



Planning Policy Team
Colchester Council
Rowan House
33 Sheepen Road
COLCHESTER
CO3 3WG

Our ref: AE/2023/128564/01-L01
Your ref: City Centre Masterplan
Date: 18 July 2023

Dear Team

FORMAL CONSULTATION OF COLCHESTER CITY CENTRE MASTERPLAN

COLCHESTER CITY CENTRE

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the proposed Colchester City Centre masterplan. We have reviewed the document and we have made comments relating to climate change, biodiversity, and water below.

Climate Change

We note that Colchester City Council is treating the issue of climate change as an emergency and have developed a detailed climate emergency action plan.

We support the approaches you have laid out in the city centre masterplan including the Zero Emission Zone, car-lite access restrictions and the pedestrian corridors.

We have noted a number of pedestrian corridors throughout the city. The Colchester local plan section 2 encourages the use of green corridors. We would welcome more consideration to green corridors within the city for their benefits to the environment particularly on biodiversity and for tackling climate change. Green corridors between green spaces can be particularly ecologically beneficial to encourage the safe movement of wildlife around the city.

Throughout the masterplan there are new residential allocation as well as other developments. We encourage tree planting, green walls and roofs especially along the transport corridors. These provide multi-functional benefits including carbon sequestration, reducing exposure to poor air quality, wellbeing and biodiversity gains, flood resilience, and shading and cooling of buildings. We would recommend that where possible trees that are planted are native species.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is an approach to development which aims to leave nature in a measurably better state than beforehand. It is recognised as a powerful way to deliver wider outcomes that benefit the environment, wildlife and people. BNG offers considerable scope to help create resilience places, through maximising opportunities to improve the water environment, manage flood risk and addressing climate risks.

The local plan sets out the local councils targets for Biodiversity net gain for new developments as the government target of 10%. We would welcome more active consideration to biodiversity and these development targets to be included in this document.

Water quality and resources

Water Pollution

We suggest a policy that encourages the use of SuDS in Urban areas because water pollution can be exacerbated by run-off from urban areas. SuDS should be designed to deliver multiple environmental benefits such as flood risk and water quality management, biodiversity and landscape enhancement, and improve amenity, access and open space. Any SuDS designs will need to be in line with requirements of Ciria C753 and the SuDS Manual. This would be in line with the NPPF paragraph 174 section E and the inclusion of a policy around the use of SuDS will help protect the environment and ensure that uses of the water (such as a source of drinking water, or for amenity) can continue.

On page 44 you seek to encourage the use of the river through the point below.

7.develop riverside access and amenities

We would strongly encourage that measures be put in place to see water quality and habitats are protected for wildlife.

Water Resources and Groundwater Pressures

We encourage water efficiency measures and SuDS and consideration should be given to the stressed groundwater resources within the area. We have previously mentioned the use of SuDS earlier in our response with regards to water runoff from Urban Development. SuDS are also an effective measure with regards to Water resourcing issues. A policy should consider rainwater harvesting and infiltration should be used to aid aquifer recharge. Any policy to support this should encourage the review of groundwater quality as well as the potential river pollution.

We hope the above comments will be taken forward for consideration. If you would like to engage with us further on any of our points made within our response, please contact us further to discuss our charged for service in which we will be able to review any documents or attend meetings to engage fully where possible.

Yours sincerely

Mr Giles Ward
Planning Officer

Direct e-mail planning.eastanglia@environment-agency.gov.uk