



PLANNING POLICY AND LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE

AGENDA

DATE:	Tuesday, 25 August 2026
TIME:	6.00 pm
VENUE:	Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton-on-Sea, CO15 1SE

MEMBERSHIP:

Councillor C Guglielmi (Chairman)	Councillor Newton
Councillor M Cossens (Vice-Chairman)	Councillor Scott
Councillor Bush	Councillor M Stephenson
Councillor Chapman BEM	Councillor White
Councillor Everett	

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DATE OF PUBLICATION: Monday, 17 August 2026

AGENDA

1 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

The Committee is asked to note any apologies for absence and substitutions received from Members.

2 Minutes of the Last Meeting (Pages 5 - 30)

To confirm and sign as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting of the Committee, held on 8 June 2026.

3 Declarations of Interest

Councillors are invited to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Registerable Interests or Non-Registerable Interests, and the nature of it, in relation to any item on the agenda.

4 Questions on Notice pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 38

Subject to providing two working days' notice, a Member of the Committee may ask the Chairman of the Committee a question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties which affect the Tendring District **and** which falls within the terms of reference of the Committee.

5 Public Speaking (Pages 31 - 32)

The Council's Public Speaking Scheme for the Planning Policy & Local Plan Committee gives the opportunity for members of the public and other interested parties/stakeholders to speak to the Council's elected members on that Committee on any specific Officer report due to be considered at that public meeting.

6 Report of the Corporate Director (Planning & Community) - A.1 - Tendring District Local Plan Review: Submission Version (Pages 33 - 114)

To present the Tendring District Local Plan 'Submission Version' to the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee and seek its agreement for this important document, along with the associated Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment, to be recommended for approval by Full Council to proceed to six-weeks' formal public consultation in line with Regulation 19 of the statutory plan-making process.

Date of the Next Scheduled Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee will be held on a date to be determined in due course.

Information for Visitors

FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE

There is no alarm test scheduled for this meeting. In the event of an alarm sounding, please calmly make your way out of any of the fire exits in the room and follow the exit signs out of the building.

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING POLICY AND LOCAL PLAN
COMMITTEE,
HELD ON MONDAY, 8TH JUNE, 2026 AT 6.00 PM
IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM - TOWN HALL, STATION ROAD, CLACTON-ON-SEA,
CO15 1SE**

Present:	Councillors Guglielmi (Chairman), M Cossens (Vice-Chairman), Bush, Chapman BEM (except item 7), Everett, Scott, Sudra and White
In Attendance:	Gary Guiver (Corporate Director (Planning & Community)), Lisa Hastings (Corporate Director (Law & Governance) & Monitoring Officer), Paul Woods (Planning Policy Team Leader), Will Fuller (Senior Planning Policy Officer), Bethany Jones (Democratic Services Officer) and Katie Koppenaal (Democratic Services Officer)
Also in Attendance:	Jacob Jaarsma (Planning Team Leader) (except items part 7 & 8), Kate Patterson (Planning Officer (Policy)) (except items part 7 & 8) and Hayley Sargent (Planning Policy Technical Officer)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillors Newton (with no substitution) and M Stephenson (with Councillor Sudra substituting).

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on Thursday 22 January 2026, be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In relation to report A.2, Councillor Chapman BEM declared a Non-Pecuniary Interest on the Officer Update Sheet relating to MSA27 that the blue hatch area was owned by her son.

As mentioned under Minute 6 below, after the short adjournment, Mrs Hastings the Council's Monitoring Officer confirmed that following the declaration of interest on Report A2, that the land shown coloured blue as referred to in the Update Sheet, was owned by her son, that fell within the definition of a Non-Registerable Interest. As the matter **affected** a financial interest or well-being of a relative, therefore in accordance with the Code of Conduct, Councillor Chapman would have to withdraw for item A2.

4. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 38

No questions on notice pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 38 had been submitted on this occasion.

5. PUBLIC SPEAKING

Pursuant to the provisions of the Council's public speaking scheme for the Planning Policy & Local Plan Committee, no member of the public had registered to ask at this meeting a question on any of the Officer reports.

A member of the public, Clare Taylor, attended and made an oral statement, on behalf of the Lawford Tye Action Group, in relation to reports A.1 and A.2 of the Corporate Director for Planning and Community. Her statement touched upon the following matters:-

- *Strong proposals from the Lawford Parish Council to give Lawford Tye Field protected status;*
- *Lawford Tye Field meets every criterion to be given protected status;*
- *Pre-historic henge with a 4,000-year-old ancient monument;*
- *Landscape quality;*
- *Biodiversity;*
- *Community using the Lawford Tye Field;*
- *Public value; and*
- *Vulnerability to planning applications.*

Will Vote, a planning agent representing Rose Builders, attended and made an oral statement in relation to report A.2 of the Corporate Director for Planning and Community. His statement touched upon the following matters:-

- *The recommendation in the Officer Report (A.2) to delete sites MSA19 (proposal for 12 new homes on Manningtree Road, Little Bentley) and MSA20 (proposal for 17 new homes on Shop Road, Little Bromley);*
- *A misunderstanding of the Anglian Water letter, which raised concerns based on a scenario that involved connection of the homes to the public sewer which was never the intention;*
- *Both sites support the Council's housing strategy and would strengthen the robustness of the Local Plan;*
- *Both sites were considered highly deliverable; and*
- *The proposal relied on modest, well-planned growth.*

6. REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (PLANNING AND COMMUNITY) - A.1 - TENDRING DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: OVERVIEW OF MAIN MATTERS RAISED THROUGH PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE PREFERRED OPTIONS DRAFT

The Chairman (Councillor Guglielmi) commended Officers for how they engaged with the public during the 6 week consultation, with 5 drop-in sessions throughout the District and with a wealth of Officers on-hand who were there to answer questions and clarifying points from the hundreds of attendees and for the way Officers engaged with Parish and Town Councils across the District.

The Committee considered a comprehensive report of the Corporate Director (Planning & Community) (A.1) which provided it with a broad overview of the level and nature of responses received from residents and other stakeholders to the public consultation on the Local Plan: Regulation 18 Preferred Options Draft, carried out in February and March 2026.

As well as providing commentary on the notable issues raised through formal representations on the Draft Local Plan, that report also reflected some of the general feedback from various engagement events held or attended by Officers, as well as notable messages and themes picked up from comments circulating on social media and the local press.

The report then provided an initial indication of what Officers considered to be the main matters that were likely to require particular attention, additional work or potential changes in moving forward in the preparation of the next version of the Plan – the Regulation 19 Submission Version.

Members recalled that the Tendring District Local Plan: Preferred Options Draft had been published for six weeks consultation starting Monday 9 February and ending Monday 23 March 2026. During that consultation period, the Council had invited residents and other stakeholders to make formal representations on the policies and proposals in the Draft Local Plan knowing that there would likely be a significant level of objection, particularly from residents, to the considerable amount of additional housing development now having to be planned for across different parts of the District to comply with the Government's challenging new mandatory housebuilding targets which had resulted in a near doubling of previous requirements.

As part of the consultation, Officers had held five public drop-in exhibitions across the District and had attended several public meetings organised by Town and Parish Councils or Ward Councillors as well as attending meetings with Town and Parish Councillors, both in public and private. Through those events and meetings, it was estimated that Officers had met and spoken to around seven hundred people; and whilst not everyone that attended an event or meeting would have necessarily submitted a written representation, Officers had noted key themes of discussion and had also been able to follow some of the comments that had circulated on social media platforms to gain a rounded view of the key issues of public interest and concern.

Members were aware that, under the planning regulations, Councils were required to take responses to the consultation into account in drawing up the final Submission Draft version of the Local Plan; and Officers had currently estimated that the Council had received duly-made representations from just over 620 individuals or organisations raising a variety of concerns, objections or suggestions across the range of policies and proposals in Draft Local Plan.

It was reported that the representations were currently still in the process of being thoroughly read, processed, grouped and summarised with responses already starting to be considered and drafted by Officers. But even from initial analysis, there were obvious notable themes that warranted early reporting to the Committee as they revealed what were likely to be the main matters for consideration as the Council progressed work on the next version of the Plan over the coming weeks.

Response from residents and communities

General concerns about growth

As anticipated, most comments and objections from residents and communities had related to the Draft Local Plan's proposals for housing and mixed-use development. They had raised a variety of serious concerns about the impact of additional development – both generally across the District and in respect of certain site or location-specific proposals. Many of the concerns had been already acknowledged and shared by Councillors and Officers and reflected a number of reasons why this Council had consistently objected to the Government's approach of imposing seemingly unrealistic top-down mandatory housebuilding targets on locations like Tendring without

taking into account the sensitivity, fragility and limitations of local geography, economics, infrastructure and the natural environment.

The Committee was informed that most objections to the housing growth proposed in the Draft Local Plan fell broadly into one or more of the following themes that applied in respect of most, if not all, of the Plan's proposals for housing development in all parts of the District:

- Inadequacy of transport and utilities infrastructure: Concerns about deficiencies in transport and utilities infrastructure (particularly water and sewerage) to cope with the scale of proposed housing growth and the potential for increases in traffic, blocked sewers and surface water flooding – with serious scepticism expressed by many at the realistic likelihood of achieving 'modal-shift' (i.e. more people in the future walking, cycling and using public transport as an alternative to private cars).
- Inadequacy of community infrastructure: Concerns about the impacts of additional housing development and population growth on health, education and other community infrastructure – particularly given current challenges faced by the NHS, GP surgeries and dentists in meeting the demands of an ageing population; and the significant variation in the capacity of schools in different parts of the District.
- Environmental impact: Significant worries about the impact of the additional development on rural landscapes, sensitive wildlife habitats, the character and feel of the District and the setting of historic buildings and structures - particularly given that the overwhelming majority of homes would need to be built on agricultural greenfield land.
- Need: Questions over the actual need for the additional housing or employment land growth and suggestions that the District was already accommodating more than enough development through the circa 10,700 homes that were already in the pipeline for the next 17 years from proposals in the Council's existing Local Plan and developments already under construction or with planning permission.
- Realistic deliverability: Questions over whether the assumptions around delivery were over-ambitious and if the level of development proposed was realistically achievable particularly for the larger Garden Village proposals, given the various complex factors that influenced housing delivery such as the general stability of the national economy, the state of the housing market and the availability of materials and labour.
- Matching housing and jobs growth: Some concern about a potential mismatch between the growth in housing and growth in jobs, acknowledging that whilst housing and employment growth do go hand in hand, Tendring had long-standing challenges around unemployment and deprivation in some locations.
- Migration and affordability: Questions over whether new homes would primarily attract in-migration to the District from other parts of the country rather than meeting the specific needs of local families and their children for more affordable accommodation, acknowledging that much of the demand for housing in

Tendring had historically been driven by migration, often from London and elsewhere in Essex.

- Loss of agricultural greenfield land: Concern over the significant loss of greenfield agricultural land to development that would result from the scale of development proposed and its impact on future food production given that there was a very limited supply of previously developed brownfield land in Tendring and so the overwhelming majority of new development was proposed for greenfield sites – many of which were classified as best and most versatile (higher grade) agricultural land.
- Impact on local character: Concern that the number and scale of developments would erode the special character of the District and its unique appeal, especially in the rural areas affected by Garden Village proposals, but also for those communities accommodating a number of medium-scale developments on the edges of their towns and villages.
- Criticism of recent developments: Criticisms over the impacts of recent development in terms of quality, lack of infrastructure at the right time and increases in traffic – and a fear that such issues would only continue or worsen with the additional developments now required.
- Distribution and proportions of development: Arguments over whether certain developments were disproportionate in housing numbers and land coverage to the existing towns, villages or hamlets to which they related along with varying suggestions from residents as to how the development could be distributed differently to be lesser, or further away from the areas in which they lived.

Officers felt that those were all reasonable and understandable areas of concern, but because there was no longer any mechanism under current Government planning policy to argue for a lower housebuilding target, the Council would need to respond as best as it could knowing that there would be a limit to how far the Council could realistically amend the Local Plan whilst still ensuring the Plan was sound and compliant with national policy.

Unsurprisingly, a number of residents both in written representations and comments made at exhibitions and public meetings had suggested that the Council should ignore the Government's requirements to plan for additional housing and stick with the policies and proposals in the Council's existing adopted Local Plan – potentially in anticipation of a possible future change in Government (and policy) at the next General Election.

However, Councillors were aware of the Council's statutory duties in respect of planning and Local Plan preparation and recalled, from previous experience, the serious implications of having an out-of-date Local Plan, being unable to maintain a five-year housing supply and having decisions on planning applications for major housing developments overturned by Planning Inspectors on appeal in a piecemeal and uncoordinated manner. It was noted that the Council was already in receipt of a growing number of major planning applications for housing, some of which were contrary to both the adopted and emerging Local Plan, and which had clearly been submitted in response to the change in Government policy and the Council's vulnerability in respect of its five-year housing supply position.

Site/location-specific objections

Many representations of objection from residents and communities had been aimed at specific site or location-specific proposals in the Draft Local Plan affecting their neighbourhood or area. Although it was the content and the validity of any material planning considerations raised in representations that could bring the soundness of a Local Plan into question, as opposed to the number, volume or tone of responses, there were some notable proposals and policies that had attracted a particularly notable level of objection. The following highlighted the main proposals and policies that had received the highest number of objections, representing around 70% of the total number of respondents:

- 1) **New Policy SAH4: Development at Land East of Church Road, Brightlingsea** – an estimated (at this time) 190 individual representations of objection (including objections from Brightlingsea Town Council) and a petition signed by 20 residents against the proposed development of 300 homes north of the town.
- 2) **New Policy SAH2: Development north of Thorpe Road, Kirby Cross** – Approximately 50 representations of objection. A petition signed by 511 residents had been received, objecting to the cumulative growth in Frinton, Walton, Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken.
- 3) **New Policy SAH3: Development of Land off Arthur Ransome Way, Walton** – In the region of 35 representations of objection and a petition signed by 382 residents against the 200 home allocation.
- 4) **New Policy SAMU8: Hare Green Garden Village** – around 35 representations of objection (including objections from surrounding Parish Councils) to the proposed broad location for a potential long-term new settlement of around 4,500 homes.
- 5) **New Policy SAMU9: Horsley Cross Garden Village** – 31 representations of objection (including objections from surrounding Parish Councils) to the proposed broad location for a further potential long-term settlement of up to 6,000 homes.
- 6) **Allocation MSA8: Land adjacent Village Hall, Harwich Road, Beaumont** – 24 objections to the proposal for 20 homes within this rural village.
- 7) **Allocation MSA24: Land east of Bentley Road, Weeley Heath** – 23 objections to the proposal for 60 homes within this settlement.
- 8) **Allocation MSA28: Land north of Rectory Road, Wrabness** – 19 objections to the proposal for 30 homes within this settlement.

Response from Town and Parish Councils

With most parts of the District affected by one or more proposals in the Draft Local Plan, all Town and Parish Councils had been actively engaged in the plan-making process and Officers had sought to keep them updated throughout the different stages of the project in inviting their views both in the run up to, and following, key decisions. With this

potentially being the last Local Plan ever produced by Tendring District Council, Officers had been keen to take on board constructive suggestions from the Town and Parish Councils wherever practical and possible – drawing upon their extensive local knowledge.

In total, 17 of Tendring's 27 Town and Parish Councils had made formal representations in response to the Preferred Options consultation.

Understandably, many of the Town and Parish Councils in representing the views of residents in their communities, had highlighted a range of concerns about growth in Tendring overall and the impact of development on specific sites in their areas – but with a general understanding of the difficult task faced by this Tendring District Council in preparing a Local Plan and having to address the Government's mandatory housebuilding requirements.

Some of the Councils had been very proactive in publicising the consultation and encouraging residents to respond and a number had put forward practical suggestions for how the Plan could be improved to take into account local issues and concerns. The responses from Brightlingsea Town Council and Bradfield Parish Council had been notably constructive in that whilst putting forward well-reasoned objections to the developments proposed for in their areas, they had offered alternative options for consideration. Councillors also recalled the constructive input of Great Bentley Parish Council and Thorpe le Soken Parish Council in requesting changes to the Local Plan at previous meetings of the Committee.

Response from technical stakeholders

Whilst it had been always anticipated that most representations and objections would be submitted by residents and communities, it was often the comments from technical stakeholders such as Government departments, utility providers and partner authorities that revealed potential weaknesses in the technical soundness of Local Plans. As a general principle, it was therefore good practice to follow the advice of those bodies in either carrying out additional work or making revisions to the Local Plan, unless there was good reason not to do so.

Given the range of issues raised by residents, communities and Town and Parish Councils around transport, health, the environment and infrastructure in general, the responses submitted by the technical stakeholders would be of particular public interest. With that in mind, Officers had specifically attached full copies of the technical stakeholders' representations as appendices to the report (A.1).

In summary, none of the responses from technical stakeholders had suggested that the Council had produced an unsound Local Plan and most were generally supportive of the approach the Council had taken albeit offering a variety of practical suggestions for strengthening certain policies. Some had recommended that additional evidence-base work be undertaken to inform final decisions on the Local Plan and some had offered information and advice on a number of site proposals in the Plan.

Of particular note, Essex County Council (ECC) and National Highways were working closely with Officers of the Council on the transport modelling work for the Local Plan; and whilst supportive of the Council's approach in principle, had reserved their judgement on the practical feasibility and deliverability of the large Garden Villages at

Hare Green and Horsley Cross until the next phase of technical transport modelling was completed. Whilst very supportive of the Local Plan overall, offering a number of constructive suggestions for how the wording of policies could be improved, ECC had objected to the amount of development proposed at Thorpe le Soken on education capacity grounds – which might therefore require revisions to the proposed allocations in the Plan.

Natural England and the Essex Wildlife Trust had provided positive advice on the environmental policies in the Local Plan and the next phase of work that needed to be carried out on the Habitat Regulations Assessment. They had advised on 'Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace' (SANGS) requirements for some of the larger developments in the Plan and had raised the ecological importance of 'functionally linked land' as a matter to be addressed more strongly in the Plan; i.e. areas of undeveloped land that, whilst not part of a designated wildlife site, were located nearby and were crucial for the ecological or behavioural needs of the species for which those sites were designated.

Natural England had supported the Garden Village approach in directing longer-term development away from the District's more ecologically sensitive coastal areas. The Wildlife Trust had suggested that the Local Plan could be strengthened in its approach to supporting the delivery of the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The Wildlife Trust had, however, formally objected to the proposed development of 200 homes on land in Walton-on-the-Naze (Site SAH2) over ecological concerns about functionally linked land – which had brought into question the soundness of that particular allocation.

Historic England had been generally supportive of the policies in the Local Plan, including the new policy on development at Thorpe Maltings, but had requested that the Council carried out a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) to assess the potential impacts of a number of main development proposals, ideally before the submission draft stage of the process.

NHS and health partners had been generally supportive of the Draft Local Plan, recognising the significant amount of additional housing development the Council was required to plan for to comply with Government policy. As well as providing constructive suggestions for the wording of policies, health partners had asked that the Local Plan was not overly specific at this stage about the type or location of new or improved health facilities that might be needed to serve the growing population; because the strategy and model for healthcare provision would change. Therefore, the Local Plan needed to be flexible in requiring larger developments to either incorporate and deliver new health facilities or contribute financially towards new or improved facilities in the wider area.

Essex Police and Essex Fire & Rescue Services had requested that the larger new developments in the Local Plan contribute financially towards the infrastructure likely to be required to serve the growing population and had provided figures to be worked into the Local Plan's viability assessment.

The Environment Agency, Anglian Water and Affinity Water had all responded to the consultation and had been generally supportive of the Local Plan and its policies. The Environment Agency had offered constructive advice in respect of the approach to flood risk and climate change and had considered and commented on the Council's Water Cycle Study (WCS). Anglian Water's advice had been also constructive and supportive

of the WCS evidence; albeit highlighting the challenges around capacity in the foul drainage and sewage treatment infrastructure which would have a bearing, in particular, on the timing and infrastructure cost of the larger Garden Village proposals.

Overall, Officers considered the representations from technical stakeholders to be supportive, positive and constructive with nothing to suggest the approach taken to growth in the Local Plan was fundamentally unsound; with none of the issues raised being irresolvable.

It was not surprising to Officers that the feasibility and deliverability of the Garden Villages at Hare Green and Horsley Cross had been raised by ECC and National Highways and this was an area that required more evidence in respect of transport modelling and the understanding of infrastructure requirements. This additional work was being carried out in collaboration with ECC, National Highways and other partners which would inform future decisions.

Representations from Landowners, Developers, Businesses and Agents

The focus of representations from landowners, developers, businesses and land/planning agents had tended to be on either to supporting or challenging decisions made in relation to spatial strategy and site allocations, and the viability or practicability of planning policies containing expectations for new development. Promoters of land or sites that had been omitted from the Local Plan as development allocations would tend to put forward a strong challenge through their representations, seeking to argue that the Plan failed either the tests of legal compliance or soundness without the inclusion of their site(s).

For promoters of sites that had been included in the Local Plan for development, representations had tended to be supportive in principle but with suggestions for how the policies in the Plan should be amended to improve the viability or practical deliverability of their sites and could assist the Council's position at examination by producing additional evidence in support of their site allocations.

With a strong financial interest in the outcome of the Local Plan review, it was often site promoters that would invest most heavily in professional consultants, technical studies and legal representation to articulate their objections to the Local Plan and who would likely take their representations all the way through to the examination stage to put evidence in front of the Planning Inspector. It was important therefore that the Council either provided a clear justification for the decisions it took in respect of the Local Plan in order to rebut certain objections or gave serious consideration to whether changes to the Plan were required to address any soundness concerns.

Some landowners/developers as well as making representations on the Local Plan, had also either submitted early planning applications for development on their sites, or were likely intending to in the coming months. There was a possibility therefore that some of their Local Plan objections would be rehearsed in the determination of those planning applications or through a planning appeal before the Local Plan reached examination stage.

Some of the notable issues raised by landowners, developers, businesses and agents in response to the Draft Local Plan included:

- arguments that the Local Plan currently did not include enough headroom/contingency over and above the Government housebuilding requirement and therefore additional sites for housing should be included;
- suggestions that the Council was placing too much reliance on the proposed Garden Villages to deliver the housing requirement in the long term, for which deliverability was uncertain – and therefore other additional smaller sites around towns and villages, more likely to deliver housing more quickly should be included in the Local Plan for development;
- objections either to the Strategic Green Gap policy overall, or the inclusion of certain areas of land in those green gaps – with the suggestion that the approach was not justified or in alignment with Government policy and was preventing sites in more sustainable locations than the Garden Villages from coming forward for housing development;
- objections to the choice of sites selected for development in particular areas in support of alternative site proposals;
- objections to the protections being given to Elmstead Market and Ardleigh on the basis that those villages could offer sustainable locations for additional development, akin to other villages where development was being proposed; and
- objections to the policies for 20% Biodiversity Net Gain, energy efficiency/net zero and water efficiency as being economically unviable.

Reassuringly, there appeared to be relatively few representations strongly challenging the overall spatial strategy for growth set out in the Local Plan which, given the sheer amount of housing required to comply with Government policy was not surprising – as there were very few permutations that would realistically deliver the numbers. There had not, for example, been any alternative Garden Village proposals put forward for consideration. The notable challenges to the soundness of the Local Plan were aimed at the deliverability of the Garden Villages and the justification for protecting Strategic Green Gaps and sites around Elmstead Market and Ardleigh from development that might otherwise be considered sustainable.

Main matters raised through the consultation

The Committee was reminded that, when a Local Plan was examined by a Government-appointed Planning Inspector, they would identify the main matters for consideration as part of the examination, based on the requirements for legal compliance and the key tests of soundness set out in the NPPF, but informed by the comments received in response to consultation on the final submission version of the Local Plan. In doing so, Inspectors often invited Councils to identify what they considered to be the main matters ahead of the examination hearings.

Whilst the Council had not yet reached the submission and examination stages of the Local Plan review process, it was still required under the regulations to produce a statement identifying the main matters raised through the Regulation 18 Preferred Options consultation and how they had been taken into account in producing the final Submission Draft of the Plan. Thinking ahead to the preparation of that statement,

Officers had started to identify what appeared to be the main matters raised through representations on the Preferred Options Draft. From the Officers' initial analysis of the representations, those main matters appeared to include the following:

- 1) **The realistic deliverability and soundness of the Garden Villages** proposed for Hare Green and Horsley Cross in light of the comments made by Essex County Council, National Highways, certain developer/landowners and residents and whether they could realistically contribute towards meeting the Government-imposed housing in the plan period up to 2042/43 – for which the updates to the transport modelling and infrastructure delivery plan evidence would be material considerations.
- 2) **The realistic deliverability of the overall housebuilding requirement** up to 2042/43 and whether the Local Plan identified sufficient deliverable land, with a suitable level of headroom/contingency, to meet the overall Government-imposed housebuilding requirement – despite the number of issues raised about how challenging and unrealistic those targets were.
- 3) **The soundness of the Brightlingsea allocation of 300 homes** (site SAH4) in light of issues raised in the large number of public objections and by the Town Council and whether an alternative approach of distributing Brightlingsea's growth across a number of smaller sites would be justified and more appropriate.
- 4) **The soundness of the Kirby Cross and Walton allocations of 420 and 200 homes** respectively (sites SAH2 and SAH3) in light of issues raised in the large number of public objections and the specific objection from the Essex Wildlife Trust to the Walton site.
- 5) **The amount of development proposed at Thorpe le Soken** and whether, in light of Essex County Council's concerns about the limited and potentially irresolvable capacity issues at the local school, one or both of the housing allocations at Thorpe should be removed from the Plan or reduced in size.
- 6) **The sustainability of housing developments in smaller rural villages** in light of objections from residents and concerns raised by Anglian Water about limited sewage capacity, the remoteness from jobs, shops, services and facilities and local impacts on village character – particularly Little Bromley, Little Bentley, Tendring Heath, Beaumont-cum-Moze and the choice and size of sites in Wrabness and Bradfield.
- 7) **The justification and soundness of the District's Strategic Green Gaps** in light of objections from certain landowners and developers stating that the designation did not align with Government policy and was preventing otherwise sustainable locations for housing development (for example around Clacton) being included in the Local Plan.
- 8) **The protection given to Ardleigh and Elmstead** over other similarly sized villages due to their up-to-date Neighbourhood Plans and proximity to the Tendring / Colchester Borders Garden Community; and whether, in light of objections from developers/landowners and current planning applications, the protection was justified.

9) The viability of zero carbon, water efficiency and BNG policies in light of the concerns raised by landowners, developers and agents in their representations when considered alongside affordable housing requirements and financial contributions sought for education, health provision, police, fire and other infrastructure.

10) The robustness of the evidence base in light of Natural England and the Essex Wildlife Trust's advice on the work required on Habitat Regulations Assessment, Essex County Council and National Highways' advice in respect of transport modelling; Historic England's request for a Heritage Impact Assessment; the Environment Agency's request to update the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the general need to ensure the Local Plan was supported by a proportionate range of appropriate and robust evidence.

In the separate Committee report (A.2), as considered later on in the meeting, Officers had commented further on those matters with emerging thoughts and recommendations as to how they could be addressed going forward.

Next steps

Officers would continue to analyse the representations in detail to prepare a fuller statement on the responses received to the Preferred Options consultation and how those responses had been taken into account in the preparation of the Local Plan. This statement was intended to be included within the evidence base in support of the Submission Version of the Local Plan.

At the meeting, the Corporate Director (Planning and Community), assisted by the Planning Policy Team Leader, introduced the report.

Officers then responded to the following questions/concerns/queries et cetera from Committee Members:-

- *Clarity around coming to this position in the Local Plan, did something need to change after Parish/Town Council meetings?;*
- *Were there any extra challenges with the fact that the political control of Essex County Council has changed, are there to be any problems as a result of that?;*
- *Report was indicating that the inspection of Sladbury's Lane would not be until the end of 2026, how long after that inspection would it take for a plan to be adopted?;*
- *How does the shortfall of the 5-year housing supply effect the policies and how does the Council stand with the weighting?; and*
- *How regular was the shortfall being reviewed and how was this being reviewed during the transitional process?*

After the short adjournment, Mrs Hastings the Council's Monitoring Officer confirmed that following the declaration of interest on Report A2, that the land shown coloured blue as referred to in the Update Sheet, was owned by her son, that fell within the definition of a Non-Registerable Interest. As the matter **affected** a financial interest or well-being of a relative, therefore in accordance with the Code of Conduct, Councillor Chapman would have to withdraw for item A2.

Councillor Chapman BEM thanked the Officers for their excellent report and for the amount of time they had spent with herself and Councillor Steady going over the sites in Brightlingsea – they had gone beyond the call of duty.

The Chairman (Councillor Guglielmi) mentioned that himself and Councillor Baker, who was in attendance as the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, were current/former members of the Lawford Tye Action Group and were involved in the appeal process for the Lawford Tye Field.

