

Representation to the Colchester Local Plan 2041 'Preferred Options' Consultation

To: The Planning Policy Team
Colchester City Council

From: Matt Free

Address: removed

OBJECTION to Proposed Policy PP29: Land East of School Road, Copford (Site Reference: 10228) for approximately 300 dwellings

Introduction

I am writing to formally object to the proposed Policy PP29, which allocates the site known as Site ID 10228 (Land East of School Road, Copford) for large-scale housing development within the emerging Colchester Local Plan 2041. I believe the site is fundamentally unsustainable, inappropriate for the village of Copford, and conflicts with existing statutory planning policy, specifically the 'made' Copford with Eastthorpe Neighbourhood Plan (2023).

Detailed Grounds for Objection to Site Allocation

1. Direct Conflict with the Adopted Copford with Eastthorpe Neighbourhood Plan (2023)

The proposed allocation directly contradicts the recently adopted Neighbourhood Plan, which carries full legal weight as part of the Development Plan for the area. The Plan's core vision is to ensure growth is "proportionate to the size of the village" and its policies:

- **Resist "Large scale development" (Policy CE1):** A 300-home site represents approximately a 16% population increase, which is highly disproportionate and defines "large scale" development that the plan explicitly seeks to prevent.
- **Prevent Coalescence and Urban Sprawl:** The allocation threatens to merge Copford with adjacent urban areas, eroding the distinct rural identity the existing plan works to conserve.

2. Cumulative Impact of Recent Development

Copford has already contributed significantly to the Borough's housing needs and experienced the associated infrastructure strain, including approximately **50 homes built off Hall Road** (Planning ref: **201236**).

- The cumulative effect of this existing new development, combined with the proposed 300 homes, exacerbates already strained local infrastructure, including roads, the village primary school, and local health services.

- The fragility of the local network to increased development pressure has already been demonstrated by recent construction activity.

3. Negative Impact on the Adjacent Pits Wood Local Wildlife Site (LoWS)

The proximity of the proposed allocation to **Pits Wood**, a designated Local Wildlife Site (LoWS) and valuable community woodland, is a significant environmental concern. The Local Plan must prioritize protecting these assets:

- Increased population density from both the existing Hall Road development and the proposed 300 homes will lead to greater recreational pressure and potential disturbance to sensitive habitats and wildlife within the LoWS area.
- As a LoWS, its protection is a significant material consideration in planning law.

4. Critical Failure of Supporting Infrastructure: Wastewater and Drainage

The allocation is unsustainable without significant, confirmed infrastructure upgrades. The existing water recycling centre (waterworks) and local sewerage network in the area are believed to be operating at or near capacity. A development of 300 homes would place an unmanageable demand on this network, leading to an unacceptable risk of sewage flooding and pollution of local watercourses.

5. Inadequate Transport Infrastructure and Highway Safety

The site fails to meet sustainability tests related to transport. The local road network already experiences significant safety and capacity issues. The combined impact of 350+ new homes will generate substantial vehicle movements that the existing infrastructure cannot safely accommodate.

Conclusion

The proposed Policy PP29 site allocation is unsuitable for inclusion in the new Local Plan. It is contrary to the community's adopted Neighbourhood Plan, contributes to unacceptable cumulative impact with the recent Hall Road development, threatens Pits Wood LoWS, and lacks the necessary infrastructure capacity to be viable.

I request that this site is removed from the list of 'Preferred Options' and is not allocated for development in the final iteration of the Colchester Local Plan 2041.

Yours sincerely,

Matt Free