

**FAO Local Plan Consultation
Colchester City Council**

Sent via email to: local.plan@colchester.gov.uk.



Mrs. Heather Gurden

Strategic Designing out Crime Manager
Essex Police HQ
Chelmsford, Essex,
CM2 6DN

14th January 2026

To Whom it May Concern

Re: Colchester Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation

The 'Essex Police – Designing out Crime Office' (DOCO), welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Colchester Regulation 18 Local Plan.

We acknowledge the Councils plan to deliver a minimum of 20,800 new homes in Colchester City between 2025 and 2041. Mindful of the scale and National Planning Policy Framework requirements to create 'a safe and sustainable development', it is imperative that crime and the perception of crime is deemed a material consideration throughout. Mitigating the opportunities for crime is not only about reducing and preventing injury and crime, but also about building strong, healthy, cohesive, accessible, vibrant, and participatory communities which will enhance the synergy and ongoing sustainability of the wider community.

We would therefore advocate early engagement with the DOCO in relation to the opportunities to design out crime within the built environment, to ensure that safety and security have been considered at the earliest opportunity.

Apon review of the documentation please see below the DOCO's Observations.

2.19 The vision for the Colchester Local Plan

We acknowledge the Vision Statement for Colchester; however, we would request the inclusion that all new proposals are developed to be 'Safe, inclusive and sustainable'. It is essential that crime (and the perception of,) Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and safety is taken into consideration and recommended to be included within the Local Plan, this will influence future development and support a sustainable and healthy future.

Policy ST1 Health and Wellbeing

The DOCO recognises the health and wellbeing policy and the following paragraph '*The way places are planned, designed and built can have a significant influence over health and wellbeing.*' The DOCO would like to bring to your attention the effect crime and having an unsafe place to live can have on health and wellbeing.

'The relationship between an area's health and crime levels is complex. On one hand, living in areas with high levels of crime can affect people's health negatively. In addition to the direct health effects of being the victim of violent crime, fear of crime can also have an indirect detrimental impact on health. Research shows that fear of crime

results in people exercising less, as well as reducing how often people socialise, resulting in poorer mental and physical health.

At the same time, people living in high crime areas are more likely to be in poor health. Crime rates are higher in more deprived areas, and deprivation is itself strongly associated with poor health.'

<https://www.health.org.uk/evidence-hub/our-surroundings/safety/relationship-between-neighbourhood-crime-and-health#:~:text=On%20one%20hand%2C%20living%20in%20areas%20with%20high,also%20have%20an%20indirect%20detrimental%20impact%20on%20health.>

The DOCO welcomes the inclusion of safety in paragraph (a), engaging with the DOCO will ensure new developments are designed to be safe and secure.

The DOCO recognises paragraph 3.4 and in support of this would recommend that all new homes and commercial buildings should seek to achieve a Secured By Design award, this will support in creating healthy and sustainable lifestyles.

Policy ST4: Development in the Countryside

It is noted that there will be development in rural areas, it is recommended there is consultation with the DOCO to ensure future developments benefit from surveillance opportunities both natural and formal. There should also be consultation with the Essex Police Roads Policing Team designing new road infrastructure to facilitate new homes.

Policies ST5 and ST6

Please see attached appendix A regarding observations on the allocated sites.

Policy ST7 Infrastructure Delivery and Impact Mitigation

The DOCO notes the possible financial contributions to Police services referenced within the Site Infrastructure Requirements. Please note that matters relating to Police infrastructure will be addressed by the Strategic Planning Department under separate cover.

Policy ST9: The Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community

The DOCO has previously engaged with Design Teams regarding the TCB Garden Community, due to the scale and influence this development will have on both Colchester and Tendring it is essential for ongoing engagement with various departments across Essex Police.

The DOCO previously commented on the EIA Scoping Opinion for the Outline/Hybrid Planning Application and welcome further consultation.

Policy GN1: Open Space and Green Network and Waterways Principles

The DOCO recognises the principle for open spaces and would encourage that safety and inclusivity are included when designing parks and public spaces.