Having duly taken all the above information into account and having discussed the matter, it was moved by Councillor Scott, seconded by Councillor Chapman BEM and unanimously:-

RESOLVED that the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee –

- a) noted the contents of this report (A.1) which provided a broad overview, based on initial analysis, of some of the main matters and issues raised by residents and other stakeholders in response to public consultation on the Regulation 18 Tending District Local Plan: Preferred Options Draft and associated evidence base;
- b) acknowledged, in particular, the significant level of public objection to proposals and policies relating to additional housing and mixed-use developments that had needed to be included in the Draft Local Plan to meet the Government's new mandatory housebuilding targets;
- c) noted that Officers were in the process of considering all the representations in detail with the intention of producing a report containing responses to all the comments that would form part of the evidence-base published alongside the revised version of the Regulation 19 Submission Version of the Draft Local Plan; and
- d) noted that the next, separate report (A.2) would set out the Officers' emerging thoughts on potential next steps for the Local Plan – including provisional recommendations for changes to the Draft Plan and additional work to strengthen the technical evidence base.

7. REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (PLANNING AND COMMUNITY) - A.2 - TENDRING DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: EMERGING THOUGHTS AND PROVISIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT STEPS

As mentioned above in Minute 6, after the short adjournment, Mrs Hastings the Council's Monitoring Officer confirmed that following the declaration of interest on Report A2, that the land shown coloured blue as referred to in the Update Sheet, was owned by her son, that fell within the definition of a Non-Registerable Interest. As the matter **affected** a financial interest or well-being of a relative, therefore in accordance with the Code of Conduct, Councillor Chapman left the room and would not participate in this item and its deliberations.

The Committee considered a detailed report (A.2) of the Corporate Director (Planning & Community) which provided it with an early indication of Officers' emerging thoughts on potential next steps – including provisional recommendations for changes to the Draft Local Plan and additional work to strengthen the technical evidence base.

The report also set out the revised housebuilding requirement for an adjusted 17-year period 2026-2043, based on an updated calculation using the Government's standard methodology and taking into account the Council's updated housing land supply position at 1 April 2026.

Given the very tight timescales for progressing the Local Plan to the next stage of the statutory plan-making process, the Committee's early consideration of the matters set out in this report, and its direction on the provisional approach to next steps and potential changes to the Local Plan, would enable Officers to progress work without delay on both the revised 'Submission Version' of Local Plan and the supporting evidence-base.

The report focussed mainly on potential changes to site allocations, on a provisional basis, but also touched on notable areas of policy that might require revisions or further development. The intention was that the revised Submission Version of the Local Plan, containing the detailed set of revised policies and maps, would be submitted for the Committee's consideration in late Summer of 2026, ahead of a Full Council decision to proceed to the next round of formal consultation.

Adjustments to the Local Plan timeframe and housebuilding requirement

The Committee was informed that one of the recommendations in this report (A.2) was to adjust the proposed timeframe for the Local Plan in the Submission Version to cover the 17-year period 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2043; and for the total housebuilding requirement for that period to be revised to reflect an updated calculation using the Government's standard methodology – giving a total requirement of 18,173 homes based on the adjusted annual requirement of 1,069 (up from 1,063 in the Preferred Options Draft).

The adjustment to the plan period reflected the requirement in national planning policy for Local Plans to cover a minimum of 15 years from the anticipated date of adoption. Based on an expected adoption before April 2028, this necessitated extending the end date of the Plan to March 2043. This revised timeframe also brought Tendring's Local Plan into broad alignment with those being prepared by neighbouring authorities, including Colchester and Braintree, which was beneficial in the context of Local Government Reorganisation and the need for greater strategic alignment across the North Essex area.

Through the latest update of the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), Officers had estimated that 10,100 of those 18,173 homes would still be built on sites either already identified for development in the Council's previous adopted Local Plan or on sites that were either already under construction or where planning permission had already been granted (or was intended to be granted following a Planning Committee resolution) including an updated predicted contribution from smaller 'windfall' sites.

This meant that the new Local Plan was still required to identify additional locations and sites to accommodate a residual requirement of around 8,000 homes and so the overall figures and expectations for housing growth for the adjusted period 2026 to 2043 were broadly unchanged from what was set out in the Preferred Options Draft for the period 2025 to 2042.

Officer's provisional recommendations for responding to the identified main matters

Matter 1: The realistic deliverability and soundness of the Garden Villages proposed for Hare Green and Horsley Cross in light of the comments made by Essex County Council, National Highways, certain developer/landowners and residents and whether they could realistically contribute towards meeting the Government-imposed housing in the plan period up to 2042/43 – for which the updates to the transport modelling and infrastructure delivery plan evidence would help determine.

Members were made aware that Officers' advice was that without the introduction of Garden Villages at Hare Green and Horsley Cross, it was highly questionable if Tendring could realistically accommodate the level of development required by the Government in a sustainable manner. It was therefore currently suggested that the Garden Village proposals needed to remain in the Local Plan, but that Officers proceeded to work with Essex County Council and National Highways to carry out the necessary next phase of transport modelling, alongside further work on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, to inform any final judgement on the deliverability and soundness of the Hare Green and Horsley Cross Garden Villages in due course.

Whilst a final decision on the inclusion of the Garden Village proposals in the Local Plan would need to await the consideration of that technical evidence; Officers were suggesting that even if the proposals remained in the Plan, the trajectory for housebuilding, and thus the total expected contribution of homes from each of the Garden Villages up to 2043 be revised down from 1,700 homes from each development to 1,450 with first homes from 2033/34. This would allow for a more flexible and reasonable timeframe for the initial preparatory planning work, including the preparation of site-specific Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and determination of planning applications. The consequence was a 500-dwelling reduction in the overall predicted housing supply from what had been indicated in the Preferred Options Draft.

Matter 2) The realistic deliverability of the overall housebuilding requirement up to 2042/43 and whether the Local Plan identified sufficient deliverable land, with a suitable level of headroom/contingency, to meet the overall government-imposed housebuilding requirement – despite the number of issues raised about how challenging and unrealistic those targets were.

It had always been the Council's contention that the housebuilding requirement for Tendring generated through the Government's standard methodology calculation was over-ambitious and would be challenging, if not impossible to achieve. Whilst, in the Preferred Options Draft of the Local Plan, the Council had incorporated around 1,500 homes-worth of over-allocation and contingency into the housing supply for the plan-period (around 8%), some landowners, developers and planning/land agents had suggested the Council needed to include more headroom (at least 10%) by adding additional sites into the Plan for housing.

However, given the significant concerns raised about developments already proposed across the District in response to the Preferred Options consultation to address what was considered to be an unrealistic target, the provisional approach being explored in this report was to delete certain housing sites from the Local Plan and adjust assumptions around deliverability on others (including, as stated above, the larger Garden Villages) that would result in an overall net reduction in the headroom

contingency level from 1,500 to closer to 300 homes (8% down to 2%) as opposed to the increase being suggested by certain landowners, developers and agents which would involve the inclusion of sites that would either conflict with the Draft Local Plan's overall strategic approach to the pattern of growth, or would be unsuitable for other planning reasons.

As a consequence, whilst the recommendations to delete certain sites and reduce the headroom from 1,500 to nearer 300 homes might address a significant number of public and community objections to the Local Plan, the consequence would be far greater scrutiny at the examination of the Local Plan of the deliverability of the Government's housing target and the specific sites that were being retained in the Plan – with landowners, developers and agents looking to convince the Planning Inspector that the Plan did not include enough flexibility within its supply of sites to ensure delivery of the Government's requirements.

Matter 3) The soundness of the Brightlingsea allocation of 300 homes (site SAH4) in light of issues raised in the large number of public objections and by the Town Council and whether an alternative approach of distributing Brightlingsea's growth across a number of smaller sites would be justified and more appropriate.

Officers provisionally suggested that Site SAH4 be removed from the Local Plan in acceptance of the concerns raised by Brightlingsea Town Council and a large number of local residents, particularly in respect of the site's weak physical relationship to the settlement form of Brightlingsea and its landscape sensitivity; acknowledging the concerns raised around Brightlingsea's unique transport limitations with its single road access.

As a part replacement for the housing numbers lost from the deletion of this site, it was suggested that two smaller sites be included in the Local Plan around the urban area of Brightlingsea and increasing the capacity expectation of one of the existing proposed sites. If agreed, those changes would bring about an overall reduction in the number of homes proposed for Brightlingsea from 325 to 150; a net reduction of 175 homes.

Matter 4) The soundness of the Kirby Cross and Walton allocations of 420 and 200 homes respectively (sites SAH2 and SAH3) in light of issues raised in the large number of public objections and the specific objection from the Essex Wildlife Trust to the Walton site.

Officers suggested that Site SAH2 for 420 homes north of Thorpe Road in Kirby Cross was a sound allocation that was currently considered capable of being retained in the Local Plan and that many of the concerns raised by residents in their objections could be addressed appropriately through the policies in the Plan, with some strengthening of the wording. Having further assessed the site and considered information submitted by the site promoter with their representation, Officers were satisfied that the site capacity could appropriately be increased to 450 homes.

Officers provisionally suggested the deletion of Site SAH3 for 200 homes off Arthur Ransom Way, Ward Chase and Coles Lane in Walton-on-the-Naze from the Local Plan in response to formal objections from the Essex Wildlife Trust identifying the allocation as one of the most ecologically problematic in the Local Plan without substantial mitigation that would significantly reduce the development of the site; acknowledging also the local concerns about landscape sensitivity.

Those changes, would, if agreed, result in a net reduction of 170 to the proposed housing numbers for the Frinton, Walton and Kirby Cross area from 660 to 490. This might help relieve some of the community's wider concerns about the impact of development on local infrastructure and traffic through Thorpe-le-Soken but would add to the aforementioned matter in respect of the reduced headroom contingency across the overall Local Plan.

Matter 5) The amount of development proposed at Thorpe-le-Soken and whether, in light of Essex County Council's concerns about the limited and potentially irresolvable capacity issues at the local school, one or both of the housing allocations at Thorpe should be removed from the Plan or reduced in size.

Officers suggested that the only way to address the objection raised by Essex County Council (ECC), having discussed further with relevant colleagues involved in the planning of school provision, was to either reduce the overall amount of development proposed for Thorpe to a much lower level by either deleting and/or reducing the size of either one or both the village's site allocations; or significantly increasing the overall amount of development for Thorpe to a level that would facilitate and incorporate new school provision.

Officers' provisionally proposed to reduce rather than increase housing provision through the deletion of Site SAH10 for 150 homes to the west of the village off Colchester Road and a reduction in both the site area and indicative numbers proposed for Site SAH11 north of the Lifehouse Spa & Hotel from 110 to 70 homes, but still retaining and strengthening the requirement for open space provision to expand Lady Nelson Playing Fields.

Reducing the overall expectation for new housing at Thorpe le Soken from 260 to just 70 homes, a significant net reduction of 190, might again relieve some of the wider community concern about infrastructure and traffic but it marked yet another reduction in the Local Plan's built-in headroom contingency and was the only recommendation in this report (A.2) that resulted in a departure from the overall spatial strategy in the Local Plan, in that Thorpe's housing figure would fall short of the 100-300 home range established through the preferred option. Elsewhere, all suggested changes to site allocations worked within the ranges established through the preferred option.

Matter 6) The sustainability of housing developments in smaller rural villages in light of objections from residents and concerns raised by Anglian Water about limited sewage capacity, the remoteness from jobs, shops, services and facilities and local impacts on village character – particularly Little Bentley, Little Bromley, Tendring Heath, Beaumont Cum Moze and the choice and size of sites in Wrabness and Bradfield.

Whilst Officers accepted that housing developments in and around the District's smaller rural settlements were generally less sustainable than sites in or around towns and larger villages in respect of access to shops, jobs, services, facilities and infrastructure, the Government-imposed housebuilding target for Tendring was so high that it would only realistically be achieved through a variety of sites in different locations and of different sizes to deliver new homes – including smaller-scale developments in and around some of the smaller rural settlements. This approach would also assist in meeting the expectation set out in national planning policy that at least 10% of the housing requirement should be accommodated on sites of one hectare or less.

However, the representations from Anglian Water specifically in respect of sewage capacity limitations at Little Bentley, Little Bromley, and Tendring Heath, and its explicit suggestion that those areas were best treated as open countryside to which no additional development be directed, had led Officers to provisionally suggest that the specific allocations in those areas (MSA19, MSA20 and MSA22), amounting to 39 homes in total, be removed from the Local Plan.

In Bradfield, comments from the Parish Council and residents had raised concern about Site MSA9, the currently proposed allocation of 100 homes on land off Windmill Road and Straight Road in respect of its weak relationship with the wider settlement of Bradfield village and concern that an estate development would not be compatible with the linear character of the village and the historic incremental pattern of growth. The Parish Council had suggested that some housing growth could be more sensitively accommodated across a number of smaller sites. Officers had acknowledged and accept this argument and were therefore suggesting the replacement of a single 100 home allocation and its replacement with three smaller sites across the village with a total capacity of 75 homes – a total net reduction of 25 for the village.

Those changes might help to address a number of local concerns and objections, but they also bring about another reduction in the overall headroom contingency built into the Local Plan's housing supply numbers.

Matter 7) The justification and soundness of the District's Strategic Green Gaps in light of objections from certain landowners and developers stating that the designation did not align with Government policy and was preventing otherwise sustainable locations for housing development (for example around Clacton) being included in the Local Plan.

Members were aware that one of the overarching guiding principles agreed by the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee at the beginning of the review process was to carry forward and expand upon the designated Strategic Green Gaps from the Council's current Local Plan to ensure the principle of maintaining the separate identity of settlements and preventing the coalescence of settlements for the long-term. Officers had not suggested that the Council should move away from that principle and it was therefore provisionally suggested that Strategic Green Gaps continued to be included in the Local Plan and defended, with additional work undertaken by specialist consultants to review and strengthen the evidence-base in support of those allocations – in anticipation that they would come under increased scrutiny through the examination process.

Matter 8) The protection given to Ardleigh and Elmstead over other similarly sized villages due to their up-to-date Neighbourhood Plans and proximity to the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community; and whether, in light of objections from developers/landowners and current planning applications, the protection was justified.

The Committee recalled that the preferred spatial strategy in the Local Plan proposed no additional housing development in or around the villages of Elmstead Market or Ardleigh in recognition of significant developments already in the pipeline, the proximity to the Tendring / Colchester Borders Garden Community and the recent adoption of Neighbourhood Plans in both areas.

Elmstead Market was already the subject of more than one speculative planning application for major housing development which demonstrated a pressure and demand

for additional housing development around the village for which the Council would need to make decisions in due course. However, Officers considered that the rationale for providing Elmstead Market and Ardleigh with additional protection was justified. Whilst Elmstead Parish Council had submitted a strong objection to the Local Plan, Officers noted that the Draft Plan included a significant level of protection for the village in terms of limiting further allocations. Notwithstanding this, Officers' provisional view was that the protection should be carried forward.

There would likely be a strong challenge to this position from landowners, developers and agents with an interest in land around Elmstead Market and Ardleigh both through the examination process, planning applications and, potentially, planning appeals.

Matter 9) The viability of zero carbon, water efficiency and BNG policies in light of the concerns raised by landowners, developers and agents in their representations when considered alongside affordable housing requirements and financial contributions sought for education, health provision, police, fire and other infrastructure.

The economic viability of new development was already known to be more challenging in parts of Tendring than elsewhere across Essex due to the area's geography, economic profile and lower than average property values; and this was recognised in the proposed reduction of the Local Plan's affordable housing requirement from 30% in the current Local Plan to 20% for most developments in the Preferred Options Draft. Despite this proposed change in policy there were still clearly a variety of pressures on new development to deliver higher energy and water efficiency standards, greater levels of BNG and greater contributions towards an increasing range of infrastructure priorities that had to be balanced against affordable housing and general viability expectations.

Officers would instruct the Council's viability consultants to revisit and update the Viability Assessment as part of the evidence-base to help determine if the various requirements in the Local Plan were justified and defensible or whether any further changes might be required in any of those policy areas to inform the decision on the content of the final Submission Version. It would be important that the combination of different policy requirements were demonstrated to be economically viable for most developments, in order for the Local Plan to be found sound, taking into account any changes in national policy that might come into force this Summer.

Matter 10) The robustness of the evidence base in light of Natural England and the Essex Wildlife Trust's advice on the work required on Habitat Regulations Assessment, Essex County Council and National Highways' advice in respect of transport modelling; Historic England's request for a Heritage Impact Assessment; the Environment Agency's request to update the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the general need to ensure the Local Plan was supported by a proportionate range of appropriate and robust evidence.

Officers advised the Committee that much of the additional evidence-base work required to support the Local Plan review and suggested in representations submitted by statutory consultees and other partners was already commissioned and underway – with the intention that all necessary work be completed to inform the Committee's consideration of the Submission Version of the Local Plan in late Summer 2026 and a final decision from the Council to proceed to the next formal round of consultation.

The only area where evidence had been commissioned, but might not be completed in time for the decision on the Submission Version, was the Heritage Impact Assessment recommended by Historic England; but Officers were satisfied that there was sufficient available information and analysis available to justify the choice of site allocations in the Local Plan; which would be supplemented and strengthened through the HIA work in due course. If the Council delayed consultation and submission of the Local Plan to await the completion of the HIA work, it would miss the Government's cut-off date for submitting Local Plans being prepared in accordance with the current regulations.

Summary of recommended changes to sites

The most important matter for the Committee's consideration and agreement through this report (A.2) was the approach to be taken in respect of changes to housing and mixed-use sites; which would enable Officers to proceed, without delay, with preparing the Submission Version of the Local Plan and updating the evidence-base.

The recommended changes were presented through a series of 'before and after' maps attached at Appendix 1 to this report (A.2) relating only to those areas where changes were being suggested.

The following reflected a provisional set of working assumptions on potential changes to site allocations, intended to enable Officers to progress evidence base work and preparation of the Submission Version of the Local Plan. They did not represent final decisions on site allocations, which would be subject to further consideration by the Committee. In summary, the recommended changes were as follows:

Provisional recommendations for deletion or reduction of sites

1. **Site SAH3 – Land off Arthur Ransome Way, Walton (200 homes) - deletion** of site from the Draft Local Plan along with Policy SAH3 and associated adjustment to the Settlement Development Boundary on the Frinton, Walton and Kirby Cross policies map.
2. **Site SAH4 – Land East of Church Road, Brightlingsea (300 homes) – deletion** of site from the Draft Local Plan along with Policy SAH4 and associated adjustment to the Settlement Development Boundary on the Brightlingsea policies map.
3. **Site SAH10 – Land south of Colchester Road, Thorpe le Soken (150 homes) – deletion** of site from the Draft Local Plan along with Policy SAH10 and associated adjustment to the Settlement Development Boundary on the Thorpe le Soken policies map.
4. **Site MSA9 – Land south of Windmill Road and east of Straight Road, Bradfield (100 homes) – reduction** in the size of the allocation to retain a proportion of the site fronting Windmill Road, a reduction in the indicative capacity of the revised site from 100 to 20 dwellings and an associated adjustment to the Settlement Development Boundary on the Bradfield policies map.
5. **Site MSA18 – Land north of Kirby le Soken Evangelical Church, Kirby le Soken (20 homes) - deletion** of site from the Draft Local Plan and associated adjustment to the Settlement Development Boundary on both the Frinton, Walton and Kirby Cross and the Kirby le Soken policies maps.

6. **Site MSA19 – Land west of Manningtree Road, Little Bentley (12 homes) – deletion** of site from the Draft Local Plan and associated adjustment to the Settlement Development Boundary on the Little Bentley policies map.
7. **Site MSA20 – Land south of Shop Road, Little Bromley (17 homes) – deletion** of site from the Draft Local Plan and associated adjustment to the Settlement Development Boundary on the Little Bromley policies map.
8. **Site MSA22 – Haulage Depot, Heath Road, Tendring Heath (10 homes) – deletion** of site from Draft Local Plan (but with no adjustment to the Settlement Development Boundary for Tendring Heath).

Provisional recommendations for addition of sites

9. **New Site MSA33 – Former Wellhouse Site, Chestnut Way, Brightlingsea (60 homes) – addition** of new site allocation, a previously developed brownfield site with potential to accommodate around 60 residential units in the form of an extra-care/assisted living scheme.
10. **New Site MSA34 – Vicarage Field, Church Road, Brightlingsea (30 homes) – addition** of new site allocation with an associated adjustment to the Settlement Development Boundary on the Brightlingsea policies map.
11. **New Site MSA35 – Land North of Robinson Road, Brightlingsea (25 homes) – addition** of new site allocation with associated adjustment to the Settlement Development Boundary on the Brightlingsea policies map.
12. **New Site MSA36 – Land north of Wix Road, Bradfield (25 homes) – addition** of new site allocation with an associated adjustment to the Settlement Development Boundary on the Bradfield policies map.
13. **New Site MSA37 – Paddock Site south of Bradfield Playing Field, East of the Street, Bradfield (30 homes) – addition** of new site allocation with an associated adjustment to the Settlement Development Boundary on the Bradfield policies map.

Provisional recommendations for adjustments to dwelling numbers on certain sites

14. **Site SAMU8 – Hare Green Garden Village - reduction** in indicative dwelling numbers for Hare Green Garden Village from 1,700 to 1,450 within the plan period up to 2043 but retaining 4,500 as the total longer-term expectation.
15. **Site SAMU9 – Horsley Cross Garden Village – reduction** in indicative dwelling numbers for Hare Green Garden Village from 1,700 to 1,450 within the plan period up to 2043 but retaining 6,000 as the total longer-term expectation.
16. **Site SAH2 Land North of Thorpe Road, Kirby Cross – increase** in the indicative dwelling number from 420 to 450 having considered further information submitted by the site promoter with their representations.
17. **Site SAH11 – Land North of Lifehouse Spa & Hotel, Thorpe le Soken – reduction** in indicative dwelling number from 110 to 70.

18. **Site MSA4 Crisp Maltings, School Lane, Mistley – reduction** in indicative dwelling number from 80 to 50 on the advice of the site promoter having carried out further work on the potential capacity of the site.

19. **Site MSA6 Land at Pannell Place, Brightlingsea – increase** in the indicative dwelling number from 10 to 20 homes but with no adjustment to the site area or its depiction on the Brightlingsea policies map, based on more recent information provided by the site promoter.

20. **Site MSA8 Land adj Village Hall, Harwich Road, Beaumont - reduction** in the indicative dwelling number from 20 to 12 homes on the advice of the site promoter.

If those indicative changes were to be taken forward, it would result in the overall potential housing supply in the Draft Local Plan reducing from 19,517 to 18,432 – a net reduction of 1,085 dwellings. This would mean that the total potential housing still supply remained above the Government requirement of 18,173 albeit with a much-reduced level of oversupply and contingency.

Next Steps

With the Committee's agreement, Officers would progress work on the Local Plan Submission Version and updating the evidence-base in line with those recommendations – but without prejudice to the Committee's final decision in respect of the Submission Version itself in late Summer 2026, which would include the full suite of updated policies and maps.

At the meeting, the Corporate Director (Planning and Community), assisted by the Planning Policy Team Leader, introduced the report.

Officers then responded to the following questions/concerns/queries et cetera from Committee Members:-

- *Is it correct to say that the houses in Little Bentley and Little Bromley are not going to be connected with sewage, that they would have to provide their own sewage?;*
- *Has the new locations had any considerations on improvements on Highways, surgeries, schools and garden communities?;*
- *Would the roads in Elmstead Market, Bromley, etc. be getting improved?;*
- *Does Local Government Reorganisation have any significance in terms of the way that the Council deal with the recommendations that are being made for the Local Plan?;*
- *Does the presumption in favour of development impact SAH4, SAH3, MSA18 and SAH10 in terms of taking them out of the allocations, would developers be able to go to those sites and put in planning applications and would there be any point of taking them out?;*
- *Are drainage and sewage a realistic defence to take sites out of the Local Plan?;*
- *Would Thorpe-le-Soken be getting an upgrade to the roads to deal with the extra traffic?;*
- *What mechanisms are in place by the Council for auditing the number of deletions/additions within the Local Plan year-on-year?;*
- *How does the Council get accurate figures when sites have been sitting empty for a while after getting permission?; and*

- *Is the Council risking, if there has been a change in Government, cutting the housing supply too far and reducing the size of the buffer?*

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Housing & Planning Portfolio Holder (Councillor Baker) addressed the Committee on the subject matter of this item. Councillor Baker highlighted the fantastic points within the Officer report (A.2) and the fact the Local Plan was at the current stage was a credit to the Officers.

Having duly taken all the above information into account and having discussed the matter, it was moved by Councillor M Cossens, seconded by Councillor Everett and unanimously:-

RESOLVED that the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee –

- e) having previously considered report A.1 containing an initial overview of the response to public consultation on the Local Plan: Preferred Options Draft, notes the contents of this report, which sets out Officers' emerging thoughts on potential next steps, including provisional recommendations for changes to sites and further work to strengthen the technical evidence base;
- f) acknowledges and agrees that the updated mandatory housebuilding target for Tendring, calculated using the Government's standard methodology, increases to 1,069 homes a year, giving a total requirement for the rolled-forward 17-year period (1 April 2026 to 31 March 2043) of 18,173;
- g) approves the Officers' provisional recommendations for potential changes to site proposals in the Draft Local Plan, as set out in this report and depicted on maps at Appendix 1, subject to the following amendments:
 - i) that sites MSA19 (Little Bentley), MSA20 (Little Bromley) and MSA22 (Tendring Heath) are not deleted from the Draft Local Plan – having had regard to representations made by speakers and advice from Officers. This is on the basis that these sites could make a valuable contribution to local housing supply, support the rural economy and help the sustainability of local services in rural areas; and that, whilst Anglian Water has advised against development in these locations where it is dependent on connecting to the public sewer network, there should be a reasonable prospect of these developments coming forward in line with relevant adopted and emerging planning policies with appropriate alternative sewage treatment provision;
 - ii) that, in retaining site MSA20 (Little Bromley) as a housing allocation, the indicative number of dwellings be reduced from 17 to 10 to better reflect the character and density of development within the village;
 - iii) that site MSA27 (Wix) be deleted, having regard to updated information provided by Officers on the update sheet, indicating that the site is unlikely to be deliverable; and
 - iv) that the recommended changes, together with the amendments set out above, form a working basis for further evidence base work and the

preparation of the Submission Version of the Plan, and do not represent a final decision on site allocations

- h) notes that , if the provisional changes set out in this report with the amendments set out in c) above, the potential supply of homes from proposals in a revised Local Plan (alongside development that is already in the pipeline) would be expected to total approximately 18,444, which would still exceed the total mandatory housebuilding requirement of 18,173 by 271 homes – albeit with a much reduced level of oversupply and contingency from that indicated in the Preferred Options Draft;
- i) agrees that the provisional approach to site changes, be used as a working basis for progressing the preparation of the Submission Version of the Local Plan and associated evidence base, with the full draft Plan (including updated policies and maps) to be brought to the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee for further consideration in late Summer 2026 ahead of any decisions to proceed to the next stage of public consultation; and
- j) notes that Officers will progress updates to the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitat Regulations Assessment, Transport Modelling, Infrastructure Delivery Plan and other relevant evidence base documents in order to test and inform development of the Submission Version of the Local Plan.

8. REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (PLANNING AND COMMUNITY) - A.3 - ADOPTION OF THE REVISED ESSEX COAST RECREATIONAL DISTURBANCE AVOIDANCE AND MITIGATION STRATEGY (RAMS)

The Committee considered a report (A.3) of the Corporate Director (Planning & Community) which sought the Committee's agreement to the adoption of the revised Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (Essex Coast RAMS) and associated tariff, and which set out the changes from the original 2018 RAMS strategy. The report also sought the Committee's agreement to the updated governance framework supporting Essex Coast RAMS, including the withdrawal of the existing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and its replacement with a Technical Advice Note (TAN).

Following such approval by the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee the revised Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (Essex Coast RAMS) and associated tariff, as attached in Appendix 1, (replacing the existing 2018–2038 Strategy), would be submitted to Cabinet for formal adoption

The Committee was reminded that the Essex Coast RAMS set out how the Council, working in partnership with other Essex authorities, would protect the unique wildlife of the Essex coastline whilst enabling new homes and development to come forward.

It provided a co-ordinated, partnership-led approach to mitigating the recreational impacts of new residential development on protected coastal habitats and bird populations, ensuring that planned housing growth across Essex could take place in a lawful and sustainable way, whilst safeguarding sensitive species and habitats protected by international nature conservation designations.

The strategy established a strategic framework to address the in-combination effects of residential development on internationally designated coastal habitats and enabled the Council, in its role as Competent Authority, to meet its statutory duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017(as amended).

It was reported that RAMS funding had already delivered tangible mitigation measures along the Tendring coastline, including the Coastal Ranger Service, targeted visitor engagement and behaviour change initiatives, and partnership projects such as Share Our Shores to protect beach-nesting birds. Those interventions, supported by ongoing monitoring, had demonstrably improved ecological outcomes and were particularly important in managing peak seasonal visitor pressures.

The updated Strategy was supported by a refreshed evidence base, including a new visitor survey, and introduced significant changes to the scale and duration of mitigation required. Most notably, it ensured mitigation was secured for the full lifetime of development and reflected a substantial increase in planned housing growth across the Zone of Influence (ZOI) arising from the Government's revised mandatory housing targets. As a result, the RAMS tariff was proposed to increase to £476 per dwelling (or qualifying unit), ensuring that the full cost of mitigation was applied in a fair and proportionate manner.

