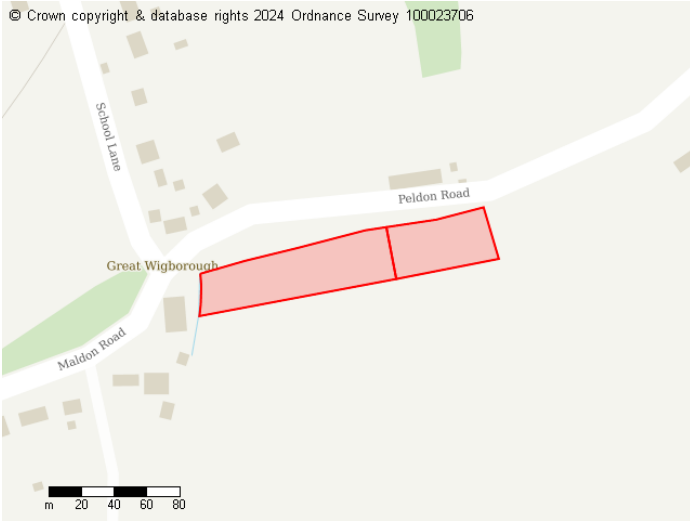
Site address

131 Colchester Road, West Bergholt, Colchester, CO6 3JX

Site area (hectares)

2.1583000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10177



Site details

Site address

Land south of Peldon Road Great Wigborough Essex CO5 7SA

Site area (hectares)

0.5489000000000005 ha

Site ID: 10178



Site details

Site address

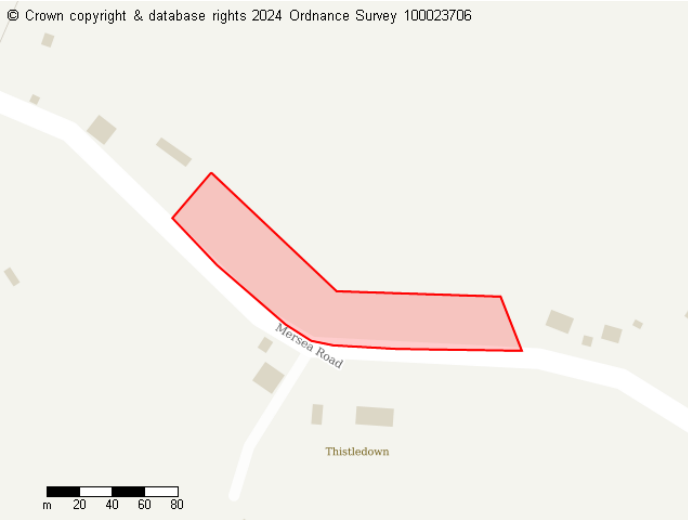
131 Colchester Road, West Bergholt, Colchester, CO6 3JX

Site area (hectares)

6.5075000000000003 ha

Site ID: 10179

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Site details

Site address

Land north of Mersea Road Peldon CO5 7QE

Site area (hectares)

0.7887999999999995 ha

Site ID: 10180

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Site details

Site address

Land west of Colchester Road Peldon CO5 7QJ

Site area (hectares)

1.0710999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10181

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Site details

Site address

Land west of Maltings Road Peldon CO5 7PU

Site area (hectares)

0.2851000000000002 ha

Site ID: 10182



Site details

Site address

Land opposite Brook Farm Halstead Road Fordham CO6 3LW

Site area (hectares)

0.5829999999999996 ha

Site ID: 10183



Site details

Site address

Land northeast of Appletrees School Road Messing CO5 9TH

Site area (hectares)

0.16250000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10185



Site details

Site address

Land west of Langham Lane Langham CO4 5NN

Site area (hectares)

0.400100000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10195



Site details

Site address

Popes Lane, Chappel.

Site area (hectares)

2.0232999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10196



Site details

Site address

Land south of Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green, CO6 3JP

Site area (hectares)

0.3948999999999997 ha

Site ID: 10197



Site details

Site address

Land south of Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green CO6 3QB

Site area (hectares)

5.749799999999996 ha

Site ID: 10198



Site details

Site address

Meeting Field Meeting Lane East Mersea CO5 8TD

Site area (hectares)

0.25490000000000002 ha

Site ID: 10203



Site details

Site address

The Allotments Colchester, CO5 7JL

Site area (hectares)

0.19370000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10205

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Site details

Site address

Tiptree Golf Driving Range, Newbridge Road, Tiptree, Colchester, CO5 0JA

Site area (hectares)

0.33079999999999998 ha

Site ID: 10208



Site details

Site address

Land North of Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green

Site area (hectares)

6.4028999999999998 ha

Site ID: 10209

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Site details

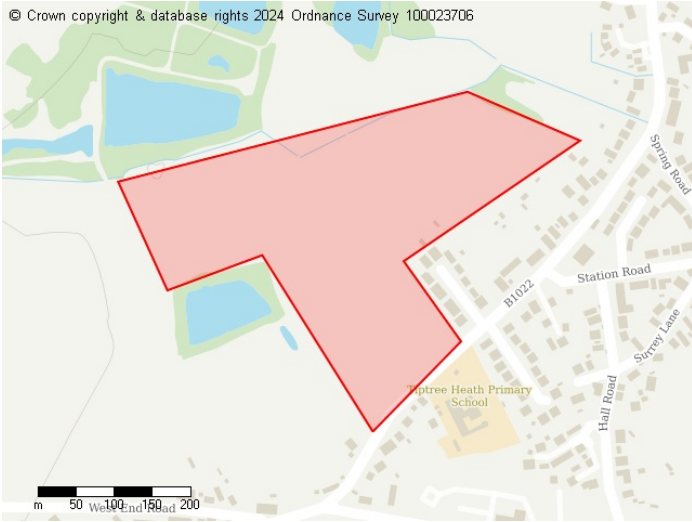
Site address

Whitehall House Whitehall Road Colchester CO2 8HT

Site area (hectares)

0.226000000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10210



Site details

Site address

Peakes Maldon Road Tiptree

Site area (hectares)

11.473100000000001 ha

Site ID: 10211



Site details

Site address

Land East of Fingringhoe Road, Rowhedge

Site area (hectares)

4.488699999999997 ha

Site ID: 10225

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Site details

Site address

Site adjoining Clay Barn, Abberton Road, Fingringhoe, Colchester, Essex, CO5 7AR. Title Number: EX615551

Site area (hectares)

0.9257999999999996 ha

Site ID: 10226



Site details

Site address

Land East of School Road Copford

Site area (hectares)

9.385300000000009 ha

Site ID: 10228

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Site details

Site address

Lower Road Peldon

Site area (hectares)

0.7732999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10229



Site details

Site address

Land North of Colchester Road, West Bergholt

Site area (hectares)

3.7008000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10230



Site details

Site address

Land south of Doggetts Lane Service Station, London Road/A12, Marks Tey, CO6 1EW.

Site area (hectares)

1.4134 ha

Site ID: 10231

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Site details

Site address

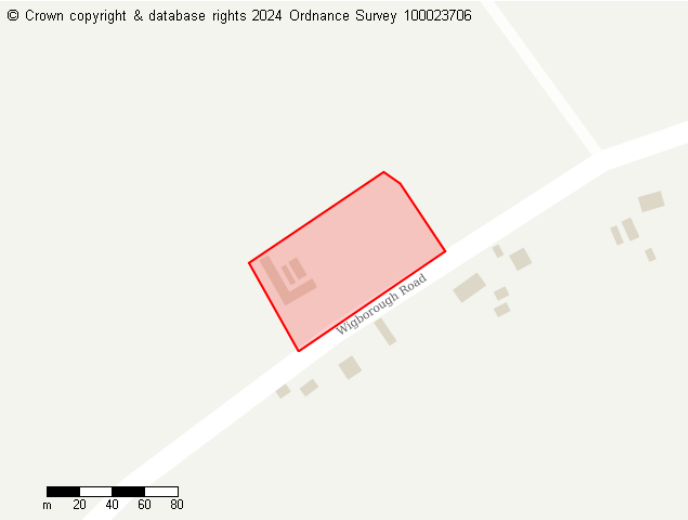
Land north of Colchester Road, West Mersea

Site area (hectares)

1.1872 ha

Site ID: 10232

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Site details

Site address

Wigborough Road, Peldon

Site area (hectares)

0.6492 ha

Site ID: 10233

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Site details

Site address

Land at Oxley House Mersea Road Abberton CO5 7NR

Site area (hectares)

2.8351999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10239



Site details

Site address

Gosbecks Business Park, Gosbecks Road, Colchester, CO2 9JS

Site area (hectares)

1.6809000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10243

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Site details

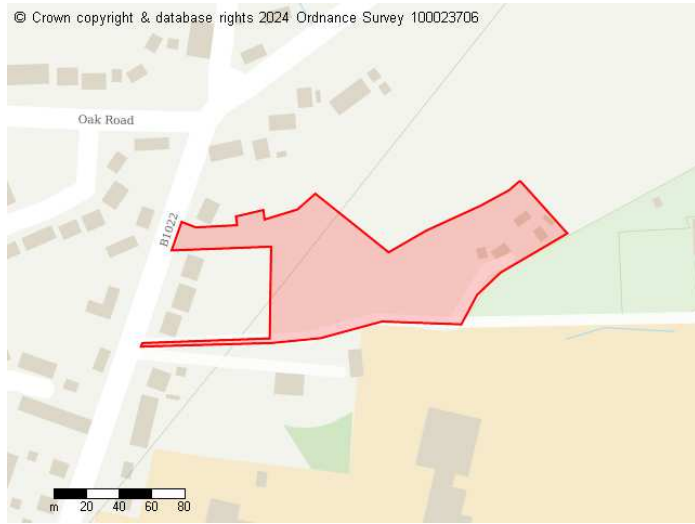
Site address

Land fronting the Ashington Lodge Estate, New Road, Aldham, Colchester, CO6 3QT

Site area (hectares)

0.8680999999999998 ha

Site ID: 10244



Site details

Site address

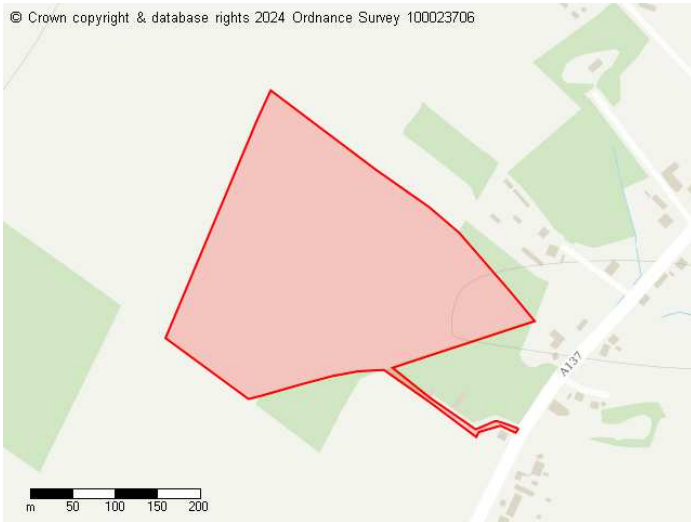
New Park Cottage, Maypole Road, Tiptree, Colchester, CO5 0ER

Site area (hectares)

1.1313 ha

Site ID: 10245

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Site details

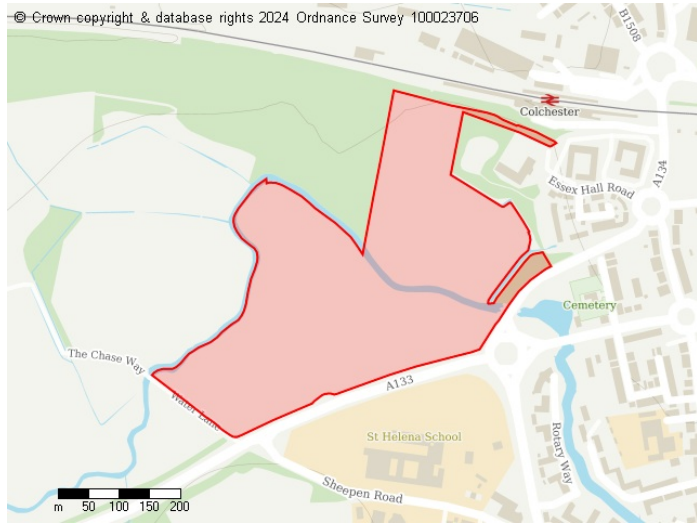
Site address

Land northwest of Harwich Road, Colchester, CO4 3ES.

