

DEVELOPMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

18 JANUARY 2018

AGENDA ITEM 8

Subject	NORTH ESSEX GARDEN COMMUNITIES ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATIONS, NOVEMBER 2017-JANUARY 2018
Report by	DIRECTOR OF SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Enquiries contact: Claire Stuckey, claire.stuckey@chelmsford.gov.uk, (01245) 606475
Gemma Nicholson, gemma.nicholson@chelmsford.gov.uk, (01245) 606631

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of consultations on the North Essex Garden Communities Issues and Options documents published in November 2017 and provide a proposed response.

Recommendation

That the Committee approve the consultation response to the 'North Essex Garden Communities Issues and Options Consultations' set out in Appendix 1.

Corporate Implications

Legal:	Councils have a legal duty to co-operate in their plan preparation.
Financial:	None
Personnel:	None
Risk Management:	It is important that the City Council respond to the consultations to ensure it can influence decisions taken by these neighbouring authorities on sites for future development and growth.
Equalities and Diversity: Equalities and Diversity: (For new or revised policies or procedures has an equalities impact)	It is expected that the documents will be subject to Equalities Impact Assessment in accordance with North Essex Authorities normal practice.

assessment been carried out? Y/N)	
Health and Safety:	None
IT:	None
Other:	None

Consultees	CCC – Sustainable Communities Directorate
-------------------	---

Policies and Strategies

The report takes into account the following policies and strategies of the City Council:

Core Strategy and Development Control Policies - Adopted DPD
 Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Focused Review - Adopted DPD
 Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan - Adopted DPD
 North Chelmsford Area Action Plan – Adopted DPD
 Site Allocations Development Plan Document – Adopted DPD
 Planning Obligations SPD – Adopted SPD
 Duty to Co-operate Strategy – Adopted Strategy
 Statement of Community Involvement – Adopted and Draft Documents
 Local Development Scheme – Adopted Document

The Chelmsford City Local Development Framework takes into account all published strategies of the City Council, together with the Sustainable Community Strategy published by The Chelmsford Partnership.

Corporate Plan Priorities

The report relates to the following priorities in the Corporate Plan

Attracting investment and delivering infrastructure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Facilitating suitable housing for local needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Providing high quality public spaces	<input type="checkbox"/>
Promoting a more sustainable environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Promoting healthier and more active lives	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enhancing participation in cultural activities	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The North Essex Authorities of Braintree District Council (BDC), Colchester Borough Council (CBC) and Tendring District Council (TDC) have published Issues and Options consultation documents focusing on the three new proposed Garden Communities at Colchester Braintree Borders, Tendring Colchester Borders and West of Braintree.
- 1.2. The consultation is open from 13 November 2017 until 22 January 2018.
- 1.3. The Issues and Options consultation documents represent the first stage in preparing specific, detailed Development Plan Documents for each of the three Garden Communities. These will include the strategies, policies and proposals required to guide the delivery of the Garden Communities for each area.

- 1.4. Each Garden Community has been proposed within Braintree, Colchester and Tendring district-wide Local Plans. The three Councils share a strategic Part 1 Local Plan and separate Part 2 Local Plan for each area. These Local Plans were subject to consultation and have been submitted to the Planning Inspector for Independent Examination, with the hearing sessions starting this month. Chelmsford City Council supported the principle of the Garden Communities in its consultation responses submitted to each Local Plan in July 2017.
- 1.5. The delivery of large scale development in adjoining authorities may have implications for Chelmsford City, and therefore, it is important that Chelmsford City Council are involved in the consultation process for the actual Garden Community Plans.
- 1.6. The consultation documents are available to view via <http://braintree-consult.objective.co.uk/portal/negc/>

2. Garden Community Principles

- 2.1. In 2015 the Government invited proposals for new 'Garden Communities' across the UK as a way of tackling the housing crisis. The North Essex authorities as the North Essex Garden Communities (NEGC) group responded and put forward draft proposals for three new settlements to be designed and delivered to Garden City Principles.
- 2.2. Since then, the North Essex authorities have been working in partnership through the shared Part 1 of their emerging Local Plans to cover cross-boundary issues. This includes the principle of development of the three new Garden Communities.

3. Proposed North Essex Garden Communities

- 3.1. There are three proposed Garden Communities subject to the consultation:
 - Colchester Braintree Borders
 - Tendring Colchester Borders
 - West of Braintree
- 3.2. Due to its cross-boundary nature, Uttlesford District Council is also working collaboratively with Braintree District Council to plan for the West of Braintree Garden Community.
- 3.3. Of particular relevance to Chelmsford is West of Braintree Garden Community. This is located at the border of Braintree and Uttlesford to the north west of Rayne along the A120.
- 3.4. The principle of development for this new Garden Community is contained in Braintree District Council's emerging Local Plan. This sets out the area of search, scale and approach of the West of Braintree Garden Community. Policy SP10 of the Publication Draft Local Plan (Regulation 19) states that this garden community will deliver 2,500 homes within the plan period (as part of an overall total of between 7,000- 10,000 homes to be delivered beyond 2033).

