



Planning Services  
Colchester City Council  
CO1 1PJ

8<sup>th</sup> January 2026

Dear Planning Services,

**Colchester Preferred Options Local Plan - Consultation Period: 26 November  
2025 to 5.00pm on 14 January 2026**

Dear Sir / Madam,

I write on behalf of my client, Horkesley Heath Ltd, in response to the Colchester Preferred Options Local Plan consultation. This representation seeks to promote land to the south of Ivy Lodge Road, Great Horkesley for a residential allocation of up to 200 dwellings.

**CASE FOR RECONSIDERATION: LAND AT IVY LODGE ROAD, GREAT HORKESLEY**

**1. STRATEGIC CONTEXT: FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH NORTH COLCHESTER**

Although Great Horkesley is identified as a *Medium Settlement* within the emerging settlement hierarchy, this designation should not be applied in isolation or treated as determinative. The Local Plan itself recognises that growth should be directed by sustainability, accessibility, and functional relationships, rather than settlement labels alone.

Emerging Policy ST3 states that:

*“Growth is directed across Colchester starting with the most sustainable and accessible locations in the urban area or close to transport corridors and existing centres, where there tends to be a range of employment opportunities, facilities, services and travel choices for future communities.”*

When assessed against this policy framework, Great Horkesley must be considered within its wider strategic context, namely its clear functional and spatial relationship with North Colchester, which is identified as one of the principal growth locations within the city area.

North Colchester has been the focus of sustained and coordinated growth over a prolonged period, supported by a comprehensive package of strategic infrastructure that is already delivered, operational, and functioning as intended. This includes:

- Axial Way and United Way;
- Improvements to A12 Junction 28;
- The Northern Approaches Road; and
- The North Transit Corridor, including the recently completed NAR2 Busway.

This infrastructure has fundamentally altered accessibility in North Colchester, enabling high-quality public transport services, improved highway capacity, and extensive opportunities for walking and cycling. Crucially, it provides direct and reliable connections to Colchester City Centre, Colchester North Station, the Park and Ride, and major employment, education, leisure and retail destinations.

The land at Ivy Lodge Road sits squarely within this established sustainable movement framework. Unlike more remote village allocations elsewhere in the plan area, the site is closely aligned with existing transport corridors and benefits from infrastructure investment that has already been made and is not dependent on uncertain future delivery.

The site adjoins the existing settlement boundary of Great Horkesley, a village located approximately 3 miles north of Colchester City Centre, and forms part of the wider North Colchester urban hinterland. Importantly, the site is located just 1 mile from the Chesterwell Neighbourhood Centre, which provides a range of day-to-day facilities and services, including:

- A Co-op food store;
- Healthcare facilities;
- Retail and office units;
- A new pre-school;
- A new secondary school; and
- Land safeguarded for a future primary school.

In addition, Colchester Sports Park, comprising a major indoor and outdoor sports and recreational hub, is located approximately 1 mile from the site. The site also lies within close proximity to the mixed-use development around the Colchester United Community Stadium, where a range of facilities have already been delivered, including a cinema, restaurants, leisure uses, an 80-bed hotel and a landscaped public piazza. This established hub is also located around 1 mile from the site.

Taken together, these facilities demonstrate that the site is functionally and spatially integrated with North Colchester, benefiting from a concentration of services, employment opportunities, education facilities and leisure uses that far exceeds what would normally be associated with a standalone medium-sized village.

The spatial strategy of the Local Plan therefore supports additional housing growth in locations such as land to the south of Ivy Lodge Road, Great Horkesley, which can capitalise on existing and committed infrastructure investment, reinforce sustainable travel patterns, and strengthen established growth corridors. By contrast, dispersing growth to less connected settlements, remote from strategic transport corridors and key service centres, risks undermining both the sustainability objectives and the deliverability of the Plan.