The report also sought approval to withdraw the existing RAMS Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and replace it with a Technical Advice Note (TAN), ensuring the guidance remained up to date and consistent across the Essex Coast RAMS partnership.

At the meeting, the Planning Policy Team Leader, assisted by the Planning Policy Officer, introduced the report.

Officers then responded to the following questions/concerns/queries et cetera from Committee Members:-

- *Was it correct to say that there would be a one off charge and no subsequent charges later on?*

Having duly taken all the above information into account and having discussed the matter, it was moved by Councillor Scott, seconded by Councillor White and unanimously:-

RESOLVED that the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee –

- a) notes the revised and updated Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (Essex Coast RAMS) associated RAMS tariff, and proposed changes to the governance arrangements, as set out in this report (A.3); and
- b) recommends to the Council's Cabinet that it:
 - i. adopts the revised Essex Coast RAMS and associated tariff, as set out at Appendix 1 to report A.3, superseding the original Essex Coast RAMS (2018-2038) Strategy;

- ii. approves the implementation of a revised RAMS tariff of £476 per net additional dwelling (or equivalent qualifying development), to take effect from 1 August 2026;
- iii. withdraws the adopted Essex Coast RAMS Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), noting that its content is no longer fully aligned with the revised Strategy, evidence base and tariff;
- iv. agrees to replace the SPD with an Essex Coast RAMS Technical Advice Note (TAN); and
- v. authorises the Corporate Director (Planning and Community), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, to finalise and publish the TAN for use alongside the updated RAMS Strategy.

The meeting was declared closed at 8.48 pm

Chairman

Tendring **District Council**



PUBLIC SPEAKING SCHEME – PLANNING POLICY & LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE - JANUARY 2016

GENERAL

The Public Speaking Scheme ("the Scheme") is made pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 40 and gives the opportunity for a member of the public and other interested parties/stakeholders to speak to the Council's elected members on the Planning Policy & Local Plan Committee on any of the Officer written reports to be considered at that public meeting.

The Scheme covers both questions and statements to the Committee. Any individual wishing to speak must contact Democratic Services (see details below).

NOTICE OF QUESTION

If an individual wishes to ask a question, at the Planning Policy & Local Plan Committee meeting, prior notification of that question must be received. The principle is to provide the Chairman (or an Officer, if the Chairman decides appropriate) the ability to fully answer questions, which have been received in advance.

Notice of a question is received by delivering it in writing or by email to Democratic Services on democraticservices@tendringdc.gov.uk, by Noon on Thursday 20th August 2026.

At the meeting, you will be given an opportunity to read out your question to the Committee, and an answer will be provided. Supplementary questions are not permitted and there is no debate by the Committee at this stage.

STATEMENTS

Advance notification of the content of a statement is not required, but to assist the running of the agenda, notification of wishing to speak should be given prior to the meeting. Please contact Democratic Services (email democraticservices@tendringdc.gov.uk or telephone 01255 686584.

NUMBER AND TIMING OF QUESTIONS

At any Planning Policy & Local Plan Committee meeting an individual is limited to asking one question or making a statement per report. On each report, no public speaker may speak for longer than three minutes. Consistent with the Council Procedure Rules, the time allocated for receiving and disposing of questions shall be a maximum 45 minutes. Any question not disposed of at the end of this time shall be the subject of a written response and published with the minutes of the meeting.

SCOPE OF STATEMENTS OR QUESTIONS

Please be straightforward and concise and keep your comments to the content of the agenda item. Please be courteous and do not make personal remarks. You may wish to come to the meeting with a written statement of exactly what you wish to say or read out, having checked beforehand that it will not overrun the three minutes allowed.

Any question or statement which is not directly related to an Officer report for that meeting of the Committee will be rejected. For questions, any rejection will be communicated in advance of the meeting by Officers, and for statements made at the meeting, this will be confirmed by the Chairman.

The Council also reserves its right to reject questions or statements if in its opinion the content is defamatory, frivolous or offensive or requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

PLANNING POLICY & LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE MEMBERS & POINTS OF CLARIFICATION

No public speaker can be questioned by the Committee however, through the Chairman, relevant points of clarification arising out of the public speaking can be requested at the specific agenda item, before the debate commences. Points of clarification can be given by Officers, with the Chairman's permission.

WHO DO I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have a query with regard to public speaking, or wish to register to speak, please email democraticservices@tendringdc.gov.uk or telephone 01255 686584.

If your query is in relation to the Local Plan, please contact: Tendring District Council, Planning Services, Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO15 1SE Tel: 01255 686177 email: planning.policy@tendringdc.gov.uk

Monitoring Officer, Tendring District Council, in consultation with Head of Planning and Chairman of the Planning Policy & Local Plan Committee

(Council Procedure Rule 40) (January 2016)

PLANNING POLICY AND LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE

25 AUGUST 2026

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (PLANNING AND COMMUNITY)

A.1 TENDRING DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: SUBMISSION VERSION

(Report prepared by Anthony Brindley, William Fuller, Jacob Jaarsma, Kate Patterson, Hayley Sargent, Carlos Valenzuela, Paul Woods and Gary Guiver)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To present the Tendring District Local Plan 'Submission Version' to the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee and seek its agreement for this important document, along with the associated Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment, to be recommended for approval by Full Council to proceed to six-weeks' formal public consultation in line with Regulation 19 of the statutory plan-making process.

The Submission Version contains the full suite of revised planning policies and detailed policies maps incorporating both the changes to housing and mixed-use site allocations considered and agreed by the Committee at its last meeting on 8 June 2026, and other recommended changes to policies and maps aimed at improving the Plan and addressing potential soundness issues, having taken into account the many representations received in response to public consultation on the earlier Preferred Options Draft, carried out in February and March of this year.

Although the Submission Version contains notable changes that should address some of the previous objections, it still contains a number of policies and proposals that are known to be unpopular locally and will undoubtedly attract further objections. However, as has been reported and discussed extensively with the Committee over the course of the Local Plan review process, the overall scale of additional housing growth set out in the Local Plan is being forced upon the Council following the introduction of mandatory housebuilding targets by the Government in 2024 and the consequence of failing to have an up-to-date Local Plan that meets with government requirements is losing control of the pattern and quality of development; continued vulnerability to uncoordinated, unwanted and unplanned speculative development; and the risk of Government intervention or planning decisions being overturned on appeal.

Given the importance of the Local Plan, this report contains detailed commentary on the various risks and consequences of not proceeding to the next stage of the Local Plan review process as well as the risks that are likely to be encountered in moving forward to the next stage. These include the Planning Inspectorate's limited capacity to examine the number of Local Plans expected to be submitted across the country before the end of this year, the likelihood continued public objections, the risks involved in progressing a Local Plan with very limited headroom contingency within the supply of sites for housing and mixed-use development, the ongoing need for the Council to make

difficult and potentially unpopular decisions both on the Local Plan and on planning applications, the ongoing risk of planning appeals, the risk of government intervention, the likelihood of public criticism of the consultation exercise, the risk of economic and housing market conditions not supporting the delivery of proposals in the Plan and the risks if, for whatever reason, the Planning Inspector concludes that the Local Plan is not sound.

The Submission Version should be treated as the final draft of the Plan that the Council believes has met the legal requirements of the plan-making process and the Government's 'tests of soundness' set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). On this basis, it is the version of the Plan the Council would intend to submit to the Secretary of State following the public consultation for it to then be examined by a government-appointed Planning Inspector as part of the statutory process. The Council must submit the Local Plan to the Secretary of State before the end of 2026 under the current regulations to avoid having to start the process from scratch under a new system.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The preparation and review of the Local Plan is both a legal duty for the Council and one of its corporate priorities. As the blueprint for future growth and the rulebook of policies that will apply in the determination of planning applications, planning appeals and some enforcement cases, the Local Plan will guide the direction of growth and the shape of the Tendring area – not just in the coming years to address immediate pressures, but for the longer term over future decades and generations to come. The choices made by the Council on the content of the Local Plan in 2026 could be more important than ever, as it could well be the last Plan prepared by Tendring District Council before Local Government Reorganisation and the establishment of a new unitary authority in 2028.

This Council like many others across the country is having to review its Local Plan under extremely challenging circumstances against the backdrop of ambitious government-imposed mandatory housebuilding targets that require Tendring to plan for 1,069 homes a year - nearly double the amount of housing required under its previous Plan. The Council is also having to work to an extremely tight programme as it must submit its new Local Plan to the Secretary of State before the end of 2026 or else risk having to start the whole process from the beginning under a new system, for which the delay would have significant negative consequences for Tendring and this Council's ability to control the quality and pattern of development.

Having already carried out two rounds of formal public consultation on Issues and Options in 2025 and the Preferred Options Draft of the Local Plan in February/March 2026, the Council has reached the next important stage in the statutory plan-making process where it needs to carry out a final round of public consultation on a revised 'Submission Version' of the Local Plan. This is essentially the final draft that, following consultation, will be submitted to the Secretary of State who will then appoint a Planning Inspector to carry out a formal examination of the Plan to determine its legal compliance and soundness. Only once the Local Plan is confirmed legally compliant and sound can it be lawfully

adopted by the Council. If Local Government Reorganisation does proceed as currently proposed, the new Local Plan will be inherited by the new unitary authority for decision making purposes.

The recommended Submission Version incorporates various revisions to policies and proposals that take into account and seek to address (as far as practical) comments and objections received in response to consultation on the earlier Preferred Options Draft. The most notable of these revisions relate to sites allocated for housing and mixed-use development, which were discussed by the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee at its last meeting of 8 June 2026. These include the removal from the Plan, for justified planning reasons, two of its most objected-to development proposals at Brightlingsea and Walton on the Naze, acknowledging however that the revised Plan still contains a number of significant development proposals known to be unpopular locally and that will understandably continue to attract further objections.

Many of the development proposals in the Draft Local Plan have been included to meet the Government's mandatory housebuilding targets. The Council's opposition to the imposition of these targets has been well documented through previous reports and decisions of the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee over the course of the last two years, however it has been made very clear by the Government that failure to produce an up to date Local Plan that complies with its expectations for housing growth will result in intervention (as experienced by Basildon Borough Council) and planning decisions being overturned on appeal (as experienced by Tendring both in the past and in respect of a very recent planning application) if housing supply requirements are not being met.

Because the proposed revisions to the housing and mixed-use development allocations were detailed extensively in the reports to, and resolutions of, the Committee on 8 June 2026, the main focus of this report is to highlight the other recommended changes to specific planning policies in the Draft Local Plan and the associated maps; and to thereafter seek the Committee's approval for the revised Plan in its entirety to be recommended to Full Council for it to agree to proceed to the next stage of public consultation as part of the statutory process.

Overall strategy for growth

Although the Submission Version incorporates changes to certain site allocations, the overall vision, objectives and spatial strategy for growth have been carried forward broadly unchanged from the earlier Preferred Options Draft. Having considered the responses to the public consultation and the findings of the updated technical evidence base, Officers remain of the view that there are no other realistic spatial strategy options that can deliver the Government's expectation of 1,069 homes a year (18,173 over the 17-year period 2026-2043) in a sustainable and appropriate manner having regard to Tendring's significant physical, environmental, geographic and economic constraints and the agreed overarching principles that have guided the review of the Local Plan since the beginning of the process (which includes the continued protection of established Strategic Green Gaps).

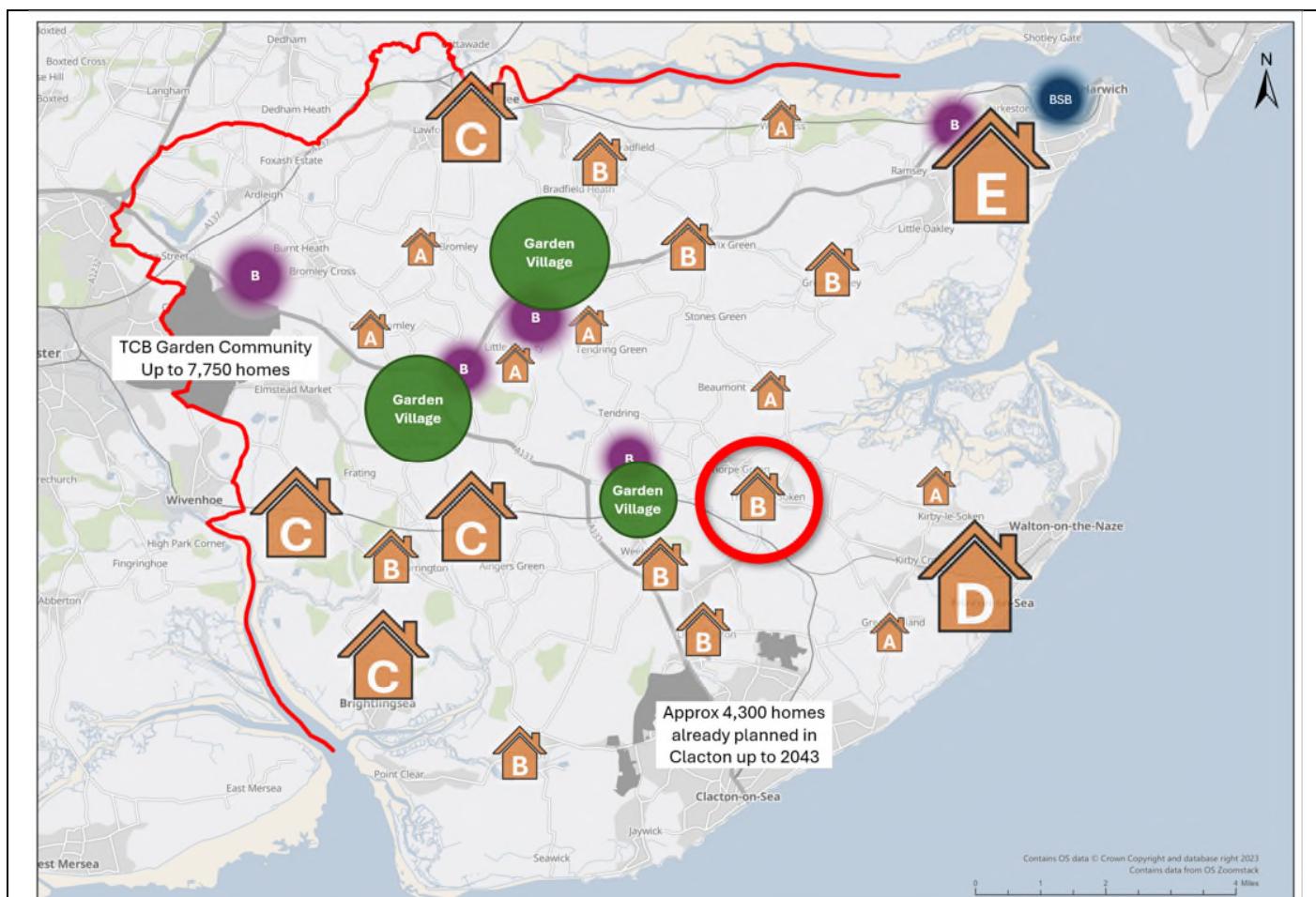
It is expected that around 10,211 of the required 18,173 homes will be built on sites carried forward from the Council's last Local Plan (including the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community

and strategic development sites around Clacton) as well as sites that are either already under construction, have planning permission for housing development or are otherwise expected to come forward on smaller sites through 'windfall' provision.

The strategy for delivering the additional 8,000 homes and associated infrastructure and employment growth up to 2043 (and further longer-term strategic growth beyond to 2043) remains broadly unchanged from the 'preferred option' that was published for consultation in February/March 2026. The preferred spatial strategy option represents a combination of Options A and B from the 2025 Issues and Options consultation, as indicated on the key diagram overleaf.

The only notable deviation from the original preferred option is at Thorpe le Soken where the allocation of housing development in the Submission Version of the Plan has been reduced to 70 homes due to issues with primary school capacity which means Thorpe now falls within the 'medium' growth category of 30-100 homes (B) rather than the 'large' growth category (C) of 100-300 homes originally envisaged.

Whilst the Local Plan deals with much more than just housing growth, it is undoubtedly the spatial strategy, distribution of housing growth, allocation of land for housing and mixed-use development and the deliverability of the Government's mandatory housebuilding targets that will be a main focus of the Planning Inspector's examination of the Plan and the main matter on which the soundness of the Plan will be scrutinised. The distribution of growth and the specific housing numbers for different parts of the District are set out in more detail within the main body of this report.



LEGEND	
●	New homes:
A	Small Housing Development (0-30 homes)
B	Medium Housing Development (30-100 homes)
C	Large Housing Development (100-300 homes)
D	Strategic/Mixed-use Development (300-800homes)
E	Strategic/Mixed-use Development (800-2000 homes)
●	Garden villages - Long Term Strategic/Mixed-use Development
●	Business parks
●	Bathside Bay
●	Existing proposals (Clacton and TCBGC)

Changes to site allocations

The Submission Version of the Local Plan incorporates nearly all of the changes to housing and mixed-use site allocations that were discussed and agreed by the Committee at its June 2026 meeting including the following:

- **Site SAH2 – Land North of Thorpe Road, Kirby Cross** – an increase in the indicative dwelling number from 420 to 450 homes having considered further information submitted by the site promoter with their representations. It should be noted that revisions to corresponding Policy SAH2 have been incorporated into the Submission Version to strengthen the protection

of footpath connections and ecology as well as stronger requirements around open space provision – noting that this proposal has attracted a high level of public objection previously.

- **Site SAH3 – Land off Arthur Ransome Way, Walton** – originally proposed for 200 homes but now deleted from the Plan in response to objections raised by the Essex Wildlife Trust and a large number of residents. The related site-specific Policy SAH3 is deleted accordingly from the Submission Version of the Plan.
- **Site SAH4 – Land East of Church Road, Brightlingsea** – previously proposed for 300 homes but deleted from the Plan, along with corresponding Policy SAH4, in response to objections from Brightlingsea Town Council and a large number of residents which raised legitimate planning concerns.
- **Site SAH10 – Land south of Colchester Road, Thorpe le Soken** – previously proposed for 150 homes but deleted from the Plan, along with corresponding Policy SAH10, in response to an objection from Essex County Council raising concern about limited primary school capacity in the Thorpe area.
- **Site SAH11 – Land North of Lifehouse Spa & Hotel, Thorpe le Soken** – a reduction in the indicative dwelling number from 110 to 70 having reviewed the site's realistic capacity. It should be noted that two parts of this site are the subject of current, but yet to be determined, planning applications for bungalow development.
- **Site MSA4 – Crisp Maltings, School Lane, Mistley** – a reduction in the indicative dwelling number from 80 to 50 on the advice of the site promoter having carried out further work on the potential capacity of the site.
- **Site MSA6 – Land at Pannell Place, Brightlingsea** – an increase in the indicative dwelling number from 10 to 20.
- **Site MSA8 – Land adj Village Hall, Harwich Road, Beaumont** – a reduction in the indicative dwelling number from 20 to 12 homes.
- **Site MSA9 – Land south of Windmill Road and east of Straight Road, Bradfield** – previously proposed for 100 homes has been reduced in area with a reduction in the expected number of homes to just 20 dwellings, in favour of a distribution of housing across Bradfield across three smaller sites.
- **Site MSA18 – Land north of Kirby le Soken Evangelical Church** – previously proposed for 20 homes but now deleted from the Plan over concerns about highway access.

- **Site MSA20 – Land south of Shop Road, Little Bromley** – originally proposed for 17 homes but now with a reduced expectation of 10 homes to better reflect the character and density of development within the village. It should be noted that Little Bromley Parish Council has written to formally object to the Committee's resolution at the 8 June meeting to retain this site in the Local Plan, asking for the Committee to reconsider deletion of the site. Details are provided in the main body of this report.
- **Site MSA27 – Land at Abbey Bottom Farm, Harwich Road, Wix** – previously proposed for 20 homes but now deleted having learnt that the principal landowner has no interest in developing the site.
- **Site MSA33 – Former Wellhouse Site, Chestnut Way, Brightlingsea** – addition of new site with an indicative capacity of 60 homes in the form of an extra-care/assisted living scheme. One of three new sites for Brightlingsea replacing, in part, some of the numbers being lost as a result of deleting contentious Site SAH4 from the Plan.
- **Site MSA34 – Vicarage Field, Church Road, Brightlingsea** – addition of new site with an indicative capacity of 30 homes.
- **Site MSA35 – Land North of Robinson Road, Brightlingsea** – addition of new site with an indicative capacity of 25 homes.
- **Site MSA36 – Land north of Wix Road, Bradfield** – addition of new site with an indicative capacity of 25 homes. One of two new sites for Bradfield aimed at achieving a thinner distribution of housing across the village following the reduction in size of Site MSA9.
- **Site MSA37 – Peacock Site south of Bradfield Playing Field, East of the Street, Bradfield** – addition of new site with an indicative capacity of 30 homes.

As set out in the June Committee report and associated resolution, the proposed changes to housing and mixed-use allocations in the Plan would have had the effect of reducing the amount of headroom contingency from around 1,300 to just 271 homes. However, Officers have had to revisit this figure following the discovery of a double-counting error in the numbers presented in the June Committee report which, when corrected, gives a deficit of around 400 homes against the 18,173 rather than a surplus.

To address this discrepancy without adding or reinstating other sites, Officers have had no choice but to look again at the trajectory assumptions for the Hare Green and Horsley Cross Garden Village proposals, and instead of reducing the estimate of homes expected to be delivered up to 2043 from 1,700 to 1,450 as suggested in the June report, it is now recommended that the figures for each proposal are instead kept at 1,700 in each location by incorporating more optimistic assumptions around the annual rates of development within the plan period, albeit still with a revised assumption that the first new homes will likely not come forward until at least 2033/34. In addition, the dwelling

capacities at Hartley Gardens, Clacton (SAMU2) and Oakwood Park, Clacton (SAMU3) have been revised from 1,700 to 1,870 and from 900 to 925 respectively based on latest evidence and, in respect of Oakwood Park, the current but yet to be determined planning application 22/00537/OUT.

Whilst most of the changes listed above will hopefully address a large number of local objections that were received in response to the Preferred Options Draft and the proposals in the Submission Version, having discovered and addressed the above-mentioned error, are still technically sufficient to meet the government requirement of 18,173 homes between 2026 and 2043, the very limited level of headroom (just 161 units) is likely to come under particular scrutiny and challenge from landowners, developers and planning agents – particularly given the reliance placed on the Garden Villages to deliver new homes in the second half of the plan-period. These fine margins further demonstrate how challenging, and potentially unrealistic, the Government's mandatory housebuilding targets are for Tendring.

Changes to planning policies

In line with the overarching principle agreed by the Committee at the beginning of the Local Plan review back in December 2023, the Council has approached the review of planning policies with the aim of updating rather than completely re-writing the Council's existing Local Plan. Therefore, the Submission Version of the Local Plan, like the earlier Preferred Options Draft, follows a similar format and chapter headings to that of the Council's existing adopted Local Plan and many of the policies are carried forward either unchanged or only slightly updated and revised. The Preferred Options Draft did however include some policies with significant revisions from the previous adopted version along with some entirely new policies – many of which were site-specific relating to the new locations and site having to be identified in the Plan for additional future development to meet the Government's housebuilding targets.

Having carried out public consultation on the Preferred Options Draft and taken into account the many representations and objections received in response to the consultation, Officers are of the view that the majority of policies from the Preferred Options Draft can be carried forward into the Submission Version of the Plan either unchanged or with relatively minor revisions – mainly in response to the advice of statutory consultees and other technical bodies. There are however various, more significant or notable revisions to policies in the Submission Version which are detailed in the main body of this report and highlighted below.

The following policies have been **deleted** in their entirety from the Submission Version of the Local Plan:

- **Policy SAH3: Development of Land off Arthur Ransome Way, Walton** – site-specific policy **deleted** and no longer featured in Chapter 9 of the Plan following the decision to delete the proposal for 200 homes in response to objections raised by the Essex Wildlife Trust and a large number of residents.

- **Policy SAH4: Development of Land East of Church Road, Brightlingsea** – site-specific policy deleted and no longer featured in Chapter 9 of the Plan following the decision to delete the proposal for 300 homes in response to objections from Brightlingsea Town Council and a large number of residents which raised legitimate planning concerns.
- **Policy SAH10: Development of Land South of Colchester Road, Thorpe le Soken** – site-specific policy deleted and no longer featured in Chapter 9 of the Plan following the decision to delete the proposal for 150 homes in response to an objection from Essex County Council raising concern about limited primary school capacity in the Thorpe area.

The following policies have been revised in the Submission Version of the Local Plan to include changes of a significant or otherwise notable nature:

- **Strategic Policy SPL1: Managing Growth** – the policy in Chapter 3 of the Plan setting out the ‘settlement hierarchy’ categorising towns and villages and underpinning the spatial strategy and distribution of growth is revised to classify Little Oakley as part of the Harwich and Dovercourt Strategic Urban Settlement given their physical connection and to be consistent with the approach taken to Parkeston. The existing village of Weeley is also included in the hierarchy alongside the proposed Weeley Green Garden Village proposal, having been omitted in the Preferred Options Draft.
- **Policy HP1: Improving Health and Wellbeing** – on the advice of the NHS Suffolk and North Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB), this policy in Chapter 4 of the Plan has been revised to be less specific in committing to health and wellbeing centres at the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community and in Clacton, or to a multi-use community hub at the Hartley Gardens development in Clacton or expansion and improvement of facilities at the Fryatt Hospital. This is because the most appropriate means of addressing the healthcare requirements for each growth area has not been determined by the various health partners of the ICB and therefore flexibility needs to be built into the Local Plan to allow for mitigation to be secured either through direct provision of land or floorspace, or via a developer contribution towards healthcare infrastructure projects to be identified.
- **Policy LP1: Housing Supply** – this policy in Chapter 5 of the Plan sets out the overall sources of housing supply to meet the government housebuilding requirement of 18,173 between 2026 and 2043. The policy along with the associated tables listing all of the relevant housing and mixed-use site allocations have been comprehensively updated in the Submission Version of the Plan to reflect the changes to site allocations set out above in this report and rolling forward the plan period. The revised policy shows that the Local Plan makes provision for 18,334 homes which incorporates 161 units of contingency headroom above the government requirement.
- **Policy LP2: Housing Choice** – this policy in Chapter 5 of the Plan has been revised to include specific reference to the latest evidence on need for supported and specialist housing and

armed forces veterans as a group in society that may have specific housing and support needs. The revised policy also refers to park homes, modular homes and other innovative forms of residential development being supported where they comply with other policies in the Local Plan.

- **Policy LP4: Development Layout & Design** – this policy in Chapter 5 of the Plan has been revised to include more detailed guidance around Biodiversity Net Gain and the incorporation of green infrastructure and vegetation within new developments and references other relevant guidance including that relating to inclusive design, age friendly environments and dementia-friendly design.
- **Policy LP5: Affordable Housing** – this policy in Chapter 5 of the Plan incorporates revisions to highlight exceptional reasons why it might not be possible to limit groups of affordable homes to no more than 10 in different parts of a site, for example where site-specific constraints, the scale of development, management considerations or Registered Provider requirements justify an alternative approach. The revised policy also includes reference to specialist and supported housing to meet identified needs within the District.
- **Strategic Policy LP9: Gypsy and Traveller Sites** – possibly the most significant policy revisions proposed in the Submission Version of the Local Plan relate to this policy in Chapter 5. To comply with national planning policy set out in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), there is an expectation that Local Plans will be specific about the sites or locations in which the projected need for gypsy and traveller sites will be met. The evidence on gypsy and traveller need has been updated, and the revised policy reflects the updated projected need for 45 pitches up to 2043. The underlying evidence recognises that accommodation needs can be met through a variety of mechanisms, including site intensification, reconfiguration, additional mobile homes and other forms of provision on existing sites, and therefore the Local Plan expresses site capacity in terms of additional pitches or pitch equivalents.

The previous version of the policy in the Preferred Options Draft identified existing established sites at Woodfield Bungalow in Great Bentley and Gutteridge Hall Lane in Weeley as locations for proportionate expansion to meet short-term needs, with the intention to invite submissions from relevant landowners to identify the extent of available land in those locations to determine their suitability for allocation. However, because no specific submissions were made but the Council is still required to identify specific locations, the updated study looked more widely at where existing accommodation needs arise and where additional capacity could reasonably be delivered through expansion, intensification or reconfiguration of existing sites.

The revised policy therefore reflects the latest study and identifies existing sites at Great Bromley, Ardleigh, Weeley, Bradfield and Kirby le Soken as locations capable of delivering 27 pitches or pitch equivalents through site intensification, reconfiguration or extension or other forms of accommodation provision. In many cases, the identified need arises from households already living on established sites who require their own independent accommodation,

meaning delivery of the allocated capacity would not necessarily result in a corresponding or proportionate increase in vehicle movements, activity levels or other impacts typically associated with entirely new households moving onto a site. The impact of any proposal on traffic, residential amenity and the wider environment would nevertheless need to be assessed on its individual merits through the planning application process.

To meet longer-term needs, the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community will provide new purpose-built Gypsy and Traveller pitches, with additional provision to be delivered through the Garden Villages at Hare Green and Horsley Cross.

