

LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE

2 NOVEMBER 2017

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING

A.1 TENDRING COLCHESTER BORDERS GARDEN COMMUNITY ISSUES AND OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

(Report prepared by Catherine Bicknell)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT
The purpose of the report is to agree for consultation the publication of the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community Issues and Options Development Plan Document (TCBGC I&O DPD) and associated sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<p>The Council is preparing a new Local Plan to guide future development in the Tendring area between now and 2033. Section 1 of the Local Plan, jointly prepared with Colchester BC and Braintree DC, deals with strategic issues and includes proposals for three garden communities in north Essex, one straddling the Tendring Colchester administrative boundary. These policies are high level, setting out broad principles for the garden community developments and reference production of Development Plan Documents to set out principles of design, development and phasing for the garden communities.</p> <p>An Issues and Options DPD has been produced which reflects the North Essex Garden Communities Charter principles and the Concept Framework which has been published as part of the Local Plan evidence base. This set out key attributes of the proposed garden community that will be refined through the stages of development of the Development Plan Document.</p> <p>It is proposed to undertake an 8 week period of consultation on the Tendring Colchester Border Garden Community Issues and Options Development Plan Document and the accompanying Strategic Environmental Appraisal/Sustainability Appraisal. The consultation material will be available via the Council's website as well as at Council offices and libraries. Local exhibitions will also be held in Elmstead Market, Greenstead and Wivenhoe.</p>
RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>That the Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Agrees that the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community Issues and Options Development Plan Document (TCBGC I&O DPD) consultation draft be published for consultation.2. Agrees that the associated Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment be published for consultation.3. Delegates authority to the Head of Planning to make minor revisions to the document prior to publication.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The Local Plan helps to implement place shaping priorities in the Corporate Plan 2016-2020 for Tendring District Council through:

- Community Leadership by engagement with the community and effective partnership working with technical stakeholders, developers and other interested parties;
- Health and Housing through policies that promote healthier lifestyles, a quality living environment, local regeneration and council house building; and
- Employment and Enjoyment through policies to support business growth and skill development and the protection and promotion of the natural and built environments.

RESOURCES AND RISK

Resources: Publication of and consultation on the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community Development Plan Document will be undertaken within the Local Plan and NEGC budgets.

Risks: Consultation on the TCBGC I&O DPD may lead to objections to the proposed garden community. All comments will be considered and will assist in the development of the detailed proposals during the process of developing the policy document. Undertaking this early stage of consultation allows issues to be debated and solutions found through a managed process of policy development, thus reducing risk to the proposal.

LEGAL

The planning legislation and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) placed 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. They are a critical tool in guiding decisions about individual development proposals (Planning Guidance Paragraph 001 Reference ID: 12-001-20140306).

Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended, places a legal duty upon local authorities and other public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation, this is known as the 'Duty to Cooperate' on strategic matters of cross-boundary significance, which includes housing supply.

Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a local planning authority to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal of each of the proposals in a Local Plan and the consequence of reasonable alternatives, during its preparation. 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". A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) have been prepared. They provide a high level assessment of options that consider potential social, economic and environmental impacts of the emerging DPD.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Crime and Disorder: The DPD will encourage economic growth and job creation (in line with the objectives of the Economic Development Strategy) which will help, alongside non-planning measures, to improve prosperity and tackle crime and disorder.

Equality and Diversity: An Equality Impact Assessment for the DPD will be prepared to ensure that the equality and diversity implications of the plan are properly considered and assessed.

Health Inequalities: The DPD will need to ensure that garden communities provide high quality environments and encourage healthy lifestyles.

Area or Ward affected: All.

Consultation/Public Engagement: Public consultation is being carried out in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

CONTEXT

Background

The principle of development of the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community (TCBGC) is identified in the joint strategic Section 1 of the Publication Drafts of the Tendring, Braintree and Colchester Local Plans. Local Plan Policy SP7 sets the overall principles for 3 garden communities in north Essex and policy SP8 specifically refers to development of a Garden Community in the area of the Tendring Colchester administrative borders. It requires that a Strategic Growth Development Plan Document (DPD) is prepared to guide its delivery. The emerging TCBGC DPD which is the subject of this report will be this Strategic Growth DPD.

