



# District Councillor Monthly Report

## Lawford, Manningtree & Mistley

### September / October 2020

#### PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE – WHITE PAPER 2020

You will be aware that The Government released its '[Planning White Paper](#)' on 6 August 2020 for consultation, the consultation closes 29 October 2020.

The Government has stated that, “..this is the most radical reform of the planning system ever.”

The attached link takes you directly to the White Paper, but I've found that it is full of glossy pictures of buildings and smiling politicians and contains a great many repetitions. Therefore, I have asked the TDC Corporate Director with responsibility for Planning, to assist me to provide some simple points from the document.

Below are some initial bullet points, but things are changing and will change again with the Local Government Review.

#### Overview:

The White Paper emphasises the importance of the planning system and its central role in providing more homes; aiding economic recovery; improving design; combating climate change; improving biodiversity; and supporting sustainable growth.

There are five main proposals.

1. Streamline the planning process with more democracy taking place more effectively at the plan-making stage. Local plans will be simplified and will focus on identifying land under three categories:
  - **Growth Areas** - suitable for substantial development, and where outline approval for development would be automatically secured for forms and types of development specified in the Plan – this could include new homes, hospitals, schools, shops and offices.
  - **Renewal Areas** - proposals will be given “permission in principle”, subject to basic checks, largely on urban and brownfield sites.

- **Protection Areas** - Preserving protected areas like the green belt, national parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty and conservation areas.

Under the proposals, planning applications based on pre-approved design codes would receive automatic planning approval within designated zones. Engagement is front loaded to the local plan stage and would **remove decision making by local authorities and the ability of local communities to comment on development proposals.**

**Changes to Local Plans:**

Local Plans should set clear rules rather than general policies for development. They will be more focused, identify site and area specific requirements (such as land use, height, density) and will be supported by locally produced design codes. **Local Plans are to be in place within 30 months of the new system “going live”**

The government wants to reduce the detail and duplication contained in Local Plans and is encouraging a much greater focus on design quality at the local level. **If a scheme meets the requirements and design code, it will automatically receive permission.**

**Community engagement:**

The government wants a new emphasis on engagement at the plan-making stage and will “streamline” the opportunity for **consultation at the planning application stage.** The move to a zonal system reduces the possibility for public input and democratic accountability. **The proposed reforms would give only one opportunity for democratic oversight, when the local plan and design code is first prepared.** This could be many years in advance of particular schemes being given the green light.

**Digitisation of plan making:**

Local Plans should be visual and map-based, standardised, based on the latest digital technology, and supported by a new standard template.

**Enforcement will be strengthened:**

**There are no details yet on how this would be achieved....!**

2. A radical, digital-first approach to modernise the planning process. This means moving from a process based on documents to a process driven by data. The government wants to see local planning authorities using digital tools (and visualisations) to support a new civic engagement process for Local Plans and decision-making, making it easier for people to understand what is being proposed and its likely impact.
3. The White Paper seeks to bring a new focus to design and sustainability

### Climate change and energy efficiency:

There is an emphasis on ensuring the planning system supports climate change goals and maximises environmental benefits. The government wants to facilitate ambitious **improvements in the energy efficiency standards for buildings and all new homes will need to be 'zero carbon ready', with no new homes delivered under the new system needing to be retrofitted in order to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050.**

### Beautiful places:

The White Paper emphasises the need for development to be beautiful, and to create a 'net gain' not just 'no net harm', with a greater focus on 'placemaking' and 'the creation of beautiful places'. **There is limited detail on what this would actually mean in practice.**

### Changes to assessing environmental impacts:

There will be a "quicker, simpler framework" for assessing environmental impacts and enhancement opportunities, that **speeds up** the process **while protecting** and enhancing unique ecosystems. **This seems to me to be dangerously contradictory.**

### Importance of design codes:

Design codes will need to support local plans and will be prepared locally. These should be based on community involvement rather than "meaningless consultation". Codes will be more binding on planning decisions.