Site area (hectares)

8.4802 ha

Site ID: 10248



Site details

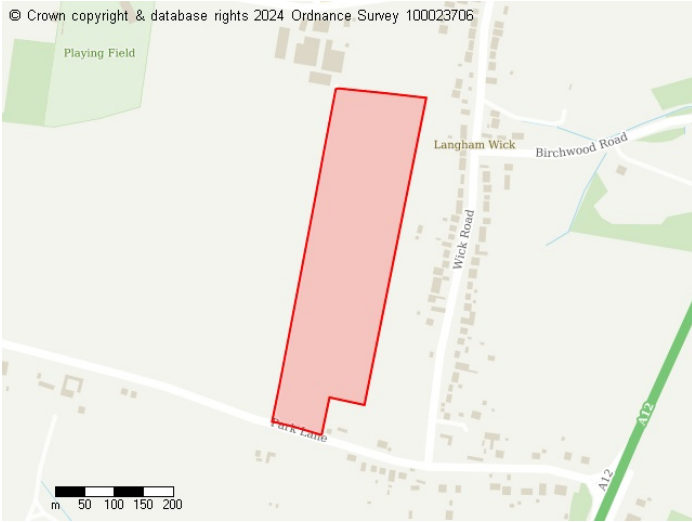
Site address

LAND ON THE NORTH WEST SIDE OF COLNE BANK AVENUE,
COLCHESTER, ESSEX CO3 3LE

Site area (hectares)

16.54850000000001 ha

Site ID: 10250



Site details

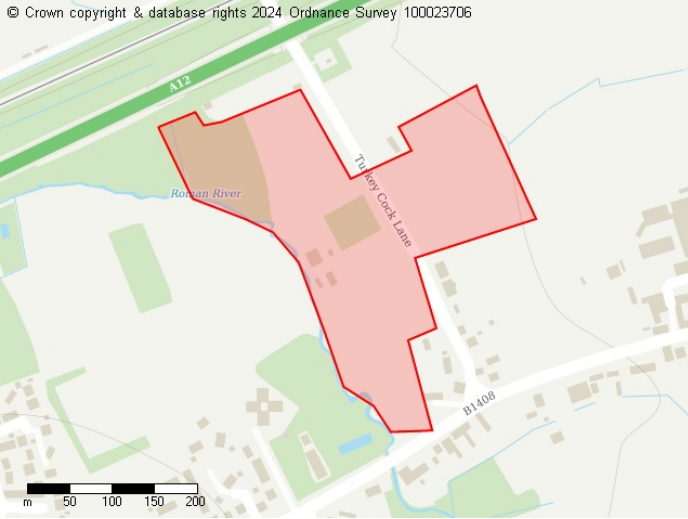
Site address

LAND ON THE NORTH SIDE OF PARK LANE, LANGHAM, COLCHESTER, ESSEX CO4 5NJ

Site area (hectares)

8.135699999999999 ha

Site ID: 10251



Site details

Site address

Stanway Nurseries, Turkey Cock Lane, Stanway, Colchester, CO3 8NA

Site area (hectares)

7.4512 ha

Site ID: 10253



Site details

Site address

Ship Inn Field Tiptree

Site area (hectares)

3.3010999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10254

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Site details

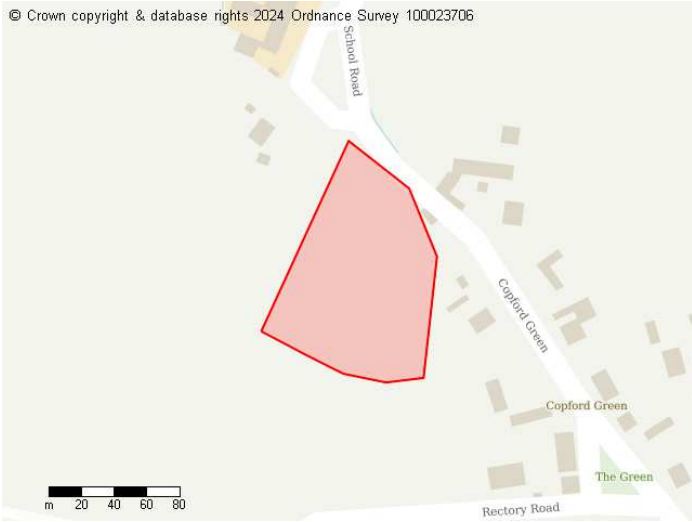
Site address

Apex Lodge, Great Tey Road, Little Tey, Colchester, CO6 1HZ

Site area (hectares)

1.1303000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10255



Site details

Site address

Green Farm House Copford Green Copford

Site area (hectares)

1.0007999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10256



Site details

Site address

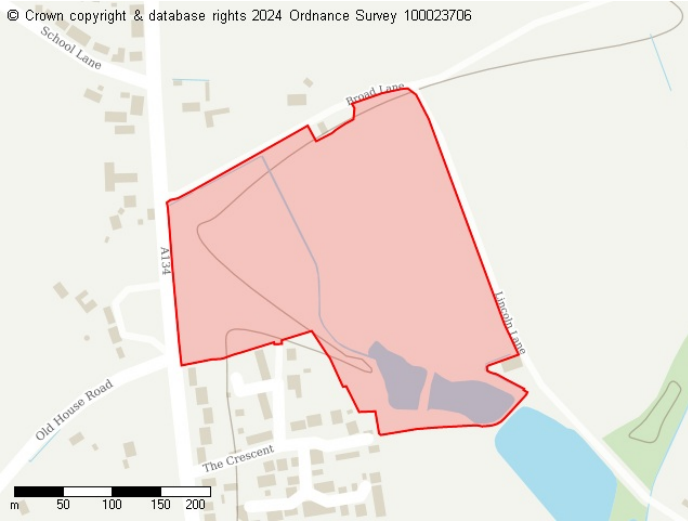
Buildings Farm, St Johns Road, Colchester, CO40JQ

Site area (hectares)

38.889000000000003 ha

Site ID: 10257

© Crown copyright & database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 100023706



Site details

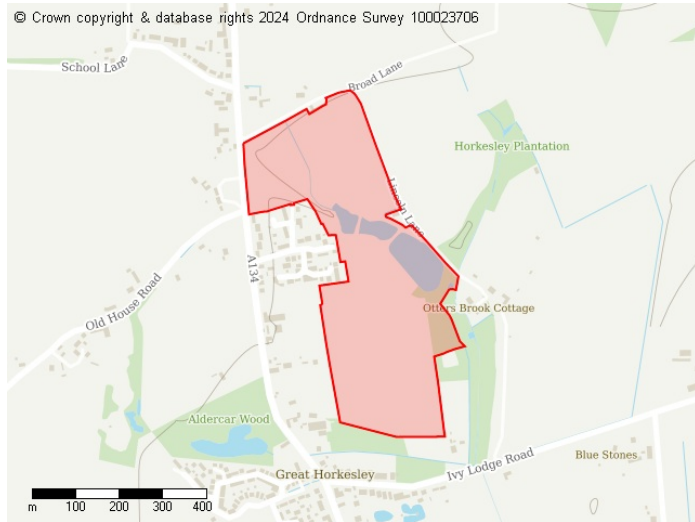
Site address

Woodlands Farm, Land west of The Causeway, Great Horkesley, Essex, CO6 4HL

Site area (hectares)

8.035899999999998 ha

Site ID: 10258



Site details

Site address

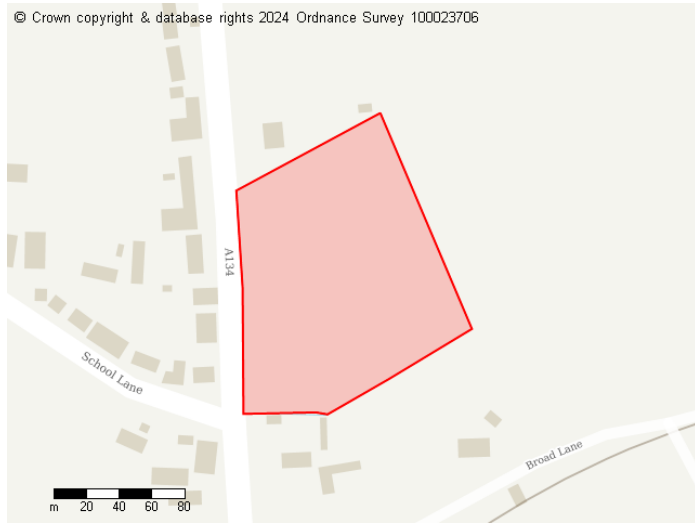
Black Brook Farm The Causeway Great Horkeley Essex CO6 4HF

Site area (hectares)

19.4983 ha

Site ID: 10259

© Crown copyright & database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 100023706



Site details

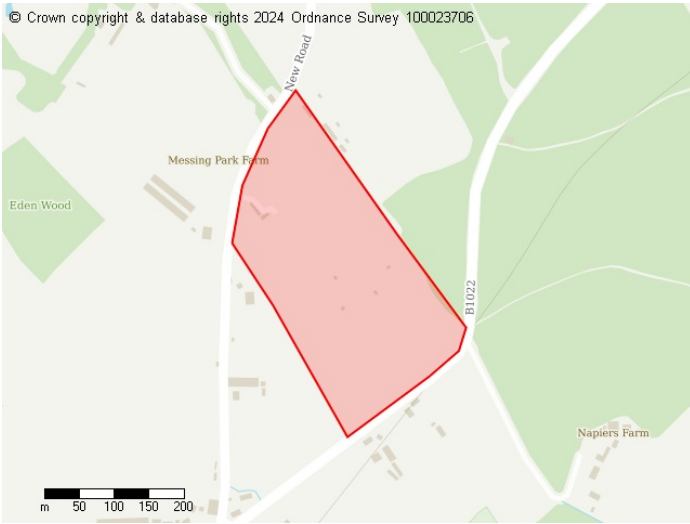
Site address

Land north of Woodlands The Causeway Great Horkesley

Site area (hectares)

1.7968999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10260



Site details

Site address

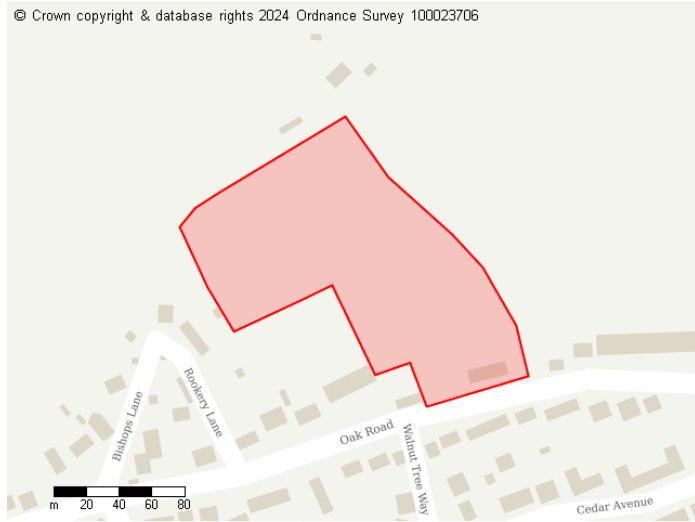
Elms Farm House, Messing Road, Tiptree, Colchester, CO5 0ES

Site area (hectares)

8.235699999999996 ha

Site ID: 10261

© Crown copyright & database rights 2024 Ordnance Survey 100023706



Site details

Site address

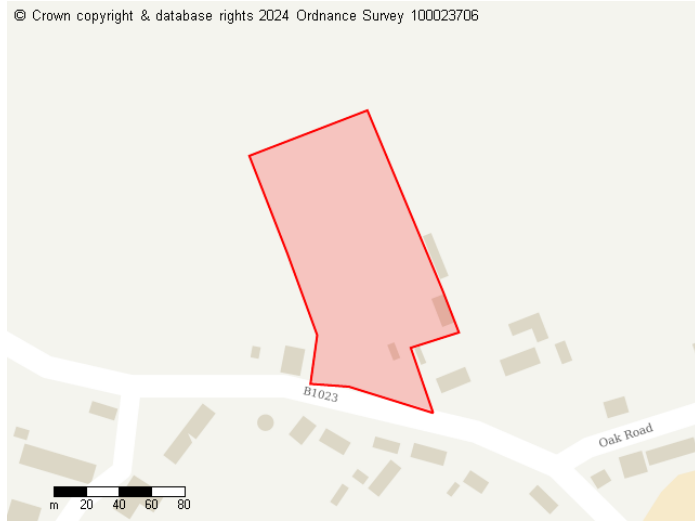
Bonnie Blue Oak, 40 Oak Road, Tiptree, Colchester, CO5 0NF