The DOCO would like to bring to your attention, the Home Office strategy of reducing Violence Against Women and Girls' (VAWG). The strategy aims to improve wellbeing and perception of crime for women and girls, thus ensuring their safety within their community. Therefore, it is recommended when designing new and adapting public realm and green spaces (inclusive of walking, cycling and play areas,) that consideration should be given to environmental design so that women and girls feel included and comfortable using the spaces.

“Women and girls often do not feel safe in parks and so use them less. This is not just because they fear crime, whether that’s rape, assault, or harassment. They also feel uncomfortable, unwelcomed, and judged. Women are three times more likely than men to feel unsafe in parks during the day, and that gets worse after dark”.

Safer Parks Improving access for women and girls: Safer Parks Executive Summary, (GreenFlagAward.org)

Policy NZ1: Net Zero Carbon Development (in operation)

The DOCO has previously experience collaborating with PassivHaus schemes and other low energy efficient designs including ecological lighting. Secured By Design standards can easily be incorporated when designing homes to meet various low energy standards.

Policy NZ4: Renewable Energy

The DOCO would like to highlight the increase of crime connected to Solar and Wind farms and other renewable energy schemes; it is essential that crime is considered a material consideration during construction and final build stage. Liaison with the DOCO will help to support in the prevention of crime and damage to critical infrastructure.

Policy H2: Affordable Housing

The DOCO acknowledges the Councils commitment to improving housing affordability in Colchester. It is recommended that all new affordable housing is designed to be safe and secure with a consistent approach to security proposals, this will also support in creating community cohesion.

Policy H3 Student Accommodation and University of Essex

The University of Essex will adjoin with the Knowledge Gateway Employment Area and the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community. The Draft Plan references the opportunity for key stakeholders to work in partnership regarding the future development of the university and linked sites. It is strongly advised Essex Police are included in these stakeholder meetings to support in the prevention of crime and serious crime on the campus and surrounding areas.

Crime rates in university towns can vary, however it is essential there are steps taken in the early stages to create a safe and secure environment. The VAWG agenda should be considered throughout any new proposals but specifically when designing public realm spaces and sustainable transport routes.

Policy H3 references that ‘*A management and maintenance plan must be prepared for multi-occupancy buildings and implemented via planning conditions.*’ This is positive as management and maintenance is fundamental to the sustainability of new developments; however, it is crucial that security and safety are considered as part of future policies and management practices.

Policy H4 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

It is acknowledged that some councils have introduced new regulations for HMOs due to longstanding public concerns regarding crime and antisocial behaviour. The DOCO recognises the importance of providing diverse housing options to meet the needs of all residents. To ensure HMOs are designed to be safe and secure, it is strongly advised that developers engage with the DOCO at the earliest stage of all future applications.

Policy H5: Specialist Housing including Housing for an Aging Population

It should be recognised that the DOCO can influence the design of specialist housing (such as Retirement accommodation) and that Secured By Design can be adapted to ensure that all homes within the district are designed to be safe and secure.

Policy H6: Self and Custom Build

The DOCO would encourage that all self-build properties should consider security and safety as a priority in the design stage. This will support paragraph 8.18 '*create inclusive and sustainable communities*'

Policy H7: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show people

The DOCO would request consultation (ideally at RIBA Stage 2) with developers and design teams regarding any potential new and or existing Gypsy and Travelling Show Person sites. In doing so, the relevant consultations within Essex Police are made, ensuring that there is an integrated co-existence between the site, local community, and businesses

Policy E2: Economic Development in Rural Areas and the Countryside

It is noted that there is the opportunity to use rural land for future development, it is essential that the accessibility of the site by public transport, cycling and walking is designed to be safe for all future users. Rural locations can lack in natural surveillance; it is essential that this is taken into consideration when selecting sites and that there is engagement with the DOCO to discuss surveillance opportunities

Policy E4: Retail and Centres and Policy CC1 City Centre

Town centres play a pivotal role in creating places for people to live, work and socialise and it is fundamental that they are designed to be safe whilst taking into consideration the various user groups. The VAWG strategy should be considered when enhancing or creating new Town Centres, the DOCO can support in ensuring this strategy is utilised when engaging with the Design Teams regarding the design and enhancements of town centres.

Policy CS3: Education Provision

The DOCO would welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with the Council, Department for Education, additional Education bodies and Design Teams to ensure future education facilities are inclusive and safe for future users.