- **Non-strategic Policy LP11: HMOs and Bedsits** – this policy in Chapter 5 of the Plan is revised in the Submission Version to strengthen the requirement for both individual and cumulative impacts of HMOs and bedsits to be considered in the determination of planning applications. The revised policy also includes additional expectations around the standard of accommodation for future occupiers, the consideration of impacts on neighbouring residents through noise, disturbance, activity levels, refuse storage requirements, parking demand and general operational impacts. Proposals will also have to demonstrate suitable management arrangements are in place for the maintenance of communal facilities, waste storage areas and external spaces.
- **Strategic Policy PP7: Employment Allocations** – this policy in Chapter 6 lists all of the sites specifically allocated for new employment development including B2 General Industry; B8 Storage and Distribution; Eg(ii) Research and Development; and Eg(iii) Light Industrial Processes. The only change proposed to this policy is the deletion of Land off Clacton Road/Dead Lane, Mistley as a 2ha employment site in the knowledge that development for that purpose has not come forward as part of the wider mixed-use development that is already under construction, and that a different parcel of the wider site is currently subject of a current, but yet to be determined, planning application (26/00645/FUL) which indicates that employment provision might be incorporated into the development in a different form, and in a different location than previously identified in the Local Plan.
- **Non-strategic Policies PP10: Camping and Touring Caravan Sites; and PP11: Holiday Parks** – these policies in Chapter 6 of the Plan are revised in the Submission Version to include specific reference to National Landscapes (formerly known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) to ensure any new development affective their setting conserves and enhances their natural beauty, landscape character and special qualities. The revisions specifically require that development is appropriately located, designed and landscaped to avoid adverse impacts on important views, tranquillity, dark skies and the wider landscape setting.
- **Strategic Policy PP12: Improving Education and Skills** – revisions to this policy in Chapter 6 of the Plan on the advice of Sport England to include a requirement for new educational facilities including indoor or outdoor recreational facilities to be designed to facilitate

community use outside normal educational hours; with long-term community use agreements put in place to secure ongoing public access where appropriate.

- **Non-strategic Policy PP15: Walton Mere** – this policy is carried forward into the Submission Version of the Plan with a simple addition requiring any Biodiversity Net Gain, new saltmarsh habitat or other ecological enhancement to support the objectives of the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy, including opportunities for coastal habitat creation, nature recovery and strengthened ecological connectivity.
- **Policy PPL3: The Rural Landscape** – this policy in Chapter 7 of the Plan has been revised in the Submission Version to make more specific reference to National Landscapes and for proposals for electricity schemes or communication requirement to be undergrounded in those areas, and for the priorities in the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy to be taken into account in considering the impact of development on the rural landscape.
- **Strategic Policy PPL4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity** – significant revisions have been made to this policy in Chapter 7 of the Plan in response to advice from Natural England and Essex Wildlife Trust and to reflect the latest evidence underpinning the Habitat Regulations Assessment. The revised policy includes strengthened requirements relating to the protection of internationally designated habitat sites and introduces specific policy provisions relating to Functionally Linked Land, recognising that land outside designated sites can nevertheless be important to qualifying bird species. The policy also introduces a framework for the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), which involves providing attractive places for walking, dog exercising and informal recreation away from the District's most sensitive wildlife habitats. The purpose is to help protect internationally important sites by encouraging some visitors to use alternative green spaces instead. Additional policy requirements clarify the relationship between SANG provision and the Essex Coast RAMS strategy and seek to ensure that recreational impacts on protected habitats are appropriately addressed. The policy also aligns development proposals with the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy and strengthens expectations around biodiversity net gain, green and blue infrastructure, ecological connectivity and habitat enhancement, ensuring that development contributes positively towards nature recovery and environmental improvement.
- **Non-strategic Policy PPL12a: St. Osyth Priory** – this policy in Chapter 7 of the earlier Preferred Options Draft included a statement that for any residential enabling development proposals in respect of the Priory, the Council will expect the development to have a reasonable geographical relationship and connection to St. Osyth, the Priory and the community to which it most relates. However, this requirement attracted objections both from St. Osyth Parish Council and the owners of the Priory and, in response, Officers are proposing deleting that requirement from the policy in the Submission Version. Officers accept that whilst it might have been the Council's preference to discourage residential enabling development schemes in or around settlements and communities unrelated to St. Osyth and the Priory, there is no legal basis for restricting enabling proposals to certain geographical locations and,

in any event, proposals in any location would need to be considered on their merits against relevant national and local policies.

- **Strategic Policy CP1: Sustainable Transport and Active Travel** – revisions to this policy in Chapter 8 of the Plan have been made in response to advice from Essex County Council and include additional references to the Tendring District Cycling Action Plan, Essex Walking Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The revised policy will also require all major developments to secure monitored Travel Plans with enforceable remedial mechanisms, demonstrating quantified mode share and carbon reduction trajectories. The revised policy also includes a statement that parking provision is to be assessed using ECC's Parking Guidance and Electric Vehicle Strategy and for electric vehicle charging to follow relevant building regulations and ECC's Electric Vehicle Charge Point Strategy.
- **Strategic Policy DI1: Infrastructure Delivery and Impact Mitigation** – although no notable changes are proposed to the wording of this policy in Chapter 10 itself, the associated table 10.1 is expanded to give the Council the ability to seek financial contributions, where justified against the relevant regulations, for the provision of emergency services facilities and infrastructure – following advice from Essex Police, Essex County Fire & Rescue Services and the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

Changes to site-specific policies

Chapter 9 in the Local Plan sets out the 'site-specific' policies relating to particular proposals for Garden Communities, Garden Villages, other strategic or larger residential and mixed-use sites or employment allocations with specific requirements. As already stated, Policies SAH3, SAH4 and SAH10 in respect of sites in Walton, Brightlingsea and Thorpe have been deleted from the Submission Version of the Plan, but all others have been carried forward, including some where some notable changes have been made.

Having considered the advice of Natural England, Essex Wildlife Trust and the consultants carrying out the Local Plan's Habitat Regulations Assessment and Appropriate Assessment, a number of the site-specific policies have been revised to include specific provision for 'Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspace' (SANGs) to address recreational impacts on protected habitats as well as references to functionally linked land and its protection and impact mitigation/compensation.

A number of the policies have also been revised to include specific reference Green and Blue Infrastructure and ensuring opportunities are taken to retain, enhance and ingrate such features within a multi-functional network. Some policies have also been strengthened to require development to seek to improve walking and cycling connectivity to surrounding neighbourhoods, services and facilities. Officers have also taken the opportunity to review policy wording to ensure consistency and to incorporate wording to better reflect the findings of the latest Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which has been updated as part of the technical evidence base.

For the Garden Village proposals at Hare Green and Horsley Cross, Strategic Policies SAMU8 and SAMU9 have been strengthened to include requirements around SEND provision; the need for open space, sport and recreation strategies and a Heritage Impact Assessment to inform the future masterplanning work; and multi-user walking, cycling and bridleway network provision. In addition, whilst it would be the intention for each of the developments to be guided by its own Development Plan Document (DPD), with an ever-changing planning system the policies have also been revised to indicate that further detail could also be developed as part of any future review of the overall Local Plan (which may well be a new Local Plan for the future unitary authority).

Some other notable changes are highlighted as follows:

- **Strategic Policy SAMU6: Development of Weeley Green Garden Village** – the policy for this 900-home mixed use development has been strengthened with the addition of a requirement that development proposals be accompanied by an infrastructure phasing, delivery, funding and monitoring strategy demonstrating how infrastructure necessary to support each phase of development will be secured and delivered. Development shall deliver its own infrastructure requirements and contribute proportionately to any shared strategic infrastructure where required.
- **Strategic Policy SAMU7: Redevelopment of Saltings Quarter, Riverside Avenue, Manningtree** – the policy for this riverside mixed-use development has been revised on the advice of the Environment Agency to include a specific requirement for the development to be informed by the findings of the Local Plan's Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and supported by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment demonstrating that the development will be safe for its lifetime, taking account of climate change, safe access and egress, flood resilience measures and emergency planning arrangements.
- **Strategic Policy SAMU9 – Development of Horsley Cross Garden Village** – Following the Preferred Options consultation, the site promoter (Rose Builders) provided the Council with additional evidence setting out the extent and configuration of the land under their control and being promoted for development. Having reviewed this information, Officers are proposing a number of minor amendments to the broad location boundary to better reflect site ownership, physical features and development constraints, and to ensure that Policy SAMU9 represents a robust and deliverable proposal in the Submission Version of the Local Plan.
- **Strategic Policy SAH2: Development North of Thorpe Road, Kirby Cross** – the policy for this 450 home development (increased from 420) has been strengthened having regard to consultation responses, to specifically require the development to retain and enhance Footpath 17 and its connections to the wider Public Rights of Way network, including provision for a multi-user route where appropriate.

- **Strategic Policy SAE3: Collierswood Farm A120 Strategic Business Park** – the policy for this strategic business park proposal north of the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community has been revised and strengthened to require the development to deliver and, where necessary, safeguard land for necessary infrastructure and to require the submission of an infrastructure phasing, delivery and monitoring strategy. That strategy will have to demonstrate how required infrastructure will be funded, delivered, maintained and reviewed, ensuring that no phase of development proceeds unless the infrastructure necessary to support that phase has been secured.

Changes to the Policies Maps

The policies maps that accompany the Submission Version Local Plan are presented in a similar format to those in the Council's current adopted Local Plan and the more recent Preferred Options Draft in the interest of familiarity and continuity. As per the current Local Plan, they will include large scale maps at district level over three fold-out maps covering the west, south-east and north-east of the district respectively; and then separately, at a more close-up scale, area by area and settlement by settlement on specific inset maps presented in alphabetical order.

The most significant changes to the Policies Maps between the Preferred Options Draft and Submission Version relate to the depiction of housing and mixed-use development sites including the deletion of sites SAH3, SAH4 and SAH10 in Walton, Brightlingsea and Thorpe, the amended broad location boundary at Horsley Cross, the inclusion of new allocations and any consequential changes to settlement development boundaries or other designations (such as Coastal Protection Belt) that arise.

Elsewhere there are relatively few changes, with the most notable being the designation of safeguarded open space at Lawford Tye and land adjoining Lady Nelson Playing Field in Thorpe (which is intended to transfer to the Parish Council under the provisions of Policy SAH11 for development north of Lifehouse Spa & Hotel, although this designation has been omitted from the Appendix maps in error and will be corrected prior to consultation) and the extension of the Strategic Green Gaps between:

- Clacton and Little Clacton;
- Clacton and Jaywick;
- Dovercourt, Ramsey, and Little Oakley;
- Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken;
- Elmstead Market and TCBGC; and
- Little Clacton and Weeley Heath.

Legal compliance and soundness

The Council is required to produce a Local Plan that is legally compliant and sound and this has to be tested and confirmed by a government-appointed Planning Inspector at the examination stage of the process before the Council can lawfully proceed to formally adopt the Plan.

The legal test is for the Local Plan to have been prepared in accordance with all the relevant legislation, regulations and procedures, carrying out consultation in the correct manner and preparing and consulting on a Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment. The soundness test for the Local Plan is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which says that Plans can be considered 'sound' if they are positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

Officers believe that the Submission Version of the Local Plan presented with this report does represent a legally compliant and sound Plan produced to the best of the Council's ability given the extremely challenging housebuilding targets and tight work programme. However, others have the opportunity to indicate otherwise through representations in response to the public consultation; and once the Plan is submitted to the Secretary of State those representations can then be considered by the Planning Inspector as part of examination.

Although an Inspector can, through the later examination process, propose modifications to rectify resolvable soundness issues, it can lengthen the examination and delay formal adoption – and it is therefore advisable that Councils carry out their own assessment as their Plans progress through the different stages of the process. With that in mind, Officers have continually assessed the soundness of policies in the emerging Plan with reference to guidance produced by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) and have attended a Planning Inspectorate advisory visit.

Weight to be given to the emerging Local Plan

From 26 January 2026 the Council's existing Section 1 Local Plan containing the current housebuilding requirement of 550 homes a year will be more than five-years old – requiring the Council to revert to new Government mandatory housebuilding target (now 1,069) for the purposes calculating housing supply and making decisions on planning applications for housing. This has resulted in the Council being unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land and this will remain the case the coming months until such time that sufficient sites have obtained planning permission or can otherwise be shown to be deliverable within five years.

Until the supply of housing land increases to the extent that a five-year supply can be demonstrated, Tendring could be vulnerable to a potential increase in planning applications for housing development. National planning policy will expect the application of the 'tilted balance' to the Government's 'Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development', which essentially requires Councils to grant planning permission for new housing unless there are very good reasons not to do so, regardless of whether or not sites are allocated in the Local Plan. This creates a heightened risk that refusals without sufficiently robust justification could be overturned on appeal by a Government-appointed Planning Inspector.

However, Councils are allowed to give some weight to the policies and proposals in emerging Local Plans according to their stage of preparation, the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies and the degree of consistency with the policies in the NPPF. Therefore, if the Council agrees to publish the Submission Version of the Local Plan for public consultation, Planning Officers and the Council's Planning Committee will have the ability to give some additional weight to the emerging policies in the determination of planning applications, alongside the existing adopted policies – with the weight increasing further when the Plan is submitted to the Secretary of State and as it progresses through the examination process.

Updates to the technical evidence base

The Submission Version of the Local Plan is supported by an extensive but proportionate technical evidence base which has been updated and added to since the Preferred Options stage of the process. As well as taking into account the consultation responses in making revisions to the Submission Version, the updated evidence has informed some of the notable changes to certain policies and proposals. Because Local Plan preparation is an evidence-based process, the various studies and other documents that form the evidence base are critical in demonstrating the Plan's soundness.

Since the publication of the Preferred Options Draft, a number of studies and documents have either been updated or added to as part of the technical evidence base or are in the process of being finalised ahead of the publication of the Submission Version for consultation. The most significant studies and documents are as follows:

- An updated Sustainability Appraisal (a legal requirement of the plan-making process);
- An updated Habitat Regulations Assessment (also a legal requirement);
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment;
- Employment Land Review;
- Whole Plan Viability Assessment;
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan;
- Transport Assessment;
- Education Scenario Test;
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;

- Water Cycle Study;
- Landscape Character Appraisal;
- Strategic Green Gap Study; and
- Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Delivery Assessment.

The main body of this report contains a full summary of all of the evidence base documents that have informed the preparation of the Draft Local Plan and which are to be published on the Council's website as background documents.

Public consultation

Under the plan-making regulations, the Submission Version Local Plan must be published alongside the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment for six-weeks public consultation. All of the evidence base documents that support the Local Plan, including draft Consultation Statement and Statement of Cooperation, will also be published for public inspection as background information.

The focus of the public consultation exercise for the Submission Version of the Local Plan will be to encourage and invite residents and other interested parties to consider and comment specifically on whether or not they think the Plan complies with legal requirements of the planning system; and specifically, whether or not they think the policies and proposals in the Plan meet with the 'tests of soundness' set out in national planning policy. This is because the representations received in response to the consultation will go to the government-appointed Planning Inspector as part of the examination process, whose job it will be to examine the Plan's legal compliance and soundness.

It is proposed that the consultation could take place from early September to mid-October and will include a number of public events, consistent with previous consultations.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee:

- a) notes the content of this report explaining how the Tendring District Local Plan – Submission Version has been developed having regard to the direction given and decisions taken by the Committee at previous meetings, feedback from the public consultation on Preferred Options Draft carried out in February and March 2026 and the updated evidence base – as well as the requirements of national planning policy;**
- b) subject to the agreement of the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder responsible for Planning, agrees to recommend to Full Council:**

- i. that the Tendring District Local Plan – Submission Version (at Appendix 1) be approved for six-weeks formal public consultation, alongside the related Sustainability Appraisal (at Appendix 2), Habitat Regulations Assessment (at Appendix 3) and other updated supporting evidence (including those listed as background documents) in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and Regulation 13 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (as amended); and
 - ii. that delegated authority be given to the Corporate Director (Planning and Community), in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee, to make corrections if necessary to address minor formatting, mapping, typographical, grammatical or factual errors within the aforementioned Draft Plan (in Appendix 1), in the event that any are discovered before consultation commences;
- c) notes that a final decision to confirm the Council’s wish to submit the Local Plan and associated documents to the Secretary of State would need to be taken by Full Council, on the recommendation of the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee following the closure of the public consultation; and
- d) notes that the submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State will need to happen before 31 December 2026 or else the Council will need to begin the Local Plan review from scratch under a new system.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

Ensuring the District has an up-to-date Local Plan is a statutory duty and a high priority for the Council, with a requirement to review and update them every five years. The review of the Local Plan is thus identified as a Council priority within the Corporate Plan (Our Vision) 2024-2028. It is also the goal of the Government for local planning authorities to deliver sustainable development and coordinate provision of housing, jobs and infrastructure whilst best protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment.

The need to review and update the Local Plan for Tendring has become all the more important following significant changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) made by the Government following the General Election in 2024 to increase housing delivery across the country through the introduction and imposition of mandatory housebuilding targets calculated using a standard methodology. With the requirement for housebuilding in Tendring nearly doubling from previous levels, it is necessary to put in place an updated Local Plan that responds positively and

proactively to these new targets to work towards achieving the best outcome for the District. In doing so, it avoids an extended period of time in which the area could be vulnerable to unplanned, uncoordinated and speculative housing development proposals over which the Council could have limited control – with a higher likelihood of local planning decisions being overturned on appeal. As explained elsewhere in this report, the Council is already witnessing an increase in planning applications for such proposals.

The programme for Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Greater Essex has also heightened the importance of the Local Plan Review in Tendring. As new powers including strategic planning powers are now devolved to upper-tier authorities and Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) (with the election of a Mayor for Greater Essex now expected in 2028) and as the area moves from a two-tier local government structure with County and District Councils replaced with Unitary Authorities from 2028, the current Local Plan Review could well be Tendring District Council's last opportunity to influence the long-term approach to growth in our area before the new structures are put in place. If the Council completes the Local Plan Review and adopts a new Local Plan in 2027 or early 2028, it will be inherited by the new Unitary Authority for decision making purposes and will influence the content of the Mayor's first 20–30-year Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) for the wider Greater Essex area.

In its meetings since 20 December 2023, the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee has already considered and agreed:

- a set of overarching guiding principles;
- the carrying out of two 'call for sites' exercises;
- a revised vision and objectives statement for consultation;
- six high-level spatial strategy options for consultation, later revised to four following the changes in Government policy and the introduction of increased housebuilding targets;
- an Issues & Options Consultation Document for which public consultation was carried out in Spring 2025;
- revisions to the Local Development Scheme (LDS) setting out the overarching work programme and timetable;
- the preferred spatial strategy for growth and the specific locations and sites for housing, mixed-use development and employment land;
- the Preferred Options Draft Local Plan for which public consultation was carried out in February/March 2026;
- a report setting out the main issues and matters raised through the responses to the Preferred Options consultation;
- the revised baseline housing position at April 2026 for the purposes of the Local Plan Review going forward; and
- provisional changes to the housing and mixed-use allocations in the Draft Local Plan for incorporation into the next version of the Plan i.e. the Submission Version that is now the subject of this report.

At its last meeting on 8 June 2026, the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee gave provisional agreement to a number of recommended changes to the housing and mixed-use allocations in response to comments received through the Preferred Options consultation. Amongst others, these changes included the deletion of two of the most objected-to proposals from the Preferred Options Draft in Brightlingsea and Walton on the Naze; deletion of a large housing allocation in Thorpe le Soken; the inclusion of some new sites in Brightlingsea and Bradfield; and changes to indicative numbers on other sites – including the assumptions for housing delivery up to 2043 at the proposed Hare Green and Horsley Cross Garden Villages.

The Submission Version of the Plan reflects these changes and the seriousness with which the Council has considered the comments raised by residents, communities and other stakeholders through the previous consultation – including Town and Parish Councils, many of whom have engaged positively and cooperatively in the process. The Submission Version also incorporates further changes to the wording of specific policies in response to comments raised through the previous consultation and to reflect the updates to the technical evidence base. In making such changes in response to the comments received, Officers are hopeful that the Submission Version of the Plan might receive fewer public objections than the Preferred Options Draft, however that can not be guaranteed.

Going forward, it will be a priority to progress through the remaining stages of the plan-making process quickly to both minimise the period of time the District could be vulnerable to unplanned speculative development; and to ensure the updated Plan can be submitted to the Secretary of State before the end of 2026 – the ‘cut-off’ point for Local Plans being prepared under the current plan making system. If the Committee for whatever reason at this meeting decides not to recommend the Submission Version to Full Council to approve for public consultation, or if Full Council does not agree to proceed to consultation, it is very unlikely that the cut-off date for submission will be achievable. The risks and implications of missing the cut-off point are set out in this report.

RESOURCES AND RISK

Resourcing the plan-making process

The overall review and update of the Local Plan has been managed by the Council's Planning Team utilising funds from the agreed Local Plan budget; however cost pressures for 2026/27 and 2027/28 have been identified that reflect the increased costs of consultancy support and the consequences of having to condense what might usually be a four-year programme of work into two years to meet government requirements in respect of housebuilding and the cut-off date for submitting Local Plans to the Secretary of State.

The near doubling of Tendring's housebuilding requirement for the period to 2043 has already had a significant impact on resources, with Officers having to assess more sites and locations for development and test the impacts on infrastructure and the environment across more parts of the District. With more sites identified for development across a wider range of locations across Tendring,

the consultation on the Preferred Options Draft unsurprisingly attracted a larger number of objections from communities than would possibly have been the case if government policy had not changed and a lower and more manageable housing requirement remained in place.

Because of the Government's strict deadline of the end of 2026 for submitting Local Plans to the Secretary of State under the current plan-making regulations, the Council risks missing the deadline if it does not progress quickly to agree and carry out consultation on the revised Submission Version of the Local Plan, with only few months of 2026 remaining. The consequence of failing to meet that deadline will be that the Council would have to start the plan-making process again under the Government's new system that, whilst designed to be streamlined, will significantly delay progress in getting an up-to-date Local Plan in place for Tendring. This risks leaving the District vulnerable to speculative development over an extended period of time and would likely result the new unitary council, not Tendring District Council, progressing the Plan through the various stages of the new system.

The work on the Local Plan considered by the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee to date has been carried out mainly by Officers in-house; however, much of the supporting evidence base has been produced by external specialist consultants who may need to be called upon to assist the Council in providing expert evidence at the future examination hearings. The transport modelling work has been a particularly expensive element of the technical evidence prepared in support of the Local Plan, albeit very necessary to assess the impact and demonstrate the soundness and deliverability of the Local Plan, particularly the large Garden Village proposals at Hare Green and Horsley Cross.

Although Officers are hopeful that the changes to policies and proposals in the revised Submission Version of the Plan might result in fewer public objections during the next round of consultation, (particularly in locations like Brightlingsea and Walton on the Naze where contentious development proposals have been deleted), this is not guaranteed – and the Council must still anticipate that there will be a significant level of objection to the Submission Version that could result in a lengthy examination process, that will need to be appropriately resourced in due course. Furthermore, it is often developers, landowners and planning agents that put up a strong and well-resourced challenge to Local Plans; and Councils therefore need to be prepared to respond to that challenge by resourcing their own defence accordingly. Where appropriate, and in line with standard practice, Officers will continue to encourage the landowners, developers and agents promoting or supporting sites and proposals included in the Submission Version to carry out their own work and produce further information in support of the deliverability of their site proposals – which will support the examination process in due course.

In carrying out the formal public consultation on the Submission version, the Planning Team will draw on assistance from Officers across its services to attend events and meetings. At the events held for the previous Preferred Options consultation, there was also good attendance and support from TDC Councillors and Town & Parish Councillors which was welcomed.

Risks

In considering the Submission version of the Local Plan and whether or not to proceed to the next stage of the process, the main issues for Councillors to bear in mind in respect of risks are the tight timetable for progressing the Local Plan along with the serious consequences of failing to submit a sound Plan to the Secretary of State by the end of 2026; the fact that the Council is still having to make very difficult and unpopular decisions about the content of the Local Plan; and that decisions on changes to the Plan that might prove popular locally might result in tougher scrutiny, challenge and criticism from other interested parties and will need to be justified to the Planning Inspector as part of the examination process. Ultimately, the Inspector's judgment on legal compliance and soundness will determine whether the Council can formally adopt the Local Plan.

Risk of delay and missing the 'cut-off' date for the current plan-making system

The programme and timetable for the Local Plan review (as agreed by the Committee as part of the updated Local Development Scheme on 8 December 2025) proposes that all the necessary stages of the process required for the Council to submit its final agreed version of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State are completed before the end of 2026. The end of 2026 is the cut-off point for Councils submitting Local Plans prepared under the current plan-making regulations and procedures; after which any new Local Plans will be expected to be prepared in accordance with the new procedures which require a very different standardised format of Local Plan for which the full process would need to start from the beginning. It is important therefore that the Council does submit its new Local Plan to the Secretary of State before the end of 2026. Any delay in progressing through the next consultation stage of the process will put that timeframe at risk.

The consequence of having to switch to the new system of plan-making would be that the Council would not be able to carry forward much of the content of the existing Local Plan (which includes bespoke policies of local significance); and Tendring would be left without an up to date Plan to guide the direction of future housing, employment land and other development for a longer period, in which time the District will remain vulnerable to speculative planning applications while a new-style Local Plan is being drawn up. Such a delay would potentially also mean that the Council would lose its opportunity to set the planning framework for the Tendring area in the remaining years ahead of Local Government Reorganisation and the establishment of a new unitary authority.

The Planning Inspectorate's capacity to receive and examine Local Plans

The Government's changes to the planning system, both in respect of moving towards a new system of plan-making and imposing mandatory housebuilding targets, has resulted in many Councils being in the same position as Tendring. Councils in the process of carrying out their five-year Local Plan review under the current system are looking to progress quickly to submit a Local Plan to the Secretary of State before the end of 2026.

The consequence is that the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) is likely to receive an extremely high number Local Plan submissions in one go at the end of 2026 (potentially more than 100) with an expectation from the Government that all of these Local Plans will be examined within a reasonable period of time to enable Councils to adopt those Plans and achieve its ambition of full coverage of up-to-date Local Plans across the country. This will put the Planning Inspectorate under significant pressure to progress an unprecedented number of Local Plan examinations at the same time which will be challenging to resource. Whilst the Planning Inspectorate has been carrying out a recruitment campaign to get more Inspectors in place in anticipation of this increase in workload, it will likely have to prioritise the examination of Local Plans to manage workloads and might look to push back submitted Local Plans that, on receipt, exhibit soundness issues that might require further work.

Therefore, Councils are being asked to undertake a PINS checklist exercise prior to the submission of their Local Plans requiring the Councils to have carried out their own analysis of representations received in response to the Regulation 19 stage consultation and identified the main issues arising in respect of legal compliance and soundness. The checklist then has to then be sent to PINS who will advise if the Local Plan is ready or not to be submitted. The need to carry out this work adds two additional risks to Councils that have not been present in the past. The first is that the Councils are not able to carry out the checklist exercise and receive a response from PINS in time to submit their Local Plan to the Secretary of State before the end of 2026; and the second risk is that having submitted the checklist, PINS advises that the Local Plan is not ready for examination.

Because of this, it will be important for the Council to not only ensure the Local Plan progresses as quickly as possible to consultation on the Regulation 19 Submission Version, but to also to ensure enough time between the end of the consultation and the end of the year to carry out the checklist assessment, get it submitted, and receive confirmation from PINS that the Local Plan is ready to be submitted. With this issue in mind Officers have taken every opportunity available to meet with government officials and members of the PINS team to seek advice, update them on the progress of the Draft Local Plan and highlight key issues being encountered in trying to comply with government requirements.

On 22 June 2026 an online advisory meeting with a PINS Inspector took place in which Officers were able to outline some of the key challenges facing the Local Plan review and seek the Inspector's advice on how such issues might be approached and what the Council might need to consider in preparing for the submission of the Plan to the Secretary of State.

The Inspector's advice was that it will be very challenging for many Councils to demonstrate the soundness of their Local Plans against the backdrop of the Government's new requirements and that if Inspector's do identify soundness issues or gaps in the evidence base that could take longer than six-months to resolve, there is a higher likelihood that Councils will be advised to withdraw their Local Plans and start again under the new system.

Given that the Council's strategy for growth in the Draft Local Plan relies on the establishment of longer-term Garden Villages at Hare Green and Horsley Cross where there will be a degree of

uncertainty as to the timescales for delivery and funding mechanisms for early infrastructure delivery in the early years of the plan period, the Inspector's advice emphasises the importance of telling a very clear story as to why the preferred strategy has been chosen and how and why other alternatives have been discounted. With this advice in mind, Officers will begin work on a topic paper that clearly articulates the journey the Council has taken over the last three years to reach the current position in respect of the Local Plan's spatial strategy and site choices.

Strong likelihood of continued public objection to the Local Plan

When the Council carried out formal consultation in the Preferred Options Draft of the Local Plan in February and March of 2026, it knew that there would be a lot of public interest and a lot of objection from residents and communities to policies and proposals in the Plan – particularly the additional housing and mixed-use development sites included in the Plan to meet the Government's new mandatory housebuilding targets. On 8 June 2026, the Committee considered a report providing an overview of the responses and the main issues and matters that were raised; and it was no surprise that the amount of objection from residents and communities was significant.