Site area (hectares)

1.8623000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10262

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Site details

Site address

Highlands, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree, Colchester, CO5 0LY

Site area (hectares)

1.2921 ha

Site ID: 10263

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Site details

Site address

White Cottage, Long Road East, Dedham, Colchester, CO7 6BW

Site area (hectares)

2.344800000000002 ha

Site ID: 10264



Site details

Site address

Land south of Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green

Site area (hectares)

9.3180999999999994 ha

Site ID: 10265



Site details

Site address

Land at Moat Road, Fordham

Site area (hectares)

1.2759 ha

Site ID: 10266



Site details

Site address

42 Malting Green Road, Layer-de-la-Haye, Colchester, CO2 0JJ

Site area (hectares)

1.4059999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10267



Site details

Site address

Tey Gardens, Church Lane, Little Tey, Colchester, CO6 1HX

Site area (hectares)

5.3045 ha

Site ID: 10291

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Site details

Site address

Land opposite Wick Road, Langham, Colchester, CO4 5NJ

Site area (hectares)

0.7882000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10293



Site details

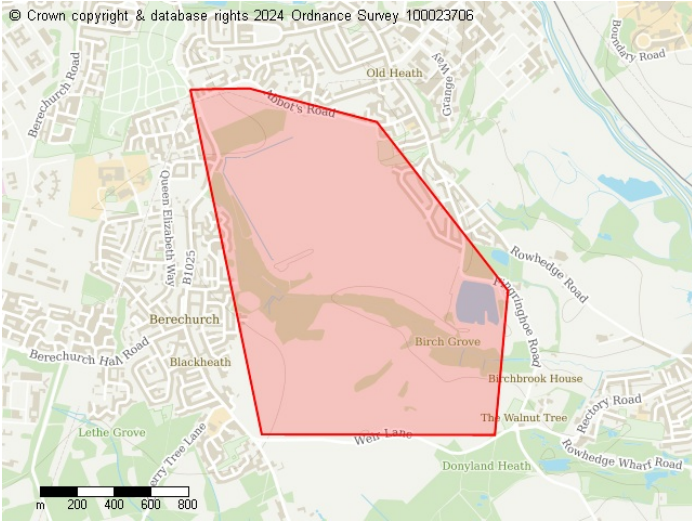
Site address

The Nurseries West End Road Tiptree

Site area (hectares)

1.7809999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10294



Site details

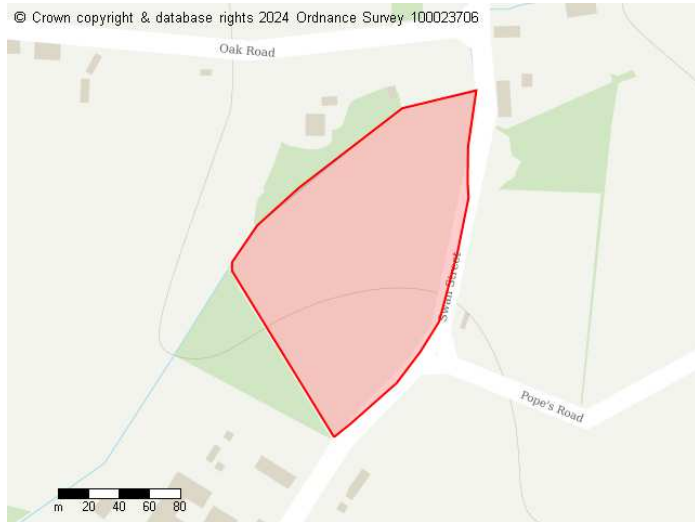
Site address

Middlewick Ranges

Site area (hectares)

224.87520000000001 ha

Site ID: 10295



Site details

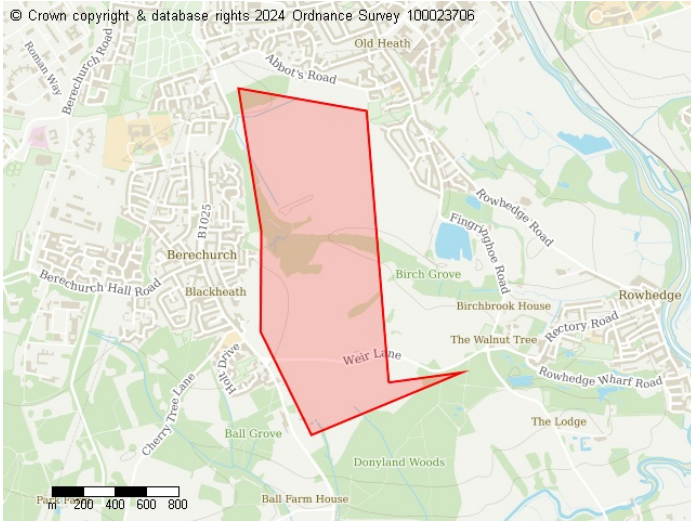
Site address

Swan Street, Chappel

Site area (hectares)

1.9939 ha

Site ID: 10387



Site details

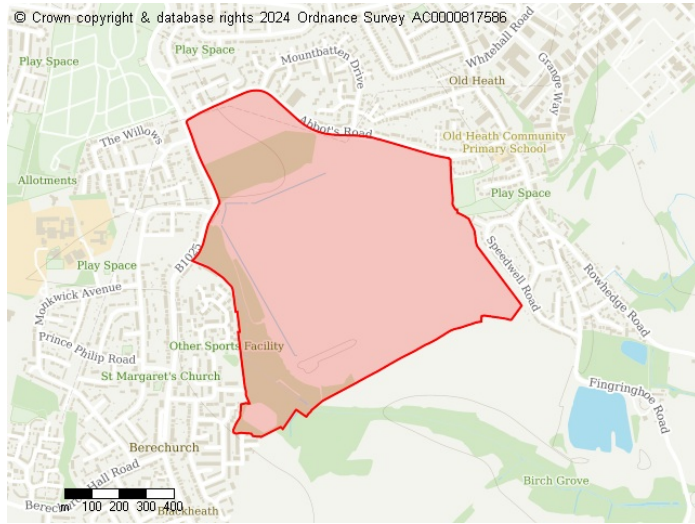
Site address

Middlewick Ranges including Birch Brook and beyond

Site area (hectares)

145.65520000000001 ha

Site ID: 10422



Site details

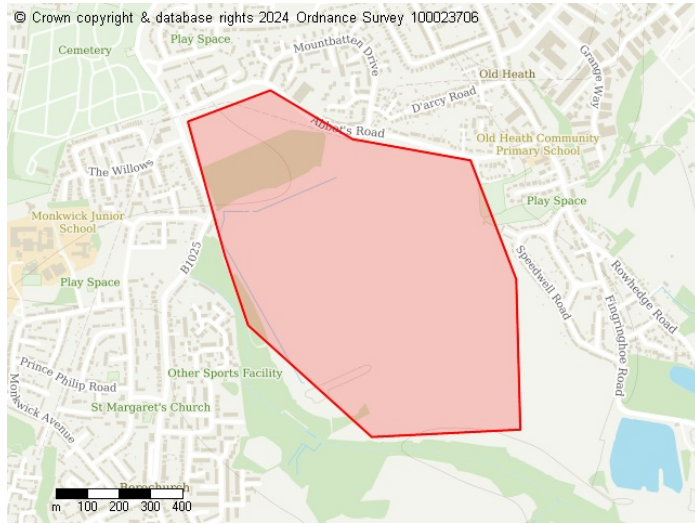
Site address

Abbots Road, Colchester, CO2 8BG

Site area (hectares)

84.34690000000005 ha

Site ID: 10434



Site details

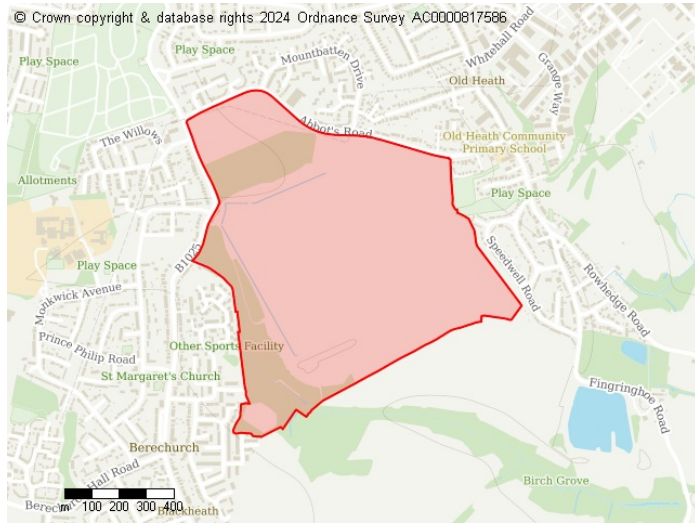
Site address

Middlewick Ranges

Site area (hectares)

78.6721 ha

Site ID: 10461



Site details

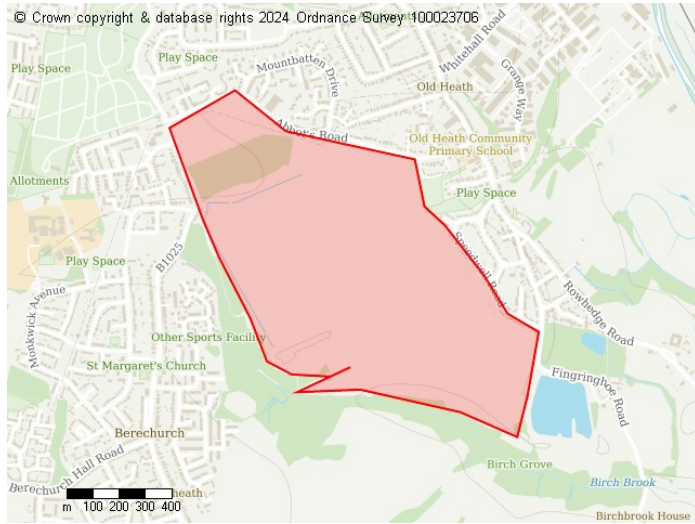
Site address

Middlewick Ranges Colchester,

Site area (hectares)

84.34690000000005 ha

Site ID: 10475



Site details

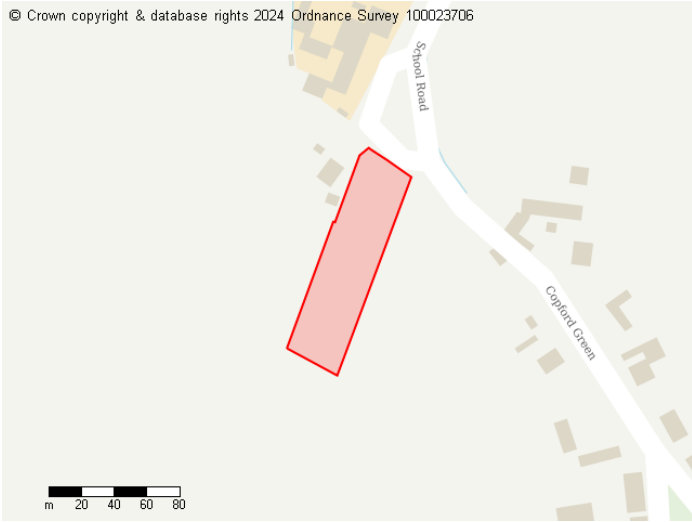
Site address

Land off Abbots Road CO2 8BG

Site area (hectares)