Policy CS4: Sports Provision

It is recognised that there will be opportunities for new sports facilities to support the additional population of Colchester. It is advised all sport provision is designed to be safe and inclusive, this will support in the prevention of crime and ASB, while allowing all users to feel included within the proposed facilities. The DOCO would also like to draw your attention to schemes such as 'Make Space for Girls campaign, (www.makespaceforgirls.co.uk/about-us); this initiative aims to incorporate the observations and opinions of teenage girls into the design and development of new and existing play spaces. This is to ensure that spaces are inclusive and safe for all users.

Policy CS5: Tourism, Leisure, Arts, Culture and Heritage

The DOCO notes Paragraph (a) regarding the opportunities for new visitor attractions and leisure facilities. It is advised there is engagement with the DOCO to ensure the facilities are designed to be safe and inclusive. There should also be engagement with the Counter

Terrorism Team regarding vehicle mitigation and other measures in support of The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, also known as Martyn's Law.

Policy PC2: Active and Sustainable Travel

Paragraph (b) incorporates the requirement for 'safe' active travel routes which is welcomed, however the DOCO notes the requirements for new layouts to be permeable. Whilst we understand the need for easy and convenient routes it is essential that these routes do not encourage crime and ASB. Permeable layouts can allow easy access for persons with non-legitimate reason to enter new developments and facilities. Early engagement with the DOCO is encouraged to ensure all active travel routes are safe and sustainable.

Policy PC6: Design and Amenity

The DOCO welcomes the inclusion of paragraph (f) and in support of this it is recommended that all new development seeks to achieve a Secure By Design accreditation, this will ensure future development is safe whilst creating a resilient and secure environment

Policy PC7: Residential Schemes on Greenfield Sites

It is advised that all new residential schemes demonstrate how they will mitigate the opportunities for crime and ASB (potentially evidence through documents such as Design and Access statements and Health Impact Assessments), this will support in creating sustainable housing as well as helping with community cohesion. Creating safe places for people to live supports health and wellbeing and creates resilience and pride of place.

Yours Faithfully



Heather Gurden AD Cert ED&CP, LCGI, MSyl, CAS

Strategic Designing Out Crime Officer (SDOCO)

HQ Local Policing Support Unit

Email: designingoutcrime@Essex.police.uk

Appendix A

Please see below the observations from the Designing out Crime Teams observations and concerns for the proposed allocated sites for Colchester.

Allocated Site Reference	DOCO's observations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Britannia Car Park, 100 PP1 	<p>The DOCO welcomed the pre planning engagement regarding the adjoining public realm space. Due to the proximity to the town centre, we would strongly advocate that the opportunity for crime and ASB is considered a material consideration throughout the design and construction. We would recommend early consultation regarding the future 100 residential dwellings.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vineyard Gate, Colchester, PP2 	<p>Due to the proximity of the Town Centre it is advised there is consultation with the DOCO in the early stages. There are concerns that the area can become a hotspot for crime if the units are not designed with crime deemed a material consideration.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land at Colchester Station North, 250 PP6 • Land South of Berechurch Hall Road 875 PP10 	<p>Berechurch Road and Cymbeline Road are currently heavily congested and there could be the potential for the new development to increase congestion. It is advised that there is engagement with the Essex Police Roads Policing Team to ensure Emergency services can gain easy access during construction and final build stage.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gas Works and Hythe Scrap Yard Siten, 200 PP14 	<p>Essex Police have previously engaged regarding the 'Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure' routes and would encourage this to continue.</p> <p>It is recommended there is Engagement with the Essex Police Roads Policing Team due to congestion and the proposed access and movement from construction to final build stage.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land south of A12 & Marks Tey Village, 1,500 PP17 • Land North of A120, Marks Tey, 1,000 PP18 • Land East of School Road, Copford, 300 PP29 	<p>It is advised that there is consultation at the pre application stage.</p> <p>It is recommended there is liaison with Essex Police Roads Policing Team due to possible congestion concerns on London Road.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essex University expansion 	<p>It is essential there is early consultation with Essex Police regarding the expansion of the University including research facilities and future student accommodation. Universities can be vulnerable to crime and ASB if the appropriate security measures are not implemented at the early design stages.</p>