

Table 1: North Essex Section One Local Plan: Consultation comments on SA of Main Modifications plus LUC response

Consultee	Summary of consultation comments	LUC response
Monks Wood (ID: 1198924) / Lightwood	<p>Para 2.22 of the SA should be clear that CBBGC and WOBGC</p> <p>“were considered by the Inspector not to be deliverable capable of being delivered as sustainable places and the Main Modifications remove these Garden Communities from the Section One Local Plan.”</p> <p>because RTS Routes 3 and 4 have not been shown to be deliverable and without them, the two GCs would be would directly conflict with the NPPF’s advice that the transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes.</p>	<p>The consultee’s comment is strictly correct, although it does not alter the findings of the SA of the Main Modifications Plan.</p> <p>If it is considered to be necessary, para. 2.22 of the SA Report could be rephrased to quote directly the form of words in the Inspector’s May 2015 letter [IED/022]:</p> <p>“For the reasons set out in the Inspector’s letter of 15th May 2020, two of the Garden Community proposals included in the Publication Draft Section One Local Plan – the Colchester / Braintree Borders Garden Community, and the West of Braintree Garden Community – were considered by the Inspector not to be justified or deliverable and the Main Modifications remove these Garden Communities from the Section One Local Plan.”</p>
Mrs Jane Bedford (1227569)	<p>Proposed East of Colchester Garden Community</p> <p>“At a time of Climate Change crisis and of need to increase production of food for our growing population it is illogical to proceed with the East of Colchester Garden Community development, which will result in the destruction of large areas of Grade 1 agricultural land and carbon-capturing countryside, release large amounts of carbon during construction, and have negative effects on carbon emissions, air pollution, water resources and bio-diversity, when most of the current housing targets for Colchester and Tendring in the Plan period to 2033 can be met from their Section 2 Local Plans and any shortfall could be made up with much smaller scale developments. Far better to keep options open for the future.”</p>	<p>This is not really a comment on the SA of the Main Modifications Plan, but a view in relation to the effects of the proposed Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community.</p> <p>The effects commented upon by the consultee were reported upon in the SA Report, for example in relation to Policy SP7 (Development and Delivery of a New Garden Community in North Essex) in para 3.296 to paras 3.328 and Policy SP8 (Tendring / Colchester Borders Garden Community) in para 3.329 to Para 3.366.</p>
L&Q, Cirrus Land, G120 (ID: 1227724)	<p>No areas of major deficiency were identified in the SA apart from not being able to locate a Non-Technical Summary online.</p> <p>For the most part, the SA provides a comprehensive discussion around the likely effects of policy and site options as evidence supporting the draft Plan as a reasonable strategy. However, the following areas of the SA would benefit from additional consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SA Framework of Objectives – The questions that form the basis of the scoring criteria against the SA objectives would benefit from some updating and/or clarifying. One issue is the impact that the climate change and health and wellbeing crises have on behaviour and how places need to adapt and be resilient to this over the Plan period. • Monitoring Measures – The monitoring metrics would benefit from some updates corresponding to the proposed suggestions for the SA Framework 	<p>The Non-Technical Summary was published for consultation in the ‘Supporting Documents’ tab to the Main SA Report on the Consultation portal. Therefore, this requirement of the SEA Regulations was met.</p> <p>The appraisal questions linked to each SA Objective are not intended to be exhaustive – they only help to guide the appraisal. In LUC’s view, the SA has identified the likely significant effects of the Main Modifications Plan.</p> <p>The suggested additions to the monitoring measures appear reasonable and could be added to the monitoring framework to be described in the SEA Adoption Statement.</p>
Mrs S Osborne (ID: 1105794)	<p>Expressed concerns regarding the risk of pollution in to the Blackwater river and estuary and its important seagrass and oyster habitat. The consultation response states that there has been significant building developments planned in Kelvedon and Feering villages, through which the Blackwater river flows, and that there appears to be incomplete sewage / waste water sustainability plans going forward .Concerns are expressed regarding the risk of pollutants going into the Blackwater river from significant building in flood plains and sewage waste / pollution,</p>	<p>The consultee does not explicitly comment on the SA, but the implication of the comment is that this issue is not addressed by the SA.</p>