97.83490000000005 ha

Site ID: 10479



Site details

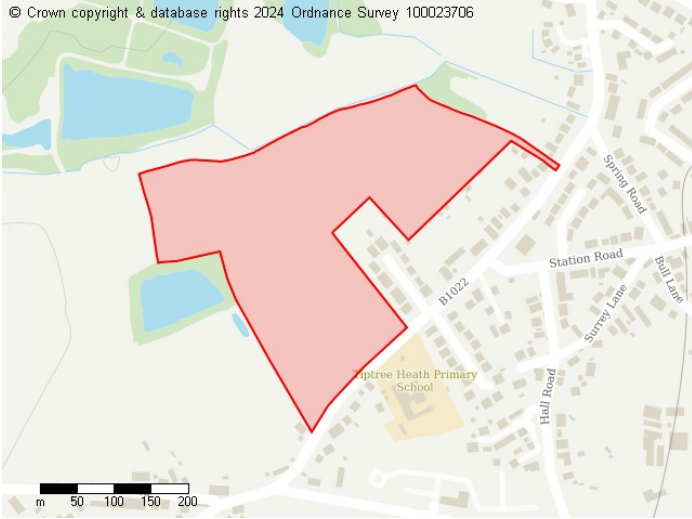
Site address

Folkard Gardens, Copford Green, Copford, Colchester, CO6 1DA

Site area (hectares)

0.45290000000000002 ha

Site ID: 10486



Site details

Site address

Land north of Maldon Road, Tiptree

Site area (hectares)

10.141 ha

Site ID: 10488



Site details

Site address

Bullbanks Farm, Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green, Colchester, CO6 3PT

Site area (hectares)

2.0853000000000002 ha

Site ID: 10492

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Site details

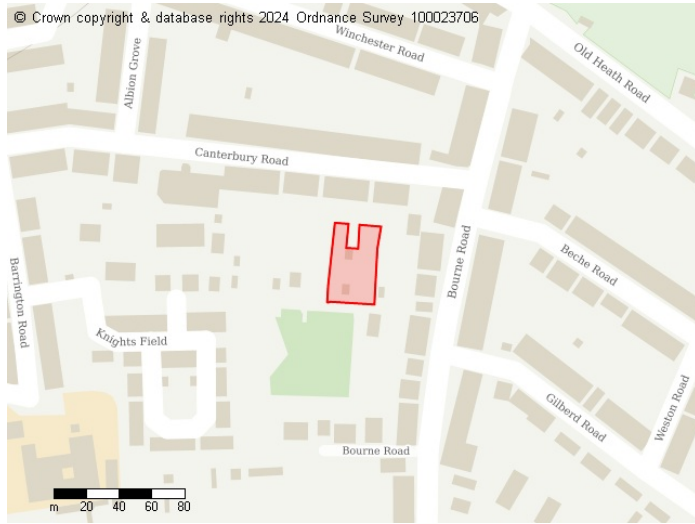
Site address

Geoffrey s Rectory Road, Copford, Colchester, CO6 1DJ

Site area (hectares)

10.300599999999999 ha

Site ID: 10507



Site details

Site address

52b Bourne Road, Colchester, CO2 7LT

Site area (hectares)

0.1255 ha

Site ID: 10508



Site details

Site address

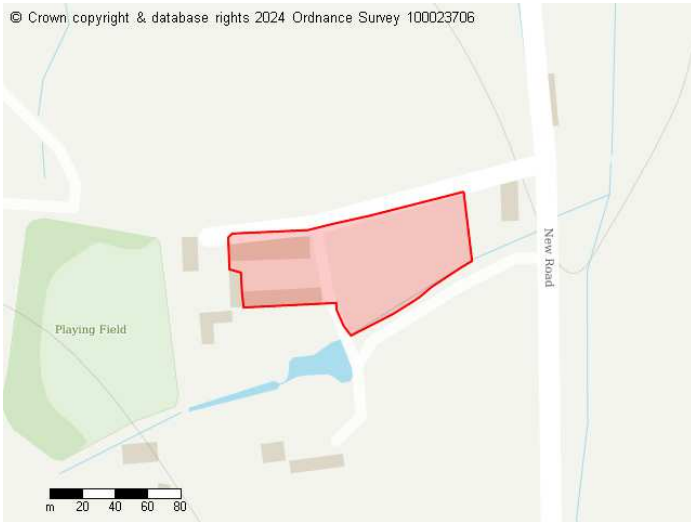
Land East of Plummers Road, Fordham, Colchester

Site area (hectares)

0.8851 ha

Site ID: 10509

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Site details

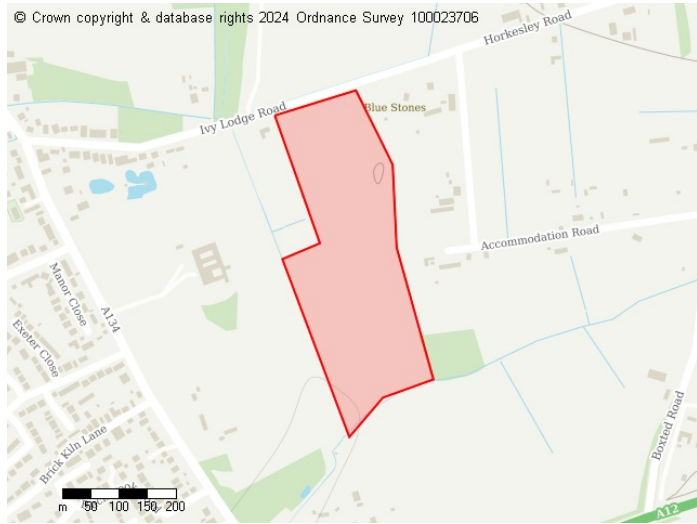
Site address

Land at Old Bourchiers Hall, New Road, Aldham, Colchester, CO6 3QU

Site area (hectares)

0.7581 ha

Site ID: 10510



Site details

Site address

Land to the East of Nayland Road, Great Horkesley

Site area (hectares)

9.150999999999998 ha

Site ID: 10511



Site details

Site address

International Farm Camp, Hall Road, Tiptree, Colchester, CO5 0QS

Site area (hectares)

2.534800000000002 ha

Site ID: 10513

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Site details

Site address

Lower Green Wakes Colne, Colchester, CO6 2BA

Site area (hectares)

2.0918999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10514

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Site details

Site address

Land west and east of North Lane, Marks Tey

Site area (hectares)

11.73440000000001 ha

Site ID: 10515



Site details

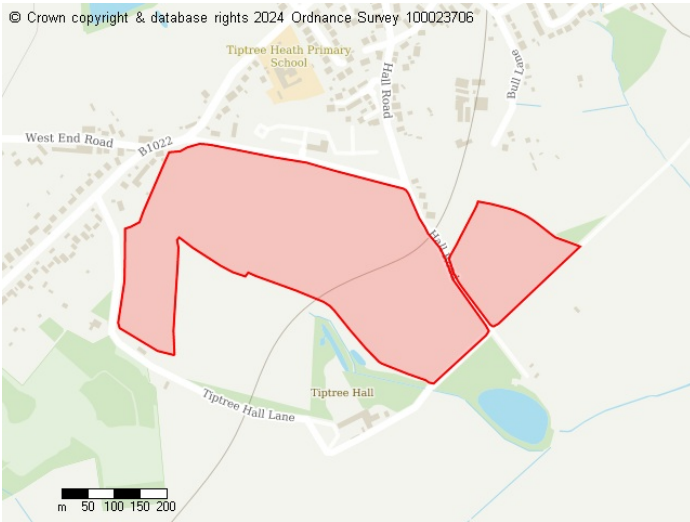
Site address

Land east of Layer Road, Colchester, Essex, CO2 0HS

Site area (hectares)

2.1337000000000002 ha

Site ID: 10520



Site details

Site address

Land south west of Tiptree (south of Hall Road and east of Hall Road), Tiptree

Site area (hectares)

19.4575 ha

Site ID: 10522

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Site details

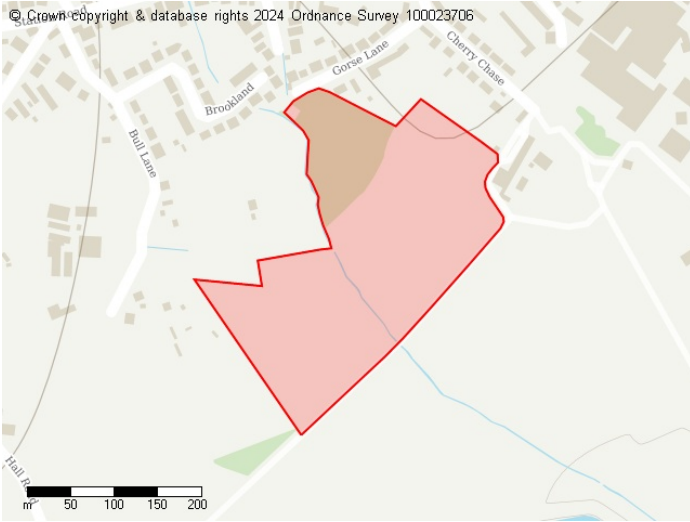
Site address

Land adjacent 57 Rowhedge Road, Colchester, CO2 8EL

Site area (hectares)

0.7540999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10523



Site details

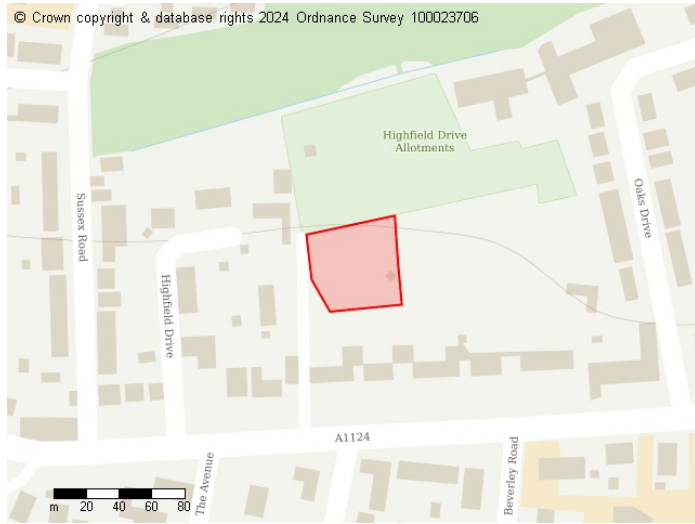
Site address

Land to rear of Cherry Chase, Tiptree

Site area (hectares)

6.5891999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10525



Site details

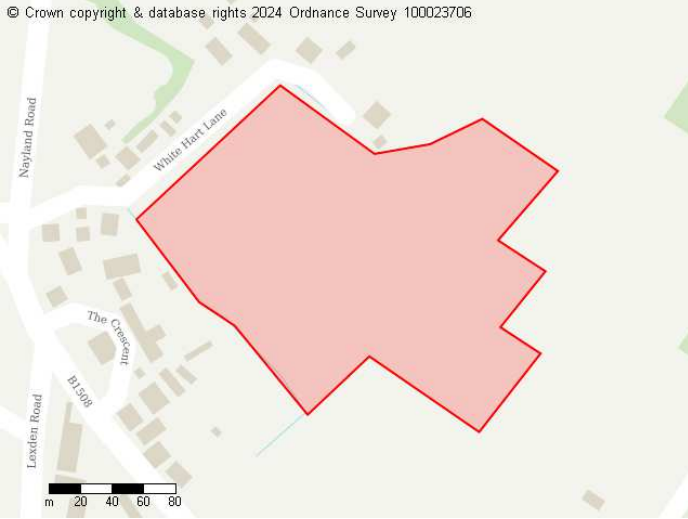
Site address

47 Lexden Road, Colchester, CO3 3PY

Site area (hectares)

0.26679999999999998 ha

Site ID: 10526



Site details

Site address

Land between White Hart Lane & Manor Road, West Bergholt

Site area (hectares)

3.3529 ha

Site ID: 10527

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Site details

Site address

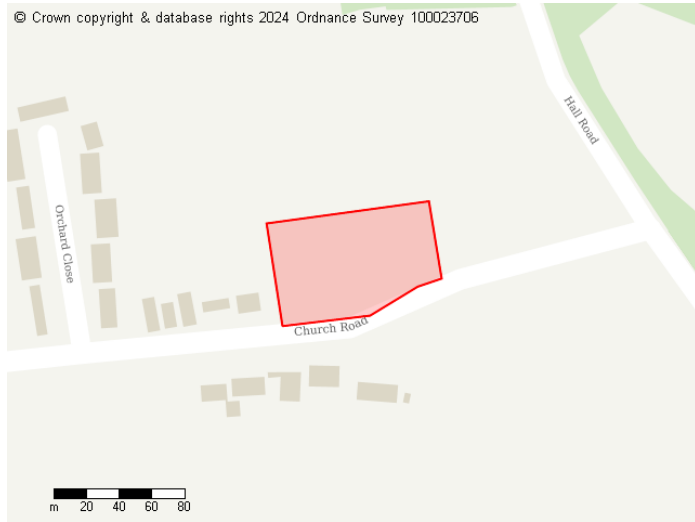
Land south of Factory Hill, Tiptree

Site area (hectares)

4.048700000000002 ha

Site ID: 10531

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Site details

Site address

Land north of Church Road, Copford Green.