The Submission Version of the Local Plan incorporates changes aimed at addressing any issues of legal compliance and soundness raised through the last consultation and which might have the potential to satisfy a significant number of public objections, particularly in respect of the developments in Brightlingsea and Walton. However, even with the changes, the revised Plan will not satisfy everybody's concerns and may well result in completely new objections from interested parties, some that might be aggrieved by the changes themselves. Whilst it might be reasonable for the Council to hope there will be fewer public objections overall to the Submission Version compared to the Preferred Options Draft following the changes, this is by no means guaranteed.

Officers expect that many residents and communities will continue to raise objections and concerns as they did at Preferred Options Stage in respect of matters set out in detail in the June Committee report including: inadequacies in transport, utilities and community infrastructure; environmental impacts; questions over the need and realistic deliverability of the housing; the challenge of matching housing and jobs growth; issues around migration and affordability; loss of agricultural greenfield land; impact on local character; criticism of recent developments; and the distribution and proportions of development across different parts of the District.

Whilst the deletion of the contentious Brightlingsea and Walton housing allocations may address the concerns raised in around 200 formal representations of objection and petitions signed by 700 residents at Preferred Options stage, the Submission Version still includes the development north of Thorpe Road, Kirby Cross which last time attracted 50 objections and a 511-name petition as well as the Garden Villages at Hare Green and Horsley Cross which each attracted more than 30 objections and which are undoubtedly the most radical and challenging proposals in the Plan.

Although the deletion of certain sites from the Plan might result in fewer public objections, it will likely result in objections from the landowners and developers that have been promoting those sites for

inclusion in the Plan who will look to challenge the legal compliance and soundness of the Local Plan in order to get them reinstated. In locations where new, albeit smaller, sites are included in the Plan (for example the alternative sites in Brightlingsea and Bradfield), there is a likelihood of new objections to the Local Plan by those affected by the inclusion of those sites.

The Submission Version includes numerous revisions to policy wording that attempt to address concerns raised by residents and communities, but again these bring a risk that landowners and developers might take an adverse view to the changes and lodge objections themselves. The Council needs therefore to be prepared that addressing objections through changes can result in objections from other quarters. Ultimately, when it comes to the examination of the Local Plan, it will be important that the Council can clearly explain and justify the changes it has made between Preferred Options and Submission stage to demonstrate that the Plan, as amended, remains legally compliant and sound.

Reduction in the level of oversupply/contingency

The changes to housing and mixed-use development sites in the Submission Version of the Local Plan have reduced the level of oversupply in housing land from around 1,500 above the total 17-year requirement (as indicated in the Preferred Options Draft) to just 161 units. Although the changes will help address some of the planning issues that were raised in response to the Preferred Options Draft consultation and will hopefully result in many fewer public objections to the Submission Version, reducing the level of built-in contingency from 8% to nearer 1% will undoubtedly be criticised by landowners, developers and planning agents who will argue that the changes increase the risk of the government housing targets not being delivered – even though the Council has technically identified enough land under very challenging circumstances.

The Council will need to be prepared that deliverability of the government's housing numbers will be challenged through objections to the Submission Version and will likely be a key focus of the Planning Inspector at the examination. Certain landowners, developers and planning agents promoting alternative sites will try and convince the Inspector that either sites included in the Local Plan are not deliverable in the timescales predicted, or that the overall level of contingency needs to increase. With a much-reduced level of contingency built into the housing supply as a result of the changes made to the Submission Version, there is with it a greater risk that the Inspector might conclude that additional sites need to be included in the Plan through modifications.

However, the Council has already made its views known to the Government about how problematic and unrealistic the mandatory housebuilding targets already are for Tendring and how this has forced the Council to consider radical options for development that would otherwise not been necessary under previous targets. In that context, a smaller percentage of contingency being built into the figures is not unreasonable – with a higher level having been achievable against a lower, more realistic overall target.

In their informal advice as part of the PINS advisory visit, the Planning Inspector did indicate that whilst there are no hard and fast rules on how much of a buffer to include in a Local Plan, it is normally better to submit a Local Plan with more sites than needed (given the likelihood that some sites might be removed through the examination process) than to leave too little in the way of contingency and risk falling short of the Government requirement and either having to carry out further work to find additional sites or otherwise having the Plan judged to be unsound. However, they understood why the Council might choose to delete sites at submission stage if they are identified to have certain planning issues and are the subject of a lot of objections. In this scenario however, it is important that Councils put forward evidenced justification for the changes they have made.

Need for the Council to make difficult and unpopular decisions on both the Local Plan and planning applications – and risk of planning appeals

From the consultation and engagement carried out to date, the Local Plan has attracted a considerable level of public objection and criticism of the Council, albeit with a reasonable understanding among communities that the Council is having to respond to challenging housebuilding targets imposed by central government.

The changes to the Draft Local Plan in the Submission Version respond to the issues raised through the consultation and should be a clear demonstration that the Council has listened to residents and taken account of the advice put forward by technical consultees and other interest parties; however, the decisions will not please everyone. The majority of site proposals in the Draft Local Plan have remained unchanged due to the sheer scale of housebuilding the Council is required to plan for; and whilst some communities will support the changes being proposed, others will remain deeply dissatisfied and critical of the Council.

The Council approaches important decisions on the Local Plan at the same time as the District is seeing the predicted increase in planning applications for major housebuilding schemes that represent departures from the Council's current adopted Local Plan – some of which accord with the emerging Draft Local Plan, whereas others do not. This increase in planning applications has come about following the Government's changes to the National Planning Policy Framework in 2024 and the introduction of new mandatory housebuilding targets which, from 26 January 2026 (the fifth anniversary of the Council adopting Section 1 of its current Local Plan), has thrown the Council into a position where it can no longer meet the Government's requirement to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites against the new target – and will not be able to until such time that sufficient sites have obtained planning consent.

The consequence is that the Council is now required to apply what has become to be known as the 'tilted balance' to the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development set out in the NPPF in the determination of planning applications for housing on certain sites. These provisions are set out in paragraph 11d) in the NPPF whereby, for planning applications for the provision of housing, the Council will be expected to grant planning permission unless:

- the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

This means that for some planning applications, even where they fall outside of the housing site allocations or settlement development boundaries in the Council's existing Local Plan, they will still need to be determined having regard to the above NPPF guidance. This means that some planning applications that one might usually expect to have been refused by the Council on principle grounds for being contrary to the Local Plan might, in the coming months, be recommended to the Planning Committee for approval – with increasing weight being given to the need to boost housing supply and address government targets.

Already the Planning Committee has resolved to grant planning permission for some notable housing developments applying the above NPPF guidance – notably 100 homes off Cockaynes Lane in Alresford, 80 homes south of Weeley Road in Great Bentley and 60 homes off Avocet Place in Thorington, all of which are at least in accordance with the Preferred Options Draft Local Plan (sites SAH6, MSA10 and MSA23 respectively). Granting planning consent for those developments will assist in reducing the five-year housing land shortfall and reinforcing the soundness of the emerging Local Plan. However, at the time of writing, the Council is already in receipt of a significant and growing number of other major planning applications for housing that are yet to be determined but that will have to be determined on their merits in due course and before the Local Plan process has fully concluded.

These include:

- 25/01633/OUT – 120 dwellings and sports facilities north of Weeley Road, Great Bentley (which corresponds with Draft Local Plan allocation SAH7);
- 26/00355/OUT – 350 dwellings off Sladburys Lane, Clacton (outside of Draft Local Plan allocations and within existing Strategic Green Gap);
- 26/00160/OUT – 31 dwellings off Batemans Lane, Little Clacton (outside of Draft Local Plan allocations);
- 26/00279/FUL – 15 dwellings east of Lifehouse Drive, Thorpe le Soken (which corresponds with part of Draft Local Plan allocation SAH11);
- 26/00281/FUL – 12 dwellings south of Thorpe Hall Gardens, Thorpe le Soken (which also corresponds with part of Draft Local Plan allocation SAH11);
- 26/00287/OUT – 30 dwellings north of Colchester Road, Elmstead Market (outside of Draft Local Plan allocations and within a proposed Strategic Green Gap);
- 26/00193/OUT – 86 homes off Holly Way, Elmstead Market (outside of Draft Local Plan allocations and within a proposed Strategic Green Gap);

- 26/00509/OUT – 78 dwellings north of Harwich Road, Hare Green (within the broad location for the Hare Green Garden Village);
- 26/00528/OUT – 206 dwellings west of Heckfords Road, Great Bentley (outside of Draft Local Plan allocations);
- 26/00599/OUT – 80 dwellings east of Heckfords Road, Great Bentley (which corresponds with Draft Local Plan allocation MSA21);
- 26/00627/OUT – 95 homes at the Grange Road, Lawford (outside of Local Plan allocations);
- 26/00810/OUT – 160 homes off Bromley Road, Elmstead Market (outside of Draft Local Plan allocations);
- 26/00910/OUT & 26/00912/OUT – between 90 and 200 homes at Carringtons Road, Bromley Cross; and
- 26/00969/OUT – 75 homes on land east of Bentley Road, Weeley Heath (which corresponds with Draft Local Plan allocation MSA24, albeit proposing higher numbers).

As well as these currently undetermined planning applications, there is also a refused planning application 24/01803/FUL for development of 79 homes north of Beth Chatto Gardens in Elmstead Market that is the subject of an appeal scheduled to be heard in September 2026. The Council is also in receipt of the hybrid planning application for the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community which is being dealt with by a dedicated team and which is likely to be determined, by the Joint Planning Committee in 2027.

In total, the above planning applications total more than 1,600 potential homes. All of these applications represent departures from the Council's existing adopted Local Plan and more applications of this nature are expected. Whilst some of these applications do correspond with the proposals in the emerging Draft Plan, others represent speculative planning applications for housing that are both contrary to the Council's adopted and emerging Local Plans.. Some of these planning applications will, and already have, attracted public objection and media publicity.

When it comes to either the Planning Committee or Officers making decisions on these applications there is the likelihood that some applications will be approved and others will be refused, with a reasonable expectation that the refusal of permission will result in appeals to the Secretary of State. Furthermore, following a government direction implemented on 11 May 2026, any planning application for 150 or more homes that the Council is minded to refuse must be referred to the Secretary of State to enable central government to decide whether or not to call in and determine the application itself.

By progressing work on the Local Plan through the remaining stages of the plan-making process, the Council may be able to exercise a level of control and be in a stronger position in defending appeals by applying increasing levels of weight to policies in the emerging Local Plan. In accordance with paragraph 49 of the NPPF, Councils are able to give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that can be given);
- the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

In taking decisions on planning applications for housing in the coming months (in light of the requirements of the NPPF, the change in housebuilding targets and housing supply situation, and the weight that can be afforded to policies and proposals in the emerging Local Plan), Officers and Members of the Planning Committee will need to carefully consider the implications of refusing permission – including the likelihood of either of the applicant appealing to the Secretary of State (or for larger applications of 150 or more homes, the Government deciding to call in the application for a decision); and the likely strength of the Council's case in contesting a possible appeal and the potential for significant costs in professional and potential legal support that might be required in fighting appeals – particularly where there might be a high likelihood of an appeal being allowed and/or costs being awarded to the appellants.

In this regard, Officers will endeavour to provide the best possible advice to Members of the Planning Committee, acknowledging that the advice might not always be followed and might not be popular amongst residents and communities affected, or the applicants in question.

Risk of government intervention

As well as the risk of individual planning decisions being overturned on appeal, the Government does have powers to intervene in the Local Plan-making process if it believes a Council is failing in its legal duties to prepare a Plan and keep it up to date. So long as this Council continues work on the Local Plan, this ought not to be an issue for Tendring. However, Officers draw Councillors' attention to recent events in Basildon where the Government has exercised its powers to intervene.

In the case of Basildon Borough Council, the Secretary of State on 21 July 2026 exercised their powers of intervention under 27 of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act because that Council has not managed to put an up-to-date Local Plan in place since 1998 and has consistently fallen short of its housing requirements. Concerned that Basildon has stated its opposition to the Government's standard method for calculating housing targets and progressing a Plan that meets that housing need in full, the Council has been ordered to commence consultation on the emerging plan that was in the process of being considered by its Members by and to submit that Plan to the Secretary of State no later than 31 December 2026 – essentially forcing the Council to progress its draft Local Plan to the examination process without the endorsement of its Councillors.

Whilst this is a scenario Tendring District Council will not face if it continues to progress the Local Plan through the remaining stages of the process with Councillor support as recommended, it does provide a clear demonstration to anyone that thinks the Council should simply ignore government requirements to review the Local Plan and meet the new mandatory housebuilding targets, that the Government is prepared to exercise its powers to step in and will, if necessary, take decision-making powers away from the Council.

Criticism of the consultation

The minimum legal expectations around consultation are set out in the planning regulations, however the Council always exceeds these requirements and through its Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the approach it takes and intends to take in respect of public consultation and engagement of planning matters including the Local Plan. Despite this, there is always public criticism of the consultation carried out at different stages of the Local Plan process in terms of the timing of consultation, the nature and level of publicity, the level of detail contained within the publicity (either too little or too much), the number of events, the location of events, the legibility of consultation material and the ease with which people can make representations. No matter what the Council does, it will inevitably be criticised given the often contentious nature of the subject matter.

Through the Preferred Options consultation, the Council and its Officers tried their best to make the engagement as effective as possible whilst making best use of available resources, knowing that the Planning Policy Team would be undertaking consultation and progressing work on the Local Plan and evidence base at the same time in order to meet the tight work programme. As well as utilising social media and on-line platforms to publicise the consultation, the early and ongoing engagement with Town and Parish Councils was extremely valuable both in enabling Officers to better understand local issues and concerns, and in providing a clear explanation to residents of its duties around planning, the requirements of national planning policy, the need for a Local Plan and the consequences of either failing to properly consider alternative options or otherwise not proceeding with the Local Plan Review - i.e. that the Council could be left without an up-to-date Local Plan, leaving the District vulnerable to speculative, unplanned and unwanted development proposals and an uncertain period of 'planning by appeal'.

It would be Officers' intention to approach the consultation on the Submission Version in a similar way with five drop-in events and, where practical, offering attendance at any Town/Parish Council or Ward Member-organised events – however, as explained in more detail in the consultation section of this report, the emphasis and focus of the Submission Version consultation will be different in that the Council will have already made its final decision on the content of the Local Plan, and the consultation this time around will be to invite comments on the legal compliance and soundness of the Plan which will go forward for the Planning Inspector's consideration as part of the examination process.

Economic and housing market conditions and deliverability

Whilst it is the job of the Local Plan to create the conditions for sustainable growth and to identify sites and locations for housing, mixed-use and employment development, the actual deliverability of development will depend heavily on wider economic and housing market conditions nationally and locally. In its objections to the Government's mandatory housebuilding targets, this Council made it very clear that it was concerned that the new targets bore little relation to projections of market demand nor the capacity of the housebuilding industry to deliver a rapid increase in housebuilding.

Therefore, whilst the Local Plan makes provision for a potential 18,173 homes between 2026 and 2043 and corresponding allocations of employment land, there is a significant risk that economic and housing market conditions will fluctuate during that period and these numbers will not actually be delivered. It has the potential to place the Council in a difficult position if, through no fault of its own, it is unable to maintain an ongoing five-year supply of deliverable housing land in accordance with government requirements or deliver upon the full potential for economic growth during the plan period.

Risk of the Local Plan being found 'unsound'

The Council has done the best job it can under extremely challenging circumstances to produce a Local Plan that Officers believe meets with the Government's requirements for legal compliance and soundness. However it will ultimately be for government-appointed Planning Inspector to determine whether those tests are met through the examination process and is a risk that the Inspector might, for whatever reason, find the Plan unsound or with legal compliance issues.

There are typically three possible outcomes from an examination:

1. that the Plan is found to be legally compliant and sound without the need for any 'main modifications' (i.e. further changes that would need to be published for consultation before the Local Plan can be formally adopted);
2. that the Plan is found to be capable of being made legally compliant and sound but only following additional work and/or main modifications; or
3. the Plan is found to be neither sound and/or legally compliant with no ability for it to be corrected through additional work and/or main modifications – in which case a Council would likely be advised by the Inspector to withdraw the Plan and start the process again.

It is desirable but unlikely that an Inspector will declare a Local Plan sound without a requirement for some additional work and/or main modifications. It is usually the case that soundness issues arising through the examination will be discussed openly at the hearings and Officers will be invited to consider possible wording for modifications to assist the Inspector in coming to their recommendations. For the Council to formally adopt the Local Plan it would need to carry out public consultation specifically on modifications set out in the Inspector's interim report and thereafter receive a final report from the Inspector confirming legal compliance and soundness.

Although the Council should be prepared for the likelihood that the examination will result in the Local Plan requiring some additional work and/or modifications on the advice of the Planning Inspector, it is difficult to predict how long the examination hearings might take, how long the Inspector takes to come to a view on what additional work or modifications might be required and how significant or contentious those modifications might be. Officers would however hope that such matters would be resolved in the 2027/28 financial year to enable the Local Plan to be adopted ahead of Local Government Reorganisation and the vesting of the new unitary authority.

The worst of the three scenarios would be for the Inspector to find the Local Plan to be not legally compliant and/or unsound to the degree that there is no ability for it be corrected through additional work and/or modifications. In that scenario, and unless the Council has reason to believe the Inspector has come to a legally flawed decision, the Local Plan would need to be withdrawn, the Council would be left with no up to date Local Plan and the District would be left vulnerable to speculative development proposals for an extended period of time. If Local Government Reorganisation does go ahead, work on a new Local Plan progressed under the new plan-making system would most likely be for the new unitary authority planning for the North East Essex area as a whole.

In the report to the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee on 8 June 2026, Officers highlighted what they considered to be the main matters likely to be the focus of an Inspector's exploration of soundness as part of the examination process along with an indication of how those matters were to be addressed either through changes to the Local Plan or through updated works and additions to the technical evidence base. Since that meeting, Officers have incorporated changes into the Submission Version aimed at addressing those matters and the evidence-base has been updated accordingly.

LEGAL

Planning legislation and plan-making regulations

Planning legislation and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) place Local Plans at the heart of the planning system, so it is essential that they are in place and kept up to date. The NPPF expects Local Plans to set out a vision and a framework for the future development of the area, addressing the needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure – as well as a basis for safeguarding the environment.

Under regulation 10A of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) local planning authorities must review local plans at least once every five years from their adoption date to ensure that policies remain relevant and effectively address the needs of the local community.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) state that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the 'development plan' unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory 'development plan' for Tendring currently includes the Tendring District Local Plan 2013-2033 and Beyond Sections 1 and 2, the Development Plan Document (DPD) for the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community as well as adopted Neighbourhood Plans for Alresford, Ardleigh and Elmstead Market and the Essex Minerals and Waste Local Plans. The NPPF states that where the development plan is out of date permission should be granted for sustainable development unless any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits or other policies indicate otherwise. It is therefore important to ensure the Local Plan is reviewed, and updated where necessary, to ensure the development plan does not become out of date.

Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 requires the Council, before submitting a Local Plan to the Secretary of State, to make a copy of each the proposed submission documents (including the Submission Version Local Plan, Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment) available for inspection and publish a statement setting out the fact that submission documents are available for inspection and the places and times at which they can be expected. It also requires the Council to invite people to make representations.

The Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025

On 18 December 2025, Royal Assent was given to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill. The new Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 introduced the following notable measures:

- making it quicker and easier to deliver critical infrastructure projects including through streamlining NSIP (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects) consultation requirements, ensuring National Policy Statements are kept up to date, and reducing opportunities for judicial review – this is to support the government's Clean Power Action Plan by accelerating the planning process for energy infrastructure and ensuring local communities benefit through the creation of a bill discount scheme for people living closest to new electricity transmission infrastructure;
- introduction of a new Nature Restoration Fund that will unlock and accelerate development while going beyond simply offsetting harm to unlock the positive impact development can have in driving nature recovery;
- measures to make planning committees operate as effectively as possible, so that (in the Government's words) they play their proper role in scrutinising development without obstructing it, whilst maximising the use of experienced professional planners – with a national scheme of delegation expected to be introduced through new regulations likely to result in more decisions having to be taken by Officers, particularly for development proposals that

accord with policies in the Local Plan (expected to come into force at the end of October 2026);

- reforms to planning fees aimed at ensuring local planning authorities have the resources they need to deliver an efficient service;
- measures to improve the effectiveness of compulsory purchase powers by ensuring compensation paid to landowners through the CPO process is fair but not excessive, and so that development corporations can operate effectively; and
- formal introduction of the new strategic planning system and a requirement for the preparation of Spatial Development Strategies at sub-regional level to facilitate effective cross-boundary working to address development and infrastructure needs – this is a duty that will fall to the new Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) for Greater Essex under current proposals for Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation.

The new measures are mainly applicable to NSIPs (such as pylon and sub-station schemes that are being determined by central Government) and sub-regional strategic planning as opposed to having any direct implications for the current Local Plan review. They do however have implications for Council decision making on planning applications and future delivery of larger-scale developments (such as the Garden Community and Garden Village proposals) and the critical infrastructure of sub regional importance required to support them – which may be the subject of future reports to Councillors in due course – particularly if a national scheme of delegation comes into being.

The tests of soundness

The Local Plan will ultimately be tested, through the examination process, to meet both legal requirements and the ‘tests of soundness’ set out in the latest NPPF which was last updated in February 2025 – although the Government has carried out consultation on a potential new version that could come into force imminently. The tests of soundness as they currently stand, and which apply to Local Plans being progressed under the current system, require a Local Plan to be:

Positively prepared – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;

Justified – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;

Effective – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and

Consistent with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.

Status of the Government's draft revised NPPF

In December 2025, the Government published a new draft version of the NPPF for consultation, with comments invited until 10 March 2026. The intention is that the requirements of the new version of the NPPF will apply to Local Plans being prepared under the new plan-making regulations i.e. new style Local Plans to be submitted to the Secretary of State after the cut-off date at the end of 2026. Because this Council's Local Plan is being reviewed under the current plan-making regulations with the intention to submit to the Secretary of State before the end of 2026, the requirements of the new NPPF are not expected to apply and thus the current NPPF will remain relevant under transitional arrangements. The policies in the new NPPF will however apply to decision-making in the determination of planning applications from the date the final version is published, with an expectation that any inconsistency between NPPF policies and current or emerging Local Plans should be resolved in favour of the national policies.

The draft NPPF was presented in a format that clearly articulates its policies in relation to plan-making and decision-making and the new strategic planning system (which will be a focus for the new Mayoral authority for Greater Essex in its preparation of a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS)) and to providing standardised policies that are expected to apply nationwide. Officers have reviewed the draft NPPF and whilst it is presented very differently to the current version (and helpfully in some respects), the majority of its content is similar to that of the current NPPF with no significant change in the thrust or intent of the majority of policies that would apply to Tendring or that would suggest the policies in the recommended Preferred Options Draft are substantially inconsistent with what the Government is proposing. It is understood that the publication of the new NPPF, with any revisions following the consultation, could be this summer.

Duty to cooperate

There had been, from the Localism Act of 2011, a legal duty for Councils to cooperate on cross-boundary matters in the preparation of Local Plans. In respect of the test of 'effectiveness', Tendring District Council, Colchester City Council and Braintree District Council, having worked together to produce Section 1 of the current adopted Local Plan have previously demonstrated exemplary practice in effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters. The joint work of TDC, CCC and Essex County Council on the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community project, with the setting up of a dedicated joint Committee is a further demonstration of continued positive cooperation.

Through the current Local Plan Review, and that of Colchester City Council (which is itself following similar timescales), Officers of both Councils have been in regular contact to discuss matters that

could be of cross-boundary significance, exploring opportunities for alignment on policy and sharing resources. This has demonstrated continued cooperation under the legal duty and forward thinking in respect of Local Government Reorganisation – under which, for all options under consideration by the Government, Tendring and Colchester are expected to merge under same unitary authority.

Whilst the Councils and other relevant partners have cooperated in line with the legal duty, that duty was abolished in March 2026, and will no longer apply to Councils in the process of preparing new Local Plans. Instead, new legislation has introduced the legal requirement for higher-level strategic plans to address and coordinate cross-boundary planning issues (Spatial Development Strategies) at combined authority level – which, for Greater Essex, will be the duty of the Mayoral Combined County Authority and the future elected Mayor. The advice from Government is however for Councils in the process of preparing Local Plans to carry on with that work, as Local Plans will feed into and inform the direction of growth in the early years of the Spatial Development Strategies.

The requirement for Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment

Section 19 of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires a local planning authority to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of each of the proposals in a Local Plan and the consequence of reasonable alternatives during its preparation and in addition prepare a report of the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal. More generally, section 39 of the Act requires that the authority preparing a Local Plan must do so “with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development”. The Sustainability Appraisal incorporates a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) which is necessary to ensure that potential environmental effects are given full consideration alongside social and economic issues. The requirement for SEA comes from EU Directive 2001/42/EC, which has been transferred into UK law. The updated Sustainability Appraisal for the Submission Version Local Plan (incorporating SEA) is attached at Appendix 2 to this report.

The Habitats Regulations

As well as the requirement for SA/SEA, there is a legal duty under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) otherwise known as the ‘Habitats Regulations’ to consider the potential effect of policies and proposals in Local Plans on the integrity of internationally important wildlife sites or ‘European sites’ such as Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites – of which there are a number around the coast of Tendring focussed on the Stour Estuary, Hamford Water and the Colne Estuary. In carrying out a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA), the Council as the ‘competent authority’ is assessing the likelihood of plans and proposals having a significant adverse effect, following which a more detailed ‘Appropriate Assessment’ might be required to consider specific effects of particular proposals.

The whole of the Tendring District is within the ‘zone of influence’ for the various European sites and through the Essex Recreational disturbance Avoidance Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) and associated Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) the Council, like others in Essex, secures financial contributions from most residential developments towards a programme of measures to mitigate the

potential indirect affects of growth to ensure which, for most developments, ensures compliance with the Habitat Regulations. The updated assessment accompanying the Submission Draft Local Plan is attached at Appendix 3 to this report.

Full Council approval to submit the Local Plan to the Secretary of State

Following the consultation on the Submission Version of the Local Plan, the next stage of the plan-making process will be to submit the Local Plan along with the representations received and other relevant documents to the Secretary of State who will then appoint a Planning Inspector to examine the Plan. In the past, some Councils, including Tendring District Council have sought Full Council approval to publish the Submission Version Plan for consultation and subsequently submit the Plan to the Secretary of State in the same decision. However following a recent High Court Case, Oxford City Council was blocked from submitting its Local Plan for examination without the Council having first considering the representations received.

Therefore, it is the intention that following the consultation on the Submission Version, there will need to be a further decision from the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee and Full Council to confirm the submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State in time for that submission to be made before the end of 2026. The reports to those meetings will provide an overview of the representations received during the consultation.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Area or Ward affected: All wards across the District are affected directly or indirectly either by one or more policies or proposals contained the Submission Version of the Local Plan. Of note in respect of the largest development proposals:

- the proposed broad location for the Hare Garden Village falls within both the Alresford & Elmstead Ward and the Frating & Bentleys Ward;
- the proposed broad location for the Horsley Cross Garden Village straddles three wards: Lawford, Manningtree & Mistley Ward; Stour Valley Ward; the Oakleys & Wix Ward;
- the main site proposed for development crosses Stour Valley Ward and Dovercourt All Saints Ward;
- the proposed development at Weeley falls within the Weeley & Tendring Ward; and
- the Collierswood Business Park employment site falls mainly within the Alresford & Elmstead Ward and partly in the Ardleigh & Little Bromley Ward.

Consultation/Public Engagement: Formal public consultation on the Submission Version of the Local Plan is a statutory requirement under the plan-making regulations. It is however very important to point out to Councillors and the public that the consultation carried out at Submission Version stage serves a very different purpose to the consultation that was previously carried out on Issues & Options in 2025 and the Preferred Options Draft back in February and March 2026.

Whereas the previous Issues & Options and Preferred Options consultation stages were designed to invite residents and other interested parties to make comments and suggestions for the Council to take into account in drafting and making changes to the Draft Local Plan, the purpose of the Submission Version consultation stage is to invite residents and other interested parties to specifically comment on and challenge the legal compliance and soundness of the Draft Local Plan. The comments are then submitted to the Secretary of State for consideration thereafter by the Government-appointed Planning Inspector as part of the examination process.

The Council will therefore not have an opportunity to make any further changes to Local Plan following the consultation, and whilst it can make suggestions for changes to the Planning Inspector as part of the examination, it will be ultimately up to the Inspector themselves to determine whether any changes to the Local Plan are needed to ensure it is legally compliant and sound and whether it can therefore be legally adopted by the Council.

Because the purpose of consultation on the Submission Version of the Local Plan is different to that of the previous two rounds of consultation, the approach to publicity and engagement with residents and others at meetings and events will also be subtly different in its emphasis. Officers will be encouraging people to consider the tests of soundness in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) when making their representations as they will need to persuade the Government Planning Inspector, not necessarily the Council, that there are issues with the Local Plan that need to be resolved.

