



Housing Land Supply Statement

Colchester Borough Council's housing land
supply position as of 31st March 2017

June 2017

Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Status of this document | 3 |
| 2. Local context | 4 |
| 3. National policy | 5 |
| 4. Colchester's five year housing land supply position | 7 |
| 6. Monitoring | 9 |
| Appendix – Housing Trajectory | 10 |

1. Status of this document

1.1 This document sets out Colchester's housing land supply position and explains how this position complies with the requirements of national policy and guidance.

1.2 The document represents the current housing land supply position as of 31st March 2017. The relevant five year housing land supply period therefore covers the period between April 2017 and March 2022.

1.3 Due to the nature of housing supply and delivery, this document is considered 'live'. Therefore whilst the information in the document is considered correct in respect of the relevant time period stated, at the date prepared, it is subject to change in light of updates to the housing supply and/or delivery position. Please see Section 6 for more information on monitoring.

2. Local context

2.1 Colchester Borough Council has an adopted Local Plan which consists of its Core Strategy (adopted in 2008 and subject to a Focused Review in 2014), Site Allocations DPD (adopted 2010) and Development Policies DPD (adopted 2008 and reviewed 2014). The Tiptree Jam Factory Plan DPD (2013) also forms part of the development plan. In addition there are two adopted Neighbourhood Plans within Colchester Borough in the form of the Myland and Braiswick Neighbourhood Plan and Boxted Neighbourhood Plan, both of which were adopted in 2016.

2.2 The adopted Local Plan set a housing target of 19,000 new homes between 2001 and 2023 at an annual rate of 830 dwellings per year. Housing delivery over this period has exceeded expectations and the Council has overseen a cumulative surplus of housing delivery between 2001 and 2017 of 939 new homes. Housing delivery in the Borough is therefore considered buoyant.

2.3 The Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan to direct future development and growth in the Borough and allocate sufficient land to meet objectively assessed housing needs over the plan period from 2017 to 2033. As a result of a robust evidence base, the emerging Local Plan sets a housing target of 14,720 over the plan period at an annual rate of 920 dwellings per year. In order to meet this housing target, the new Local Plan allocates additional land to supplement sites already identified and committed for residential development.

2.4 The emerging Local Plan is currently at its Publication Draft stage with public consultation being carried out over summer 2017, and following this, submission to the Secretary of State later in 2017.

3. National policy

3.1 A core principle of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a commitment that planning should be genuinely plan-led and that planning should proactively set out to meet the growth needs of an area. This is re-enforced at paragraph 47 which sets the requirements of local planning authorities to ensure that objectively assessed housing needs are met through the identification of sites.

3.2 Paragraph 47 goes on to require local planning authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing land against their housing requirements. A buffer is required to be added to this five year requirement, the level of which is determined by the local planning authorities' recent housing delivery record: a default 5% buffer is added to ensure choice and competition in the market for land; and in areas where the local planning authority has overseen a persistent under delivery of housing, this is increased to 20%. In both instances the buffer is brought forward from later in the plan period so that the overall housing target in the plan period is not affected.

3.3 For sites to be considered deliverable, footnote 11 of the NPPF states they should:

- be available now;
- offer a suitable location for development now;
- be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years; and
- development of the site is viable.

Sites with planning permission should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that schemes will not be implemented within five years, for example if they will not be viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units permitted or if sites have long term phasing plans.

3.4 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) is clear that planning permission is not a prerequisite for a site being considered deliverable in respect of a five year supply of housing land. For example if there are no significant constraints (e.g. substantial infrastructure requirements, extensive contamination, etc) to overcome, sites without planning permission can be considered capable of being delivered within the five year period.

3.5 Paragraph 48 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities may make an allowance for windfall sites in the five year supply if they have compelling evidence that such sites have consistently become available in the local area and will continue to provide a reliable source of supply. Any allowance should be realistic having regard to historic windfall delivery rates and expected future trends, and should not include residential garden sites.