Site area (hectares)

0.5990999999999997 ha

Site ID: 10532

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Site details

Site address

Land east of Factory Hill and south of Honey Lane, Tiptree

Site area (hectares)

1.7896000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10533

No site plotted.

Site details

Site address

Milestone Farm, Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green, Colchester, CO6 3PX

Site area (hectares)

Site ID: 10534



Site details

Site address

Land East of Factory Hill, Tiptree

Site area (hectares)

19.893000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10535

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Site details

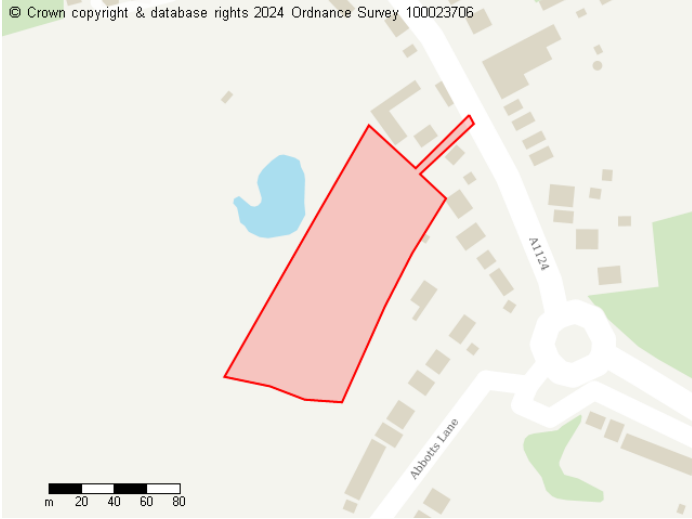
Site address

Land off New Road, Aldham

Site area (hectares)

0.29659999999999997 ha

Site ID: 10536



Site details

Site address

Ellor Land southwest of Halstead Road Eight Ash Green CO6

Site area (hectares)

1.0595000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10538



Site details

Site address

Land south of Church Road and east of Birch Road, Copford Green.

Site area (hectares)

1.1969000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10539

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Site details

Site address

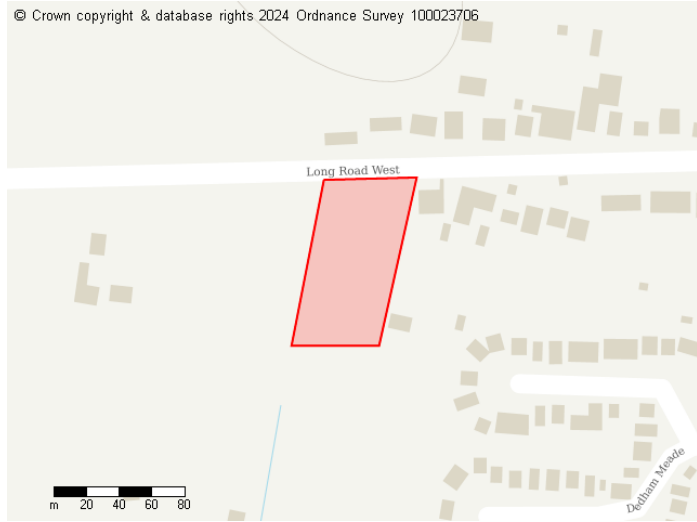
Friars Farm Kennels & Cattery, Halstead Road, Fordham, Colchester, CO6 3LW

Site area (hectares)

0.152799999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10547

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Site details

Site address

Land east of Duck Lane and south of Long Road West, Dedham

Site area (hectares)

0.5608999999999995 ha

Site ID: 10548



Site details

Site address

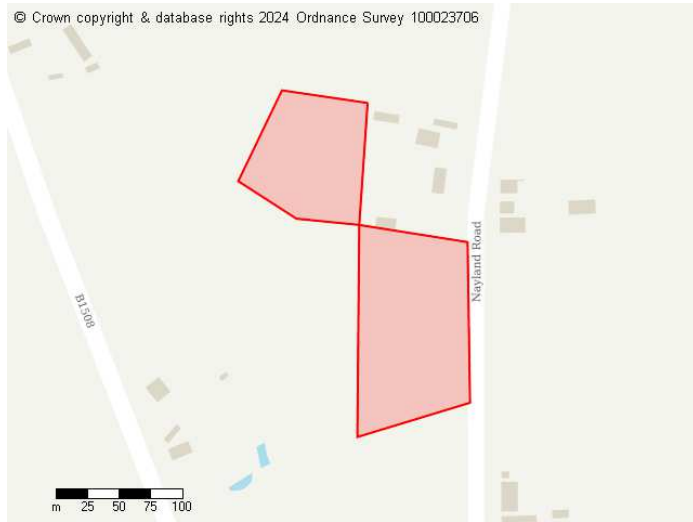
Land east of Hall Road, Copford

Site area (hectares)

2.2113999999999998 ha

Site ID: 10566

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Site details

Site address

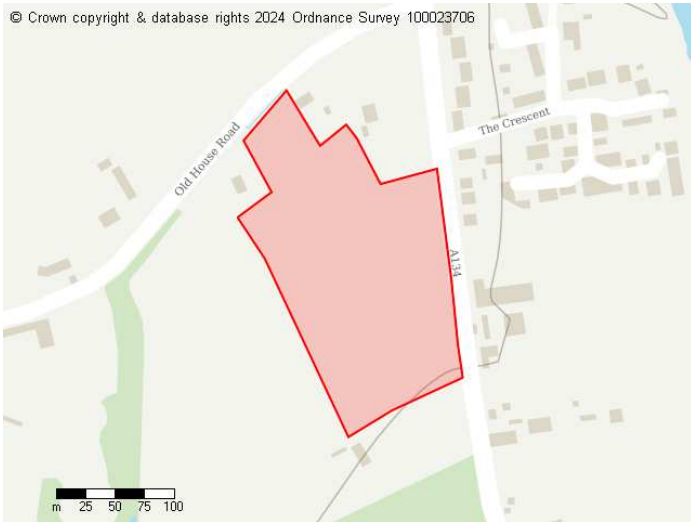
Oakview Landscapes Ltd, Pattens Yard, Nayland Road, West Bergholt, Colchester, CO6 3DQ

Site area (hectares)

2.0802999999999998 ha

Site ID: 10567

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Site details

Site address

Land west of The Causeway, Great Horkesley, Colchester, CO6 4EQ

Site area (hectares)

3.139600000000002 ha

Site ID: 10569



Site details

Site address

Land East of Brook Road, Great Tey

Site area (hectares)

2.1132 ha

Site ID: 10571



Site details

Site address

Bumblebee Farm, Colchester Road, Layer Breton, Colchester, CO2 0PT

Site area (hectares)

1.1746000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10572



Site details

Site address

Friars Farm Cottage, Ponders Road, Fordham, Colchester, CO6 3LN

Site area (hectares)

0.075700000000000003 ha

Site ID: 10573

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Site details

Site address

Friars Farm Kennels & Cattery, Halstead Road, Fordham, Colchester, CO6 3LW

Site area (hectares)

0.028299999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10574



Site details

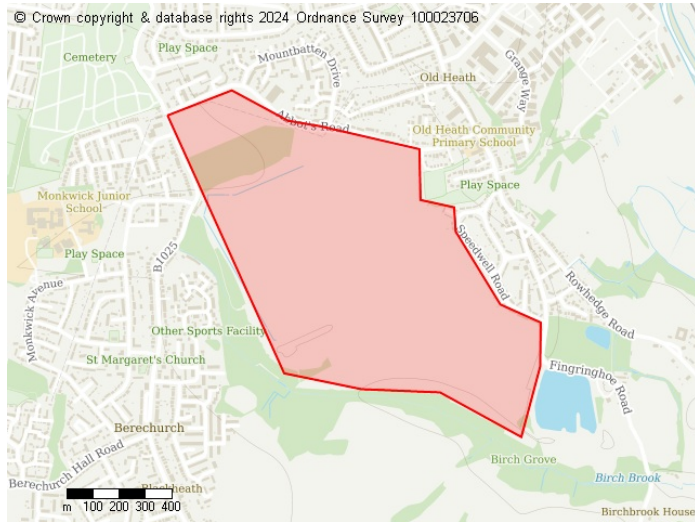
Site address

Old House, Old House Road, Great Horkesley, Colchester, CO6 4EQ

Site area (hectares)

1.6229 ha

Site ID: 10575



Site details

Site address

Middlewick Ranges, Colchester, CO2 8BG

Site area (hectares)

95.52639999999995 ha

Site ID: 10579

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Site details

Site address

V W Bullibarn, Friars Farm Barn, Halstead Road, Fordham, Colchester, CO6 3LW

Site area (hectares)

0.1781000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10583



Site details

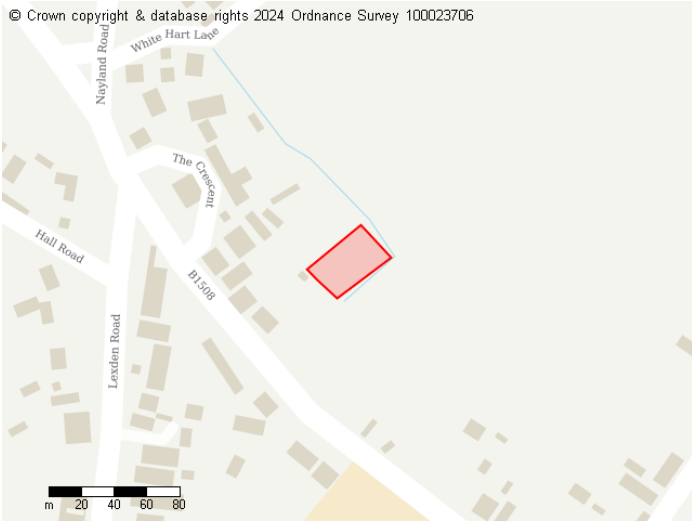
Site address

Land on the corner of Long Road West and The Heath, Dedham Heath

Site area (hectares)

0.49959999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10584



Site details

Site address

12 Colchester Road, West Bergholt, Colchester, CO6 3JG

Site area (hectares)

0.1104 ha

Site ID: 10587

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Site details

Site address

Land to the north of Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green

Site area (hectares)

1.0518000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10589

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Site details

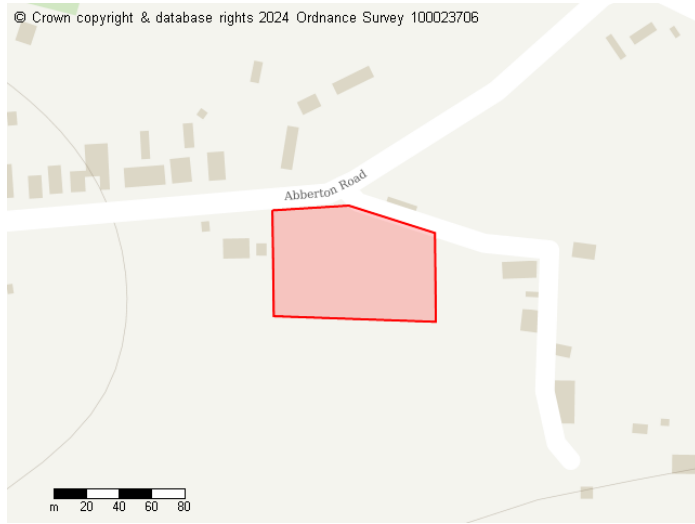
Site address

Land off Abberton Road, Layer-de-la-Haye, Colchester

Site area (hectares)