### National design body:

**The government will establish a new body to support the delivery of design codes in every part of the country** and give permanence to the campaigning work of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission.

### Chief officer for design and placemaking:

Each local planning authority will need to designate a **chief officer for design and place-making**, to help ensure there is the capacity and capability locally to raise design standards and the quality of development.

### Historic environment:

Historic buildings and areas will continue to be protected "while ensuring the consent framework is fit for the 21st century". **(Whatever that means?)**

4. Improve infrastructure delivery in all parts of the country and ensure developers play their part, through reform of developer contributions

Section 106 Agreements and CIL to be abolished:

The reforms would see Section 106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy abolished and replaced with a new nationally set Infrastructure Levy that will be a fixed proportion of the value of the development, above a set threshold. (But will this deliver benefits at a truly local level?)

Local authorities (which are likely to be a very different structure) will be given greater powers to determine how developer contributions are used, including by expanding the scope of the Levy to cover affordable housing provision to allow local planning authorities to drive up the provision of affordable homes. No details are given as to how this would take place.

5. Ensure more land is available for the homes and development people and communities need, and to support renewal of our town and city centres

New nationally set housing numbers:

The government will set housing requirements for each local planning authority nationally to be delivered through their Local Plans. The government is still committed to delivering 300,000 homes annually, and one million homes over the Parliamentary term.

Proposed new nationally set housing numbers

Essex LPA	Average delivery (last 3 years)	Current standard method	Proposed new standard method
Basildon	364	1,001	820
Braintree	439	857	776
Brentwood	191	453	393
Castle Point	160	654	386
Chelmsford	1,089	946	1,557
Colchester	1,045	1,078	1,612
Epping Forest	380	953	868
Harlow	432	473	442
Maldon	250	308	623
Tendring	713	*866	1,141
Rochford	226	360	586
Uttlesford	666	1,145	1,122
TOTAL	5,955	9,094	10,326

\*The Tendring Local Plan is in progression and consultation begins on the latest phase on the 27<sup>th</sup> August. Acceptance of (Part One), would most likely see our District Housing Allocation revised back to the 550 level. It is vitally

important therefore that the Tendring Local Plan is accepted in full before the end of 2021. **See Below message from TDC:**

*Residents across North Essex are being given the chance to have their say on the proposed changes to the joint parts of the local plans for Braintree, Colchester and Tendring made by the Planning Inspector.*

*Following his public inspection of the council's joint plans, which centred around three garden communities in North Essex, the Inspector recommended some key modifications to the proposals before he can find the section 1 local plan sound.*

*Now residents will be able to have their say on his changes to the draft plan, during a six-week consultation running from **Thursday 27th August** until 5 pm on the **9 October 2020**.*

*The government-appointed Planning Inspector, who examined the joint part of Braintree, Colchester and Tendring councils' Local Plan, has said the plan can be made sound and the proposed **Garden Community on the Tendring/Colchester Border can proceed**, but two others should be removed.*

*The Inspector, Roger Clews, said in a letter to the North Essex Authorities (NEAs) that he agreed the garden communities could be supported in principle and the policies in the plan rightly set high standards for delivery and infrastructure. However, he said the Colchester/Braintree Borders and West of Braintree Garden Community proposals were not, in his view, deliverable.*

*The inspector gave the authorities two options. **Option one** is to propose and consult on main modifications to **remove the Colchester / Braintree Borders and West of Braintree Garden Community proposals from the Plan**; or two, to withdraw the Whole Plan from examination. **The NEAs have collectively agreed to take option one and proceed to consultation.***

*Among the other modifications the Inspector has put forward are: steps mitigating the impact on wildlife; managing any potential flood risk; allocating land in the garden community to accommodate expansion of the University of Essex, and that planning consent and funding approval for the A120-133 link road and rapid transit system is secured before planning approval is granted for any development forming part of the garden community.*