The emerging Local Plans for Tendring District and Colchester Borough are now at submission stage and will be examined early next year by an independent Planning Inspector appointed by the Government. Undertaking Issues and Options consultation prior to the Local Plan examination in public serves to demonstrate progress on the Section 1 proposals whilst at the same time providing the Councils with an opportunity to carry out an additional, early stage of consultation with local communities and stakeholders.

The preparation of the TCBGC DPD will follow a similar process to that of the Local Plan. There will be distinct stages accompanied by public consultation. The Issues and Options stage is the first of these stages which will be followed by a preferred Options stage and finally a Publication stage prior to the TCBGC DPD's independent examination and eventual adoption.

Once adopted, the TCBGC DPD will provide the strategies, policies and proposals required to guide the delivery of the Garden Community. It will set out a shared vision for the new community and a strategy for its delivery. It will also set out a range of development objectives that will help deliver this vision and more detailed planning policies that will guide future proposals and secure timely delivery of development and infrastructure in the short, medium and long term. Importantly, the TCBGC DPD will be prepared in accordance with relevant emerging Local Plan policies as well as the North Essex Garden Communities Charter.

Purpose of the Issues and Options Consultation

The Issues and Options consultation is the first stage in the detailed planning of the Garden Community. An important part of the consultation will be forming a distinct vision for the Garden Community which will encapsulate the ambition of the Councils whilst reconciling the views of local communities and stakeholders. The vision needs to be a shared view that governs all processes from design through to delivery of the development and management of community assets.

The consultation will also be an opportunity to summarise and present the existing evidence base, much of which has been produced to inform Section 1 of the Local Plan. This will outline strategies that are emerging to respond to the numerous issues that planning a Garden Community involves.

The Councils and North Essex Garden Communities Ltd

The consultation document explains that the Garden Communities are being overseen both by the strategic planning partnership agreed between Braintree, Colchester, Essex and Tendring Councils as well as North Essex Garden Communities Ltd (NEGC). NEGC is jointly owned by the four councils to drive the delivery of the three garden communities to secure investment in enabling infrastructure across the wider area. Through NEGC, the Councils will act as the 'lead developer' and so will have more control over the type of development, the design and the rate of delivery and also the ability to commit to an 'infrastructure first' approach. Such an approach will ensure that transport improvements (including new roads), schools, health and leisure facilities are developed ahead of or alongside new housing, to adequately serve the needs of the new community and to minimise any adverse impacts on existing communities. Similarly, this innovative delivery approach will also give the Councils a key role in attracting investment and businesses to assist in the creation of vibrant, thriving and sustainable communities.

The Consultation Approach

A key part of the evidence base which underpins the Issues and Options consultation is the North Essex Garden Communities Charter. This Charter was produced to articulate the Councils' aspirations for the Garden Communities and has been directly informed by the Town and Country Planning Association's (TCPA's) Garden City Principles. The Charter comprises ten principles based around three themes, as follows:

Theme 1: Place and Integration

- Green Infrastructure
- Integrated and Sustainable Transport
- Employment Opportunity
- Living Environment
- Smart and Sustainable Living
- Good Design

Theme 2: Community

- Community Engagement
- Active Local Stewardship

Theme 3: Delivery

- Strong Corporate and Political Public Leadership
- Innovative Delivery Structure

The Charter provides a framework for the Issues and Options document as well as a set of principles against which strategies, policies and proposals can be monitored in due course.

The Issues and Options document sets out the emerging strategies and approaches to how the Councils will realise each of the Charter Principles at the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community and invites consultees to respond to these emerging strategies and approaches. Each principle is accompanied by a 'Have Your Say' section which poses a question and suggests some factors which consultees may wish to consider in their response. These questions are intentionally broad, reflecting the early stage of the Garden Community's planning and thus ensuring that all views, however divergent, are considered before the TCBGC DPD can proceed to the next stage.

The Concept Framework

The development potential of TCBGC has been explored in a Concept Framework study which has been published as part of the evidence base. This study looked at the area of search identified in the Local Plan for the Garden Community, suggesting the distribution and location of land uses and associated infrastructure that could be accommodated to meet the aspirations of the North Essex Garden Communities Charter as well as emerging Local Plan policies.