## **2. RELATIONSHIP TO APPROVED DEVELOPMENT EAST OF NAYLAND ROAD (POLICY SS7)**

Policy SS7 in the current Local Plan allocated land east of Nayland Road, Great Horkesley, for 80 dwellings. That site has now secured planning permission for 100 dwellings under application Ref: 230625, confirming both its acceptability in principle and its deliverability.

The land to the south of Ivy Lodge Road would represent a logical and contained extension to this consented scheme:

- It would consolidate development along the eastern side of the settlement rather than fragmenting growth.
- It would benefit directly from the pedestrian and cycle connectivity already approved as part of the Nayland Road scheme, which links into Chesterwell and the wider North Colchester network.
- It could share pedestrian and cycle access, and potentially vehicular access, or be served via a new access from Ivy Lodge Road, providing flexibility in design and highways terms.

In spatial planning terms, the site performs strongly as a rounding-off and consolidation opportunity, rather than an isolated development.

## **3. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS: CONTAINMENT AND ACCEPTABILITY**

The submitted LVIA [Appendix B] demonstrates that the site has a strong environmental fit with its landscape context and accords with the relevant Landscape Character Areas, particularly the southern section, where rural character is influenced by:

- Proximity to Colchester's urban edge
- Ribbon development along the A134

- The presence of the A12 and strategic road infrastructure

Key findings from the LVIA include:

- The site is well contained by the Black Brook valley to the south and west, with strong existing vegetation limiting visibility.
- The Zone of Theoretical Visibility is tightly constrained, with views limited to a small number of receptors.
- Development would not significantly alter important panoramic, cross-valley, or historic views, nor would it materially affect the skyline.
- The site sits within a gap between existing residential development, and would not intrude into the wider open countryside to the north, east, or west.

Where impacts are identified, the LVIA confirms that primary and secondary mitigation can manage residual effects to an acceptable level. Importantly, the site would not be visually evident from elsewhere within Great Horkesley, reinforcing its suitability as a discreet extension rather than an encroachment.

#### **4. GREAT HORKESLEY SETTLEMENT FORM AND INTEGRATION**

Great Horkesley has evolved over time as a predominantly linear settlement, originally focused along the former Roman road, now the A134, which provides a direct route to North Colchester.

Subsequent phases of development have extended westwards along a series of secondary roads branching from the main route. This pattern reflects the historic growth of the village and its functional relationship with Colchester.

Land to the east of the A134 has historically remained more open in character, behind the ribbon development along the road and further ribbon development along Ivy Lodge Road. This spatial distinction has already been materially altered by the approved development east of Nayland Road, which establishes a new eastern edge to the settlement and confirms the acceptability in principle of growth in this location. As a result, the settlement form of Great Horkesley is no longer defined solely by its linear frontage to the A134, but by a more nuanced and evolving pattern of edge development.

In this context, development at Ivy Lodge Road would represent a logical and well-related consolidation of the settlement, rather than an outward or piecemeal extension.

The site would complete and reinforce the emerging eastern edge created by the Nayland Road scheme, avoiding the dispersal of development into more sensitive or isolated areas of countryside.

Specifically, development at Ivy Lodge Road would:

- Consolidate the eastern edge of Great Horkesley, building upon an already approved development pattern rather than establishing a new or disconnected direction of growth;
- Integrate physically and functionally with the Nayland Road scheme, allowing shared or complementary access arrangements and direct synergy with the community facilities, public open space and landscape infrastructure already approved;
- Strengthen sustainable movement patterns, reinforcing pedestrian and cycle links to Chesterwell, the community stadium, and the wider North Colchester area, in accordance with the Plan's sustainable transport objectives; and
- Avoid settlement coalescence, through the retention and reinforcement of landscape buffers and structural planting, as confirmed by the LVIA [Appendix B], ensuring that the development remains visually contained and that the distinct identity of Great Horkesley is preserved.