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	<p>which may affect the essential ecosystems. Building near to it next to the blackwater river should be resisted at all costs. The consultee claims that unfortunately there is not a great track record regarding pollutants and the Environment Agency appear to have little or no power controlling such common infringements.</p>	<p>With respect to water quality, the SA relied on the findings of the Water Cycle Studies. For example, para 3.121 of the SA Report found that:</p> <p>“In relation to SA11 (Water resources and quality) there is the potential for the provision of new homes to result in pressure on water supply and water treatment facilities. The Water Cycle Studies undertaken to inform the preparation of the Section One Local Plan generally concluded that there are some localised constraints with the water supply and wastewater network which need to be resolved and agreed between the relevant developer and water company (Affinity Water, Anglian Water or Essex and Suffolk Water), but that overall, there are no constraints with respect to water service infrastructure and the water environment to deliver the Local Plan development. These conclusions were on the basis that strategic water resource options and wastewater solutions are delivered in advance of development coming forward.”</p> <p>Conclusions regarding the cumulative effects on SA Objective 11 (To improve water quality and address water scarcity and sewerage capacity) are given in paras 4.46 to 4.48 of the SA Report.</p>
<p>Mr Matthew O'Connell (1198834)</p>	<p>It remains clear that the ASA's approach to climate change and in particular net emissions and the 2050 Net Zero target (or even the previous lesser target) is entirely inadequate and could be subject to legal challenge. The following statement, for example, is entirely without evidential basis:</p> <p>“The plan, however, can support national targets through promoting new development that maximises active and sustainable modes of transport”</p> <p>Even a qualitative assessment would have to conclude that a new development requiring a specially constructed trunk road and an RTS system - which of course risks delays in completion and indeed commercial failure - is unlikely to "support national targets" when compared to other spatial options.</p> <p>There has simply been no meaningful or defensible consideration of this topic, in contravention of national policy. The statement that this is similar to the approach taken in other SAs neglects to consider whether other SAs are considering such large standalone developments as the sole strategic spatial strategy, and does nothing to make this appraisal any more robust.</p>	<p>The issue of climate change was addressed throughout the SA Report, through SA Objective 10 (To make efficient use of energy and reduce contributions to climatic change through mitigation and adaptation). This includes an appraisal of every policy in the Main Modifications Plan as well as the cumulative effects of the Main Modifications Plan as a whole and with other plans and projects.</p> <p>For example, in relation to Policy SP3 (Spatial Strategy for North Essex) the SA stated:</p> <p>“In relation to SA10 (Energy efficiency and climate change), the delivery of growth is considered likely to result in increased carbon emissions – resulting from the construction of the development, loss of habitat which can act as a carbon store and the activities of humans such as travel and energy demand, which result in increased carbon emissions. It is therefore considered that there is the potential for minor negative effects in relation to SA10 (Energy efficiency and climate change). These effects are uncertain however, as different designs and forms of development can result in different amounts of carbon release. It is also important to note that the focus of growth to existing settlements, and within a Garden Community which is intended to be developed in a way that seeks to reduce carbon release and build in climate change adaptation and mitigation, is likely to result in less severe effects compared to other growth strategies which</p>

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		<p>provide for more dispersed growth, as these are considered likely to increase the need for people to travel further distances compared to the strategy proposed."</p> <p>This is expanded upon in the section on the cumulative effects of the Plan as a whole (paras 4.41 to 4.45 of the SA Report).</p> <p>There is inevitably an element of professional judgement regarding the likely effects of the Main Modifications Plan on carbon emissions, but the basis for all judgements is clearly explained on each occasion. It is considered that the issue of climate change is sufficiently addressed in the SA Report.</p>
