



5 January 2026

Dear Sir / Madam,

Reference:

**Colchester City Council Preferred Options Local Plan Regulation 18
Consultation**

PP9: North East Colchester

Site IDs: 10616, 10616a, 10616b

We write to strongly object to the above sites being included in the Local Plan. As currently drafted, the allocation of PP9 Sites 10616, 10616a and 10616b fails the Local Plan soundness tests and are inconsistent with national planning policy.

We therefore request that the allocation of these sites is removed from the plan and the existing settlement boundary for North East Colchester is retained.

Specific areas of concern are detailed below:

1. Lack of Infrastructure

There is a serious lack of infrastructure to support the number of houses being proposed for the above sites in the following areas:

1.1 Transport

Two main roads border the proposed sites namely the Bromley Road and the Parsons Heath / Harwich Road. Both roads are extremely busy with commuter traffic and heavy goods vehicles and lead to congested mini roundabouts on the approach to the town centre.

Access to the proposed sites from both roads is extremely limited.

Access from the Parsons Heath / Harwich Roads requires crossing the mainline Norwich to London railway line. This currently consists of a single file, privately owned track via a small bridge over the railway line.

Access from the proposed sites on to the Bromley Road is also via a single track which leads to a dangerously busy, unsighted bend very close to the entrance to the Salary Brook Nature Reserve and to the newly built Mill View properties and the “Bellway” housing estate. It is worth noting here that the Colchester Borough Council objected to the Bellway development during the consultation by Tendring District Council. The new housing developments have significantly increased the level of traffic on the Bromley Road which will be further seriously impacted with the development of the planned Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community (the “Garden Community”).

Existing bus routes, particularly on the Bromley Road are extremely limited as is pedestrian access. Footpaths are narrow and very close to fast moving traffic. As a result, with increased housing, car dependency is inevitable.

1.2 Utilities

1.2.1 Water

The Anglian Water Essex South Water Resource Zones was expected to go in to supply deficit by 2025 if no measures were put in place. Anglian Water plan to overcome the predicted deficit through water restrictions to new dwellings.

1.2.2 Electricity

Parsons Heath is one of the two areas in Colchester which is forecasted to have the greatest increase in electrical demand by 2041. This increase would put the primary substation in our area into demand deficit. The cost to improve capacity for the emerging development to 2041 is £50.95m. There are currently no planned UKPN projects identified to increase capacity of the electrical infrastructure in Colchester.

1.3 Healthcare

Under the proposals there will be a significant rise in demand for all aspects of healthcare which is already struggling to cope with the needs of the existing population.

1.3.1 General Practice

As of December 2023, all medical practices in Colchester were operating above capacity (Ref: The Stage 3 Infrastructure Audit and Delivery Plan, Dec.2023). Hundreds of new houses in the area will increase the pressure on local GP practices enormously. The GOV:UK Fact Sheet 4 “New Houses and healthcare facilities” states that one full time GP is required for every 1.800 people. In June 2017, NHS

England confirmed in their consultee comments for the Bellway site south of the Bromley Road that the Parsons Heath Medical Practice (the nearest to the proposed development) did not have capacity for the additional growth.

People are already struggling to get appointments with their GPs which in turn increases the pressure on other healthcare services particularly the A&E Department at the local hospital.

1.3.2 Hospital Services

Colchester General Hospital often operates near full capacity especially during the winter months with reports showing occupancy around 97% for the Trust in February 2025. The NHS recommends that hospital bed occupancy should not exceed 92% for safe and effective healthcare for populations.

In the Spring of 2025 a member of my family was taken by ambulance to the A&E department of the Colchester hospital. This resulted in them spending 24 hours on a trolley in a “corridor ward” due to lack of beds.

It is difficult to describe the scene of barely controlled chaos within the unit. Corridors were lined with patients on trolleys, cubicles were cramped, equipment was hanging loosely from shelving, there were blood stained swabs on the floor and barely enough room for paramedics and A&E Staff to work. The staff looked harassed and frankly exhausted. I estimate that there were at least fifty patients lining the corridors on trolleys that night. The staff were doing their very best to cope with this impossible situation, but they were almost completely overwhelmed by the sheer volume of patients. Can we really be planning to increase this burden further?

More recently, at an outpatient appointment with a senior Doctor, we were discussing the pressures on the local hospital in broader terms and he said that in his speciality, Orthopaedics, because of the merger between the Ipswich and Colchester hospitals, the catchment area had increased and the population being served by his unit has tripled in the last five years.

