



## **Colchester Preferred Options Local Plan - Regulation 18 Representation**

### **Land at Spring Lane, Colchester – Park & Ride Opportunity Site**

On behalf of our client, Lanswood Ltd, we submit this representation to the Regulation 18 Preferred Options Local Plan to promote land at Spring Lane, Lexden [adjacent to the A12 slip road], as a potential opportunity site for a Park & Ride facility serving the western approach to Colchester.

This representation should be read alongside, but distinct from, our parallel submission relating to leisure-led development at Lexden Wood. This submission is focused specifically on the role the site could play in supporting the Local Plan's transport strategy, modal shift ambitions and growth mitigation objectives.

### **Policy Context**

The land at Spring Lane has a longstanding planning and transport history in relation to Park & Ride provision, having been promoted previously as part of the 2007–2008 Core Strategy process.

While the earlier plan processes ultimately prioritised delivery of the North Colchester (Cuckoo Farm) Park & Ride, the Spring Lane site was not dismissed as unsuitable. Rather, it was acknowledged as a logical and deliverable location, with delivery deferred in favour of alternative strategic priorities at the time.

The Local Plan Review now being undertaken provides an appropriate opportunity to reconsider the role of a western Park & Ride facility in light of:

- Substantially increased committed and proposed growth;
- Updated transport modelling (NEMO);
- A clear policy emphasis on vision-led sustainable transport mitigation rather than reliance on highway expansion alone.

### **Alignment with the Council's Transport Evidence**

The Council's Further Transport Evidence (October 2025) and the Jacobs / Essex County Council Transport Evidence (February 2025) are clear in their conclusions that:

- Business-as-usual car travel assumptions are not compatible with the scale of growth proposed in the Preferred Options;
- A step-change in sustainable travel behaviour is required, supported by integrated land use and transport planning;

- Park & Ride remains an important supporting component of a wider package including bus priority, RTS expansion, mobility hubs and travel planning.

Crucially, the evidence confirms that:

- Some highway congestion will remain even with mitigation, but that reliability and network resilience can be improved through targeted interventions;
- Transport mitigation will continue to evolve between Regulation 18 and Regulation 19, and should not be regarded as “fixed” at this stage.

In this context, Lanswood Ltd considers that the Spring Lane site represents a credible and proportionate opportunity to support the Council’s strategy, particularly in relation to intercepting car trips on the western approaches to Colchester.

### **Strategic Rationale for a West Colchester Park & Ride**

The transport evidence identifies continued pressure on:

- The A12 strategic corridor;
- Cymbeline Way (A133);
- Lexden Road and other western approaches into the urban area.

Committed and preferred allocations together represent approximately 16,000 new homes and 15,000 jobs, with a significant proportion of movements originating from, or passing through, the western catchment area, including the A12 and A120 corridors.

While the North Colchester Park & Ride provides an important element of the overall strategy, there remains no equivalent facility serving West Colchester. The Local Plan Review therefore risks relying disproportionately on a single Park & Ride location, alongside longer-term and uncertain highway interventions.

A western facility at Spring Lane would:

- Complement, rather than compete with, the North Colchester Park & Ride;
- Provide network resilience and choice;
- Support bus reliability by intercepting trips before they enter congested urban routes;
- Align with the Council’s stated ambition to expand high-quality public transport and reduce car dependency where practicable.

### **Site Characteristics and Deliverability**

The Spring Lane site benefits from a number of attributes consistent with the Council’s transport objectives:

- Immediate proximity to the A12 south off-slip, enabling interception of inbound traffic;

- Existing and historic evidence confirming the feasibility of highway access from Spring Lane and the strategic network;
- Sufficient land area to accommodate a Park & Ride facility with appropriate landscaping and mitigation;
- Separation from dense residential areas, allowing amenity impacts to be appropriately managed;
- Opportunity to integrate the facility into a wider bus network, including future RTS extensions and bus priority corridors.

The site has historically been assessed by transport consultants and highway authorities, and there is no evidence to suggest that it is fundamentally constrained from a delivery perspective, subject to detailed design and mitigation.

### **A Flexible, Opportunity-Based Policy Approach**

At Regulation 18 stage, Lanswood Ltd is not seeking a fixed allocation or a prescriptive scheme design, but stands receptive and ready to contribute to a solution that improves the offer, it is suggested that the Local Plan should:

- Recognise Spring Lane as a potential Park & Ride opportunity site; or
- Include the site within a criteria-based policy framework for additional Park & Ride provision, should further testing demonstrate the need for capacity or network resilience.

This would be consistent with the Council's own acknowledgement that transport mitigation will continue to be refined as the plan progresses, and that further sensitivity testing is ongoing with National Highways and Essex County Council.

This could be achieved either through amendments to Policy ST3 by inserting the following paragraph:

**Additional Park and Ride facilities will be explored at the opportunity area [Spring Lane] in West Colchester as shown on the Policies Map, where required to support the delivery of the Local Plan growth strategy and to facilitate a shift towards sustainable modes of travel.**

Or a dedicated new site-specific policy as follows:

#### **Policy PPxx: Park & Ride Opportunity Area at Spring Lane, Colchester**

**In addition to the infrastructure and mitigation requirements identified elsewhere in this Plan, and subject to compliance with all other relevant policies, land at Spring Lane, Colchester, as identified on the Policies Map, is designated as a Park & Ride opportunity area to support the delivery of sustainable and integrated transport measures serving Colchester.**

**Development will be supported where it provides:**

**a) A Park & Ride facility that contributes to reducing car-based trips into the urban area and supports modal shift to public transport, consistent with the Local Transport Plan and the Local Plan transport strategy;**

- b) Safe and suitable vehicular access from the strategic and local highway network, with access arrangements and internal layout to be agreed with the Highway Authority, and demonstration that the proposal would not result in unacceptable impacts on highway capacity, safety or network resilience;**
- c) Integration with high-quality and frequent bus services, including the potential for future connection to Rapid Transit or priority bus corridors, to ensure reliable journey times to key destinations within the urban area;**
- d) A layout, scale and design which enables the interception of inbound traffic on the western approaches to Colchester, including movements from the A12 and A120 corridors, without undermining the operation or effectiveness of other Park & Ride facilities;**
- e) Landscape-led design, including appropriate screening, green infrastructure and Biodiversity Net Gain, having regard to the Colne Valley landscape character and the site's relationship with the River Colne;**
- f) Sustainable drainage and flood risk management measures, with development directed away from areas at highest risk of flooding with the site presenting the potential for net improvement within the Colne Valley floor area;**

**The Council will work with Essex County Council, National Highways and relevant landowners to determine the timing, scale and detailed design of any Park & Ride facility at this location as the Local Plan progresses.**

## **Conclusion**

In summary:

- The Council's transport evidence supports a multi-faceted mitigation strategy in which Park & Ride continues to play an important role;
- There remains a strategic gap in provision serving West Colchester;
- Land at Spring Lane / A12 slip road is a logical, deliverable and previously tested location that aligns with current policy objectives;
- The site should be recognised at Regulation 18 stage as a potential opportunity to support sustainable transport outcomes and manage growth-related impacts.

Lanswood Ltd remains willing to engage constructively with the Council, Essex County Council and National Highways as the Local Plan progresses, to explore the role the site could play as part of an integrated and resilient transport strategy for Colchester.