Halstead Town Council (Ms Sarah Greatorex - 61614)	The consultation response refers to the posting of statement on the consultation website stating Halstead Town Council supports the modifications as outlined in the consultation, and sets out a number of recommended changes to the detailed wording of some of the policies and text in the Main Modifications Plan.	<p>Although these comments have been posted to the SA Report, they relate to the wording of the Main Modifications Plan, rather than the SA.</p> <p>As a result, no response regarding the SA is required.</p>
Rosie Pearson (1248577)	<p>1 Water quality</p> <p>The SA does identify some uncertainty around water supply and water treatment and points to policy as a means to address concerns. However, there is still no accurate or complete NEA evidence (as per CAUSE reps, the IWMS was flawed) against which to assess objective 11, water quality, and we still do not know where the water for Section 1 and 2 will come from.</p> <p>Nor do we have any certainty that the ecologically sensitive Colne estuary will not see a deterioration in water quality. With regards to treatment of wastewater, note that in 2019 the Colchester waste recycling centre spilled sewage 342 times for 7,248 hours, straight into the protected habitats of the Colne Estuary and upstream of the popular beaches of Brightlingsea, Frinton, Mersea. This will only get worse with the level of development proposed at E Colchester and in Section 2. It is not enough to trust the water companies to deliver:</p> <p>Government's report 2 Oct into the performance of water and sewerage companies in 2019 showed that their performance deteriorated for the second year in a row. Anglian Water is one of the worst performing companies, with only two stars out of five. Anglian Water and Thames Water were responsible for over half of serious pollution incidents, with Anglian Water seeing an increase in 2019 with twelve incidents.</p> <p>1 Climate change</p> <p>While the Paris Agreement is referenced in this SA, this is too little too late, especially given the conclusion in para 3.315 and 3.356: "...in the context of the Paris Agreement (2016) and Climate Change Act (2008 as amended), it is considered that the development of the Garden Community is likely to lead to an overall increase in the release of carbon dioxide, although the full amount of this is not known."</p> <p>Throughout plan-making there has been a reliance on the argument that the plan proposed is better than no plan - but there has been no testing of alternatives from a climate change perspective. I do not agree with the SA conclusion, "To quantify the effects would require transport modelling of not only the preferred spatial strategy, but every other reasonable alternative, in order to provide consistency in approach. That would be disproportionate and is</p>	<p>With regard to water quality, the points raised by the consultee are noted. To identify and report on the effects on SA Objective (To improve water quality and address water scarcity and sewerage capacity), the SA of the Main Modifications Plan relied on the findings and recommendations of the relevant Water Cycle Studies.</p> <p>The key conclusions are reported upon in the SA Report, and on the basis of these conclusions, judgements were made in the SA Report on the likely effects of implementing the Main Modifications Plan. These judgements take into account the policy safeguards (e.g. regarding the provision of water infrastructure) included in the Main Modifications Plan.</p> <p>With regard to climate change, the SA Report clearly explains the approach adopted in the SA of the Main Modifications Plan (see paras 2.35 to 2.39). Climate change was addressed throughout the SA Report, through SA Objective 10 (To make efficient use of energy and reduce contributions to climatic change through mitigation and adaptation). This includes every policy in the Main Modifications Plan as well as cumulative effects of the Main Modifications Plan and with other plans and projects.</p> <p>The SA Report noted that climate change matters are also reflected under appraisals of other SA Objectives including SA3 (Health), SA4 (Vitality and viability of</p>

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	<p>not required by the SEA Directive." It is precisely the lack of data (air quality, climate change effects, water quality, transport modelling) to drive decision-making which leads me to believe that there is simply no way of telling if the plan is the best one.</p>	<p>centres), SA5 (Economy), SA7 (Achieve more sustainable travel behaviour) and SA8 (Services and infrastructure).