- 3.5. Colchester Braintree Boarder Garden Community is located around Marks Tey. The Colchester and Braintree Publication Draft Local Plan Section 1 Policy SP9 states that this garden community will deliver 2,500 homes (as part of an overall total of between 15,000 – 24,000 homes to be delivered beyond 2033).
- 3.6. Tendring Colchester Boarder Garden Community is located to the west of Colchester. The Colchester and Tendring Publication Draft Local Plan Section 1 Policy SP8 states that this garden community will deliver 2,500 homes with the plan period (as part of an overall total of between 7,000-9,000 homes to be delivered beyond 2033).

4. Consultation Process

- 4.1. A draft Officer consultation response is given in Appendix 1. The response will need to be submitted to the North Essex Authorities following approval at Development Policy Committee by 22 January 2018. This response continues to support the delivery of the three Garden Communities to aid in the implementation of the required housing numbers for the three North Essex Authorities. It also supports in principle the emerging proposals to guide their development set out within the consultation documents, and confirms that the City Council will continue to actively engage with each authority through the Duty to Cooperate on any cross-boundary matters.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1. After the consultation, the North Essex Authorities will review the responses and make any necessary changes to produce Preferred Options consultation documents. These will then be subject to further consultation in Summer 2018 with adoption anticipated in Summer 2019.
- 5.2. The timescales for each of the plans is included in the respective Councils' Local Development Schemes (LDS).
- 5.3. Once adopted, the Garden Community Plans will form part of the suite of documents that together form part of the respective Local Plans for Braintree, Colchester and Tendring Councils.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. As an adjoining local authority, the consultation documents, particularly at West of Braintree could have implications for Chelmsford. It is imperative that the City Council responds to the current consultation highlighting the City Council's comments.

7. List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Officer Consultation Response

Background Papers

- National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012
- National Planning Practice Guidance

- Braintree District Council – Publication Draft Local Plan June 2017 Section 1 and 2
- Colchester Borough Council – Publication Draft Local Plan June 2017 Section 1 and 2
- Tendring District Local Plan 2013-2033 and Beyond Publication Draft – June 2017
- Report to Development Policy Committee 13 July 2017, Item 7 for Chelmsford City Council representation to Braintree District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council – Publication of Draft Local Plans 2017-33:
<https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/your-council/committees-and-meetings/list-of-past-and-future-meetings/?page=1&month=&year=2017&category=8156ead0-fa5c-4864-9aa3-dcf156f0a306&id=d1708c91-5014-4de7-9c37-b89ce05021a7>

DRAFT OFFICER RESPONSE TO NORTH ESSEX GARDEN COMMUNITY ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION

Chelmsford City Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the North Essex Garden Community Issues and Options consultation documents to help influence the emerging proposals and monitor the key cross-boundary/strategic issues that affect Chelmsford City Council's administrative area.

Chelmsford City Council has worked collaboratively with Braintree, Colchester and Tendring Councils throughout their plan making and is a co-signatory of a Memorandum of Co-operation with the three Local Authorities and Essex County Council.

As part of this co-operation, a jointly Objectively Assessed Housing Needs Assessment (OAHN) and Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) has been prepared providing a common evidence base for proposed housing numbers across the Housing Market Area (HMA) and demonstrates collaboration under the Duty to Co-operate.

The City Council has reviewed each Garden Community Issues and Options consultation document and has the following comments.

Overall, the City Council continues to support the delivery of the three Garden Communities to aid in the implementation of the required housing numbers for the three North Essex Authorities. It also supports in principle the emerging proposals to guide their development set out within the consultation documents.

The consultation documents are focused around high level (charter) principles for the development of the Garden Communities, which Chelmsford City Council is generally supportive of. There is recognition that these are large-scale developments during and beyond the plan period (2033), and therefore a certain level of infrastructure is needed to support such developments. The opportunities and constraints of the development locations have been identified on matters such as landscape, heritage, ecology, connectivity and economy. The Visions set out reflect the Policies and objectives within the respective Local Plans.

Of particular interest to Chelmsford, is the West of Braintree Garden Community. The consultation document highlights the need for maximising opportunities for sustainable travel such as links with the Park and Ride, improved Local Bus Network with connections to Chelmsford. The City Council welcomes these proposals and supports the production of a transport strategy and green infrastructure strategy.

The City Council also supports the recognition of the opportunities for new vehicular access via the existing local and strategic road network in the form of the A120 and A131 which could provide connectivity south towards Chelmsford. For Chelmsford City Council, it important that all authorities continue to deliver improvements to the strategic highway network and continue to work in partnership.

The development of the Chelmsford North East Bypass would provide a strategic road link between mid and north Essex essential to support growth in this area and aid connectivity between the districts.

Employment opportunities in nearby locations are also recognised in the document with Chelmsford listed as an example due to the easy commuting distance. The City Council

welcomes this recognition and supports the provision of public transport to encourage sustainable means to travel.

The City Council is also supportive, in principle, of the Colchester Braintree Boarder and Tendring Colchester Border Garden Communities including key principles such as delivering infrastructure first, addressing capacity issues on the network, highways improvements and maximising opportunities for green infrastructure.

Chelmsford City Council will continue to actively engage with the North Essex authorities on their Local Plan preparation through the Duty to Cooperate and to work on any cross boundary matters.