

CLG Response GC Policy 1 Land Use and Spatial Approach

The CLG are in support of almost all of this policy with the exception of that referring to the RTS route and, by extension, an incomplete link road. We have worked extensively with the planners and the communities we live in and represent from east Colchester, Wivenhoe, Crockleford Heath and Elmstead Market to propose and agree some of the key elements of the Land Use Parameters and Policies Map submitted as part of this DPD, apart from that relating to GC Policy 7 and the RTS, which was not part of the Reg 18 consultation and based on a report that was only made available on 10 February 2023.

We support the following:

Part B: The Garden Community Neighbourhoods including the 'special character' designation of the Crockleford Heath neighbourhood with its own design codes protecting 'its heritage assets and their settings, its distinctive network of green lanes, small fields and land parcels', is supported strongly by the CLG together with the concept of 20 minute neighbourhoods to support less dependence on the car, and with walkable hubs in each neighbourhood centre including shops, primary school, healthcare and community facilities. We believe that building in neighbourhoods will inculcate a sense of community in each of these centres and combat many of the ills, both physical and mental, of living in large anonymous developments without a community centre or identity. The CLG believes it is important to develop one neighbourhood at a time, for example, the southern neighbourhood closest to the A133, to focus on its development as an integrated whole with its own character and identity.

Part C: Salary Brook Country Park and

Part G: Knowledge-Based Employment Land

The CLG were able, because of their intimate knowledge of and love for this part of the local area, to propose an alternative option to the two options proposed by the planners to accommodate Knowledge Gateway and University of Essex expansion land including sports facilities needs, which was adopted by planners with some good tweaks such as extending the Knowledge Gateway expansion land as a narrow border to the A133 beyond the ridgeline. We particularly welcome the requirement of 'an appropriate transition between built development and open countryside'. Thus the area designated for Salary Brook Country Park area with its nature reserve, including wetland habitat, and the slopes with public rights of way, meadows and ancient woodland with their rich biodiversity and flora and fauna, has been safeguarded as a precious resource for both existing residents of east Colchester and future generations of the TCB Garden Community. It will also form an important strategic green gap like the other two mentioned in this policy to ensure the new Garden Community keeps its own identity and prevents coalescence with neighbouring settlements .

Part D: Wivenhoe Strategic Green Gap and

Part F: Sports and Leisure Park and University of Essex Expansion

Although some of the land south of the A133 and to the east of the B1027 will be used for sports field extension for the University of Essex, to be also available for local community use, the CLG support the use of this land for this purpose, with the proviso that the intended 'strong landscaped edge', including screening such as trees and 'new enhanced habitats for a range of biodiversity' takes place. We would also support broadly its use for cemeteries/ burial grounds or allotments.

Part E: Elmstead Strategic Green Gap – Whilst the CLG support this green gap and its intended designation as 'rural' thus limiting development to suitable uses consistent with this designation, we would like to see an approach by the Garden Community, perhaps in the future, to landowners to consider rewilding schemes or adoption of woodland by the Woodland Trust, to maintain or enhance biodiversity further.

Part H: A120 Business Park

The siting of this area south of the A120 and east of the A120-A133 link road is ideally located to ensure quick access by commercial vehicles from the A120 (which leads to Harwich Docks and ferry services to the continent to the east) – providing of course the link road is completed prior to house building and occupation. This would ensure that there are employment opportunities readily accessible to TCBGC residents, which is one of the goals of the Garden Community, that employment opportunities will be provided within it wherever possible, and its siting in this location will make it attractive to business investment and accessible from outside the community.

This however would not be the case if the Link Road was not complete, where the only access to this area would be from the A133 – already hugely congested – and if visitors and deliveries were coming from the south, eg the A12, there would be a huge detour until the junction of the A120 and A133 considerably further on on the A120, with then another trip back down the A133 to gain access to this site. Clearly, commercial vehicles travelling through Colchester on the A133 is not desirable either due to existing congestion and travel times (40 minutes on Cowdray Avenue and St Andrews Avenue at peak times for a 6 minute journey). It is thus essential if the A120 Business Park is to be a success that the A133-A120 link road is built in full before the commencement of house building.

Part I: Provision for Gypsies and Travellers

The CLG support the accommodation of a site for Gypsies and Travellers in the planned location, and acknowledge that it will be developed 'in response to need', as stated.

Part J: A133 Park and Choose Facility

The policy states 'One new 'Park and Choose Facility' will be developed on land adjacent to the A133 in one of the two the broad locations shown on the 'Policies Map', where only one location is shown on this map, located at the junction of the A133 and B1027.

Whilst the CLG supports Park and Choose Facilities at this location, we do NOT accept the intended RTS route making use of this location. Instead we support the A133-A120 link road completed in its entirety and a revised RTS route which utilises the same Park and Choose facility as its starting point, then proceeding along the link road to the A120 in an anti-clockwise direction around Colchester, on a route that connects key locations such as the A120 business park, the hospital, Colchester Business Park, North Station, the Northern Gateway and returning in a loop from the station up Balkerne Hill A134 and following the A134 all the way to Elmstead Road, then Capon Road onto Boundary Road, these last 3 being dedicated bus routes which avoid the horrendously congested A133 Clingoe Hill. The route then joins up with the B1028/7 leading back to the A133 Park and Choose facility. This route is shown in the accompanying uploaded file, labelled Alt_RTS_Route.

The CLG supports the Park and Choose facility in this location but only in conjunction with a fully completed link road and the anti-clockwise RTS route around Colchester utilising the A120, because of the huge range of benefits it presents which align wholly with those of the Garden Community. This alternative plan also has the benefits of avoiding huge road improvement costs which are in any case time-limited and on avoiding additional congestion on existing overloaded routes and bottlenecks for both Garden Community residents and those of surrounding communities and traffic coming into Colchester on A133. Whereas the Rapid Transit System route based on a completed link road proposed by the CLG without huge road improvement costs and without adding to the congestion on local road infrastructure with a capacity for 50 years and beyond whilst expanding active travel and modal shift for both Garden Community and neighbouring communities.