</p> <p>With respect to the issue of alternatives, detailed appraisal of strategic sites and spatial strategies was undertaken during the Additional SA (LUC, July 2019). This explained in para 3.121 to 3.122 that, in relation to SA10 (To make efficient use of energy and reduce contributions to climatic change through mitigation and adaptation), all strategic sites are of a scale that should be able to include renewable energy technology to provide at least 20% of the projected energy requirements of major developments, as well as requiring appropriate energy conservation measures and providing for sustainable urban drainage, resulting in minor positive (+) effects. In order to avoid duplication of assessment, the Additional SA reported that carbon emissions from transport were not assessed under this objective because accessibility and use of sustainable modes of transport were assessed under a number of other SA objectives (e.g. SA objectives 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8). The Additional SA Report explained that those strategic sites that scored positively under these objectives might also be considered to perform well under SA objective 10 with respect to carbon emissions.</p> <p>In the Additional SA Report, there was considerable analysis of how different sites and strategies performed under these SA objectives, and overall conclusions drawn out with regard to the relative effects on carbon emissions as a result. For example, the ninth bullet of para 4.16 in the Additional SA Report concluded that, with respect to spatial strategies to the west of Colchester "Although all of the remaining spatial strategy alternatives are considered to have minor positive effects on carbon, this is primarily with respect to delivery on site, rather than from traffic. From a traffic perspective, those sites that perform strongest against SA objective 7 are also likely to perform strongest with respect to transport related carbon emissions (SA objective 10)." For spatial strategies to the east of Colchester, the seventh bullet of para 4.21 of the ASA Report stated that "The main advantage of East 6 when fully built out is with respect to longer journeys and easy access to railway stations (SA objective 7) which is reinforced by the strong commuting relationship between Tendring and Colchester. This would also feed into effects on carbon emissions from traffic (SA objective 10). On the other hand, the rural locations could lead to longer journeys by car for those journeys where rail is not a realistic choice. For shorter journeys, East 3, East 4 and East 5 perform most strongly."</p> <p>Carbon emissions are the product of other aspects of plan making (in spatial strategy terms, primarily traffic), and this</p>

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		<p>was clearly explained and reported upon in the Additional SA Report, and helped to inform the Main Modifications Plan. The effects of the Main Modifications against SA10 (Energy efficiency and climate change), have comprehensively been reported upon in the latest SA Report.</p> <p>The consultee's comments on modelling are noted. It is considered that the approach adopted in the SA work remains proportionate and sufficient to be able to come to conclusions of the effects of the Main Modifications Plan on carbon emissions.</p>
<p>Mr Sean Tofts (1250440)</p>	<p>Those matters relating primarily to the SA have been drawn out below. No summary was provided in the consultation response, and given the nature of the comments, these are provided in full.</p> <p>The Principle of splitting the SA into Four Separate Entities</p> <p>Likely the most significant issue that was raised to several of the management team in the NEAs outside of the formal consultation process by myself. The Sustainability Appraisal(s) are flawed in terms of their effectiveness in assessing the likely impact of any strategy within the NEAs by design. That is to say that having 4 distinct sections that are not examined in conjunction undermines the ability of any of them to be substantively assessed as based on sound evidence. It should be noted that there is no precedent for the approach being taken forward by the authorities within the time of the NPPF and a plan being deemed sound. Even if there are plans with a similar context, though the West of England Joint Strategy is the only one that comes to mind, it is the responsibility of the NEAs to illustrate beyond doubt that the four sustainability appraisals (SA) are sufficiently interlinked and being amended to reflect the nature of changes between the Section One Plan and SAs and the apparently corresponding Section Two SAs. The Shared approach is much more compromised in the NEA Section One Plan when compared to any joint planning arrangements elsewhere which generally appear to have had cohesive and holistic examinations including substantive assessment of the SA elements.</p> <p>The examination process to date has not allowed this to happen by design as the Section Two Plans and associated SAs have not and will not be examined within the current Inspectors deliberations. It is seemingly beyond his remit. This leads to the perverse scenario where the inspector is being asked to assess if a spatial strategy that relies heavily on the inclusion of allocations which are not to be assessed by him to be found sound. You can't make an omelette without knowing if you have eggs are fresh to use a simple analogy.