0.4440999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10591



Site details

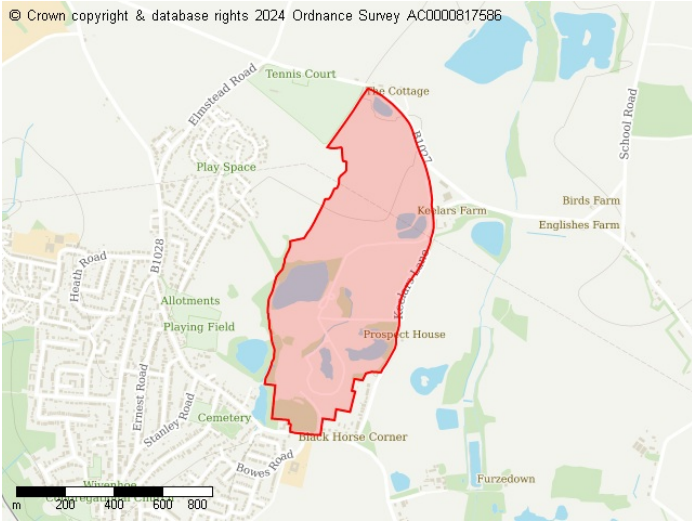
Site address

Land East of Little Garlands, Abberton Road, Layer-de-la-Haye, Colchester, CO2 0JY

Site area (hectares)

0.6351999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10594



Site details

Site address

Land west of Keelars Lane, Alresford Road, Wivenhoe, Essex, CO7 9JU

Site area (hectares)

56.91120000000001 ha

Site ID: 10600



Site details

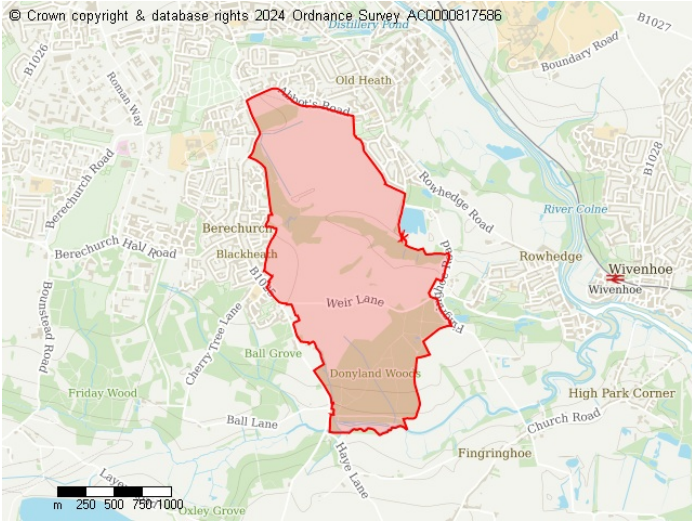
Site address

Picketts, Church Road, Fingringhoe, Colchester, CO5 7BL

Site area (hectares)

1.0996999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10601



Site details

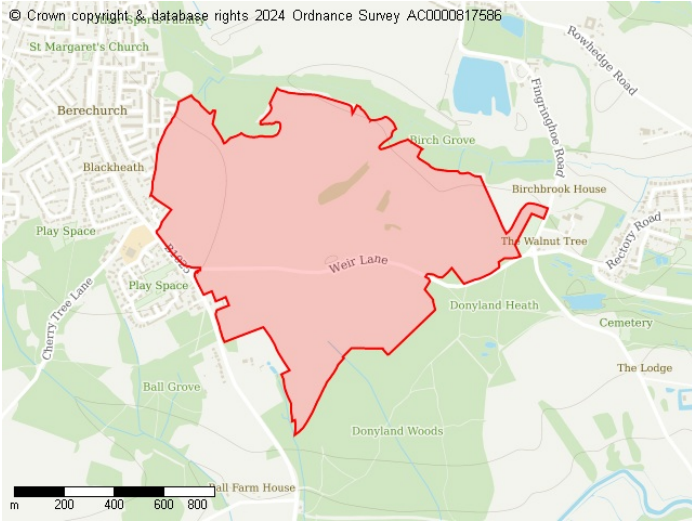
Site address

Middlewick Ranges

Site area (hectares)

316.241199999999999 ha

Site ID: 10606



Site details

Site address

Weir Lane Grasslands (between Middlewick/Birch Brook LoWS and Roman River SSSI)

Site area (hectares)

108.0835 ha

Site ID: 10608



Site details

Site address

Timberlands, Vernons Road, Chappel, Colchester, CO6 2DL

Site area (hectares)

0.017299999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10610



Site details

Site address

Middlewick Ranges, Mersea Road and Abbots Road Colchester

Site area (hectares)

86.20380000000001 ha

Site ID: 10611



Site details

Site address

Land East of School Road, Copford

Site area (hectares)

2.1701000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10612

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Site details

Site address

Land South of Copford Village Hall, Copford

Site area (hectares)

0.5074999999999995 ha

Site ID: 10615



Site details

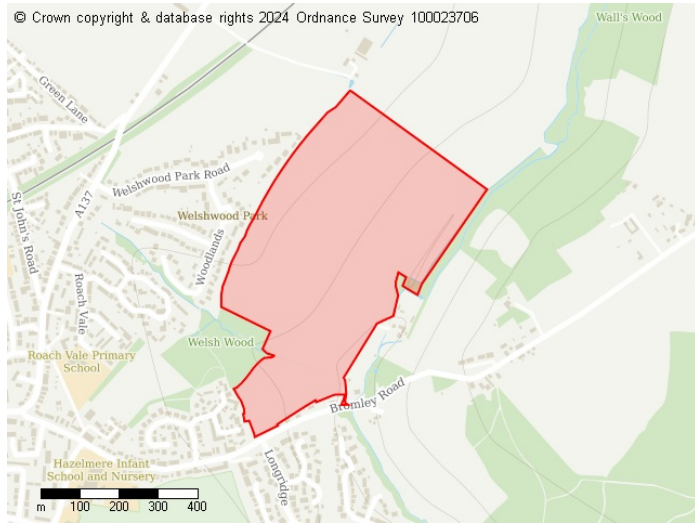
Site address

129 Colchester Road, West Bergholt, Colchester, CO6 3JX

Site area (hectares)

1.8849 ha

Site ID: 10616



Site details

Site address

Land north of Bromley Road, Colchester

Site area (hectares)

29.8734 ha

Site ID: 10617



Site details

Site address

Land South of Lakelands

Site area (hectares)

4.453999999999997 ha

Site ID: 10618

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Site details

Site address

View Park, Abberton Road, Fingringhoe, Colchester, CO5 7AW

Site area (hectares)

1.9906999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10621



Site details

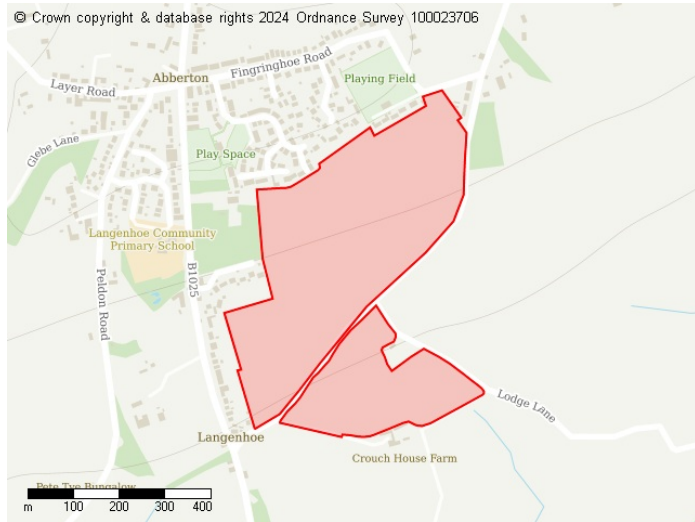
Site address

Land at St Ives Road, Peldon

Site area (hectares)

1.6973 ha

Site ID: 10622



Site details

Site address

Land East of Mersea Road, Langenhoe, Essex

Site area (hectares)

24.2881 ha

Site ID: 10623



Site details

Site address

Land north and south of Dobbies Lane, Marks Tey

Site area (hectares)

6.7077 ha

Site ID: 10627



Site details

Site address

Land to the east of Dawes Lane, West Mersea

Site area (hectares)

14.0266 ha

Site ID: 10628

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Site details

Site address

St. Marys Lower School, 247 London Road, Stanway, Colchester, CO3 8LT

Site area (hectares)

3.7732999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10629



Site details

Site address

Place Farm, Rowhedge Road, Colchester, CO2 8DD

Site area (hectares)

5.9993999999999996 ha

Site ID: 10632



Site details

Site address

Land south of Tower Business Park, Kelvedon Road, Tiptree, CO5 0LX

Site area (hectares)

0.6026000000000002 ha

Site ID: 10634



Site details

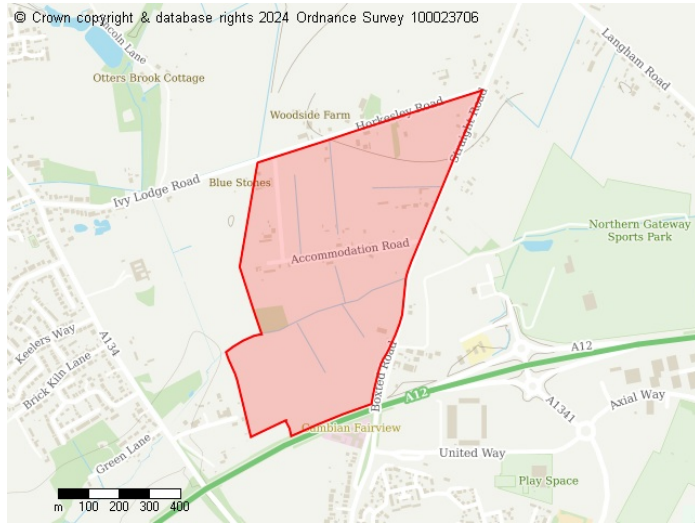
Site address

Land at Kelvedon Road, Messing

Site area (hectares)

2.7279 ha

Site ID: 10635



Site details

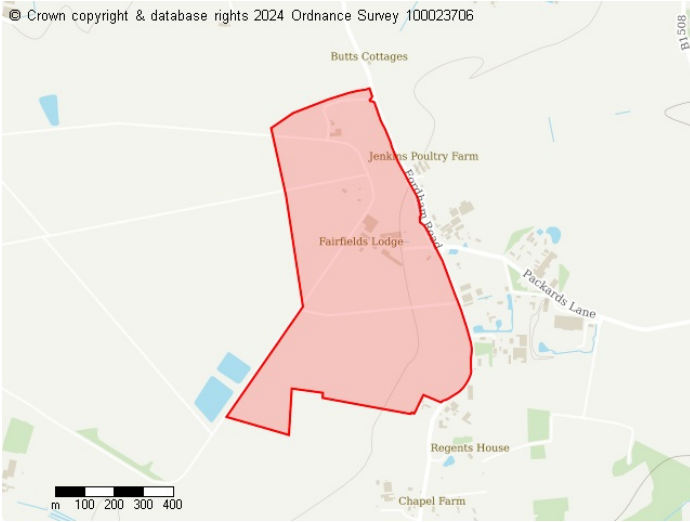
Site address

Land at and around Accommodation Road, Boxted

Site area (hectares)

50.25909999999997 ha

Site ID: 10638



Site details

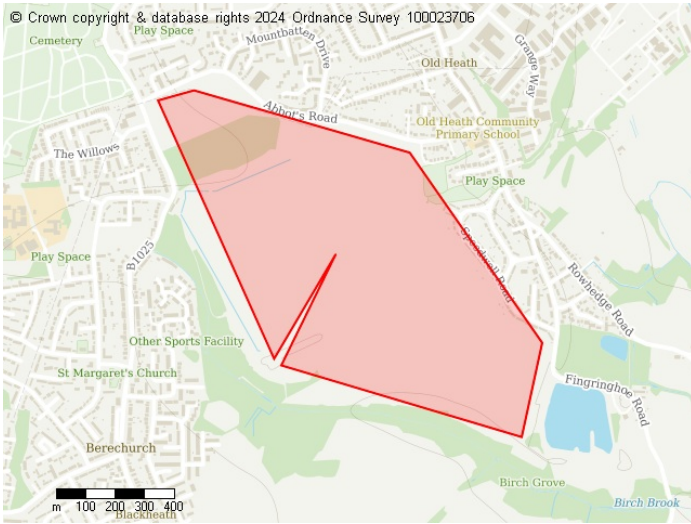
Site address

Fairfields Farm Wormingford Airfield, Fordham Road, Wormingford, Colchester CO6 3AQ

Site area (hectares)