Conclusion:

- **Access to the proposed sites is extremely limited**
- **Water and sewerage systems to the existing dwellings are stretched**
- **Risk of demand deficit for electricity**
- **The healthcare facilities to support the allocation of the proposed sites are totally inadequate and the sites should be removed from the plan.**
- **Sites:10616, 10616a, 10616b should be removed from the plan.**

2. Failure to Comply with National and Local Planning Policy

The proposed allocation of these sites contradicts the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) principles on sustainable development and prioritising brownfield over greenfield land.

The sites are currently outside the existing settlement boundary of the Colchester Urban Area and are therefore considered countryside. This will be particularly important to preserve with the planned development of the Garden Community which is nearing its final stages.

Conclusion:

- **The allocation of proposed sites 10616, 10616a and 10616b fails to comply with NPPF principles and the local settlement boundary. They should therefore be removed from the plan and the settlement boundary should not be changed but remain as existing.**

3. Destruction of Landscape Value and Character

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 187 (a) creates the concept of 'valued landscapes'. This states that in planning policies and decisions 'valued landscapes' should be protected and enhanced.

Over the past thirty years there have been several references which suggest that the land to the east of the Welshwood Park development, which is part of the Salary Brook Valley, is of high value and capable of being designated a 'valued landscape'

References:

1985 recorded as a Special Landscape Area by Essex County Council and designated as a countryside Conservation Area by Colchester Borough Council.

2005 Review of Countryside Conservation Areas recorded Salary Brook as "high value" and recommended it was designated as a Area of Landscape Conservation Importance

2024 Landscape Character Assessment Ardleigh River Valley (the valley of Salary Brook) identified as high landscape value

The Welshwood valley which encompasses the proposed sites should be considered to be a "valued landscape". With further development pressure immediately to the east of the valley, from the Garden Community, there will be even greater value to the valley area as a break between settlement areas providing a green corridor which serves both the Tendring and Colchester areas and preventing coalescence. The Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) Stage 2 report identifies the sites as a red risk for coalescence.

Conclusion:

- **The allocation of sites 10616, 10616a and 10616b should be removed from the plan to ensure a sufficiently green break between settlement areas.**

4. Loss of Amenity Space

.The Colchester Orbital, which was launched by Colchester Borough Council in partnership with local community groups is a circular route around the city, connecting some of its most important and beautiful green spaces and off-road pathway networks. The route follows public rights of way, and links with cycle paths wherever possible.

A short section of the orbital route requires people to exit Welshwood and to walk on pavements through the Welshwood housing estate before rejoining the public footpaths by the side of the fields and on to Bullock Wood. Many people take a short cut to avoid this section of the orbital which has created an unofficial footpath over many years.

The footpath in question, (which is included in the land allocated for development Site IDs: 10616, 10616a, 10616b), is used extensively by members of the public when walking from Welsh Wood to the existing public footpaths leading to Bullock Wood and the Salary Brook Nature Reserve. In March 2025, documents in support of an application to modify the Definitive Map to include this footpath were submitted to Essex County Council (**Ref: HIGH/13485**)

In support of the application, twenty-one Evidence of Use forms were submitted by individuals, twenty of whom had used the footpath for over twenty years, five for over thirty years and seven for over forty years. The ages of the witnesses ranged from 36 to 86 years. Our own family has lived in the area for almost 25 years and we, our children and grandchildren love to walk and cycle in the area.

Surprisingly, not only residents of Welshwood Park use this footpath but also people who live along the Bromley Road and from the St John's and Greenstead estates. Reasons for walking here include not only physical exercise but also social contact with other people, stress reduction and a sense of wellbeing from exposure to green spaces.

Conclusion:

- **Development on the proposed sites would remove access to green space not only for people living in north east Colchester but for all city residents and visitors who use the Colchester Orbital both now and in the future.**

5 Harm to Biodiversity and Habitats

The proposed sites are bordered by mature hedgerows, two Local Wildlife Sites (Welsh Wood and Walls' Wood), and the Salary Brook Nature Reserve. The woods are classified as ancient woodland and the lower slopes of the fields which form part of the valley floor provide a diverse wetland habitat. Several protected species have been seen in the area including Sky Larks, Slow Worms, Grass Snakes and Reptiles.

The Council plans include a suggested 15m buffer between the woodland and the proposed housing. This is inadequate to prevent harm to the many veteran trees and ancient woodland due to physical damage, air pollution and recreational pressure. The last is already evident in Welsh Wood in compacted soil, the destruction of ground flora and damaged stream banks.

Conclusion:

- **The proposed development on these fields would lead to biodiversity harm due to proximity of the designated sites and the Local Wildlife Sites.**

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Yours faithfully

Mr & Mrs R. Fisher