The LVIA confirms that the site sits comfortably within the existing landscape framework, occupying a gap between existing built form and benefiting from strong containment to the south and west. With appropriate primary and secondary mitigation, development would not result in unacceptable landscape or visual effects, nor would it erode the character or legibility of the settlement.

Overall, development at Ivy Lodge Road would respect and respond to the established settlement form, reinforce an emerging and coherent pattern of growth, and deliver a well-integrated extension that aligns with both the historic evolution of Great Horkesley and its contemporary role within the North Colchester growth area.

## **5. DELIVERABILITY AND THE NEED FOR A ROBUST SUPPLY OF SITES**

The delivery of the Local Plan's housing requirement over the plan period is subject to a range of increasingly complex and interrelated risks, including infrastructure capacity constraints, rising build costs, and policy uncertainty associated with climate change and environmental requirements.

These factors reinforce the need for the Plan to allocate a sufficient range and choice of deliverable sites, including those that can come forward without reliance on major new infrastructure or marginal viability assumptions.

The emerging Local Plan introduces a suite of ambitious policy requirements relating to climate change mitigation, water efficiency, biodiversity, landscape, design quality and infrastructure provision. While these objectives are supported in principle, there is a clear risk that the cumulative

impact of these requirements, when applied alongside affordable housing obligations and conventional Section 106 and CIL contributions, will affect the viability and deliverability of a significant proportion of allocated sites over the plan period.

Importantly, the Plan does not contain a comprehensive cumulative viability assessment demonstrating that all policy requirements can be delivered together across different site typologies, market locations and development scales. This creates uncertainty, particularly for larger strategic allocations and sites with known infrastructure constraints, where delivery is more sensitive to cost escalation, phasing issues and market conditions.

In this context, there is a clear planning rationale for ensuring that the housing supply is not overly dependent on a small number of large, complex or contentious allocations, but instead includes additional sites that are well-located, flexible in delivery terms, and capable of coming forward in response to changing economic and policy conditions.

The land at Ivy Lodge Road represents such an opportunity.

The site benefits from its proximity to North Colchester, where strategic transport and community infrastructure has already been delivered, reducing reliance on future, uncertain infrastructure funding or off-site mitigation. This significantly improves its prospects for timely delivery when compared to sites that are dependent on upgrades to constrained utilities, wastewater treatment capacity, or major highway interventions.

By contrast, some other proposed allocations around Colchester face more acute and acknowledged infrastructure challenges, including water and wastewater capacity constraints, limited public transport accessibility, and the need for substantial upfront investment. These factors introduce delivery risk and increase the likelihood that sites will stall, be delayed, or fail to come forward at the scale anticipated within the plan period.

There is also increasing uncertainty associated with the implementation of climate change and environmental policies over time. As national standards, Building Regulations and funding mechanisms continue to evolve, locally-specific requirements that go beyond national frameworks may have unintended consequences for viability, particularly when applied rigidly or without sufficient flexibility. This uncertainty strengthens the case for maintaining a robust buffer of deliverable sites, capable of responding to policy change without undermining overall housing delivery.

Allocating additional land at Ivy Lodge Road would therefore improve the resilience and flexibility of the housing supply, helping to ensure that the Plan remains effective in the face of market fluctuations, infrastructure constraints and evolving regulatory requirements. The site's capacity—up to approximately 200 dwellings—would make a meaningful contribution to housing delivery without relying on the successful implementation of large-scale, high-risk allocations elsewhere.

In soundness terms, the inclusion of the Ivy Lodge Road site would directly support the Plan's effectiveness by reducing reliance on uncertain delivery assumptions, diversifying the portfolio of sites, and aligning housing growth with locations where infrastructure investment has already been secured. Its exclusion, by contrast, risks placing undue pressure on more constrained and contentious sites, thereby undermining the Plan's ability to deliver its housing strategy in full.

