



Colchester Preferred Options Local Plan - Regulation 18 Representation

Policy ST5: Colchester's Housing Need

We support Policy ST5, which wish to make refinements to the housing number of the following site allocations:

- Land at Earls Colne Road, Great Tey – Change 125 dwellings to 150 dwellings
- Kelvedon Road, Messing – Change 25 dwellings to 30 dwellings
- Land at St Ives Road, Peldon - Change 25 dwellings to 30 dwellings

The site capacity for each of these sites will be explained further under the specific policies for these site allocations.

Need for an Increased Allocation Buffer to Ensure Deliverability

Policy ST5 would benefit from the inclusion of a **larger allocation buffer** to ensure delivery is robust and resilient over the plan period.

While the headline supply figure marginally exceeds the identified requirement (21,106 dwellings against a requirement of 20,800), the margin is extremely limited. This leaves little flexibility to respond to slippage or non-delivery.

Elsewhere in the emerging Local Plan, the Council acknowledges that:

- Infrastructure constraints and lead-in times may affect the timing and delivery of development;
- The delivery of some strategic sites is dependent on complex and coordinated infrastructure provision; and
- Phasing, funding, and delivery mechanisms may result in delays.

It is also relevant that the policy approach itself will place additional financial burdens upon these sites and put some of these at a viability risk.

These acknowledged risks create uncertainty around the timely delivery of a proportion of the identified supply, particularly in the early and middle years of the plan period.

With a surplus of only approximately **306 dwellings** over the plan requirement, the housing trajectory lacks sufficient contingency to absorb slippage should any element of the supply underperform.

National policy requires local plans to be **positively prepared, effective, and deliverable**.

Maintaining a five-year housing land supply “plus an appropriate buffer” is a minimum requirement, not a justification for a tightly constrained overall supply position across a long plan period.

Given the scale of housing need, the length of the plan period, and the infrastructure dependencies identified elsewhere in the Plan, a higher allocation buffer would:

- Improve flexibility and resilience;
- Reduce the risk of under-delivery;
- Provide greater certainty that housing needs will be met in full; and
- Minimise the likelihood of unplanned or speculative development arising later in the plan period.

In practical terms, this would equate to the inclusion of a contingency buffer of between 5% and 10% over the plan period, to provide a realistic and proportionate allowance to account for infrastructure constraints, delivery risk and potential slippage, and ensuring the housing requirement can be met in full.