54.029200000000003 ha

Site ID: 10639



Site details

Site address

middlewick ranges CO2 8BG

Site area (hectares)

82.29739999999996 ha

Site ID: 10640



Site details

Site address

Land to the west of Rowhedge

Site area (hectares)

2.655400000000002 ha

Site ID: 10647



Site details

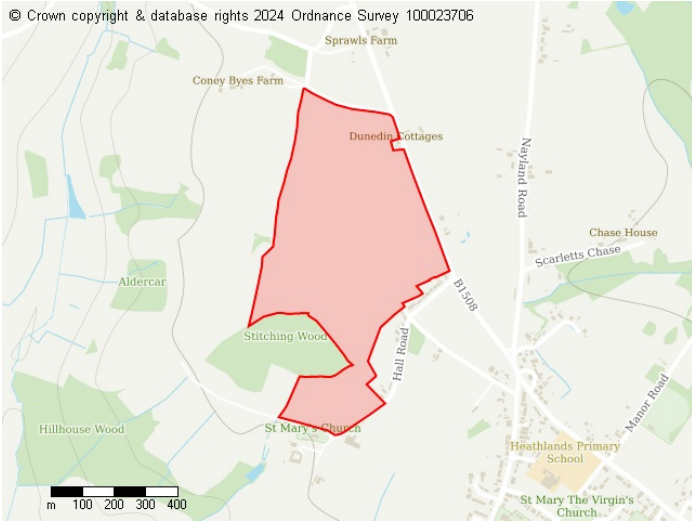
Site address

Wakes Hall Business Centre, Colchester Road, Wakes Colne, Colchester, Essex, CO6 2DY

Site area (hectares)

0.8606000000000003 ha

Site ID: 10648



Site details

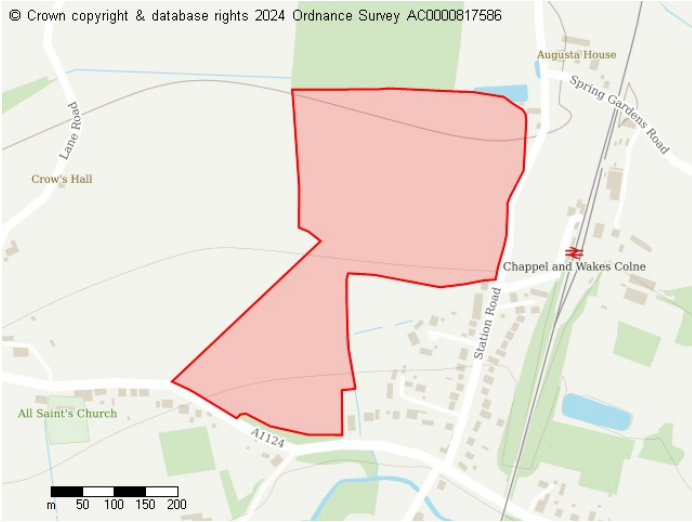
Site address

Hall Road, West Bergholt

Site area (hectares)

35.80870000000002 ha

Site ID: 10649



Site details

Site address

Land west of Station Road, Wakes Colne and Chappel

Site area (hectares)

15.0154 ha

Site ID: 10652

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Site details

Site address

Land north of the A1124, Wakes Colne and Chappel

Site area (hectares)

3.0139999999999998 ha

Site ID: 10656



Site details

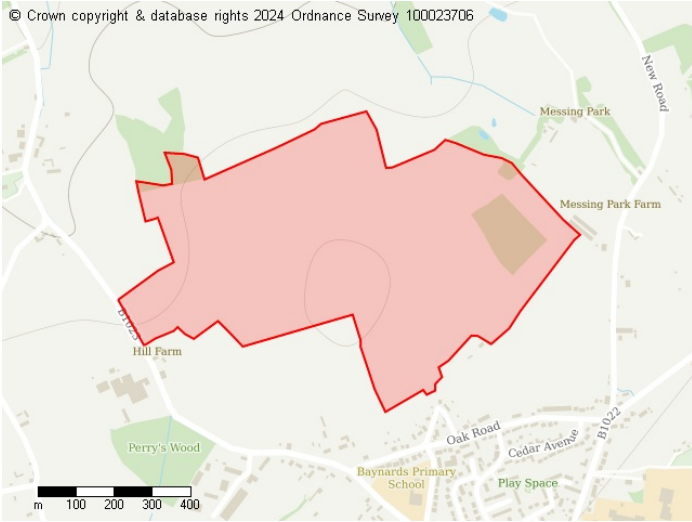
Site address

Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green, C06 3QA

Site area (hectares)

7.0092999999999996 ha

Site ID: 10657



Site details

Site address

Land to the north of Tiptree

Site area (hectares)

51.003300000000003 ha

Site ID: 10660

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Site details

Site address

Land at Hilly Fields, Colchester

Site area (hectares)

0.7308999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10663



Site details

Site address

Land off Newpots Lane, Peldon

Site area (hectares)

0.2586 ha

Site ID: 10664



Site details

Site address

Land north of Park Lane, Langham, Colchester CO4 5PA

Site area (hectares)

40.06320000000002 ha

Site ID: 10665



Site details

Site address

Land east of Wick Road and west of A12, Langham, CO4 5QG

Site area (hectares)

9.9111999999999991 ha

Site ID: 10666



Site details

Site address

Land to south of School Road, Langham

Site area (hectares)

13.404199999999999 ha

Site ID: 10671



Site details

Site address

Land south of the A12 and north of the proposed new route of the A12, to the north of Wishingwell Farm, Marks Tey

Site area (hectares)

15.9581 ha

Site ID: 10673



Site details

Site address

Land adjacent Mersea Road, Peldon

Site area (hectares)

5.7709000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10675



Site details

Site address

East Road, East Mersea

Site area (hectares)

5.532199999999996 ha

Site ID: 10676



Site details

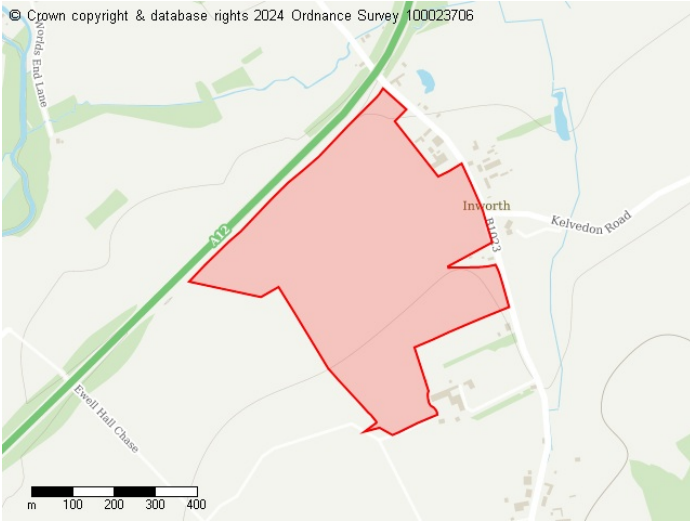
Site address

Land North of Botted Straight Road, Botted Cross

Site area (hectares)

6.123999999999997 ha

Site ID: 10677



Site details

Site address

Land South of the A12, Kelvedon CO5 9SH

Site area (hectares)

28.357900000000001 ha

Site ID: 10679

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Site details

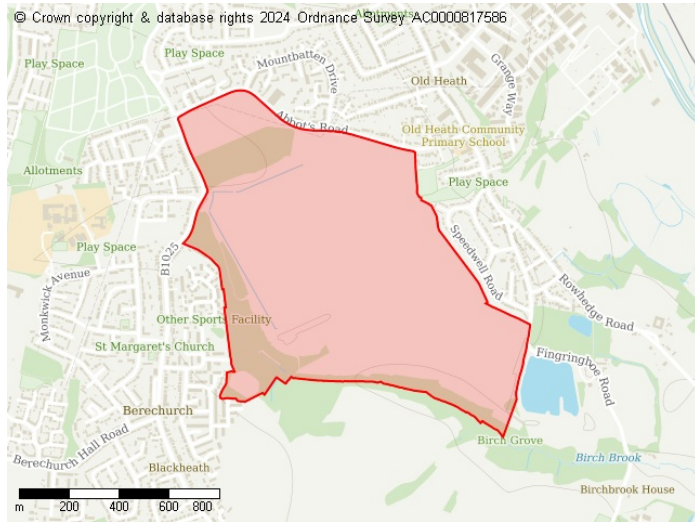
Site address

Land north of the A12, Kelvedon CO5 9SG

Site area (hectares)

11.6602 ha

Site ID: 10680



Site details

Site address

Middlewick Ranges Colchester

Site area (hectares)

111.1267 ha

Site ID: 10682



Site details

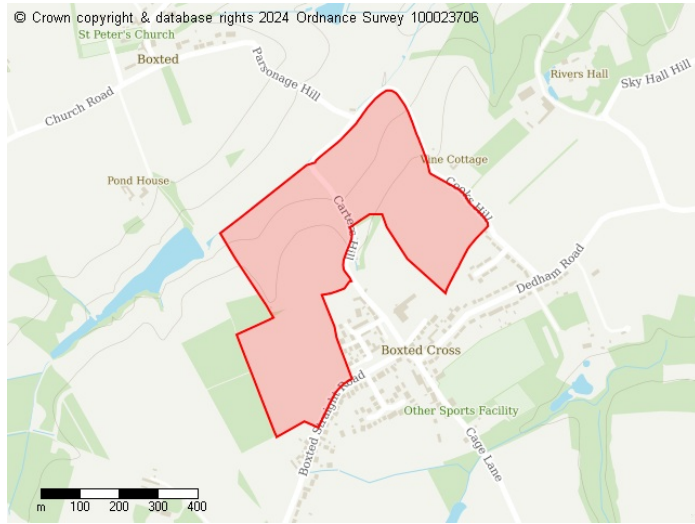
Site address

Land to the east of Cross Lane, West Mersea, Essex

Site area (hectares)

9.486700000000008 ha

Site ID: 10685



Site details

Site address

Land North of Boxted Straight Road / West of Cooks Hill, Boxted Cross

Site area (hectares)

24.022500000000001 ha

Site ID: 10686

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Site details

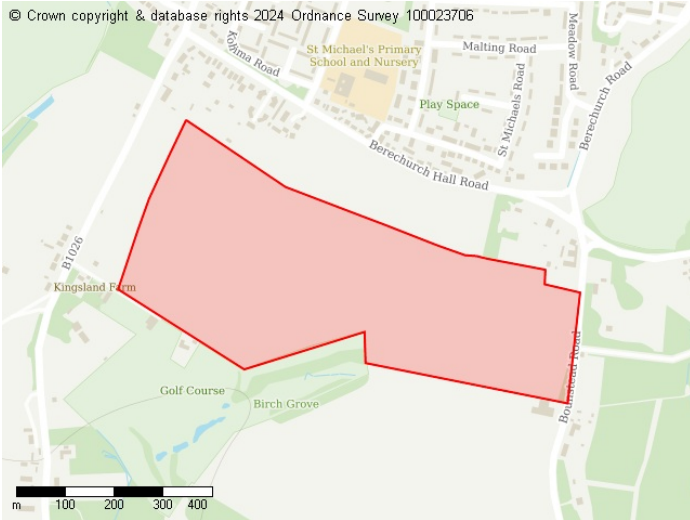
Site address

Land at Earls Colne Road, Great Tey

Site area (hectares)

5.9819000000000004 ha

Site ID: 10687



Site details

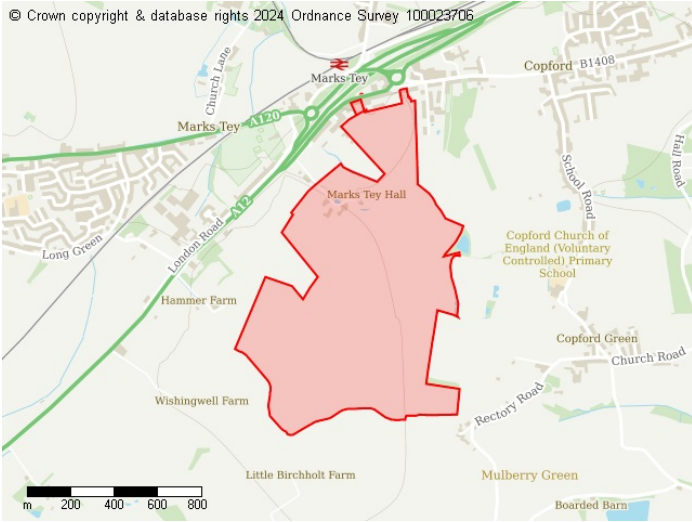
Site address

Land south of Berechurch Hall Road and west of Bounstead Road, Colchester

Site area (hectares)