## **6. COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT: CONCERNS WITH POLICY PP37 (LANGHAM)**

The allocation of land north of Park Lane, Langham under Policy PP37, for approximately 900 dwellings, raises significant concerns when assessed against the Local Plan's spatial strategy, deliverability objectives and the need for a resilient housing supply over the plan period.

The objection is not to the principle of housing delivery, but to the scale and location of this allocation and the degree to which it introduces avoidable delivery risk when compared to more sustainable and strategically aligned alternatives, such as land at Ivy Lodge Road, Great Horkesley.

Langham is a small settlement, and the proposed scale of development is clearly disproportionate to its existing size, role and level of services. Unlike Great Horkesley, Langham does not form part of a strategic growth corridor, nor does it benefit from close functional integration with Colchester's main urban area. The site is remote from identified growth locations and is not aligned with existing or planned high-quality public transport corridors, increasing reliance on private car travel and undermining the sustainability objectives of the Plan.

The allocation is also subject to acknowledged infrastructure constraints, particularly in relation to water and wastewater capacity.

Policy PP37 explicitly requires confirmation of treatment capacity and, where necessary, the agreement of phasing triggers to support development. This introduces a clear element of uncertainty into the delivery of the site and places reliance on strategic infrastructure upgrades that are outside the direct control of developers and may not align with the Plan's anticipated delivery trajectory. Whilst this constraint affects a number of the allocations, the scale of this allocation is what represents the risk to the Council's overall spatial strategy.

When these infrastructure constraints are considered alongside the cumulative impact of other emerging Plan requirements—relating to climate change mitigation, water efficiency, biodiversity, design quality and infrastructure contributions—the delivery of such a large, village-scale expansion becomes increasingly uncertain.

Larger strategic allocations of this nature are inherently more exposed to viability pressures, phasing complexity and market fluctuations, particularly where they are dependent on infrastructure solutions that are not yet secured.

By contrast, the land at Ivy Lodge Road represents a smaller-scale, more flexible and lower-risk opportunity.

It is closely related to North Colchester, benefits from strategic infrastructure that has already been delivered, and does not depend on major upgrades to transport networks. Its location close to an established growth area means it can respond more effectively to changing policy requirements and market conditions, including evolving climate change and environmental standards.

From a soundness perspective, continued reliance on large, contentious and infrastructure-constrained allocations such as Langham, while excluding well-located and deliverable sites like Ivy Lodge Road, risks undermining the effectiveness of the Plan. It concentrates delivery risk rather than spreading it and reduces the Plan's ability to adapt to uncertainty over the plan period.

A more balanced approach would be to moderate reliance on Policy PP37, either in scale or in delivery assumptions, and ensure that additional sites are allocated in locations that are demonstrably sustainable, infrastructure-ready and capable of coming forward without undue delay. The allocation of land at Ivy Lodge Road would directly support this objective, strengthening the Plan's resilience and increasing confidence that housing delivery targets can be met in practice.

## **7. CONCLUSION: A SOUND AND NECESSARY ALLOCATION**

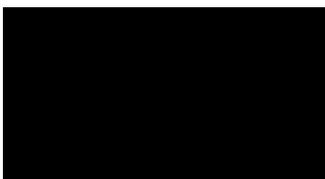
In summary, the land at Ivy Lodge Road represents a sustainable, deliverable, and strategically aligned opportunity that directly supports the spatial strategy for North Colchester. Its exclusion from the emerging Local Plan risks:

- Over-reliance on large, uncertain, and poorly located allocations;
- Undermining housing delivery over the plan period; and
- Failing to make effective use of infrastructure that is already in place.

The site should therefore be reconsidered for allocation, as an extension to Policy SS7 in the current Local Plan, to ensure the new Local Plan is positively prepared, justified, effective, and consistent with national policy.

Should any further information be required, please do not hesitate to get in contact.

Yours faithfully,



**Andrew Ransome MRTPI**  
Planning Director