

Response to Policy NC1 of the Preferred Options

Colchester Local Plan 2017-2033

Response on behalf of the Economic Growth Section of Colchester Borough Council to Policy NC1: North Colchester and Severalls Strategic Economic Area

Policy NC1 allocated part of the Rugby Club site at Mill Road for approximately 150 dwellings and states “Development of the site will provide approximately 150 new dwellings”. It is considered that this number of houses is too low for the size of the site and Policy NC1 should be revised to provide 300 dwellings as a minimum with no maximum housing numbers stated. The site needs to be considered in the context of the Northern Gateway redevelopment rather than the surrounding suburban development which the site will be physically separated from by the new village green area. The current masterplan proposes a boulevard from NAR3 through the Zone 1 sites to the west and into the site allocated as housing. In addition the site will share a landscape and public realm scheme with the rest of the Northern Gateway. In essence the site will form a new residential neighbourhood within the wider Northern Gateway and needs to achieve its own identity which a larger and denser scheme is able to provide.

Given the above it is considered that it would be more appropriate if this site was developed as a higher density, urban form development which would support a minimum of 300 dwellings in up to five storey blocks, possibly higher on a strategic corner site. This level of housing will provide the quantum required to give the new neighbourhood its own distinct character and allow for a high quality urban development. The policy should also state that the site is suitable for specialised high density accommodation. Paragraph 58 of the National Planning Policy Framework encourages development to create a sense of place as well as optimising the potential of sites to accommodate development. A denser development optimises use of the land and will permit the creation of the generous public community space that is proposed in both the Neighbourhood Plan and the Master Plan.

The wider Northern Gateway development, particularly the highway infrastructure, has improved the sustainability and accessibility of the area and high density development will reflect the fact that this is an urban site with good access to the town centre, plus significant leisure and sports facilities in very close proximity.