Subject to the agreement of the Committee and Full Council, the six-week consultation for the Submission Version of the Local Plan is intended to be held in September and October 2026, with the precise dates to be agreed with the Planning Portfolio Holder and will be carried out in conformity with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

The Submission Version of the Local Plan and relevant supporting documents will be published online on the Planning Policy consultation portal, which can be accessed through the Council's website. Interested parties will be encouraged to submit comments directly through this portal, although alternative methods of submission such as emails or letters will also be accepted. Hard copies of the documents will be deposited at a number of locations around the District for those that do not have access to the internet – specifically at Clacton Town Hall, and at each of the District's libraries.

As before, various methods will be used to advertise the consultation and encourage members of the public and other interested parties to respond. These methods include:

- use of the Council's website and social media;
- letter/email to residents, businesses and interested parties that have registered on the Local Plan Consultee Database to advise that the consultation period has started;

- email to statutory consultees and other key stakeholders including town and parish councils; including where possible adding a News item to websites of town and parish councils with a link to TDC and the Planning Policy consultation portal; and,
- a press release to local newspapers.

Officers also propose to again hold a limited number of public events in locations across the District – most affected by the developments proposed in the Plan. However, as stated above, the emphasis of the events will be to encourage residents to consider the legal compliance and soundness of the Local Plan in making their representations.

Although these kinds of events have become less well attended in recent years, particularly since the pandemic and the rise in internet usage, they are still an important method of engaging with people – and they provide an opportunity for discussions and questions of clarification before a formal submission is made. It is proposed to hold events in similar locations to those used for the Preferred Options stage of consultation.

Not being able to attend an event will not put people at a disadvantage, as all of the consultation materials will be available online and in locations around the District, and Officers will be available by phone and email should members of the public or other stakeholders have further questions. The intention is to publicise the availability of the consultation documents widely across the District via posters/leaflets in locations, for example GP surgeries, Post Offices and Sports Centres, which will aim to impress upon hard-to-reach groups.

Alongside carrying out official TDC public consultation events, it is proposed that Officers continue informal engagement with Town and Parish Councils and could attend local meetings on request, subject to capacity and availability, to provide further information and explanation of the Local Plan and to encourage people to make representations.

Local Government Reorganisation: The Local Plan currently under review is highly likely to be the last Local Plan that will ever be prepared by Tendring District Council in its current configuration before proposals for Devolution and LGR take effect, TDC and other Councils are abolished, and a new unitary authority for the north or north/east part of Essex comes into being. It also represents TDC's last opportunity to influence the future pattern of growth in the Tendring area ahead of the formation of the Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) for Greater Essex – which will have new powers in respect of strategic planning, including through the preparation of a 30-year Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) for longer-term growth across the Greater Essex area.

The updated Tendring Local Plan will therefore not only serve as the statutory development plan to guide planning decisions in the Tendring area by TDC and the future unitary authority that succeeds it – but will also have an important bearing the MCCA's decisions on the content of the SDS for long-term strategic growth in Greater Essex. Therefore, the proposals to establish Garden Villages at Hare Green and Horsley Cross are of particular relevance for the SDS, with the potential for growth

to extend well beyond the Local Plan's 2042 timeframe and over a 20-30 period and the potential to secure support through the MCCA for future masterplanning, infrastructure delivery and funding.

Financial sustainability of public services: When the Government introduced the concept of mandatory housebuilding targets, the Council raised strong objections to the significant increase in housebuilding targets if not supported by necessary investment in infrastructure. When the Council publishes the Submission Version Local Plan for consultation, Officers anticipate understandable feedback from residents, communities and other stakeholders raising concerns about the impact of growth on infrastructure provision, particularly in respect of transport, health and education.

Whilst the extent of additional housing growth being proposed under the Government-imposed target is extremely challenging for the Council to plan for through the Local Plan and raises a number of concerns, growth in housing and employment is however important both for the national and local economy and the future sustainability of providing public services including Council services, health services (including the NHS), education and associated infrastructure. Therefore, whilst growth in housing and commercial development raises concerns about impacts on infrastructure, it is also part of the solution; and at a national level, the Government has been keen to emphasise the importance of housing growth to general growth in the economy, tax revenue and the ability for both central Government and Councils in sustaining and investing in public services.

In addition to sustaining and growing public services through economic growth and increasing the tax base, the planning system provides the ability to secure infrastructure delivery through s106 legal agreements on the grant of planning permission and/or through Community Infrastructure Levy.

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

WORK ON THE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW TO DATE

Tendring's current Local Plan was adopted by decision of Full Council in two sections - Section 1 on 26 January 2021 (for North East Essex), and Section 2 (for Tendring only) on 25 January 2022. The Local Plan was designed to set out the planning framework for the period up to 2033 and, in the case of developments like the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community, into the longer-term beyond 2033.

However, to be effective, plans need to be kept up to date and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states policies in local plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years and should then be updated as necessary. Therefore, over the course of the last three years, the Council has been in the process of updating and reviewing the Tendring District Local Plan under its statutory duties and has done so clearly and transparently through its reports and meetings – following a logical sequence and an agreed set of overarching guiding principles. The various stages of this process have been extensively documented in reports

to, and associated decisions from, the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee since December 2023.

The initial anticipated timescales for reviewing the Local Plan were set out broadly in the report to the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee in December 2023, with a more detailed timetable provided to the Committee in February 2024 as part of the Local Development Scheme. A 'call for sites' consultation was undertaken in early 2024, and around 200 site propositions were submitted to the Council for consideration as part of the Local Plan Review.

An Issues and Options Consultation Document was presented to, considered and agreed by the Committee in May 2024 including a set of key overarching principles and six spatial strategy options for how additional growth to meet needs over an extended plan-period could be accommodated in the District, however the consultation itself was delayed due to the General Election and the new Government's proposals for reforming the NPPF and imposing new (much higher) mandatory housebuilding targets.

The Council responded to the Government's consultation on its proposed changes to national policy raising strong practical objections to the proposed imposition of mandatory housebuilding targets which, for Tendring nearly double the amount of housing needing to be planned for from the figures in the previous Local Plan. However, in December 2024, the Government pressed ahead with publishing the new NPPF along with the updated standard method for calculating housing need, which despite the Council's objections, at least provided it with certainty over the requirements that the updated Local Plan will need to satisfy.

With greater certainty over the housing target the Council would be expected to address through its updated Local Plan, the Committee was able to agree an updated version of the Issues and Options Consultation document, which featured greatly limited options for accommodating the significantly increased housing target. Four new spatial strategy options were proposed, each combining elements of urban expansion, proportionate growth in smaller settlements, and the establishment of strategically located garden villages to deliver housing at scale with supporting infrastructure.

The Issues and Options document was published for public consultation in spring 2025, and generated strong engagement from residents, Town and Parish Councils, technical stakeholders and the development industry. Recurring themes included concerns about infrastructure capacity, the protection of green spaces, and the deliverability of large-scale development. While there was some support for Garden Villages as a means of delivering comprehensive infrastructure alongside new homes, there were concerns about the deliverability of such large schemes and the impacts on nearby communities. Technical stakeholders emphasised climate change mitigation, sustainable transport, and water and health infrastructure as key considerations for the updated Local Plan.

In December 2025, the Committee agreed the preferred strategy and site allocations for inclusion in the Preferred Options Draft of the new Local Plan followed, in January 2026 by the Draft Plan itself containing the full suite of planning policies and maps. Following a decision of Full Council on 27

January 2026, the Preferred Options Draft was published for six-weeks consultation between 9 February and 23 March. On 8 June 2026, the Committee was presented with a report providing a broad overview of the level and nature of responses received from residents and other stakeholders to the public consultation. That report also identified what Officers considered to be the ten main matters raised through the consultation:

- 1) the realistic deliverability and soundness of the Garden Villages proposed for Hare Green and Horsley Cross;
- 2) the realistic deliverability of the overall housebuilding requirement;
- 3) the soundness of the Brightlingsea allocation of 300 homes (site SAH4);
- 4) the soundness of the Kirby Cross and Walton allocations of 420 and 200 homes respectively (sites SAH2 and SAH3);
- 5) the amount of development proposed at Thorpe le Soken;
- 6) the sustainability of housing developments in smaller rural villages;
- 7) the justification and soundness of the District's Strategic Green Gaps;
- 8) the protection given to Ardleigh and Elmstead in the Draft Local Plan;
- 9) the viability of zero carbon, water efficiency and BNG policies; and
- 10) The robustness of the evidence base.

A second Committee report on 8 June 2026 then set out Officers' thoughts on potential next steps, including provisional recommendations for changes to the Draft Local Plan and additional work to strengthen the technical evidence base to address the above main matters. The Committee then agreed a series of changes to the housing and mixed-use site allocations including (notably) the deletion from the Plan of sites SAH3, SAH4 and SAH10 in Walton, Brightlingsea and Thorpe and other deletions, additions and revisions to sites or indicative housing numbers – which have now been incorporated into the Submission Version of the Plan subject of this report, with the exception of the previously proposed revisions to the delivery assumptions for the Hare Green and Horsley Cross Garden Village proposals which, for the reasons set out earlier in this report, are no longer recommended.

Throughout the review process, the Council has been updating and adding to the technical evidence base that sits alongside and informs the content of the Draft Local Plan and the current position is set out below.

EVIDENCE BASE UPDATES AND FINDINGS

The Submission Version of the Local Plan is informed and underpinned by a range of technical evidence and studies, some of which were already in place (or otherwise in the process of being finalised) to inform the earlier Preferred Options Draft. In moving to the submission stage of the process, the evidence base is now completed to the level necessary to support the Submission Version and includes additional pieces of evidence and relevant updates to other studies.

In the 22 January 2026 report to the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee accompanying the Preferred Options Draft Local Plan, Officers set out a summary of each element of the technical evidence base, their purpose and final or emerging findings. In the interest of completeness and continuity, this approach is replicated again for the purpose of this report with relevant updates and additions.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

The Submission Version Local Plan is accompanied by updated versions of the Sustainability Appraisal and a Habitat Regulations Assessment – both of which are legal requirements of the plan-making process. The Sustainability Appraisal (which includes a Strategic Environmental Assessment) is needed to assess the extent to which an emerging Local Plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve sustainable development, having regard to environmental, economic and social objectives. The assessment is also specifically designed to ensure that potential environmental effects are identified, considered and where necessary addressed. There is a requirement under legislation to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal for all the proposals and policies in a Local Plan throughout the different stages of its preparation.

The updated SA for the Submission Version Local Plan has been carried out by Essex Place Services, and it has considered all of the policies and proposals in the Submission Version of the Plan against reasonable alternatives (where applicable) and against a set of sustainability criteria, similar to those used to assess the Council's previous Local Plan. The work is presented in an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Report (ISA), which includes:

- a review of relevant plans, strategies and environmental protections;
- a detailed baseline of environmental, social and economic information;
- a set of sustainability objectives and appraisal criteria;
- assessment of each policy and proposed allocation;
- assessment of reasonable alternatives; and
- supporting Annexes, including site-by-site assessments.

The updated ISA also incorporates a Health Impact Assessment screening and an Equalities Impact Assessment, ensuring that health outcomes and equality considerations are taken into account.

The Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) concludes that the Submission Version Local Plan is likely to generate a range of positive social, economic and environmental effects through the delivery of new homes, employment opportunities, infrastructure, biodiversity net gain, green infrastructure and measures to address climate change. In particular, the appraisal identifies significant positive effects in relation to housing delivery, economic growth and biodiversity net gain.

As would be expected for a Plan accommodating significant levels of growth, the ISA also identifies the potential for adverse or uncertain effects in relation to transport, biodiversity, landscape character, the historic environment, agricultural land, water resources and flood risk. These considerations have informed the preparation of the Local Plan and the refinement of policies and site allocations throughout the plan-making process.

The appraisal highlights that the scale of development proposed at the Hare Green and Horsley Cross Garden Villages has the potential to give rise to landscape and heritage impacts if not carefully planned and designed. However, the ISA recognises that the Local Plan's policy framework requires further masterplanning, assessment and mitigation work as these proposals progress, providing opportunities to avoid, minimise or mitigate adverse effects and secure environmental enhancements.

The ISA concludes that, overall, the Submission Version of the Local Plan represents an appropriate and sustainable strategy for accommodating Tendring's development needs. Recommendations arising from the appraisal have informed the preparation of the Submission Version and will continue to be addressed through future masterplanning, detailed assessment work and, where appropriate, planning applications.

The ISA also incorporates Health Impact Assessment screening and an Equalities Impact Assessment. These conclude that the Local Plan has the potential to support improved health and wellbeing through the provision of housing, infrastructure, open space, employment opportunities and active travel measures, whilst no significant adverse impacts have been identified for groups protected under the Equality Act 2010.

It is a legal requirement for the Sustainability Appraisal to be part of the Council's formal decision-making process and for it to be published for consultation alongside the Draft Local Plan. For this reason, it is expressly referred to in the recommendations and is attached to this report as appendices rather than being simply listed as background documents like other studies within the evidence-base.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

The Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) assesses whether the Local Plan, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have a significant effect on internationally important wildlife sites protected under the Habitats Regulations, including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), and Ramsar sites associated with the Stour

and Orwell Estuaries, Hamford Water, Colne Estuary, and other designated coastal environments. The HRA has been updated by Essex Place Services to support the Submission Version of the Local Plan, taking into account consultation responses received on the Preferred Options Draft and the earlier iteration of the HRA – including from Natural England and the Essex Wildlife Trust.

The updated HRA has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Habitat Regulations and relevant case law. At the screening stage, a number of policies and site allocations were identified as having the potential for likely significant effects, particularly through recreational disturbance, impacts on functionally linked land, water quality and air quality. As a result, these policies and allocations were subject to Appropriate Assessment.

The Appropriate Assessment considered the potential effects of the Local Plan both alone and in combination with other plans and projects and examined the mitigation measures embedded within the Plan, including requirements relating to the Essex Coast RAMS, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), protection of functionally linked land, biodiversity mitigation, wastewater infrastructure, sustainable drainage and project-level HRA where necessary.

The HRA concludes that, with these mitigations incorporated into the Plan and secured through subsequent planning applications where required, the Submission Version Local Plan would not result in an adverse effect on the integrity of any Habitats Site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. Consequently, no further stages of the Habitats Regulations Assessment process are required.

As with the Sustainability Appraisal, there is a legal requirement for the updated HRA to be part of the Council's formal decision-making process and for it to be published for consultation alongside the Draft Local Plan. For this reason, it is expressly referred to in the recommendations and is attached to this report as an appendix.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) carried out by HDH Planning and Development was reported to the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee at its meeting on 28 May 2025. It remains valid and has not needed to be revisited or updated any further for the purposes of progressing the Submission Version of the Local Plan.

The SHMA forms a key part of the Local Plan evidence base and provides an up-to-date picture of the types of homes likely to be needed in Tendring over the Plan period. It's main finding is that, across the 18,000 new homes the District is required to plan for up to 2042, the projected demand is likely to be relatively evenly spread across one-, two-, three- and four-bedroom homes. This reflects Tendring's ageing population, continued growth of smaller households, and a steady requirement for family-sized accommodation. Although the Submission Version of the Local Plan has now been revised to extend its plan period to 2043, it is not considered necessary nor proportionate to update the SHMA evidence at this time to align its timescales.

The SHMA's modelling indicates that no single house size dominates future need, and that a balanced mix will be required to support both older residents wishing to downsize and working-age households needing larger homes. The SHMA also identifies a significant requirement of affordable housing, estimating a net annual need of around 275 affordable homes – equivalent to roughly 25% of the District's total housing requirement. This need arises from a combination of households unable to access market housing, newly forming households, and expected future turnover within the affordable stock. The assessment also highlights the importance of a range of affordable housing types – with most need focussed on Social and Affordable Rent, but with a meaningful role for Shared Ownership and First homes in helping younger households enter home ownership.

This evidence is reflected both in the affordable housing policy and the housing choice policy in Submission Version of the Local Plan. It is also consistent with the existing Local Plan policy which requires larger housing developments to deliver an appropriate mix of housing size, type and tenure having regard to the SHMA, ensuring that new development responds directly to Tendring's demographic profile and future needs.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

The purpose of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is to identify land with potential for housing development, assess its suitability, availability and achievability, and demonstrate how the district's housing requirement can be met over the plan period. It is updated every year by Officers in the Planning Team, and the 2026 update has been prepared using an updated base date of 1 April 2026, drawing on the most up-to-date information about planning permissions, appeal decisions and delivery rates across the district.

The updated SHLAA has informed the Local Plan's spatial strategy and the selection of locations and sites for housing and mixed-use development in the Draft Local Plan. It includes a housing trajectory showing how the requirement for 18,173 homes between 2026 and 2043 could be met through a combination of existing commitments, adopted and emerging Local Plan allocations, strategic locations for longer-term growth and a realistic allowance for windfall development of smaller sites.

Based on current evidence, around 10,211 homes are expected to be delivered from sites that already benefit from planning permission or are allocated in the current Local Plan, alongside small sites and windfall development that have consistently contributed to housing supply in Tendring. The additional allocations proposed through the Submission Version of the Local Plan will deliver the remaining 8,000 homes. As set out earlier in this report, following refinement of the housing trajectory and removal of some of the most objected-to or otherwise problematic sites, the level of contingency is significantly lower than previously anticipated but remains sufficient to demonstrate that the housing requirement can be met over the plan period.

Employment Land Review (ELR)

The Tendring Employment Land Review (ELR) was prepared by GC Insight (formerly Ekosgen) and BE Group to assess whether additional employment land is needed beyond existing allocations to support economic growth, housing delivery and strategic infrastructure projects. The study reviewed national and local policy, Tendring's economic performance and property market trends, and tested future growth scenarios originally to 2041. Following the Council's decision to extend the Local Plan period to 2043, an ELR Addendum has been prepared to update the higher growth 'policy-on' scenario using the same Cambridge Econometrics forecasts and sector-specific adjustment assumptions as the original study, but over the extended period.

The Addendum shows that extending the assessment period to 2043 increases the higher growth scenario from the 2025 ELR figure of 30.69 hectares to a total employment land requirement of 35.03 hectares. This comprises 18.38 hectares of B2 industrial land, 12.93 hectares of B8 warehousing land and 3.72 hectares of E(g)(i–iii) office, research and development and light industrial land, associated with just over 169,000 square metres of floorspace. While the revised requirement is higher than previously identified, the overall supply of employment land in Tendring remains sufficient in quantitative terms.

The Local Plan therefore continues to focus on safeguarding high-performing and strategically important sites, aligning new employment allocations with growth priorities, supporting strategic housing locations and capitalising on opportunities linked to Freeport East, Bathside Bay and the A120 and A133 corridors. The ELR and Addendum also support a flexible approach between employment uses, protection of key employment areas and the delivery of modern, high-quality premises to meet demand from logistics, advanced manufacturing, low-carbon, construction and knowledge-based sectors. This approach ensures Tendring can accommodate economic growth over the extended plan period while supporting housing delivery and infrastructure investment.

Essex Supported and Specialist Housing and Accommodation Need Assessment 2025 (SSHANA)

The Supported and Specialist Housing and Accommodation Need Assessment (SSHANA) has been undertaken by Essex County Council, with input from district authorities, the NHS and housing providers. It provides a comprehensive evidence base on the future need for supported and specialist housing across Essex to 2044, covering people with learning disabilities and autism, mental health needs, physical and sensory impairments, vulnerable young people, children in care, older people, victims/survivors of domestic abuse, and people with lower-level support needs. Its purpose is to quantify unmet need, identify pressure points and ensure that Local Plans and commissioning strategies can support the right mix of accommodation, care models and tenures across the county. The assessment forms part of the evidence base for emerging Local Plans and will need to be refreshed every five years.

The assessment provides strong evidence that delivering specialist and supported housing in sustainable, well-connected locations helps residents maintain independence, reduces pressure on health and social care services, and supports the Council's aim of creating healthy, inclusive

communities. These benefits are maximised where new provision is integrated within existing settlements, with good access to services, public transport, and high-quality design and amenity standards that promote wellbeing and prevent isolation.

Local Plan Viability Assessment

The Local Plan Viability Assessment has been prepared by consultants HDH Planning and Development to test whether the policies and proposals in the Local Plan are capable of being delivered viably over the plan period. The assessment considers a range of factors including development values, construction costs, land values, infrastructure requirements, and the cumulative impact of policy requirements such as affordable housing, efficiency standards and Biodiversity Net Gain. The assessment has been updated to reflect changes to national policy, market conditions, development costs, the extended plan period to 2043 and amendments made to the Local Plan since the previous stage of consultation.

The updated assessment indicates that the economic viability of development varies across different parts of the district, reflecting differences in sale/rental values, market conditions and site characteristics. It also confirms that the cumulative impact of the Plan's policy requirements, including higher environmental standards and infrastructure obligations, can have a significant effect on viability and therefore requires a balanced and proportionate policy approach.

The findings support the proposed approach in the Submission Version of the Local Plan of seeking 20% affordable housing on most qualifying developments, rising to 30% on the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community and the proposed Garden Villages at Hare Green and Horsley Cross. The assessment uses a balanced tenure mix of 10% Social Rent, 60% Affordable Rent and 30% Affordable Home Ownership, which reflects local needs and viability considerations.

The viability evidence has also informed the proposed approach to environmental standards. In particular, whilst the Water Cycle Study identified that a tighter water efficiency standard of 85 litres per person per day is technically achievable, viability testing indicates that a standard of 100 litres per person per day represents a more appropriate balance between environmental objectives and deliverability. Overall, the Viability Assessment provides evidence that the Plan's policies and allocations are capable of being delivered over the plan period.

Community Infrastructure Levy Viability Study

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Viability Study assess whether CIL could fund infrastructure in Tendring without putting planned growth at risk. It will form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan Review, and tests in a consistent district-wide way how typical policy costs affect viability for different development types and locations. Importantly, the modelling was undertaken against the Council's adopted policy requirements, and the emerging Local Plan is proposing even higher standards (for example in water and energy efficiency) which would further tighten viability margins for CIL.

The Study was carried out by Porter Planning Economics using standard methods and typology testing across market value areas, differentiating between greenfield and brownfield land, and including sensitivity tests on market conditions. It provides a robust indication of where, and to what extent, any levy might be supportable alongside section 106 obligations.

In headline terms, the findings show limited and uneven capacity for CIL. Most brownfield housing typologies have little or no headroom, while some greenfield housing (particularly in higher-value parts of the district) could support CIL. The largest strategic sites (including the Garden Community and Hartley Gardens) do not have capacity for CIL and would continue to rely on bespoke section 106 agreements. In the non-residential market, meaningful headroom is largely confined to convenience retail; offices, industrial, hotels and most comparison retail do not support a viable levy under current conditions.

These findings have been shared with the consultants preparing the Local Plan Viability Assessment and will continue to inform our work as the Local Plan Review progresses. At this stage, Officers are not recommending the introduction of CIL but consider that the question should be revisited later in the plan-making process – potentially following Local Government Reorganisation, when a more coordinated approach across a wider North Essex geographic area may offer a more effective and efficient route to implementation.

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)

The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) identifies the accommodation needs for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Tendring and provides the evidence base for the preparation of Local Plan policies relating to traveller accommodation.

The study was commissioned jointly by the Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA) and undertaken by Opinion Research Services (ORS). It involved desk-based research, stakeholder engagement, and interviews with Gypsy and Traveller households across the district. Fieldwork was undertaken between July and October 2023, using a November 2023 baseline.

The GTAA identified a need for additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches over the plan period and recommended that provision should be made through a combination of site allocations and criteria-based policies capable of responding to future needs and windfall proposals. The assessment found no current or future need for Travelling Showpeople plots within the district.

Following publication of the GTAA, the Council commissioned a further Pitch Deliverability Assessment (PDA) to investigate the extent to which identified needs could be met through the intensification, reconfiguration or expansion of existing sites and to inform the Local Plan's approach to delivery. The PDA included additional engagement with site owners and residents, resulting in updated evidence that supersedes the original GTAA figures.

Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Delivery Assessment

The Pitch Deliverability Assessment (PDA) was undertaken by Opinion Research Services (ORS) to assess the suitability, availability and deliverability of existing Gypsy and Traveller sites in Tendring and to establish how much of the identified accommodation need could realistically be met through existing sites. The assessment considered opportunities for site intensification, reconfiguration and expansion, together with the potential for unauthorised sites to contribute towards future supply where appropriate.

Additional fieldwork and engagement undertaken as part of the PDA resulted in an updated assessment of need. The revised evidence identified a requirement for 45 pitches over the plan period, comprising 33 pitches of current need and 12 pitches of future need. These figures supersede those contained within the original GTAA and form the basis of the Local Plan's approach to future traveller provision.

The PDA concludes that approximately 64% of the identified need could potentially be met on existing sites through intensification, reconfiguration or expansion, subject to detailed planning assessment and the resolution of any site-specific constraints. The assessment therefore demonstrates that a significant proportion of identified need can be accommodated through existing sites, reducing the requirement for wholly new allocations.

The findings of the PDA have informed the Local Plan's approach to traveller provision. In the short term, additional pitches are expected to come forward primarily through the expansion and intensification of existing authorised sites where these are demonstrated to be suitable and deliverable. To provide flexibility over the longer term, the Local Plan proposes broad locations for future provision within the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community and the proposed Garden Villages at Hare Green and Horsley Cross. Any proposals outside these locations would be considered against the criteria-based policy approach set out in the Plan.

Leisure, Open Space and Outdoor Sports Evidence Base

To inform the Local Plan Review, the Council commissioned a suite of studies from Knight, Kavanagh & Page (KKP) covering leisure facilities, open space, playing pitches, and outdoor sports provision. Together, these studies provide a comprehensive overview of the quality, quantity, accessibility and future needs of leisure, recreation and open space infrastructure across the district and establish the standards required to support both existing and future communities.

The studies identify existing deficiencies and future requirements arising from population growth, together with opportunities to improve the quality, accessibility and long-term sustainability of facilities. Common themes include the need to protect existing open spaces, playing fields and sports facilities; maintain and enhance opportunities for recreation and physical activity; address

deficiencies in provision; and ensure that new development contributes appropriately towards the delivery and improvement of leisure and open space infrastructure.

The evidence confirms that population growth over the plan period will increase demand for a range of facilities, including public open space, children's play areas, playing pitches, sports facilities and associated recreational infrastructure. It also highlights the importance of securing both on-site provision and developer contributions towards off-site improvements where necessary to maintain adequate levels of provision and accessibility.

The findings have directly informed the Local Plan's approach to open space, sport and recreation. In particular, Policy HP5 establishes updated standards for open space provision, safeguards existing facilities from inappropriate loss, and requires development to deliver or contribute towards open space, play, sports and recreational facilities in accordance with identified needs. The policy's requirements for on-site provision, financial contributions and long-term management arrangements reflect the recommendations of the evidence base and are intended to ensure that planned growth is supported by appropriate leisure and recreational infrastructure.

Infrastructure Delivery Plan

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has been prepared by LUC to support the Regulation 19 Submission Version of the Tendring District Local Plan. It has been informed by engagement with Council Officers and a wide range of infrastructure providers, including transport, education, health, utilities, emergency services, waste, libraries, green infrastructure, leisure and flood risk bodies. The IDP provides a proportionate strategic assessment of existing infrastructure provision and the additional infrastructure likely to be required to support the proposed housing and employment growth over the plan period. It should be treated as a living document and a snapshot in time, with further refinement expected as detailed masterplanning, planning applications and provider investment programmes come forward.

The Regulation 19 IDP assesses a broader range of infrastructure topics than the earlier Regulation 18 work, including water and drainage, energy, broadband, green infrastructure/open space and leisure, education, health, transport and sustainable travel, emergency services, waste, libraries and flood defences. Residential sites have been assessed individually where they are of strategic scale, with smaller sites grouped into settlement-based clusters, while employment allocations have been tested separately. Education remains one of the most significant infrastructure considerations. The Garden Villages at Hare Green and Horsley Cross will require substantial on-site provision, including new primary schools and secondary school land, while Weeley Green Garden Village, Hartley Gardens, Oakwood Park and Rouses Farm also generate primary and early years requirements. In health terms, the IDP identifies existing pressure across GP practices in Tendring, with developer contributions or new branch surgery/community hub solutions likely to be required for several larger allocations. Green infrastructure and open space requirements are also significant, particularly the need for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace and Essex Coast RAMS contributions to address recreational pressure on protected coastal habitats.

Utility and transport infrastructure will require careful planning and phasing but the IDP does not identify any constraint that is incapable of mitigation. Wastewater is a key issue, with Clacton-Holland Haven, Manningtree and Great Bromley Water Recycling Centres facing capacity constraints and new or on-site wastewater treatment solutions likely to be required for Hare Green and Horsley Cross Garden Villages. Electricity infrastructure may require new or extended primary substations in several growth areas, while potable water provision will generally require detailed modelling and local reinforcement. Transport modelling identifies a package of highway, bus, mobility hub, rail, walking and cycling measures, including improvements to key corridors and junctions, sustainable travel measures, mobility hubs and enhanced access to railway stations. The IDP also identifies potential contributions towards emergency services, libraries, waste infrastructure, healthcare and community facilities. Overall, while the infrastructure requirements are substantial, and in some cases critical to phasing, the IDP supports the deliverability of the Local Plan provided that development is accompanied by timely infrastructure planning, developer contributions, provider investment and continued engagement through masterplanning and planning applications.

