

From: Matt & Lisa Free · [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, December 10, 2025 14:41
To: Local Plan <Local.Plan@colchester.gov.uk>; Planning Policy <Planning.Policy@colchester.gov.uk>
Subject: Fw: Formal Objection: Colchester Local Plan Preferred Options – Policy PP29 (Land East of School Road)

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Dear Colchester Planning Policy Team,

Please accept this formal representation regarding the Colchester New Local Plan (2026-2041) Preferred Options consultation. I am writing to strongly object to the allocation of 300 dwellings under Policy PP29 (Land East of School Road, Copford).

I believe this policy is "unsound" as it is not justified, effective, or consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for the following reasons:

1. Evidence of Historical Flood Risk & Drainage System Failure

I object to Policy PP29 based on site-specific evidence of flood risk that has been overlooked.

- **Historical Failure:** My property, located on land previously occupied by a bungalow, has a recorded history of flooding. This was caused by local drainage systems—including essential ditches—failing to manage water volumes, often due to inadequate maintenance.
- **Increased Pressure on Infrastructure:** The addition of 300 dwellings will replace natural absorbent ground with significant impermeable surfaces. This will exponentially increase the volume of water entering a drainage network that is already demonstrably at its limit.
- **Legal Conflict:** Under NPPF Paragraph 173 (2025), development must not increase flood risk elsewhere. Given that the existing local system is already surcharging and failing, adding 300 homes poses an unacceptable and illegal risk to the safety and property of existing residents.

2. Failure to Prioritize Brownfield and Urban Alternatives

Under NPPF Paragraph 125(c) (2025), the Council must give "substantial weight" to using brownfield land within settlements.

- **Untapped Capacity:** The Council's Brownfield Land Register identifies significant capacity in urban locations, such as COL/14 (Magdalen Street Railway Sidings) and COL/25 (Essex County Hospital site).
- **The Argument:** The Council has not demonstrated that these urban sites have been maximized for density (Policy H2) before moving to high-sensitivity rural sites. The failure to use the "Part 2" Brownfield Register to grant "Permission in Principle" for urban sites makes the allocation of PP29 unjustified.

3. Impact on Irreplaceable Habitat & Conflict with National Ecological Priorities

Policy PP29 acknowledges that Pits Wood is an Ancient Wood Irreplaceable Habitat.

- **Woodland Trust Standards:** I support the Woodland Trust's advice that a 15m buffer is wholly inadequate for a development of this scale. A buffer of at least 50–100m is required to protect against noise, light, and nitrogen deposition from 300 additional households.
- **National Strategy Conflict:** Pits Wood is designated within the Woodland Priority Habitat Network (High Spatial Priority). National strategy identifies this land for nature recovery and connectivity. Building 300 houses here creates permanent fragmentation, contrary to the National Nature Recovery Strategy.
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- **4. Unacceptable Highway Safety Impact (Primary School)**

The proposed access on School Road creates an "unacceptable impact on highway safety" (NPPF Paragraph 115).

- **Vulnerable Road Users:** The site is in immediate proximity to Copford Primary School. The influx of traffic from 300 households during school peak hours poses a demonstrable danger to children walking to school.
- **Lack of Sustainable Transport:** Copford is a rural settlement with limited public transport, contradicting the Council's Climate Emergency declaration.

5. Severe Infrastructure and Healthcare Deficit

- **Healthcare/Education:** Local GP surgeries and [Copford Primary School](#) (already at capacity following its 2023 expansion) cannot sustain this growth.
- **Strategic Road Network:** National Highways has identified the A12 and A120 as operating at capacity. This development adds a "severe residual cumulative impact" to an already struggling network.
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Conclusion

I formally request that you acknowledge receipt of this representation and confirm it has been registered as a valid objection to Policy PP29.

Furthermore, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, I wish to be notified of the following:

1. The submission of the Colchester Local Plan for independent examination.
2. The publication of the recommendations of the Planning Inspector appointed to carry out the independent examination.
3. The formal adoption of the Colchester Local Plan.

I also reserve my right to participate in the public hearing sessions during the examination in public to elaborate on the material considerations raised in this objection.

Yours faithfully,

Matt Free

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Matt Free.