The Concept Framework proposes that development commences at the southern part of the site, initially on land adjacent to and north of the A133, which provides a point of access onto the strategic highway network. The Concept Framework recommends identification of distinct parcels of development that are 'village' in scale, which would provide a clear strategy for phasing and delivery and would help support a construction and implementation programme that is capable of responding to changes in market conditions and/or local priorities over the lifetime of the development.

The Concept Framework identifies an overall capacity within the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community for 7,500 homes with the following key attributes:

- Distinct development parcels each with its own characteristics and each with a particular role to play in the new community as a whole. Each of these 'neighbourhoods' is serviced by essential community infrastructure, all within walking distance, including educational establishments, local shops, public transport services, employment opportunities and recreational facilities.
- Green buffers that provide visual and physical separation between new development and existing communities; establishing an attractive landscape setting for the new development; providing space for functions such as storm water management; and creating opportunities for formal and informal recreation, including enhanced cycle and footway links to surrounding settlements.
- A new Country Park at Salary Brook incorporating substantial amounts of additional land to that currently designated as a Local Nature Reserve.
- A new link road from the A133 to a new junction on the A120.
- An employment area close to the A120 to the east of the new link road.
- Land for the expansion of the University's Knowledge Gateway to the north of the A133.
- Land for the expansion of the University Campus to the east of Brightlingsea Road south of the A133.
- Two residential neighbourhoods north of the A133 separated by a broad green corridor connecting Salary Brook to open countryside.
- Smaller-scale, lower density areas of housing development close to Crockleford Heath.

- Mixed use centres close to the A133, the proposed expansion of the University and to each proposed new neighbourhood.
- Sites for up to four new primary schools and a new secondary school.
- A rapid transit public transport spine through the centre of the Garden Community connecting a new park and ride with the A120 and A133, employment areas, the mixed use centres and the University with Colchester Town Centre and the wider north Essex area.
- Generous amounts of accessible green spaces and landscaping, providing opportunities for recreation as well as creating a distinctive, verdant townscape.

The key findings of the Concept Framework study have been presented in the consultation document to gauge stakeholder feedback on the spatial aspects of the Garden Community. Whilst the Concept Framework was produced in consultation with local communities, this affords the first opportunity for the wider public to comment on the location and distribution of land uses in the new settlement. Within the document consultees are asked their opinion on what is perceived to work well in the Concept Framework and also what perhaps does not work as well. As with the development of the emerging strategies for the Garden Community, the spatial approach presented in the Concept Framework is included as part of the consultation to provoke discussion and will be refined as the TCBGC DPD progresses.

The Next Stage

Following the close of the Issues and Options consultation, the Councils will collate, analyse and review all of the responses received. In combination with ongoing community engagement and stakeholder liaison, the consultation responses will play a key role in shaping the next stage of the TCBGC DPD. This stage will be the 'Preferred Options' which will set out the Councils' preferred strategies and approaches to addressing the planning issues at Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community in the form of a draft Plan. The Preferred Options will be subject to formal public consultation which is anticipated to take place in Summer 2018.

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal

The Issues and Options consultation document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) which provide a high-level evaluation of options that consider potential social, economic and environmental impacts of the emerging TCBGC Plan. The SEA/SA will also be subject to consultation and will be available to view and comment on alongside the Issues and Options consultation document. The SEA/SA document is appended to this Committee Report at Appendix B

Consultation Arrangements

It is proposed that the Issues and Options consultation document and associated documentation be published for consultation over the eight week period between 13th November 2017 and 8th January 2018.

The consultation will include a range of measures to encourage engagement including an online consultation portal where stakeholders can respond to the questions posed in the consultation document.

Additionally local exhibitions will be held at the following locations (venues subject to confirmation):

- Greenstead Community Centre;
- Elmstead Marketfield School; and
- Wivenhoe William Loveless Hall

Following this consultation stage, the Council will carry out further engagement and consultation to inform future stages of the TCBGC DPD. An indication of the timescales involved for each stage of the planning process of the TCBGC Plan can be found in the Local Development Scheme (LDS) which is available on the Council's website and is the subject of a report on this agenda.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community Development Plan Document Issues and Options Report

Appendix 2: Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community Issue and Options Development Plan Document Strategic Environmental Assessment/Sustainability Appraisal

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

The Development Plan Document is supported by an evidence base commensurate with requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

A link to the evidence is provided below: [Tendring Local Plan Evidence Base](#)