</p> <p>For the above reason it is considered that the Plan is fundamentally flawed in its ability to be thoroughly assessed and this is evidenced further by extracts of the latest Section One SA (North Essex Section One Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Proposed Main Modifications). There are multiple points where this is highlighted but examples include the below.</p> <p>"it should be noted that the majority of development will be delivered through Section Two Local Plans, which are subject to separate SA, and have yet to be subject to examination" Paragraph 3.110</p> <p>"Although several negative and/or uncertain effects have been identified, it is not considered that these could be mitigated by changes to the policy wording, given that the intention of the policy is to set out a spatial strategy rather how sustainability matters should be addressed [though the two undeniably are interlinked and dependant upon each other for the spatial strategy to be</p>	<p>It is appreciated that the approach of the NEAs to have a shared Strategic Section One Local Plan, which would act as the first part of individual two part Local Plans is unusual in current approaches to plan making, but not unprecedented.</p> <p>For example, in the past there have been County Structure Plans, Regional Spatial Strategies, and more recently Core Strategies (that still exist) that have been appraised, examined and adopted, with more detailed plans comprising non-strategic site allocations and local issues being dealt with subsequently. Indeed, even now it is not uncommon for there to be three development plan documents: a Core Strategy, a Site Allocations Plan, and a Development Management Policies Plan. These were normally appraised separately, and usually the Core Strategy is prepared and examined first and independently of the other development plan documents. Similarly, with respect to joint plans, in West Northamptonshire, a Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1), which included strategic site allocations, was subject to appraisal, examined and adopted prior to the three individual local authorities (Northampton, South Northamptonshire, Daventry) preparing (and subjecting to appraisal and examination) detailed Part 2 Local Plans, which include non-strategic site allocations.</p> <p>That the Section One Local Plan, and the three Section Two Local Plans, have been accepted for Examination by the Secretary of State suggests that the chosen approach for North Essex is considered to be acceptable by the Planning Inspectorate.</p> <p>With respect to the two examples of text from the SA Report quoted, the Section One Local Plan sets out an overarching strategy, and it is on this basis that it was appraised. It is perfectly reasonable for an overall sub-</p>

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	<p>considered sound]. Instead, the mitigation for such effects is likely [not ensured, or able to be scrutinised sufficiently at this point in time] to be achieved by the application of policies of the Section One Local Plan and Section Two Local Plans. As such no mitigation or recommendations are suggested". Paragraph 3.130</p> <p>The second to last sentence in the above extract is simply incorrect as the onus is fully on the 3 separate yet to be examined Part Two SAs within their example. Hypothetically if just one of the 3 Section Two Local Plans was to be found to be fundamentally unsound in terms of allocations on the basis that the corresponding SA for that plan was not a reasonable route to take forward then the strategy endorsed by the Section One Plan would be found to be flawed. With three separate plans being assessed in a process that is still yet to be decided (by the same inspector as Section One, a new inspector looking at all three plans or 3 different inspectors) the odds are that one will be found unsound on a purely statistical basis. It is also worth noting that the use of potentially four different inspectors really undermines the likelihood that there will be any consistency in approach taken, balance and judgement regardless of the guidance, policies and regulations (predominantly the Procedure Guide for Local Plan Examinations) in place professional judgement is not an exact science and asking 10 individuals an opinion of anything related to planning; you will likely get 11 views. That is to say that the rationale and intent behind decision making as clear as any inspector makes them can be misconstrued in the latter parts of the Local Plan(s) examination.