



Council

Item
7

18 October 2023

Report of	Author Rachel Forkin ☎ 282625
Title	Adoption of the Copford with Easthorpe Neighbourhood Plan
Wards affected	Marks Tey and Layer

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Copford with Easthorpe Neighbourhood Plan has successfully completed the process of examination, approval at referendum and has now come before the Council to be made (adopted) as part of the Colchester Local Plan.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 That the Council makes (adopts) the Copford with Easthorpe Neighbourhood Plan following its approval at referendum.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 To ensure the Council's planning policies provide a robust basis for decisions on future planning applications in the Borough.
- 3.2 The latest version of Planning Practice Guidance provides that if the majority of those who vote in a referendum are in favour of the draft Neighbourhood Plan, then the Neighbourhood Plan must be 'made' by the Local Planning Authority within 8 weeks of the referendum.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 There is no alternative option. Not adopting the Neighbourhood Plan would be contrary to the positive approach to Neighbourhood Plans found in National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. If the majority of

those who vote in a referendum are in favour of the draft Neighbourhood Plan, then the Neighbourhood Plan must be made by the Local Planning Authority.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 In May 2015, Colchester Borough Council designated the Copford with Easthorpe Area for the purpose of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan (in accordance with The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012). The plan area includes the whole of Copford with Easthorpe Parish.
- 5.2 During the course of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, the Copford with Easthorpe Neighbourhood Plan Group carried out a number of public meetings, consultation events and surveys.
- 5.3 The Copford with Easthorpe Neighbourhood Plan sets out the planning framework for how Copford with Easthorpe residents and businesses would like the parish to develop over the 15 years up to 2033. The Copford with Easthorpe Neighbourhood Plan contains a vision for the future of Copford with Easthorpe up to 2033, which seeks to conserve and enhance the distinctive nature of the rural community, recognising the challenge of the climate emergency while taking a sustainable view of future development.
- 5.4 Colchester City Council appointed an independent examiner, David Kaiserman, to examine the Neighbourhood Plan. The Examiner's Report was issued in May 2023 and concluded that subject to modifications recommended by the examiner being made to the document, the Neighbourhood Plan would meet the basic conditions set out in legislation and that, as modified, should proceed to Referendum.
- 5.5 The Referendum on the Copford with Easthorpe Neighbourhood Plan was held on 21st September with the following results: 120 votes recorded in favour of the plan and 35 against, or 85% in favour.
- 5.6 The latest version of Planning Practice Guidance provides that if the majority of those who vote in a referendum are in favour of the draft Neighbourhood Plan, then the Neighbourhood Plan must be 'made' by the Local Planning Authority within 8 weeks of the referendum. A Neighbourhood Plan comes into force as part of the statutory Development Plan once it has been approved at referendum.

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: [Equality Impact Assessments - Colchester City Council](#)

6.2 There are no particular Human Rights implications.

7. Strategic Plan References

7.1 Effective strategic planning supports the Strategic Plan 2023-26, which aims to recognise the distinctive qualities of our rural and city life, our many communities and identities and our culture and heritage. It includes commitments to conserve and enhance our biodiversity; support local areas as they help shape and deliver the services which are most important to them; and ensuring developers apply beautiful and sustainable to all house builds across the city. The Copford with Easthorpe Neighbourhood Plan will contribute towards achieving these objectives.

8. Consultation

8.1 The preparation of the Copford with Easthorpe Neighbourhood Plan was underpinned by extensive public consultation, in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements. The consultation process was documented in a Consultation Statement submitted along with the Neighbourhood Plan document as part of the examination process.

9. Publicity Considerations

9.1 Both Copford with Easthorpe Parish Council and Colchester City Council have publicised the Neighbourhood Plan on their respective websites.

9.2 On adoption, the document will be made available on the Colchester City Council and Copford with Easthorpe Parish Council websites, and stakeholders will be notified, in accordance with Regulations 19 and 20 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

9.3 Neighbourhood planning is generally seen as a positive activity and any publicity arising should be seen in this light.

10. Financial implications

10.1 Colchester City Council is financially responsible for organising the examination and referendum for Neighbourhood Plans in their areas. The Council can

however reclaim £20,000 from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for all Neighbourhood Plans once a statement has been issued detailing their intention to send the plan to referendum following a successful examination. These payments have been made by Central Government to Local Authorities to reflect the additional financial burdens associated with supporting Parish Councils or Neighbourhood Plan Forums prepare Neighbourhood Plans. The grant will cover the cost of the examination and referendum.

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

11.1 None identified.

12. Health and Safety Implications

12.1 None identified.

13. Risk Management Implications

13.1 The adoption of the Copford with Easthorpe Neighbourhood Plan will help ensure that the Council's planning policies are robust and up-to-date and help to reduce the risk of inappropriate development being permitted.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

14.1 In order to support the achievement of sustainable development, the Neighbourhood Plan aims to ensure that new development will be both sustainable and improve life for the community without prejudicing lives for future generations. The Plan contains a vision to seek to conserve and enhance the distinctive nature of the rural community recognising the challenge of the climate emergency while taking a sustainable and optimistic view of future development.

14.2 A screening opinion, carried out under the Environmental Regulations 2004, was undertaken in August 2022, and concluded that the Neighbourhood plan is not likely to have significant environmental effects and consequently confirmed that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is not required.

Appendices

A – Copford with Easthorpe Neighbourhood Plan