3.6 Paragraph 49 states that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites.

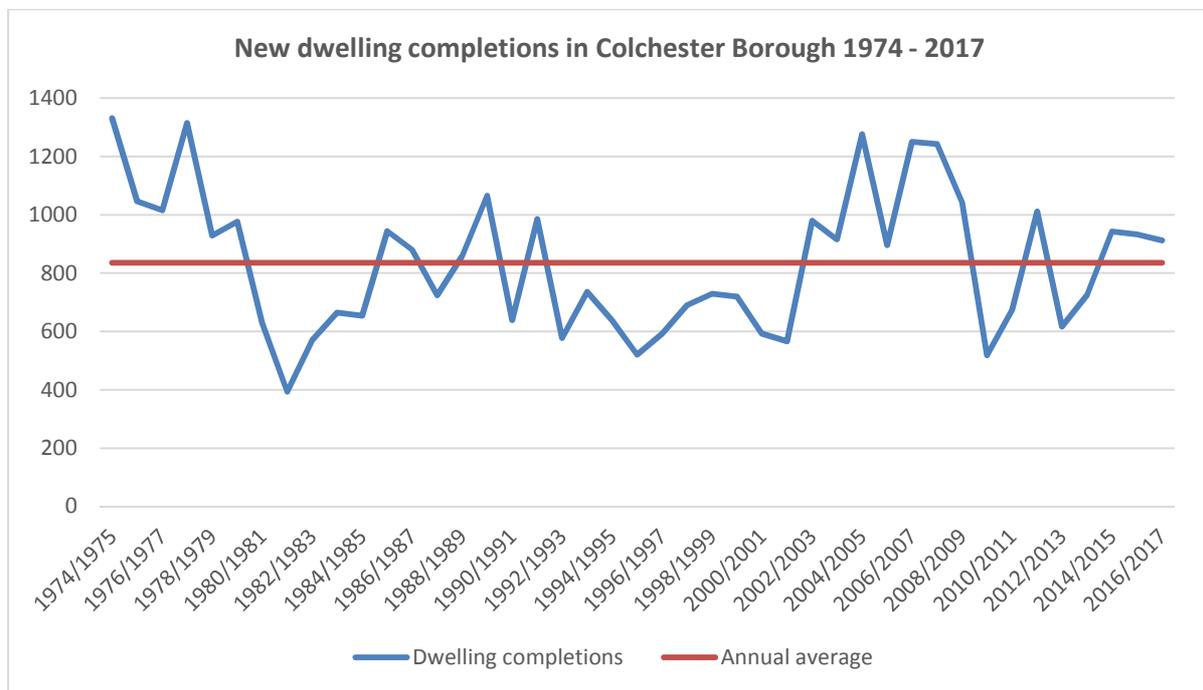
4. Colchester’s five year housing land supply position

4.1 This section sets out Colchester Borough Council’s five year housing land supply position including its justification for the calculation of deliverable sites.

4.2 Colchester’s five year housing land supply is based on an annual housing target of 920. This figure is derived from an objectively assessed housing need study published in 2015 by Peter Brett Associates¹ in full compliance with national guidance. This housing target equates to a requirement to deliver 4,600 new dwellings over a five year period.

4.3 As explained in the previous section, national policy states that where local planning authorities have a record of persistent under delivery of new housing, there is a requirement to apply a 20% buffer to its five year housing requirement. National policy does not define persistent under delivery but it is clear this would mean a prolonged period of under delivery; mere fluctuations in annual delivery, for example caused by adverse market conditions, are not sufficient to warrant the imposition of a 20% buffer.

4.4 The Council has an excellent record of housing delivery over a prolonged period. Since 1974 it has overseen the delivery of almost 36,000 homes at an average rate of 835 new dwellings per year.



¹ Peter Brett Associates on behalf of Braintree District Council, Colchester Borough Council, Chelmsford City Council and Tendring District Council, *Objective Assessed Housing Needs Study* (2015) [available from colchester.gov.uk].