27.696899999999999 ha

Site ID: 10690



Site details

Site address

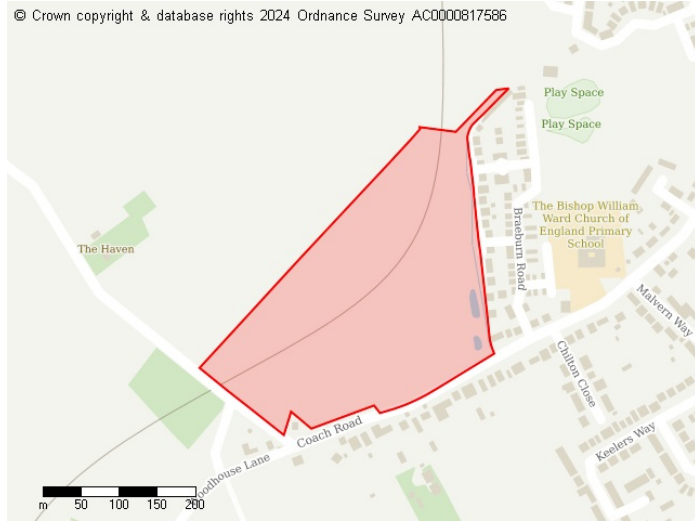
Land South of Marks Tey Village, Marks Tey

Site area (hectares)

92.52939999999995 ha

Site ID: 10691

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Site details

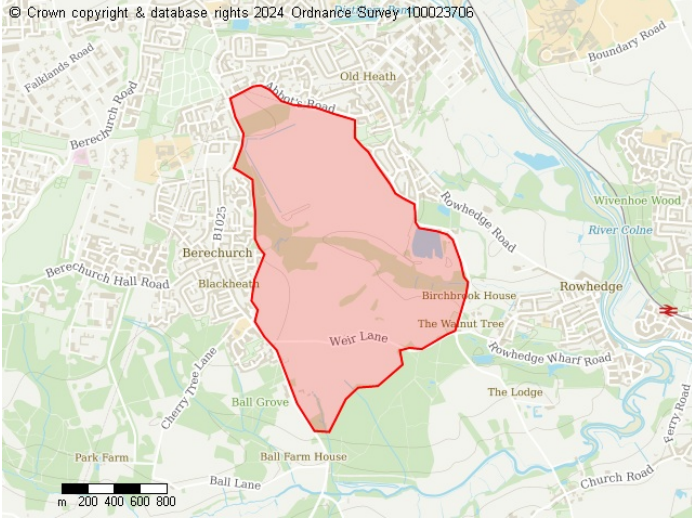
Site address

Land North of Coach Road, Great Horkesley

Site area (hectares)

8.513099999999997 ha

Site ID: 10723



Site details

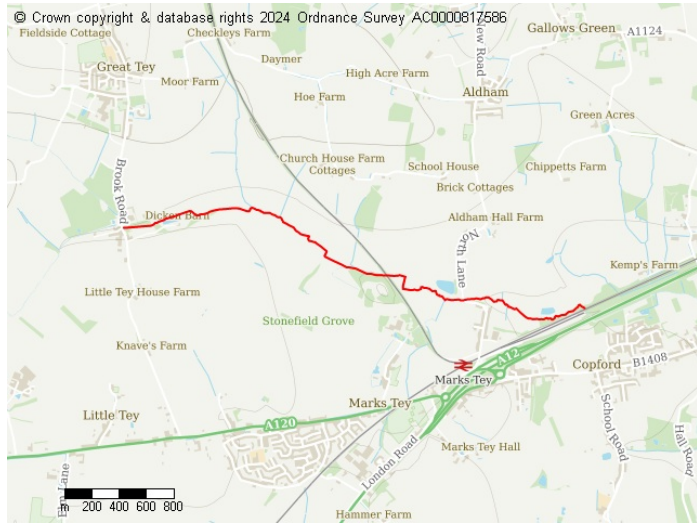
Site address

Middlewick, Birch Brook and Weir Lane Colchester

Site area (hectares)

259.39980000000003 ha

Site ID: 10743



Site details

Site address

Roman River Corridor

Site area (hectares)

Site ID: 10744



Site details

Site address

Land at St Johns Farm Cottages, West of Harwich Road, Parsons Heath
Colchester CO4 3ES

Site area (hectares)

39.22010000000002 ha

Site ID: 10745

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Site details

Site address

102 East Road, West Mersea, Colchester, CO5 8SA

Site area (hectares)

1.8895 ha

Site ID: 10746



Site details

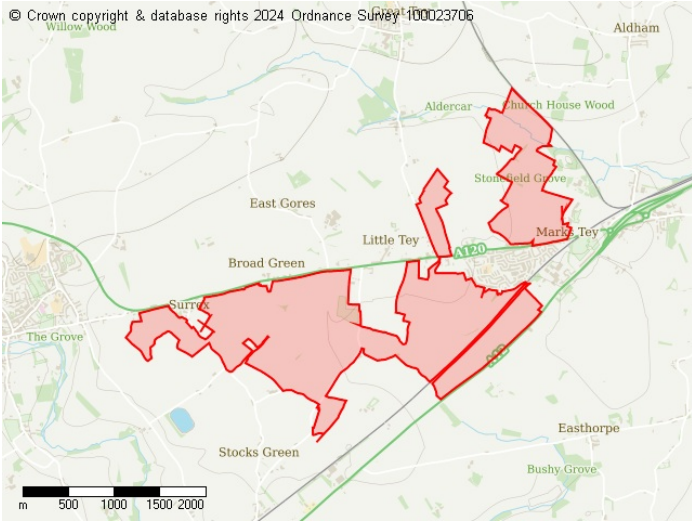
Site address

The Car Boot field London Road Marks Tey

Site area (hectares)

7.1544999999999996 ha

Site ID: 10747



Site details

Site address

Land north, south, south-west and west of Marks Tey

Site area (hectares)

453.3877 ha

Site ID: 10748

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Site details

Site address

Land off Colchester Road, West Mersea

Site area (hectares)

5.0785 ha

Site ID: 10749



Site details

Site address

Land off Colchester Road, West Bergholt

Site area (hectares)

4.0080999999999998 ha

Site ID: 10750



Site details

Site address

Land off Rowhedge Road, Colchester

Site area (hectares)

3.7145000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10751

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Site details

Site address

Land off Croquet Gardens, Wivenhoe

Site area (hectares)

15.0572 ha

Site ID: 10752

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Site details

Site address

Land west of Oxley Parker Drive, Mill Road, Colchester CO4 5XQ

Site area (hectares)

1.4919 ha

Site ID: 10755

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Site details

Site address

Land North of the Fire Station, Colchester Road, Wivenhoe, CO6 3QA

Site area (hectares)

6.9127000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10756



Site details

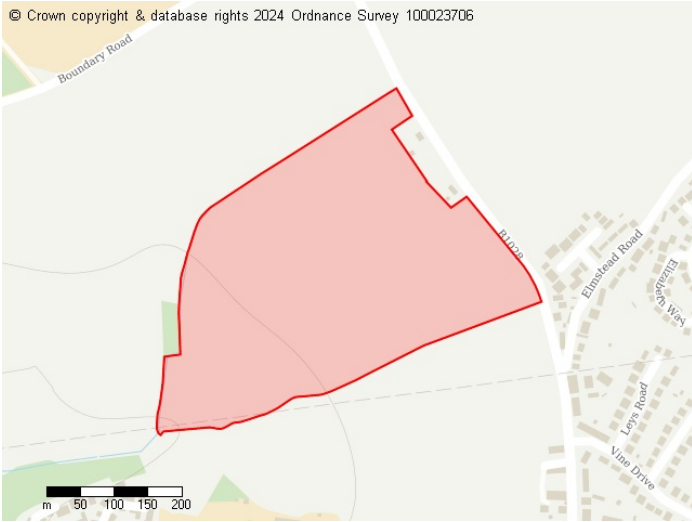
Site address

Land East of Colchester Road, Wivenhoe, CO7 9HT

Site area (hectares)

8.2960999999999991 ha

Site ID: 10757



Site details

Site address

Land West of Colchester Road, Wivenhoe, CO6 3QA

Site area (hectares)

15.2011 ha

Site ID: 10758



Site details

Site address

Land west of The Folly, Layer de la Haye CO2 0JA

Site area (hectares)

3.159800000000002 ha

Site ID: 10759

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Site details

Site address

The Furze, Layer de La Haye, CO2 0JA

Site area (hectares)

0.6865 ha

Site ID: 10760

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Site details

Site address

Land south of Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green, CO6 3QA

Site area (hectares)

6.110800000000002 ha

Site ID: 10761



Site details

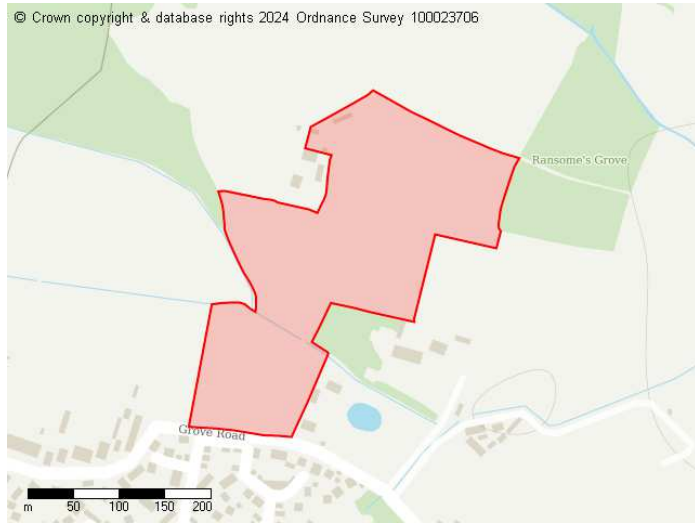
Site address

Land off Bakers Lane, Braiswick

Site area (hectares)

7.1773999999999996 ha

Site ID: 10762



Site details

Site address

Land North Of Grove Road, Tiptree

Site area (hectares)

6.146899999999996 ha

Site ID: 10764



Site details

Site address

Former Aldham Playing Field, Aldham

Site area (hectares)

0.6876999999999998 ha

Site ID: 10765



Site details

Site address

London Road Copford

Site area (hectares)

1.2896000000000001 ha

Site ID: 10766



Site details

Site address

The Willows Foundry Lane Copford CO6 1BH

Site area (hectares)

5.085700000000001 ha

Site ID: 10767

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Site details

Site address

Land North East of Coach Road, Great Horkesley, Colchester – site edged red on accompanying site plan

Site area (hectares)

6.610400000000003 ha

Site ID: 10768



Site details

Site address

Land South of Armoury Road, West Bergholt, Colchester – site edged red on accompanying site plan

Site area (hectares)

19.0717 ha

Site ID: 10769

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Site details

Site address

Land North of Armoury Road, West Bergholt, Colchester – site edged red on accompanying site plan

Site area (hectares)

1.3008999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10777

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Site details

Site address

Queen Street, Short Wyre Street Colchester

Site area (hectares)

1.4061999999999999 ha

Site ID: 10778



Site details

Site address

The Roman Circus Quarter, Colchester

Site area (hectares)

6.5879000000000003 ha

Local Plan Committee - Background Information

What is a Local Plan?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Why is a Local Plan important?

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

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

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

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

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is included in the Development Plan for Colchester?

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

Within Colchester Borough this currently includes:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is included within the Development Framework for Colchester?

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

1. Development Plan

Currently for Colchester this includes:

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

2. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

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

Currently for Colchester these are:

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

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

3. Local Development Scheme (LDS)

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

4. Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)

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

5. Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

The SCI sets out the standards that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) intend to achieve in relation to involving the community and all stakeholders in the preparation, alteration and continuing review of all Local Development Plan documents and in significant planning applications. The SCI also outlines how the LPA intends to achieve those standards. The SCI itself, is not a development plan document, but is subject to independent examination. A consultation statement showing how the LPA complies with its SCI should accompany all Local Development Plan documents.

What are housing targets and why do we have them?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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