

Mersea Island Society comments on the Colchester City Council Regulation 18 Consultation - Preferred Options Local Plan 2025

A Statement Outlining Concerns and Objections

Introduction

The Society was formed to preserve, safeguard and promote the characteristics of Mersea Island for the benefit of all, to arrange open discussion whenever it appears necessary to obtain a consensus of public opinion and to provide opportunities to gain factual knowledge from lectures, visits and discussion of this great island.

Mersea Island Society Committee wishes to formally express its opposition to the current draft Local Plan for Colchester. This statement outlines the principal concerns and objections that the Committee has identified, highlighting the potential impact on Mersea Island and its residents.

Key Concerns

1. **Pressure on Local Infrastructure**
2. **Environmental Impact**
3. **Overdevelopment and Community Character**
4. **Lack of Meaningful Consultation**

Summary of Objections

- Inadequate consideration of infrastructure limitations.
- Insufficient measures to protect the environment and manage flood risk.
- Overambitious housing targets that threaten the community's character.
- Poor consultation and lack of engagement with Mersea residents and stakeholders.

Conclusion

In light of these concerns, Mersea Island Society urges Colchester City Council to reconsider the draft Local Plan. The Society requests a thorough review of the proposals as they relate to Mersea Island, with genuine engagement with the local

community, robust environmental protections, and a realistic approach to infrastructure capacity. The Society remains committed to working constructively with all stakeholders to achieve a sustainable future for Mersea Island and the wider Colchester area.

The Society is concerned that the consultation process has not been sufficiently inclusive or transparent. There appears to be a lack of engagement with the specific needs and circumstances of Mersea Island.

The draft Local Plan proposes a level of housing growth that the Society believes is disproportionate to the size and character of Mersea Island. Such development risks altering the identity of the community, placing a strain on local services and undermining the qualities that make Mersea a desirable place to live and visit.

Mersea Island is a unique and fragile environment, home to diverse wildlife and protected habitats. The Society is deeply concerned that the scale and nature of the proposed developments threaten local biodiversity and undermine environmental protections. There is a risk of increased flooding and erosion, and the plan does not provide sufficient safeguards for the island's distinctive landscape and ecology.

The Society is not opposed to very limited growth and for priority for housing to be given to local particularly young people but an additional 300 houses on top of the 200+ from the last local plan is unsustainable.

The proposed development sites in the draft Local Plan would place significant additional pressure on the island's already limited infrastructure. Concerns include the capacity of local roads, particularly the Strood causeway, as well as water supply, drainage, and waste management systems. The Society believes that these issues have not been adequately addressed within the plan nor the considerable pressure that arise from occupation of caravans. Neighbourhood Plan (2021) indicates there are 1,905 static caravans and lodges.

The Society will comment on specific texts in the Consultative Document. These to include comments on the evidence lacking in the consultation documents about the capacity for growth of West Mersea; provision of medical care and the aging population on the island; adequacy of the local Water Treatment Centre; our island position and flooding on the Strood severely affecting entry to and from the island; threats to environment resulting from overdevelopment; the site allocation on Dawes Lane; bus

links and transport connectivity; ongoing consideration to SMR's being located at the former nuclear power station at Bradwell, and the huge gap in money available for infrastructure improvements.

The Society urges that these comments be considered when further consideration is given. Mersea in many ways is unique and its future needs safeguarding,

Mersea Island Society Committee

January 2026



The Society says that wholly insufficient attention has been given to Mersea being an island.