Education Scenario Testing

Alongside preparation of the IDP, Essex County Council's School Place Planning Team undertook a detailed Education Scenario Test to assess the school place implications of the emerging spatial strategy. The test was based on the June 2026 housing scenario supplied by the Council (excluding the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community because it is already governed by an adopted Development Plan Document and will operate largely as a self-contained school planning area). The assessment used January 2026 school census data, May 2026 pupil forecasts and ECC's standard pupil product factors, with most dwellings treated as houses in the absence of detailed unit mix information to provide a robust worst-case test.

The Scenario Test confirms that the two larger Garden Villages will require significant on-site education provision. Hare Green Garden Village should allocate three 2.18 hectare education sites for primary schools with early years and childcare provision, with one site co-located with a further 7.9 hectares for secondary school and sixth form provision. Horsley Cross Garden Village should allocate four 2.18 hectare education sites for primary schools with early years and childcare provision, with one site co-located with a further 10.1 hectares for secondary school and sixth form provision. The assessment also confirms that education land already secured or proposed through the adopted Local Plan should be carried forward at Weeley, Rouses Farm, Hartley Gardens and Oakwood Park, and that land south of Colchester Road at Weeley should be considered as a potential alternative location for primary and early years provision given the scale and character of the Weeley Green Garden Village proposal.

For the remainder of the District, the assessment identifies a combination of manageable capacity issues and locations where careful planning will be required. In the Manningtree/Lawford area, Lawford CE Primary has already expanded to 2fe and has limited further scope, but changes to admission patterns and modest expansion at other schools could assist. In Harwich and Dovercourt,

much of the additional primary demand would be closest to Chase Lane Primary, but St Michael's CE Primary at Ramsey has a larger site that could facilitate expansion. In the west of the District, coordination will be needed around Elmstead, Great Bentley and Alresford, particularly because the area will also be influenced by the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community. In Frinton and Walton, Kirby Primary and Frinton-on-Sea Primary are full or constrained, although Hamford and Walton-on-the-Naze Primary have potential expansion options. For Thorpe-le-Soken, the previous concern around primary school capacity has been reflected in the Submission Version by deleting the larger allocation south of Colchester Road (SAH10) and reducing the remaining level of growth from 260 homes to 70 homes, thereby reducing pressure on Rolph CE Primary and the wider planning group.

For secondary education, the Scenario Test identifies the need for land within both Hare Green and Horsley Cross Garden Villages, while noting that existing secondary schools may be able to respond to growth in other areas through expansion, changes to admission patterns and the effect of new schools altering catchment behaviour over time. Harwich and Dovercourt High has site area to expand, although substantial expansion could have cost implications; Colne Community School will need to be considered carefully in relation to Hare Green; and in Clacton there is a range of potential need, with scope for capacity at Clacton County High and evidence that a 2fe expansion at Lift Clacton is viable. ECC's overall conclusion is that, provided the recommended education land allocations, financial planning obligations, safe walking and cycling routes, cross-boundary coordination and careful phasing of secondary provision are addressed, the scenario does not identify any school place planning reason why the emerging Local Plan cannot be supported or any concern regarding soundness. These findings have informed the Regulation 19 IDP, the site-specific policies and the approach to safeguarding land for education and early years provision across the District.

Transport Modelling

Transport evidence for the Submission Version Local Plan has been updated by Essex County Council and its consultants to assess whether the scale and distribution of growth proposed in the Plan can be accommodated on the transport network and what improvements will be required to support development up to 2043. The work builds upon the earlier transport evidence presented alongside the Preferred Options Draft and provides a more detailed assessment of both the impacts of growth and the measures needed to address them.

The assessment has considered not only the additional homes and employment proposed through the new Local Plan, but also growth that is already committed through existing planning permissions, allocations in the adopted Local Plan and neighbouring authorities' emerging plans. This provides a realistic picture of how travel demand across Tendring and the wider North Essex area is expected to change over time and allows the Council and Essex County Council to identify where intervention will be required.

The evidence confirms that growth will place additional pressure on a number of key transport corridors, particularly the A120, A133 and parts of the network connecting Tendring with Colchester. Existing congestion issues around locations such as the A12 Junction 29, Greenstead Roundabout, Manningtree and parts of the A133 corridor are expected to become more pronounced as development comes forward. However, the modelling demonstrates that these impacts can be managed through a planned package of transport improvements and do not represent an insurmountable obstacle to delivery of the Local Plan strategy.

Importantly, the transport evidence follows a "vision-led" and "sustainable travel first" approach consistent with national planning policy. Rather than relying solely on new highway capacity, the strategy focuses on providing residents with greater choice over how they travel. This includes improved walking and cycling connections, enhanced bus services, better links to rail services, new mobility hubs and measures that make sustainable transport more attractive and convenient. These interventions are then complemented by targeted highway improvements where required.

Key transport measures identified through the assessment include improvements along the A133 corridor, upgrades at important junctions including A12 Junction 29 and Greenstead Roundabout, improvements to the B1029 in Brightlingsea, enhanced public transport connectivity between Tendring and Colchester, and the introduction of a Rapid Transit System linking the proposed Garden Villages at Hare Green and Horsley Cross with major employment, service and transport hubs in Colchester, Manningtree and Harwich. The strategy also includes a network of mobility hubs and extensive active travel improvements connecting new developments with existing settlements, services and railway stations.

The modelling has been undertaken using a range of scenarios, including one that assumes greater use of sustainable transport modes as the proposed improvements are delivered. The results indicate that, where the identified package of transport measures is implemented alongside development, the cumulative impact of growth can be accommodated, and the transport effects of the Local Plan can be managed to an acceptable level. The evidence therefore supports the deliverability of the Council's preferred spatial strategy from a transport perspective.

The assessment also recognises that many of the larger strategic developments, including the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community and the new Garden Villages at Hare Green and Horsley Cross, will continue to grow beyond the current plan period. Longer-term modelling has therefore been undertaken to test the resilience of the proposed transport strategy over time. While further investment will inevitably be required as growth continues beyond 2043, the evidence concludes that the overall approach provides a robust framework for managing growth and supporting sustainable movement across the District.

Overall, Essex County Council's transport evidence concludes that the Submission Version Local Plan is capable of being supported by an integrated package of highway, public transport and active travel improvements. Whilst significant investment will be required over the plan period, the evidence demonstrates that the proposed strategy is deliverable and that the impacts of growth can be

appropriately mitigated through a coordinated approach involving developers, infrastructure providers and public sector partners.

Evidence to Support the Essex Energy and Carbon Policies

A comprehensive package of technical studies has been prepared by Essex County Council to support the development of robust and deliverable Energy & Carbon policies across Greater Essex. Together, these reports provide the scientific, engineering, design and viability evidence required to justify new planning policies that will ensure future development delivers healthy, energy-efficient, climate-resilient and net zero-carbon buildings consistent with local and national climate commitments.

At the core of the evidence is the Essex Net Zero Policy Study (Reports 1 and 2), led by Introba, which establishes the technical justification for requiring all new buildings to be ultra-low-energy, fossil-fuel-free and capable of generating sufficient on-site renewable energy to match their annual energy consumption. The study sets clear performance targets for space heating demand, total energy use and building fabric efficiency – measures that reduce carbon emissions, cut running costs for residents and ensure resilience to future climate conditions.

Alongside the technical standards, the Policy Study also examines the cost of meeting these requirements compared with current Building Regulations (2021). The findings show that the additional costs are manageable and broadly comparable to those identified in the earlier county wide Net Zero Carbon Viability Study undertaken by Three Dragons and partners. This provides assurance that the proposed approach is financially viable and can be embedded into Local Plan viability assessments across Greater Essex.

To support the practical implementation, Report 2 sets out the information applicants need to provide through the planning process, such as energy modelling, carbon reporting, and design evidence. It also includes design guidance and submission checklists to help planning officers and developers apply the standards consistently and effectively.

The wider evidence base is strengthened by the Essex Embodied Carbon Policy Study, which assesses how to reduce the whole-life carbon footprint of new development. This includes both the operation energy used once buildings are occupied and the carbon associated with materials and construction. The study covers a range of residential and non-residential building typologies, using recognised modelling tools. It recommends an overarching planning policy requiring net zero carbon in operation, supported by standards for energy efficiency, heating systems and renewable energy generation, aligned with Greater Essex's climate targets.

Further practical detail is provided in the Essex Buildings (Net Zero) Specifications, which offer clear, typology-specific guidance on building fabric, ventilation systems and design considerations – including good practice for Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) and approaches to reducing thermal bridging. A supporting document expands on materials, skills and supply chains in

Greater Essex, and offers advice on cost-effective design and meeting the emerging policy requirements.

Finally, the Net Zero Carbon Viability and Toolkit Study assesses the financial and practical implications of different carbon-reduction targets. Drawing on industry engagement, national research and high-level modelling, it concludes that net zero-aligned development can be viably delivered where local plan policies are clearly framed and consistently implemented.

Together, these studies provide a coherent and robust evidence base for New Policies PPL10a, PPL10b, and PPL10c detailed above. These demonstrate that net zero new development is technically achievable, financially viable and supported by clear, practical guidance – enabling the Council to include these ambitious policies within the updated Local Plan.

Integrated Water Cycle Study

The Tendring Water Cycle Study (WCS) has been prepared by AECOM as part of the evidence base for the updated Local Plan. It has been undertaken jointly with Colchester City Council, with separate authority reports reflecting the different Local Plan timetables, and has involved Anglian Water Services, Affinity Water, the Environment Agency and other relevant bodies. The WCS follows Environment Agency guidance and combines scoping and detailed assessment in one report. It considers the interaction between planned housing and employment growth, water supply, wastewater treatment, sewer networks, water quality, flood risk, water-dependent habitats, bathing and shellfish waters, sustainable drainage and nature-based solutions. The WCS also updates the assessment to reflect revised site allocations and employment allocations following the Regulation 18 consultation.

In wastewater terms, 11 Water Recycling Centres are expected to receive growth. Brightlingsea Church Road, Harwich and Dovercourt, Thorington, Walton-on-the-Naze and Wix have sufficient flow capacity within existing permits after growth. By contrast, Clacton Holland Haven, Great Bromley, Jaywick, Manningtree and St Osyth are expected to be at or exceed their permitted flow limits once growth is taken into account, requiring new permits, investment, phasing or upgrades. Little Bentley Tendring Road has a descriptive permit and therefore any additional connections will require careful liaison with Anglian Water and the Environment Agency. Horsley Cross Garden Village is outside an existing sewer catchment and is likely to require a new developer-delivered wastewater treatment facility or alternative agreed wastewater solution; modelling indicates that a single local discharge to Holland Brook may present constraints for ammonia, so options will need to be developed through detailed masterplanning and engagement with Anglian Water and the Environment Agency.

The WCS concludes that wastewater infrastructure is capable of supporting the Local Plan, but only where growth is accompanied by timely infrastructure planning, pre-application engagement, appropriate phasing, developer contributions and, where necessary, upgrades or new treatment solutions. It recommends that development in constrained catchments engages early with Anglian

Water, demonstrates capacity in the sewerage network and receiving WRC, and prevents surface water from entering the foul sewer network. For water supply, Tendring is within an area of serious water stress and is served by Affinity Water's Brett Water Resource Zone. Affinity Water's Water Resources Management Plan indicates a supply surplus until around 2040, with demand management being critical thereafter. The WCS therefore provides evidence for a stronger water-efficiency policy. Although the study shows that 85 litres per person per day is technically achievable and would further reduce pressure on water resources and wastewater infrastructure, viability testing indicates this would risk deliverability at this stage. Policy PPL5 therefore requires new homes to be designed to use no more than 100 litres per person per day, supported by Water Efficient Design Statements, while also requiring separate surface water drainage, sustainable drainage systems, protection of water quality and stronger control over non-mains drainage proposals. This represents a balanced and deliverable response to the WCS evidence, while still supporting long-term water resilience, environmental protection and Local Plan deliverability.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

This Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) provides a comprehensive and up-to-date assessment of flood risk across the district and forms a key part of the evidence base supporting the Local Plan. Prepared by Essex County Council, the SFRA draws on the latest Environment Agency flood modelling, surface water and groundwater mapping, climate change allowances, and relevant national policy and legislation. The assessment considers flood risk from all sources including fluvial, tidal, surface water, groundwater, sewer and reservoir flooding, and includes an assessment of 62 Local Plan sites.

In line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the SFRA supports the application of the Sequential and Exception Tests, ensuring that development is directed towards areas of lowest flood risk wherever possible. The assessment concludes that most sites are located wholly or predominantly within Flood Zone 1, although a number are affected by fluvial, surface water or groundwater flood risk and will require site-specific Flood Risk Assessments, careful masterplanning, and appropriate mitigation measures.

The assessment identifies surface water flooding as a significant issue across parts of the district, particularly when climate change impacts are taken into account. It therefore emphasises the importance of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), green infrastructure, and natural flood management measures in reducing runoff, managing exceedance flows and improving resilience. The assessment also highlights the need to consider groundwater flooding in some locations and the longer-term implications of sea-level rise and coastal change along the district's coastline.

The findings have informed the site selection process and the development of policies relating to flood risk, sustainable drainage and climate resilience. The assessment demonstrates that the proposed pattern of growth can be accommodated, subject to appropriate mitigation and site design, while ensuring that development remains safe and resilient to future flood risk.

Landscape Character Assessment

Place Services has produced the updated Landscape Character Assessment as part of the Local Plan evidence base. The assessment is intended to inform policy formulation and decision making with regard to landscape management and nature recovery. In doing so, the assessment will guide any conservation and restoration efforts of Tendring's landscapes and highlight opportunities to increase the District's resilience to climate change. The methodology undertaken for the Landscape Character Assessment follows the accepted method promoted by Natural England. The work included a review of the District's physical, ecological, and historic and cultural characteristics, together with field surveys and an updated assessment of landscape character types and areas.

The formative influences within Section 2 of the report provide background to the landscape context of Tendring. Physical influences refer to the geology and landform of the District, including marine erosion and deposition, local drainage patterns, and soil and agricultural capacity. The assessment also notes the historic human influences on Tendring's local landscape, such as woodland clearance, farming, settlement development, and policy. Ecological Character and Landscape Designation and Value are identified as further formative influences. The assessment identifies the Internationally Important Sites, regionally important sites, the Coastal Protection Belt, and National Landscapes as key designations within the District for local landscape character.

Section 3 of the report identifies eight landscape character types and 29 individual Landscape Character Areas across the District. The assessment identifies a range of pressures for change, including climate change, coastal erosion, biodiversity decline, infrastructure projects and development pressures, and provides guidance on conserving and enhancing landscape character, supporting nature recovery and responding to future environmental challenges.

The findings generally support the retention of the District's existing landscape protections and provide evidence for the continued protection and enhancement of important landscapes, settlement separation and green infrastructure. The assessment also reinforces the importance of the Coastal Protection Belt, Strategic Green Gaps and other measures aimed at preventing the coalescence of settlements and conserving the distinctive character of Tendring's coastal and rural landscapes.

The Naze is identified as a specific Landscape Character Area in the assessment. Changes to the area noted in the assessment include intensive grassland management of coastal heath habitats, ongoing pressure for development, and the continued erosion and slippage of the Naze cliffs. The assessment's guidance encourages the conservation and protection of the Naze as it relates to habitat diversity, views, and heritage value. Therefore, the LCA provides a robust evidence base for Policy PPL12c of the Local Plan, which seeks to conserve and protect the Naze.

The Landscape Character Assessment provides a robust evidence base for policies in the Local Plan that seek to conserve and enhance local landscapes, habitats, and heritage assets in the District, as

well as site specific policies that include requirements to protect landscape character, biodiversity, and green infrastructure.

Strategic Green Gap Study

To inform the review of the Local Plan, the Council commissioned The Landscape Partnership to undertake a Strategic Green Gaps (SGG) Study as part of its evidence base. The purpose of the study was to assess whether the District's existing Strategic Green Gaps continue to fulfil their role in maintaining the separate identity of settlements and preventing coalescence, in accordance with Policy PPL6 of the Local Plan. The study also considered proposed new and extended Strategic Green Gaps identified through the Regulation 18 Preferred Options consultation.

The study reviewed all existing Strategic Green Gaps within the adopted Local Plan, together with proposed new or amended gaps at Elmstead Market, Little Clacton/Weeley Heath, Little Oakley and an extension to the existing gap south of Kirby-le-Soken. The assessment considered a range of factors including settlement identity, landscape character, visual separation, boundary defensibility, biodiversity interests and opportunities for landscape enhancement and public access. The work included both a desk-based assessment and field surveys, culminating in recommendations on the retention, amendment or removal of designated gaps, together with revised boundary proposals where appropriate.

The study was prepared to provide a robust and up-to-date evidence base for the emerging Local Plan Review, particularly in the context of significant planned housing growth across the district and the need to ensure that Strategic Green Gaps remain justified, effective and capable of withstanding examination scrutiny. The findings generally support the retention of existing Strategic Green Gaps and the extension of a number of gaps, including those between Clacton and Little Clacton, Clacton and Jaywick, Dovercourt, Ramsey and Little Oakley, Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken, Elmstead Market and the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community, and Little Clacton and Weeley Heath. Boundary amendments otherwise reflect changes on the ground and the need for more logical and defensible boundaries whilst maintaining and strengthening separation between settlements.

Consultation Statement and Report of Regulation 18 Representations and Responses

The Consultation Statement and Report of Representations and Responses document how the Council has engaged with residents, stakeholders, statutory consultees and other interested parties throughout the Local Plan Review process, and how the views expressed through consultation have influenced the development of the Plan.

The Report of Representations and Responses provides a comprehensive record of the comments received on the Preferred Options Draft Local Plan, summarising individual representations against specific policies, site allocations and other elements of the Plan, together with the Council's response and an explanation of whether changes have been made to the Submission Version as a result.

The Consultation Statement provides a higher-level summary of the main issues and themes raised during consultation and the Council's response to those matters. It demonstrates how consultation has informed the evolution of the Local Plan and will be updated following the Submission Version (Regulation 19) consultation to reflect representations received at that stage. The final document will form part of the submission documents provided to the Planning Inspectorate, setting out how representations received throughout the plan-making process have been considered and taken into account in preparing the Local Plan.

FINAL SPATIAL STRATEGY AND DISTRIBUTION OF GROWTH

Whilst the Local Plan covers a wide variety of topics and it's not just a strategy for housing growth, it is normally the spatial strategy and distribution of growth, particularly housing growth, that attracts the most public attention and the greatest level of scrutiny by the Planning Inspector in considering the legal compliance and soundness of the Plan. For this reason, Officers have included a specific section in this report to articulate the final spatial strategy and distribution of housing and other development in the Submission Version of the Local Plan, as revised following the Preferred Options Draft consultation.

The total housebuilding requirement for Tendring, as calculated in line with the Government's standard methodology is 18,173 homes over the period 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2043 as was discussed and agreed by the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee on 8 June 2026. The Council has no choice but to accept this figure as it is effectively imposed by the Government through its standard methodology and the Council has to prepare a Local Plan that seeks to address that requirement.

10,211 of the 18,173 homes are expected to come forward on sites that have been carried forward from the Council's previous Local Plan and sites that are either already under construction, have obtained planning permission for housing or are otherwise anticipated to come forward as small site 'windfall' development. Developments carried forward from the previous Local Plan include the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community (see Policy SAMU1) shared with Colchester City Council which is expected to contribute 1,950 homes up to 2043, and the Hartley Gardens (SAMU2), Oakwood Park (SAMU3) and Rouses Farm (SAMU4) developments on the edge of Clacton which are together expected to deliver 3,745 homes.

To deliver the additional 8,000 that result from the introduction of the new government housing targets, the preferred option for growth is a hybrid combination of Options A and B that were part of the consultation (alongside Options C and D) carried out at Issues and Options Stage – albeit with an amendment now in respect of Thorpe le Soken where only 70 homes are now proposed as opposed to the 100 to 300 range indicated under the original Option A/B strategy.

The revised distribution of the additional housing growth in the revised Submission Version of the Local Plan that results from that strategy is summarised as follows:

- **Major expansion at Harwich & Dovercourt:** 1,882 additional homes, mostly through a major mixed-use urban extension onto greenfield land south-west of the settlement off Long Road and Oakley Road (mostly within the parish of Ramsey and Parkeston). Whilst this major allocation did attract objections at preferred options stage, Officers remain satisfied that the proposal is sound in planning terms and is necessary for the Council to achieve the Government housebuilding target.
- **Hare Green Garden Village:** An almost entirely new settlement in the Frating, Great Bromley and Hare Green area including up to 4,500 homes in total (alongside employment, infrastructure and community facilities) built over 20-30 years – but of which potentially 1,700 could be built in the period up to 2043. Like the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community, this would be a comprehensively planned development underpinned by its own planning document and masterplan which alone could take a number of years to produce before much of the development is able to come forward.
- **Horsley Cross Garden Village:** A second new settlement of up to 6,000 homes with employment, infrastructure and community facilities on land predominantly north of the A120 at Horsley Cross which, like the Hare Green Garden Village, would likely take 20-30 years to develop in full – but for which potentially around 1,700 could foreseeably be built in the period up to 2043. Again, such a development will require comprehensive planning from the outset through a planning document and masterplan that could take a number of years to produce before planning applications are determined and delivery commences.
- **Weeley Green Garden Village:** A smaller Garden Village comprising a mixed-use development of 900 homes with employment, infrastructure and community facilities in the form of a tightly defined western expansion of the village. Officers anticipate that a development of this scale could be delivered in full in the period to 2043, guided by a Masterplan that could either be produced by the future unitary authority or which could be developer-led with community input.
- **Proportionate expansion of Smaller Urban Settlements:** Additional residential and mixed use developments in and around the urban settlements of Frinton, Walton & Kirby Cross; Manningtree, Lawford & Mistley; and Brightlingsea delivering 850 homes as follows, reflecting some notable changes and deletions from the earlier Preferred Options Draft:
 - o Frinton, Walton and Kirby Cross: 490 homes on greenfield land on the edge of the settlement, mostly (450, as revised) on land north of Thorpe Road, Kirby Cross – but with the continued protection and expansion of designated ‘Strategic Green Gap’ that maintains separation of the main settlement to the neighbouring village of Kirby le Soken – noting that an earlier proposal for 200 homes on land on the

edge of Walton has been deleted from the Plan following objections from the Essex Wildlife Trust and a large number of residents;

- o Manningtree, Lawford and Mistley: 170 homes across a number previously developed brownfield sites including the waterworks site off Mill Lane, the former Crisp Maltings site off School Lane and a mixed-use waterside development involving the redevelopment and reconfiguration of land and property off Riverside Avenue – a slight reduction from the 200 originally suggested in the Preferred Options Draft following a revision to the estimated dwelling numbers on the Crisp Maltings site in Mistley; and
 - o Brightlingsea: 150 homes spread across a number of medium sized sites, including some sites included in the Plan following the deletion of the contentious 300-home site off Church Road/Samson Road having agreed the suggestions of Brightlingsea Town Council and taken on board local concerns.
- **Proportionate expansion of Rural Service Centres with railway stations:** Residential developments totalling approximately 490 new homes on selective sites on the edge of the larger villages of Alresford and Great Bentley and on land in the Thorpe le Soken/Thorpe Station and Maltings area distributed as follows:
 - o Alresford: 140 homes on land north of the village off Cockaynes Lane, of which 100 are already the subject of a Planning Committee resolution to grant planning permission;
 - o Great Bentley: 280 homes on greenfield sites east of the village (of which 80 are already subject of a Planning Committee resolution to grant planning permission and the remaining 200 are the subject of current, but yet to be determined, planning applications); and
 - o Thorpe le Soken: 70 homes on land south of the village adjoining the recent developments of Lady Nelson Gardens and around the entrance to the Lifehouse Spa & Hotel – a significant reduction from the 260 originally proposed for the Thorpe area following consideration of objections from Essex County Council raising concerns about primary school capacity.
- **Proportionate expansion of Rural Service Centres without railway stations:** Some limited further development totalling approximately 180 homes split equally between Little Clacton and St. Osyth as follows, and unchanged from the Preferred Options Draft:
 - o Little Clacton: 80 homes on land off Grove Road, Feverills Road and Amerells Road; and

- o St. Osyth: 100 homes on land off Rochford Road and Clacton Road.
- **Proportionate small-scale expansion of Smaller Rural Settlements:** 461 homes mainly on smaller greenfield sites distributed throughout some of Tendring's smaller villages as follows:
 - o Beaumont cum Moze: 12 (reduced from the 20 originally proposed as part of the Preferred Options Draft)
 - o Bradfield: 75 (reduced from 100 as originally proposed, following suggestions from Bradfield Parish Council for development of smaller sites)
 - o Great Bromley: 25
 - o Great Holland: 20
 - o Great Oakley: 100
 - o Kirby le Soken: 10 (reduced from 30)
 - o Little Bentley: 12
 - o Little Bromley: 10 (reduced from 17)
 - o Tendring Heath: 10
 - o Thorrington: 60 (where planning permission has already been granted)
 - o Weeley Heath: 77
 - o Wix: 20 (reduced from 40 in the Preferred Options Draft)
 - o Wrabness: 30

The sites identified in the Submission Version Local Plan in total have the potential to deliver 18,334 homes between 2026 and 2043, which is just 161 above the 18,173 required under the Government's mandatory housebuilding targets, representing a much reduced level of headroom contingency from the earlier Preferred Options Draft.

The following table sets out the total distribution, between individual settlements and locations, of proposed housing growth across the district up to 2043 including both housing already in the pipeline and additional housing proposed through the Submission Version of the Local Plan. It should be noted that these figures do not include estimates for 'windfall' housing provision which, by definition, come forward through planning applications generally on unidentified small sites in locations all across the district (albeit with larger numbers tending to be in larger urban areas like Clacton).

The table also sets out the percentage distribution of the planned housing provision across the district up to 2043 and the estimated percentage increase in housing stock up to 2043 for each specific settlement location from 2026 levels.

Settlement/Location	New homes in current pipeline	Additional homes proposed	Total 2026-2043	% of total planned provision (excluding windfall)
Strategic Urban Settlements				

Clacton	4,369	0	4,369	25.9%
Harwich	514	1,882	2,396	14.2%
Garden Community and Garden Village locations				
Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community	1,964	0	1,964*	11.6%
New Hare Green Garden Village	0	1,700	1,700*	10.1%
New Horsley Cross Garden Village	0	1,700	1,700*	10.1%
Weeley Garden Village	301	900	1,201	7.1%
* It should be noted that the figures for Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community, New Hare Green Garden Village and New Horsley Cross Garden village represent only a proportion of the total amount of housing envisaged for those locations which is considered realistically deliverable in the period up to 2043 and, for TCBGC, the 50% of such homes attributable to meeting Tendring's housing requirement.				
Smaller Urban Settlements				
Frinton, Walton and Kirby Cross	173	490	663	3.9%
Manningtree, Lawford and Mistley	665	170	835	4.9%
Brightlingsea	41	150	191	1.1%
Rural Service Centres				
Alresford	0	140	140	0.8%
Elmstead Market	154	0	154	0.9%
Great Bentley	36	280	316	1.9%
Little Clacton	148	80	228	1.4%
St. Osyth	227	100	327	1.9%
Thorpe le Soken	4	70	74	0.4%
Smaller Rural Settlements				
Ardleigh village	No housing growth proposed – as explained elsewhere in this report.			
Beaumont Cum Moze	0	12	12	0.1%
Bradfield	0	75	75	0.4%
Frating	See figures for the Hare Green Garden Village proposal.			
Great Bromley	67	25	92	0.5%
Great Holland	0	20	20	0.1%
Great Oakley	86	100	186	1.1%
Kirby-le-Soken	0	10	10	0.1%

Little Bentley	0	12	12	0.1%
Little Bromley	0	10	10	0.1%
Little Oakley	See figures for the Harwich area.			
Ramsey Village	0	0	0	0.00%
Tendring Village	0		0	0.00%
Tendring Heath	0	10	10	0.1%
Thorpe Station and Thorpe Maltings	See figures for Thorpe le Soken.			
Thorrington	0	60	60	0.4%
Weeley Heath	0	77	77	0.5%
Wix	0	20	20	0.1%
Wrabness	0	30	30	0.2%

Accepting that the Garden Village proposals for Hare Green, Horsley Cross and Weeley represent a very different kind of developments that are, by their very nature, disproportionate in scale to the existing communities to which they most closely relate to be of a scale that will accommodate and deliver new infrastructure, services and facilities; elsewhere the distribution of growth represents a more traditional settlement hierarchy approach, directing development to the most sustainable locations whilst ensuring that growth in smaller settlements remains proportionate to their scale and function.