</p> <p>This matter is likely controversial and it is appreciated that if the points raised above are fundamentally correct then it has been overlooked to date however this is not something that bodes well for the future of this particular augmentation of the plan. Notwithstanding this to overlook this issue could lead to a Judicial Review. I suspect that the management teams at the NEAs are aware that this issue could have arisen however as insinuated elsewhere in this response, the Local Plan in delivery, or lack there of to date, has been a juggernaut which no one in the decision making capacity has dared to take a step back and raise their head above the parapet. If this is not the case then I am afraid that it highlights a drastic lack of competence.</p> <p>It is advised that the Councils seek to consider what contingencies can be put in place for any of the eventualities highlighted above as none have been expressed publicly or at the time I was at the NEAs at officer level. This would be the responsible action to take considering the gravity of the ramifications and the resource that has been dedicated to the Local Plan progression.</p> <p>Notwithstanding this if this is an error on my part then I am still of the view that this has been as issue wrongfully overlooked in previous examinations and a precedent for procedural mistakes in former examinations if present is not a good rationale to continue this as a trend.</p> <p>The Lack of Reasonable Alternatives Considered.</p> <p>For various reasons, known and unknown, the alternative strategies that have been assessed through the iterations of the Section One SA have not looked at several reasonable and realistic alternatives that ultimately would amount to more sustainable options than the route that is currently being taken forward.</p> <p>If the matters in the last section of this commentary can in some way be dealt this is the next significant issue that must be contended with publicly to demonstrate that the options being taken forward have been based on sound judgement.</p> <p>Furthermore, as just suggested, if the fundamental issues in the former section of this commentary is found to be reconcilable, then it is sincerely hoped that the solutions proposed in this section are carefully considered by the NEAs. In that instance it is suggested that they put forward to the Inspectorate a new option which is more in line with the NEAs initial ambition for</p>	<p>regional spatial strategy to be appraised (as per a Core Strategy) to the level of detail in that strategy, along with reasonable alternatives, prior to more detailed site allocations to be appraised at the local level. Indeed, even with fully comprehensive Local Plans, it is often the case that an overall spatial strategy is appraised and a preferred strategy selected before individual sites that accord with the preferred strategy are identified and appraised.</p> <p>The second example quotes the appraisal of an individual policy. It would not normally be expected for all mitigation to be in a single policy, not least a spatial strategy policy, but through other policies included for that purpose in the Local Plan – the plan needs to be read as a whole. At the strategic level (being the Section One Local Plan) these 'mitigation' policies, such as Policy SP6 (Place-shaping Principles) have also been appraised, and an appraisal of how all the policies combine (the cumulative effects of the plan as a whole) also appraised in the SA Report (see Chapter 4). This is established practice in SA.</p> <p>The SA has appraised a wide range of strategic sites and spatial strategies. This is evident from the work undertaken in the Additional SA and the Inspector's comments when he considered the adequacy of that SA work, as set out below.</p> <p>With respect to the strategic sites, para 72 of his letter to the NEAs dated 15 May 2020 [IED/022] the Inspector concluded that:</p> <p>"23 alternative strategic sites (including the three GC sites in the Plan) were assessed during the Stage 1 assessment, and most of them were assessed at a range</p>

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	<p>new settlements that are more sustainable than the ad-hoc pseudo-sustainable sprawl that is currently being mandated by the Plan (with no full assessment of this as the last section suggests). In actuality as the onus of the critique of the growth of the NEAs area is currently pushed to the Section Two Plans, to recalibrate this back to new settlements may well be the only way to evidence that the Section One Local Plan is sound. Arguably, the Inspector is currently is no longer being asked to consider the level of detail he once was requested to; East of Colchester isn't in fact a standalone community it amounts to an urban-extension and all but the decision that there is no garden communities is left to the Section Two Plans other than the handed down spatial strategy which as mentioned doesn't assess the matter in sufficient detail.