

Planning Policy (Local Plan Team)
Colchester City Council
Rowan House
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By e-mail to local.plan@colchester.gov.uk

Our ref: OC183 – 6

14 January 2026

Dear Sir

**PREFERRED OPTIONS LOCAL PLAN: REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION
ROWHEDGE BUSINESS PARK, ROWHEDGE (POLICY PP41)**

On behalf of [REDACTED] I write with regard to the current Regulation 18 consultation exercise being undertaken for the preferred options version of the new Colchester Local Plan. My client owns the parcel of land that abuts the existing built-up area of Rowhedge that is subject to *Policy PP41: Rowhedge Business Park, Rowhedge*, and wishes to confirm that the site remains deliverable and that the draft allocation for approximately 50 new dwellings and the text of the draft policy are acceptable, meaning that it is not necessary to submit comments through the consultation portal.

For the record, an initial assessment of the site-specific elements of the policy found that they can be delivered and that it is expected that the site will be developed in accordance with the draft policy. Pre-application discussions have already commenced (reference 223170), pursuant to Policy SS13 and the current allocation for 40 dwellings, including investigations to ascertain whether a greater level of development could be accommodated, and it is expected that an application for outline planning permission will be submitted later in 2026. As such, elements of the draft policy are already being considered in detail and in the same order as they are set out in the policy:

- a. The owners of the site have already explored the potential for increasing the density of development to a level closer to the grain of the existing village, and while initial assessments of the site show that a net density of 35 dwellings per hectare (14.2 dwellings per acre) would appear to be more appropriate, the redevelopment of the garden around Donyland House requires an up to date tree survey to ensure that best use can be made of the site. As such, it is confirmed that 50 new homes is likely to be the minimum level of residential development on the site.

- b. A detailed design for a vehicle access from Rectory Road has already been agreed with the highways team at Essex County Council as part of the pre-application discussions, set just inside the beginning of the 30 mph speed limit at the entrance to the village. It is expected that the existing entrances from Fingringhoe Road will be closed as part of the redevelopment of the business park.
- c. New connections for residents travelling on foot will also be created, including an extension of the existing footway to the north side of Rectory Road to meet the new entrance, a link into the new area of open space and a connection into the existing public footpath (East Donyland 29) to the north to create a shorter route to the centre of the village. The site is on the edge of the village and has easy access to the footpath and bridleway links in the adjoining countryside, including routes at Donyland Heath, Donyland Woods and across the Middlewick Ranges.
- d. The existing woodland on the east side of the site will be retained (it is outside the allocation for residential use) and will form part of the provision of open space for the new homes, with public access created for the first time. The woodland also has an important role in securing a net increase in the tree canopy cover within the scheme.
- e. A baseline for the biodiversity value of the site will be established in the Spring and it is expected that careful landscape design will allow the 10% net gain in value to be achieved within the site by improving the woodland and the grassland against the eastern boundary.
- f. Retention of the trees and hedges on the boundaries will ensure that the site can be successfully screened, integrated into the adjoining countryside and respecting the character of the landscape.
- g. The scale of the scheme is unlikely to affect the setting of nearby listed buildings (including the former Ipswich Arms PH, immediately to the south west), although a heritage assessment will be prepared to guide and support an application for outline planning permission to create new homes.
- h. A Flood Risk Assessment has prepared as part of the pre-application discussions, confirming that the development of the site can successfully accommodate surface water drainage and a discharge rate which does not increase the impact on the existing infrastructure. Furthermore, surface water will not be discharged to a combined sewer.
- i. It is anticipated that detailed negotiations will be needed with Anglian Water to secure the required capacity in the foul water drainage network to accommodate the additional demand created by the new homes. It is expected that these discussions will take place in parallel, as part of an application for outline planning permission and as part of wider and more strategic discussions within the context of the examination of the new local plan.

- j. Sustainability measures will be integrated into the scheme for the new homes, including reducing the demand for water and separating foul and surface water flows.

On behalf of the owners of the site, I can confirm that the draft allocation for residential development is a sound and appropriate allocation policy, and that it is anticipated that the new homes will be under construction within five years of the adoption of the new local plan: the request for pre-application advice will be concluded when the supporting reports and assessments are brought up to date and, with time allowed for amendments to the draft scheme to be made in accordance with the advice received, it is expected that the application for outline planning permission will be submitted later in 2026 and approved during 2027, setting the timescale for the reserved matters to be submitted within three years of the grant of permission.

There are no constraints that would prevent the site from being developed, with no existing uses that would need to be relocated, no restrictions on access or ransom strips around the boundaries, no restrictive covenants that would prevent residential development, and no water courses, trees subject to a preservation order or contamination of the ground that would restrict the ability of the site to accommodate approximately fifty new homes. Furthermore, there is vehicle access direct from Rectory Road and existing utility services run along the road which can be used to serve the new homes. The site is available in the short term and the strong demand for new homes in Rowhedge and southern Colchester means that residential development has already been found to be economically viable.

I trust that you will find this information submitted on behalf of [REDACTED] provides confirmation that draft *Policy PP4I: Rowhedge Business Park, Rowhedge* and the allocation of the site for residential development comprising approximately 50 new homes are deliverable, sound and appropriate allocation, meaning that it is not necessary to submit comments through the Regulation 18 consultation exercise. However, if you have any queries or should you require any additional information to support the draft allocation of the site for residential development through Policy PP4I, please do not hesitate to contact me at the above address.

Yours faithfully

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Michael Smith.

MICHAEL SMITH

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