4.5 Since the beginning of current plan period from 2001 to 2023, the Council has exceeded its housing requirements by 939 dwellings, equivalent to an additional year's worth of housing growth, as illustrated in the table below.

| Year | Annual target | Completions per year | Cumulative target | Cumulative completions | Cumulative completions against target |
|---------|---------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2001/02 | 830 | 566 | 830 | 566 | -264 |
| 2002/03 | 830 | 980 | 1660 | 1546 | -114 |
| 2003/04 | 830 | 916 | 2490 | 2462 | -28 |
| 2004/05 | 830 | 1277 | 3320 | 3739 | +419 |
| 2005/06 | 830 | 896 | 4150 | 4635 | +485 |
| 2006/07 | 830 | 1250 | 4980 | 5885 | +905 |
| 2007/08 | 830 | 1243 | 5810 | 7128 | +1318 |
| 2008/09 | 830 | 1028 | 6640 | 8156 | +1516 |
| 2009/10 | 830 | 518 | 7470 | 8674 | +1204 |
| 2010/11 | 830 | 673 | 8300 | 9347 | +1047 |
| 2011/12 | 830 | 1012 | 9130 | 10359 | +1229 |
| 2012/13 | 830 | 617 | 9960 | 10976 | +1016 |
| 2013/14 | 830 | 725 | 10790 | 11701 | +911 |
| 2014/15 | 920 | 943 | 11710 | 12644 | +934 |
| 2015/16 | 920 | 933 | 12630 | 13577 | +947 |
| 2016/17 | 920 | 912 | 13550 | 14489 | +939 |

4.6 As a result of this record of housing delivery, the Council does not consider a persistent under delivery of new housing to have taken place and accordingly a 5% buffer has been applied to the five year housing land supply requirement. Applying the 5% buffer results in a requirement to deliver 965 dwellings a year or 4,825 new dwellings over the five year period.

4.7 As detailed in the housing trajectory (see Appendix A) Colchester has a supply of 5,216 new dwellings over the relevant five year period between April 2017 and March 2022. This equates to a surplus 391 dwellings over the NPPF-compliant requirement of 4,825 (or 616 units above the OAN).

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Annualised objectively assessed housing need (OAHN) | 920 |
| Annualised OAHN plus 5% buffer required by NPPF | 965 |
| OAHN plus 5% buffer required by NPPF over five years | 4,825 |
| Housing supply over five years | 5,216 |
| Total number of years' worth of housing supply ((housing supply) divided by (OAHN plus 5% buffer)) | 5.4 years |

6. Monitoring

6.1 This housing land supply statement and accompanying housing trajectory has been produced based on information from a number of sources to reflect the multifaceted nature of housing supply and delivery.

6.2 In respect of housing supply the principle sources of information are residential planning permissions (including sites undergoing the planning application process, sites benefiting from extant permission, and sites with lapsed permission) and strategic residential allocations contained in the adopted and emerging Local Plans. Future sources of information may include the Brownfield Land Register and any future Strategic Land Availability Assessment.

6.3 Housing delivery information, specifically completion records, is gathered from Local Authority Building Control (LABC) records which are available internally within the Council. In addition to LABC records, a large number of sites are inspected by the National House Building Council (NHBC) which compiles its own records and reports building regulations compliance to Colchester Borough Council.

6.4 Site specific anticipated delivery rates on sites under the control of a developer, land promoter or other such interested party are, wherever possible, gathered through direct contact with those parties. The Council contacts applicants and developers on an annual basis to ensure the information is as accurate as possible.

6.5 The anticipated delivery rates of sites without discernible promotion, or where contact has not been possible, are calculated based on the best judgement of the Council, taking into account whatever site specific information is available. Such sites are rarely included in the 5 year supply, unless there are exceptional circumstances to justify it.

6.6 In addition to these sources, the Council conducts site visits to gauge the progress of residential development sites and verify building control records where they are present, and supplement them where those records are not available.

6.6 Due to the live nature of this document, it is subject to change following any subsequent changes to the housing land supply and housing delivery position. Therefore whilst the published statement is correct at the relevant date stated in the document (31st March 2017), it is subject to change. Future updates will be published on a regular basis to ensure that an accurate representation of the Council's land supply position is available to interested stakeholders.

Appendix – Housing Trajectory

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