</p> <p>Garden Communities / Transit Orientated New Settlements</p> <p>Circling back to objections on the sustainability appraisal; beyond the one density being tested in the SA the garden communities were not considered in locations that would have been reasonable alternatives. It is contentious locally but the land to the north of Hatfield Peverel is a good contender for a possible garden community. However if this location has been entirely overlooked it is unclear as to why. Hatfield Peverel has been subject to several speculative developments the last 5 years and sadly this could have possibly have been avoided if the prospect of a new settlement to the north of the railway was proposed.</p> <p>Though the land was not submitted through the plan process the NEAs could have considered it for development similarly to other locations which were not put forward by the landowners (The Pearls on a Necklace by CAUSE for instance).</p>	<p>of different sizes. They made up an impressively comprehensive list, and I find no evidence that any strategic site that could have been a reasonable alternative was excluded from it"</p> <p>With respect to the spatial strategies, the Inspector concluded in para 89 of the same letter concluded that:</p> <p>"Taken as a whole, the alternative strategies represent an appropriate range of different ways of delivering the amount of development that is sought, taking appropriate account of my suggestions in IED/011, and I see no basis on which to conclude that any reasonable alternative was excluded from the assessment."</p> <p>Therefore, the range of reasonable strategic sites and spatial strategies subject to SA have been independently examined and found to be sound.</p> <p>With respect to Hatfield Peverel, this was excluded from consideration in the Additional SA because there is a lack of willing landowners at this location, particularly north of the railway line which has no land being promoted at all. This would make an allocation unavailable and undeliverable.</p>
<p>The Wivenhoe Society (Professor Jane Black - 148020)</p>	<p>These comments relate to the section 3 Appraisals of policies SP7 and SP8, in particular tables 3.16 and 3.17.</p> <p>The main concern that the Wivenhoe Society has about the proposed new garden community is the impact this will have on traffic congestion on Clingoe Hill and the A133 through Colchester. We have argued in previous consultations and at the Hearings that the previous versions of the SA did not adequately address this issue. This new proposed main modifications Sustainability Appraisal is no better. Traffic congestion is mentioned in SA objective 7, though there are no appraisal questions relating to this. It is also mentioned in SA objective 8 which contains the associated question 'Does it seek to minimise congestion at key destinations /areas that witness a large amount of vehicle movements at peak times?'. There is no discussion of this assessment question in relation to the proposed Garden Community anywhere in the text. There should be a separate SA objective dealing with congestion issues rather than hiding it amongst other considerations of sustainable transport provision and infrastructure provision. It would not be possible to learn from the SA that the proposed location is immediately adjacent to one of the most congested routes into Colchester.</p> <p>Policies SP7 and SP8, both deal with the proposed new garden community. The scorings for both SA7 and SA8 in the long term are predominantly positive and indeed ++ for SP8. If there has been a separate SA relating to the assessment question quoted above the scores would be much more unfavourable.</p> <p>It is difficult to understand why the scorings for SA8 differ marginally between policies SP7 and SP8 given that both are dealing with the impacts of the same garden community.</p>	<p>The objector considers that there should be a separate SA objective dealing with congestion.</p> <p>However SA Objective 7 of the SA is 'To achieve more sustainable travel behaviour, reduce the need to travel and reduce congestion' and one of the assessment criteria of SA objective 8 is 'Does it seek to minimise congestion at key destinations / areas that witness a large amount of vehicle movements at peak times?'</p> <p>We consider that the issue is sufficiently covered within the SA of the Main Modifications Plan which explains that:</p> <p>"the evidence showed that delivery of the necessary infrastructure in a timely manner was likely. Policy SP7 includes provisions for infrastructure to be provided ahead of or in support of development and as such the effects are considered to be minor positive in the early stages of the development (medium term) and significant positive in the long term. Although there is uncertainty relating to this as the specific phasing of development and infrastructure is to be worked up in future planning policy documents and masterplans, it should be noted that Policy SP5 (Infrastructure and Connectivity) requires the planning consent and funding to be secured prior to planning approval of the Garden Community, which in combination</p>