Broadly speaking, of the 18,000 homes required between 2026 and 2043:

- Almost 40% of new homes are expected to be built in and around the larger urban settlements Clacton and Harwich, the areas with the largest economies and greatest range of jobs, shops, services and facilities.
- Approximately 40% are to be delivered in the strategically important Garden Community and Garden Village locations on the Tendring Colchester Borders and at Hare Green, Horsley Cross and Weeley.
- Around 10% of all housing development is being directed towards the smaller urban settlements of Frinton, Walton and Kirby Cross; Manningtree, Lawford and Mistley; and Brightlingsea.
- 7% are going to the rural service centres, i.e. larger villages of Alresford, Elmstead Market, Great Bentley, Little Clacton, St. Osyth and Thorpe le Soken.

- Approximately 3% of planned housing provision is distributed amongst the district's smaller rural settlements, representing a modest level of growth intended to support the vitality and sustainability of village communities without fundamentally changing their rural character.

Taken as a whole, this distribution of growth reflects a sustainable and balanced spatial strategy that accords with the settlement hierarchy and directs the largest proportion of development towards the district's most sustainable locations. The majority of housing growth is concentrated within or adjoining the largest urban settlements, strategic growth locations and smaller towns where there is the greatest range of employment opportunities, services, facilities and public transport options, thereby reducing the need to travel and supporting the efficient use of existing and proposed infrastructure.

The strategy also recognises the important role that the Garden Community and Garden Village proposals can play in delivering significant numbers of new homes alongside new employment opportunities, schools, community facilities, green infrastructure and transport improvements in a coordinated and comprehensively planned manner. Whilst these developments represent substantial new settlements in their own right, they provide an opportunity to accommodate a significant proportion of the district's housing requirement in locations capable of supporting long-term sustainable growth.

At the same time, the strategy avoids an over-concentration of growth in any single settlement or geographic area and instead spreads a proportion of development across rural service centres and smaller villages. This helps sustain local services, schools, shops and community facilities, supports rural economies and enables people to remain within their local communities whilst ensuring that growth remains proportionate to the size, role and character of individual settlements.

The resulting pattern of development therefore seeks to strike an appropriate balance between meeting the Government's mandatory housing requirement in full, making efficient use of the district's most sustainable locations, supporting economic growth and infrastructure investment, and protecting the distinctive character of Tendring's towns, villages and countryside. Officers consider that this represents the most appropriate and sustainable strategy when assessed against the reasonable alternatives considered through the Local Plan process and having regard to the environmental, infrastructure and deliverability constraints that affect different parts of the district.

Letter from Little Bromley Parish Council

On 3 August 2026, Little Bromley Parish Council wrote to the Council's Corporate Director – Planning Community objecting, in the strongest possible terms to the decision taken by the Planning Policy & Local Plan Committee on 8 June 2026 to depart from the Officers' recommendation to delete Site MSA20 (Land south of Shop Road, Little Bromley) and instead retain it as a housing allocation, with a reduced indicative capacity of 10 dwellings. The Parish

Council has suggested that the decision was procedurally flawed, contrary to the evidence, and inconsistent with the principles of sound plan-making required under national planning policy.

The Parish Council's letter and the response of the Corporate Director – Planning and Community have been provided separately to Members of the Committee, along with the Parish Council's representation on the Preferred Options Draft, or information.

Members should note that a representative of Little Bromley Parish Council may wish to address the Committee at the meeting in accordance with the public speaking scheme ahead of the Committee making its decision as to what to recommend to Full Council.

FINAL PLANNING POLICIES

Having considered the representations received in response to the Preferred Options Draft consultation and taken into account updates to the technical evidence base, Officers are recommending the majority of planning policies can be carried forward from the Preferred Options Draft into the Submission Version of the Local Plan with either no changes at all, or only minor amendments. However, as highlighted in the executive summary to this report, there are some policies where some significant or otherwise notable changes have been made.

For completeness and ease of reference, all of the Local Plan policies are listed below, identifying (in bold) where any significant or notable changes have been made, or otherwise indicating the nature of any minor revisions:

Chapter 3: Sustainable Places

- Strategic Policy SPL1a: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development – no changes.
- **Strategic Policy SPL1: Managing Growth** - the policy setting out the 'settlement hierarchy' categorising towns and villages and underpinning the spatial strategy and distribution of growth is revised to classify Little Oakley as part of the Harwich and Dovercourt Strategic Urban Settlement given their physical connection and to be consistent with the approach taken to Parkeston. The existing village of Weeley is also included in the hierarchy alongside the proposed Weeley Green Garden Village proposal, having been omitted in the Preferred Options Draft.
- Strategic Policy SPL2: Settlement Development Boundaries – no changes.
- Non-strategic Policy SPL3: Sustainable Design – minor amendment to wording in respect of flood risk and sustainable drainage systems to improve clarity and ensure consistency with national policy and other policies in the Local Plan.

Chapter 4: Healthy Places

- **Non-strategic Policy HP1: Improving Health and Wellbeing** – on the advice of the NHS Suffolk and North Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB), this policy in Chapter 4 of the Plan has been revised to be less specific in committing to health and wellbeing centres at the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community and in Clacton, or to a multi-use community hub at the Hartley Gardens development in Clacton or expansion and improvement of facilities at the Fryatt Hospital. This is because the most appropriate means of addressing the healthcare requirements for each growth area has not been determined by the various health partners of the ICB and therefore flexibility needs to be built into the Local Plan to allow for mitigation to be secured either through direct provision of land or floorspace, or via a developer contribution towards healthcare infrastructure projects to be identified.
- Non-strategic Policy HP1a: Managing the Location of Hot Food Takeaways – no changes.
- Non-strategic Policy HP2: Community Facilities – no changes.
- Non-strategic Policy HP4: Cemeteries, Crematoriums and Burial Sites – no changes.
- Non-Strategic Policy HP5: Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities – minor amendments only to include reference to the Council's Sport and Activity Strategy and replace references to 'playing fields' with 'outdoor playing facilities', on the advice of Essex County Council.

Chapter 5: Living Places

- **Strategic Policy LP1: Housing Supply** – this policy sets out the overall sources of housing supply to meet the government housebuilding requirement of 18,173 dwellings between 2026 and 2043. The policy along with the associated tables listing all of the relevant housing and mixed-use site allocations have been comprehensively updated in the Submission Version of the Plan to reflect the changes to site allocations set out above in this report and rolling forward the plan period, as agreed by the Committee in its June meeting. The revised policy shows that the Local Plan makes provision for 18,334 homes which incorporates 161 units of contingency headroom above the government requirement.
- **Strategic Policy LP2: Housing Choice** – revised to include specific reference to the latest evidence on need for supported and specialist housing and armed forces veterans as a group in society that may have specific housing and support needs. The revised policy also refers to park homes, modular homes and other innovative forms of residential development being supported where they comply with other policies in the Local Plan.

- Non-strategic Policy LP3: Housing Density and Standards – minor amendments only to improve wording and to include specific reference to utilities infrastructure and associated easements, which could be a factor in determining the appropriate density of development.
- **Non-strategic Policy LP4: Development Layout & Design** – revised to include more detailed guidance around Biodiversity Net Gain, the incorporation of green infrastructure and vegetation within new developments and references other relevant guidance including that relating to inclusive design, age friendly environments and dementia-friendly design.
- **Strategic Policy LP5: Affordable Housing** – incorporates revisions to highlight exceptional reasons why it might not be possible to limit groups of affordable homes to no more than 10 in different parts of a site, for example where site-specific constraints, the scale of development, management considerations or Registered Provider requirements justify an alternative approach. The revised policy also includes reference to specialist and supported housing to meet identified needs within the District.
- Non-Strategic Policy LP6: Rural Exception Schemes – minor amendment in response to comments from Essex County Council to include an expectation for rural exception sites for affordable housing to provide safe and suitable access for all users and for them to be reasonably related to local services and facilities, having regard to opportunities for active and sustainable travel – consistent with other policies in the Local Plan.
- Non-strategic Policy LP7: Self-build and Custom-built Homes – minor rewording of part of the policy to refer to and ensure consistency of approach with other relevant policies in the Local Plan – requiring proposals to be of a high-quality design response that is appropriate to its site and surroundings, uses durable and appropriate materials and accords with the requirements of Policies SPL3, LP3 and LP4.
- Non-strategic Policy LP8: Backland Residential Development – no changes to the policy itself, but some additions to the supporting text are proposed to provide more detail and clarification about how the policy is intended to operate.
- **Strategic Policy LP9: Gypsy and Traveller Sites** - possibly the most significant policy revisions proposed in the Submission Version of the Local Plan. To comply with national planning policy set out in the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), there is an expectation that Local Plans will be specific about the sites or locations in which the projected need for gypsy and traveller sites will be met. The evidence on gypsy and traveller need has been updated, and the revised policy reflects the updated projected need for 45 pitches up to 2043. The underlying evidence recognises that accommodation needs can be met through a variety of mechanisms, including site intensification, reconfiguration, additional mobile homes and other forms of provision on existing sites, and therefore the Local Plan expresses site capacity in terms of additional pitches or pitch equivalents.

The previous version of the policy in the Preferred Options Draft identified existing established sites at Woodfield Bungalow in Great Bentley and Gutteridge Hall Lane in Weeley as locations for proportionate expansion to meet short-term needs, with the intention to invite submissions from relevant landowners to identify the extent of available land in those locations to determine their suitability for allocation. However, because no specific submissions were made but the Council is still required to identify specific locations, the updated study looked more widely at where existing accommodation needs arise and where additional capacity could reasonably be delivered through expansion, intensification or reconfiguration of existing sites.

The revised policy therefore reflects the latest study and identifies existing sites at Great Bromley, Ardleigh, Weeley, Bradfield and Kirby le Soken as locations capable of delivering 27 pitches or pitch equivalents through site intensification, reconfiguration or extension or other forms of accommodation provision. In many cases, the identified need arises from households already living on established sites who require their own independent accommodation, meaning delivery of the allocated capacity would not necessarily result in a corresponding or proportionate increase in vehicle movements, activity levels or other impacts typically associated with entirely new households moving onto a site. The impact of any proposal on traffic, residential amenity and the wider environment would nevertheless need to be assessed on its individual merits through the planning application process.

To meet longer-term needs, the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community will provide new purpose-built Gypsy and Traveller pitches, with additional provision to be delivered through the Garden Villages at Hare Green and Horsley Cross.

- Non-strategic Policy LP10: Care, Independent and Assisted Living. Secure Institutions – minor additional wording incorporated into the policy giving support to specialist housing accommodation within residential and mixed-used developments where the scale, design and operation of the proposal are compatible and where suitable access to services and facilities can be achieved. Policy also updated to refer to the Essex Design Guide, ECC Extra Care Design Guide and other relevant good practice relating to inclusive and dementia friendly design.
- **Non-strategic Policy LP11: HMO and Bedsits** – revised in the Submission Version to strengthen the requirement for both individual and cumulative impacts of HMOs and bedsits to be considered in the determination of planning applications. The revised policy also includes additional expectations around the standard of accommodation for future occupiers, the consideration of impacts on neighbouring residents through noise, disturbance, activity levels, refuse storage requirements, parking demand and general operational impacts. Proposals will also have to demonstrate suitable management arrangements are in place for the maintenance of communal facilities, waste storage areas and external spaces.

Chapter 6: Prosperous Places

- Non-strategic Policy PP1: New Retail Development – no changes to the policy itself, but some additions to the supporting text to refer to the latest available evidence on retail and to recognise that retailing and town centres will evolve in response to changes in consumer behaviour, technology and market conditions – with the need to keep evidence under review to inform future decision-making.
- Strategic Policy PP2: Retail Hierarchy – no changes.
- Strategic Policy PP3: Village and Neighbourhood Centres – no changes.
- Non-strategic Policy PP4: Local Impact Threshold – no changes.
- Non-strategic Policy PP5: Town Centre Uses – no changes.
- Strategic Policy PP6: Employment Sites – no changes to the policy itself but revisions to the policy's supporting text have been made to reference the latest updated evidence on employment land.
- Non-strategic Policy PP6a: Extensions to Existing Employment Sites in the Countryside – no changes other than a reference to National Landscapes in the section of the policy concerned with protection of countryside character and sensitive areas.
- **Strategic Policy PP7: Employment Allocations** – this policy lists all of the sites specifically allocated for new employment development including B2 General Industry; B8 Storage and Distribution; Eg(ii) Research and Development; and Eg(iii) Light Industrial Processes. The only change proposed to this policy is the deletion of Land off Clacton Road/Dead Lane, Mistley as a 2ha employment site in the knowledge that development for that purpose has not come forward as part of the wider mixed-use development that is already under construction, and that a different parcel of the wider site is currently subject of a current, but yet to be determined, planning application (26/00645/FUL) which indicates that employment provision might be incorporated into the development in a different form, and in a different location than previously identified in the Local Plan.
- Strategic Policy PP8: Tourism – no changes.
- Non-strategic Policy PP9: Hotels and Guesthouses – no changes.
- **Non-strategic Policy PP10: Camping and Touring Caravan Sites** – revised in the Submission Version to include specific reference to National Landscapes (formerly known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) to ensure any new development affective their setting conserves and enhances their natural beauty, landscape character and special

qualities. The revisions specifically require that development is appropriately located, designed and landscaped to avoid adverse impacts on important views, tranquillity, dark skies and the wider landscape setting.

- **Non-Strategic Policy PP11: Holiday Parks** – similar revisions to those incorporated into Policy PP10 in respect of National Landscapes.
- **Strategic Policy PP12: Improving Education and Skills** – revisions on the advice of Sport England to include a requirement for new educational facilities including indoor or outdoor recreational facilities to be designed to facilitate community use outside normal educational hours; with long-term community use agreements put in place to secure ongoing public access where appropriate.
- Strategic Policy PP13: The Rural Economy – no changes.
- Strategic Policy PP14: Priority Areas for Regeneration – no changes.
- **Non-strategic Policy PP15: Walton Mere** – this policy is carried forward into the Submission Version of the Plan with a simple addition requiring any Biodiversity Net Gain, new saltmarsh habitat or other ecological enhancement to support the objectives of the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy, including opportunities for coastal habitat creation, nature recovery and strengthened ecological connectivity.
- Non-strategic Policy PP16: St. Osyth Car Park – no changes.

Chapter 7: Protected Places

- Strategic Policy PPL1: Development and Flood Risk – minor changes only to re-order the wording of the policy so that national policy requirements are towards the beginning of the policy rather than at the end.
- Strategic Policy PPL2: Coastal Protection Belt – no changes.
- **Strategic Policy PPL3: The Rural Landscape** – revised in the Submission Version to make more specific reference to National Landscapes and for proposals for electricity schemes or communication requirement to be undergrounded in those areas, and for the priorities in the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy to be taken into account in considering the impact of development on the rural landscape.
- **Strategic Policy PPL4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity** - significant revisions in response to advice from Natural England and Essex Wildlife Trust and to reflect the latest evidence underpinning the Habitat Regulations Assessment. The revised policy includes

strengthened requirements relating to the protection of internationally designated habitat sites and introduces specific policy provisions relating to Functionally Linked Land, recognising that land outside designated sites can nevertheless be important to qualifying bird species. The policy also introduces a framework for the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), which involves providing attractive places for walking, dog exercising and informal recreation away from the District's most sensitive wildlife habitats. The purpose is to help protect internationally important sites by encouraging some visitors to use alternative green spaces instead. Additional policy requirements clarify the relationship between SANG provision and the Essex Coast RAMS strategy and seek to ensure that recreational impacts on protected habitats are appropriately addressed. The policy also aligns development proposals with the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy and strengthens expectations around biodiversity net gain, green and blue infrastructure, ecological connectivity and habitat enhancement, ensuring that development contributes positively towards nature recovery and environmental improvement.

- Strategic Policy PPL4a: Biodiversity Net Gain in Tendring – minor changes only to improve wording to reference the statutory hierarchy of BNG and viability as a factor which might lead to the need to buy statutory biodiversity credits from the government as a last resort, if other onsite or off-site solutions cannot be found.
- Strategic Policy PPL5: Policy Water Conservation, Drainage and Sewerage – minor changes only to include a reference to the Essex Water Strategic and SuDS Design Guidance, and to state in respect of private sewerage treatment facilities, that they will only be permitted if there is existing capacity and where there would be no harm to the environment.
- Strategic Policy PPL6: Strategic Green Gaps – no changes to the policy wording, but it should be noted as explained elsewhere in this report, that the Strategic Green Gap designation as shown on the revised Policies Maps includes extensions to those designations in and around Clacton and Little Clacton; Dovercourt, Ramsey and Little Oakley; Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken; Elmstead Market and the Garden Community; and Little Clacton and Weeley Heath – having considered the findings of the new Strategic Green Gap Study.
- Non-strategic Policy PPL7: Archaeology – no changes.
- Non-strategic Policy PPL8: Conservation Areas and Registered Parks and Gardens – no changes.
- Non-strategic Policy PPL9: Listed Buildings – no changes.
- Non-strategic Policy PPL9a: Non-designated Heritage Assets – no changes.

- Strategic Policy PPL10a: Operational Energy and Carbon (Net Zero) in Homes and Buildings – no changes.
- Strategic Policy PPL10b: Embodied Carbon and Circular Economy in Homes and Buildings – no changes.
- Strategic Policy PPL10c: Renewable Energy Installations – no changes.
- Non-strategic Policy PPL11: The Avenues Area of Special Character, Frinton-on-Sea – no changes.
- Non-strategic Policy PPL12: The Gardens Area of Special Character, Clacton-on-Sea – no changes.
- Non-strategic Policy PPL12a: Thorpe Station and Maltings – no changes.
- **Non-strategic Policy PPL12b: St. Osyth Priory** - this policy in the earlier Preferred Options Draft included a statement that for any residential enabling development proposals in respect of the Priory, the Council will expect the development to have a reasonable geographical relationship and connection to St. Osyth, the Priory and the community to which it most relates. However, this requirement attracted objections both from St. Osyth Parish Council and the owners of the Priory and, in response, Officers are proposing deleting that requirement from the policy in the Submission Version. Officers accept that whilst it might have been the Council's preference to discourage residential enabling development schemes in or around settlements and communities unrelated to St. Osyth and the Priory, there is no legal basis for restricting enabling proposals to certain geographical locations and, in any event, proposals in any location would need to be considered on their merits against relevant national and local policies.
- Non-strategic Policy PPL12c: Protection of the Naze – minor addition only to strengthen the policy by including a reference to the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- Non-strategic Policy PPL13: Ardleigh Reservoir Catchment Area – no changes.
- Non-strategic Policy PPL14: Safeguarding of Civil Technical Site, North East of Little Clacton/South of Thorpe-le-Soken – no changes.
- Non-strategic Policy PPL15: Safeguarding of Hazardous Substance Site, South East of Great Oakley/South West of Harwich – no changes.

Chapter 8: Connected Places

- **Strategic Policy CP1: Sustainable Transport and Active Travel** – revisions in response to advice from Essex County Council and include additional references to the Tendring District Cycling Action Plan, Essex Walking Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The revised policy will also require all major developments to secure monitored Travel Plans with enforceable remedial mechanisms, demonstrating quantified mode share and emission reduction trajectories where appropriate. The revised policy also includes a statement that parking provision is to be assessed using EPOA Parking Guidance and Electric Vehicle Strategy and for electric vehicle charging to follow relevant building regulations and ECC's Electric Vehicle Charge Point Strategy.
- Strategic Policy CP2: Improving and Maintaining the Transport Network – no changes.
- Strategic Policy CP3: Improving the Telecommunications Network – The proposed amendment expands the policy's digital connectivity requirements by requiring new development to provide reliable mobile connectivity (4G/5G where practicable), alongside the existing broadband requirements. It also introduces a requirement for the installation of appropriate internal cabling and a fully enabled connection to an open access fibre network, ensuring that future occupiers can access high-speed digital services immediately without the need for additional engineering works. These changes will help improve digital infrastructure provision and future-proof new development across the district.

Chapter 9: Delivering Places

- Strategic Policy SAMU1: Development and delivery of Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community – the proposed changes to Policy SAMU1 are primarily focused on improving clarity, consistency and alignment with the adopted Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community DPD. Key amendments include updating references to education and health and wellbeing provision, improving the structure and readability of the policy, and making minor refinements to the supporting text and evidence base without altering the overall scale or delivery expectations of the Garden Community.
- Strategic Policy SAMU2: Development at Hartley Gardens, Clacton - the proposed changes to Policy SAMU2 are focused on improving flexibility and ensuring consistency with the adopted Hartley Gardens SPD and latest infrastructure evidence. Key amendments include minor updates to the education, health and community infrastructure requirements, strengthen references to ecological mitigation, and ensure that the detailed form and delivery of infrastructure can be determined through the appropriate statutory processes.
- Strategic Policy SAMU3: Development at Oakwood Park, Clacton – the proposed changes introduce greater flexibility in how education and healthcare infrastructure is delivered, ensuring provision can respond to evidenced needs and future requirements. The amendments also update references to current healthcare governance arrangements and

strengthen links between development delivery and the timely provision of wastewater and utility infrastructure.

- Strategic Policy SAMU4: Development at Rouses Farm, Jaywick Lane, Clacton –changes were brought on to ensure the allocation wording is aligned with the extant planning permission and completed Section 106 Agreement, particularly in relation to education, healthcare and community infrastructure delivery. Amendments also provide greater flexibility for infrastructure provision, recognise the potential role of emergency services infrastructure, and reinforce the need to coordinate development with wastewater and utility capacity improvements.
- Strategic Policy SAMU5: Development off Dean's Lane and Oakley Road, Dovercourt – the policy has been updated to strengthen requirements relating to environmental mitigation, biodiversity, education provision, sustainable transport, clarity around utility infrastructure and landscape integration. The amendments reflect the latest evidence and stakeholder input, particularly from surrounding communities and statutory bodies such as Natural England and Essex County Council, and to ensure the allocation is supported by appropriate infrastructure, protects environmental assets and delivers a sustainable, well-connected development.
- **Strategic Policy SAMU6: Development of Weeley Green Garden Village** – the policy for this 900-home mixed use development has been strengthened with the addition of a requirement that development proposals be accompanied by an infrastructure phasing, delivery, funding and monitoring strategy demonstrating how infrastructure necessary to support each phase of development will be secured and delivered. Development shall deliver its own infrastructure requirements and contribute proportionately to any shared strategic infrastructure where required. Further, the policy has been updated to strengthen requirements for habitat mitigation, biodiversity net gain, sustainable transport, inclusive design, utility infrastructure and infrastructure delivery planning. These amendments respond to feedback from Weeley Parish council and nearby residents but also from statutory consultees, including Essex County Council and Natural England. These further changes will help ensure the Garden Village is supported by appropriate infrastructure, environmental safeguards and high-quality place-making from the outset.
- **Strategic Policy SAMU7: Redevelopment of Saltings Quarter, Riverside Avenue, Manningtree** – the policy for this riverside mixed-use development has been revised on the advice of the Environment Agency to include a specific requirement for the development to be informed by the findings of the Local Plan's Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and supported by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment demonstrating that the development will be safe for its lifetime, taking account of climate change, safe access and egress, flood resilience measures and emergency planning arrangements. Further, the revised policy now includes stronger requirements relating to flood risk, tidal defence infrastructure, sustainable transport, wastewater management, biodiversity and

environmental mitigation. The amendments respond to residents and consultee feedback and updated evidence, helping to ensure the redevelopment of this brownfield site is better supported by appropriate infrastructure, safeguards environmental assets and remains resilient to future flood risk.

- Strategic Policy SAMU8: Development of Hare Green Garden Village - The evidence in respect of transport and infrastructure implication has now been updated to inform the Submission Version which demonstrates the Hare Green Garden Village has a reasonable prospect of delivery, albeit longer-term towards the end of the plan period and beyond.
- **Strategic Policy SAMU9: Development of Horsley Cross Garden Village** – Following the Preferred Options consultation, the site promoter (Rose Builders) provided the Council with additional evidence setting out the extent and configuration of the land under their control and being promoted for development. Having reviewed this information, Officers are proposing a number of minor amendments to the broad location boundary to better reflect site ownership, physical features and development constraints, and to ensure that Policy SAMU9 represents a robust and deliverable proposal in the Submission Version of the Local Plan. Further, the updated transport and infrastructure evidence indicates that the Horsley Cross Garden Village has a reasonable prospect of delivery in the longer term towards the end of the plan period and beyond.
- Strategic Policy SAH1: Development at Vicarage Farm Off Main Road and South of A120, Harwich – revised policy includes stronger references to walking and cycling connectivity, Green and Blue Infrastructure, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs) mitigation and infrastructure contributions including healthcare and emergency services contributions and connection to services and utilities.
- **Strategic Policy SAH2: Development North of Thorpe Road, Kirby Cross** – an increase in the indicative dwelling number from 420 to 450 homes having considered further information submitted by the site promoter with their representations. It should be noted that revisions to corresponding Policy SAH2 have been incorporated into the Submission Version to strengthen the protection of footpath connections and ecology as well as stronger requirements around open space provision – noting that this proposal has attracted a high level of public objection previously.
- **Strategic Policy SAH3 [DELETED]: Development of Land Off Arther Ransome Way, Walton** - originally proposed for 200 homes but now deleted from the Plan in response to objections raised by the Essex Wildlife Trust and a large number of residents. The related site-specific Policy SAH3 is deleted accordingly from the Submission Version of the Plan.
- **Strategic Policy SAH4 [DELETED]: Development of Land East of Church Road, Brightlingsea** - previously proposed for 300 homes but deleted from the Plan, along with

corresponding Policy SAH4, in response to objections from Brightlingsea Town Council and a large number of residents which raised legitimate planning concerns.

- Strategic Policy SAH6: Development of Land East of Cockaynes Lane, Alresford - revised policy includes stronger references to walking and cycling connectivity, Green and Blue Infrastructure, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs) mitigation and infrastructure contributions including healthcare and emergency services contributions and connection to services and utilities. It should be noted that this site is the subject of a current, but yet to be determined planning application for development. The supporting text to the policy is also updated to refer to the fact that the site is already the subject of a Planning Committee resolution to grant planning permission for development.
- Strategic Policy SAH7: Development of Land East of Admirals Green and North of Weeley Road, Great Bentley – revised policy includes stronger references to walking and cycling connectivity, Green and Blue Infrastructure, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs) mitigation and infrastructure contributions including healthcare and emergency services contributions and connection to services and utilities. It should be noted that this site is the subject of a current, but yet to be determined planning application for development.
- Strategic Policy SAH8: Development of Land East of Amerells Road, Little Clacton – revised policy includes stronger references to walking and cycling connectivity, Green and Blue Infrastructure, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs) mitigation and infrastructure contributions including healthcare and emergency services contributions and connection to services and utilities.
- Strategic Policy SAH9: Development of Land South of Clacton Road, St. Osyth – revised policy includes stronger references to Green and Blue Infrastructure, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs) mitigation and infrastructure contributions including healthcare and emergency services contributions and connection to services and utilities.
- **Strategic Policy SAH10 [DELETED]: Development of Land South of Colchester Road, Thorpe-le-Soken** - previously proposed for 150 homes but deleted from the Plan, along with corresponding Policy SAH10, in response to an objection from Essex County Council raising concern about limited primary school capacity in the Thorpe area.
- Strategic Policy SAH11: Development of Land North of Lifehouse Spa & Hotel, Thorpe-le-Soken – a reduction in the indicative dwelling number from 110 to 70 having reviewed the site's realistic capacity. It should be noted that two parts of this site are the subject of current, but yet to be determined, planning applications for bungalow development.
- Strategic Policy SAE1: Carless Extension, Harwich – no changes.

- Strategic Policy SAE2: Freeport East, Bathside Bay and the A120 Corridor – no changes.
- **Strategic Policy SAE3: Collierswood Farm A120 Strategic Business Park** – the policy for this strategic business park proposal north of the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community has been revised and strengthened to require the development to deliver and, where necessary, safeguard land for necessary infrastructure and to require the submission of an infrastructure phasing, delivery and monitoring strategy. That strategy will have to demonstrate how required infrastructure will be funded, delivered, maintained and reviewed, ensuring that no phase of development proceeds unless the infrastructure necessary to support that phase has been secured.

Chapter 10: Delivering Infrastructure

- **Strategic Policy DI1: Infrastructure Delivery and Impact Mitigation** - although no notable changes are proposed to the wording of this policy itself, the associated table 10.1 is expanded to give the Council the ability to seek financial contributions, where justified against the relevant regulations, for the provision of emergency services facilities and infrastructure – following advice from Essex Police, Essex County Fire & Rescue Services and the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust. Minor text amendments have been made to reflect the fact that Supplementary Planning Documents can no longer be used. The revised wording clarifies that design briefs, masterplans, supplementary guidance and, where appropriate, Supplementary Plans may be prepared during the Plan period to support the implementation of Local Plan policies, in accordance with national policy and statutory procedures.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Tendring District Local Plan: Submission Version

Appendix 2 – Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

Appendix 3 – Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

Essex Supported and Specialist Housing and Accommodation Need Assessment 2025 (SSHANA)

Employment Land Review (ELR)

Local Plan Viability Assessment

Community Infrastructure Levy Viability Study

Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Transport Assessment

Education Scenario Testing

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

Integrated Water Cycle Study

Landscape Character Assessment

Strategic Green Gap Study

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)

Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Delivery Assessment

Leisure, Open Space and Outdoor Sports Evidence Base

Evidence to Support the Essex Energy and Carbon Policies

Consultation Statement and Report of Regulation 18 Representations and Responses

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