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		<p>creates sufficient certainty around the effects identified." (para 3.313).</p> <p>The SA does recognise that the Garden Community will result in increased traffic and potentially congestion. It explains that the plan includes road improvements, including a new A120-A133 link road which forms part of the Garden Community proposals, and that these may help to reduce congestion. The SA does also acknowledge that the road improvements could facilitate car travel and cumulatively mixed effects are likely (paras 4.27-4.31).</p> <p>In 2019, proposals to provide infrastructure to support the Garden Community were the subject of a successful Housing Infrastructure Fund bid covering the construction of the A120/A133 Link Road and elements of the RTS. The Link Road will provide additional highway capacity, improve connectivity locally and provide some relief to the existing local road network. The RTS will provide a public transport alternative that is fundamental to the planned modal shift strategy, encouraging the use of more sustainable modes of transport to and from the Garden Community and between other key destinations along the route.</p> <p>Essex County Council (ECC) is leading the delivery of the Housing Infrastructure Fund for the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community. This relates to the A120 / A133 Link Road and Rapid Transit System, and work is progressing to the agreed timetable.</p> <p>For the 120 – A133 Link Road, a preferred route has now been selected following a review of consultation responses, engineering, environmental and design considerations. The route is progressing through preliminary design ahead of ECC submitting a planning application by December 2020. Construction is due to begin in 2022 for a two year period. ECC has appointed contractors to undertake ground investigation works in the vicinity of the A133 and A120 highways and in the fields between these roads so activity on site may now be noticed.</p> <p>Work on developing the RTS continues with current workstreams looking at the following tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route selection • Determining Halt locations and priority measures • Incorporating cycling and walking provision measures along the route

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysing passenger flows and journey times <p>The marginal difference in scores for SA8 (Services and infrastructure) reflects the policy wording for Policy SP7 (Development and Delivery of a New Garden Community in North Essex) and Policy SP8 (Tending / Colchester Borders Garden Community), even though they are dealing the same Garden Community proposal. Policy 7 sets down the principles for planning, designing and delivering the Garden Community, whereas Policy SP8 provides greater detail regarding the services and infrastructure to delivered as part of the Garden Community. For example Policy SP8 explicitly states that the respective phases of development do not come forward until the necessary social, physical and environmental infrastructure is secured, and then goes on to refer specifically to the A120-A133 Link Road, Route 1 of the Rapid Transit System and waste water treatment infrastructure. Hence, Policy SP8 receives a higher score in the medium term than Policy SP7, which is less specific. It is acknowledged in the SA Report there is a degree of uncertainty as to when the infrastructure will actually be delivered.</p>
Colchester Natural History Society (Mr Peter Hewitt - 1146657)	<p>Whilst CNHS welcomes additional survey work pre-development on 'European sites' and RAMS, it is considered vital that the same degree of attention is afforded to locally sensitive sites, including all Local Wildlife Sites. It is critical to the protection of natural habitats and associated biodiversity in the local landscape that thorough due diligence applied to this level of the natural environment too.</p> <p>Recreational behaviour and/or water management processes must not be detrimental to inland water courses such as Salary Brook a biodiversity rich water course and corridor.</p>	Noted. This comment is more appropriately taken into account by the NEAs when implement the Main Modifications Plan. No response regarding the SA is required.
Colchester Natural History Society (Mr Peter Hewitt - 1146657)	It is disappointing that Colchester continues to bear the brunt of development with the unavoidable consequences being detrimental to the natural environment and its biodiversity. Stating that there will be "sensitive integration" with the natural environment is not borne out when the data reveals minimal if any gains for biodiversity despite local and national intentions to achieve much more. There is also an inherent danger in diminishing the role of neighbourhood plans if the inclusion of local democracy in 'future setting' is to be achieved.	Noted. No response required.
Colchester East Action Group (Mr James Marchant - 1146705)	In Policy SP7, principle (i), it is a shame that 'participation' has replaced 'empowerment'.	Noted. No response required.