***Several of his recommendations were put forward by the NEAs themselves, last year.***

*All three councils have agreed to go out and consult on the Inspector's proposed changes on his behalf. All the responses made to the consultation will be given to the Inspector, to enable him to make his final decision.*

***Cllr Nick Turner, Chairman of Tendring District Council's Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee, said: "Once this consultation has concluded the Inspector will analyse the responses before hopefully declaring our Section One Local Plan sound, modified as he has indicated. The NEAs can then move on to examination of their individual parts of their Local Plans."***

**To view the consultation and to make comments, visit <https://www.braintree.gov.uk/NEAMMS1>.**

### **Local Government Reform**

**A White Paper (Devolution and Recovery) is expected in the autumn. However Local Authority Chief Executives have been meeting with Ministers over the last few weeks, in the hope of learning more. The below is a sample of what has initially come from those meetings. Clearly this is still early in process and things are likely to change or be enhanced.**

- County Boundaries will be maintained.**
- The County/District Structure is likely to change to a system of Unitary Authorities. This could well see amalgamations of current authorities in Essex, potentially with elected Mayors.**
- Parish Councils may well have greater powers and responsibilities, but only where they are capable of assuming those tasks. Amalgamations of Parish Councils is under consideration.**
- Authorities to be based on recognised communities, but not crossing County Boundaries.**

**An independent report commissioned and published on the 28<sup>th</sup> August 2020 by the County Councils Network (CCN) has shown evidence that replacing 213 local councils with 25 new local authorities could save £2.94bn over five years.**

**The merging of district and county councils in a mid-sized county area could save £126m for that council over five years.**

**This report comes ahead of the publication of the Government's Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper.**

**Clearly any new Local Government Structure will impact on the Planning System going forward, as the Local Planning Authority is likely to be very different.**

## Local Planning

### **(1) Anchor Public House (20/00662/FUL)**

At the request of Mistley Parish Council I have 'called-in' this application. It is not expected before the Planning Committee before October.

### **(2) Land South of Long Road Lawford (20/00782/OUT)**

Mistley Parish Council Clerk has submitted an objection to this application.

As requested by Mistley PC the Lawford Clerk communicated with the Lawford PC Planning Committee and Council Chairman; however, they did not request the application be included on the full agenda of the council on the 17<sup>th</sup> August and I have not been requested by Lawford PC to 'call-in' the application.

### **(3) Communication from Alan Coley to Mistley Parish Council (27.08.2020),**

**"As you are aware Tendring Farms Ltd (City & Country) have secured Planning Consent (on Appeal) to build 485 dwellings on land at the rear of Mistley Manor, between Long Road and Clacton Road. The Reserved Matters for the next phase (185 dwellings) has yet to be submitted.**

It is the intention of your District Councillors to attempt a dialogue with the management of Tendring Farms, in an attempt to in some way influence the future design and facilities in this phase. It is our pragmatic view that the time for opposition has ended and the sensible way forward is to attempt a meaningful discussion with the developer.

To this end, we will be suggesting to Tending Farms that the below be considered when formulating their application for Reserved Matters.

Contemporary Designs to include:

- Triple Glazing
- Solar Roof Panels or Solar Tiles

In order to maximise the effectiveness of Solar Panels, buildings should have a strong southerly aspect and for the south side of pitched roofs to be rectilinear and uncluttered. Dormer Windows, hipped roofs and corner tower elements should be confined to the northern side of pitched roofs.

- Air Source Heating Systems or
- Ground Source Heating Systems
- Super Insulation (walls and loft void)
- Rainwater Capture Systems

In order to reduce the carbon emissions in the wider community developers should also provide the following:

- Electric Vehicle Rapid Charging Points (a household or an adequate communal facility)

- **Superfast Broadband and a flexible space designed within each home to allow a temporary Home Office to be provided. This will allow for efficient home working, thereby reducing the carbon impact of travel.**
- **A Tree Planting Scheme of sufficient size to contribute towards Carbon Capture.**
- **Wildlife supporting structures, such as ‘Swift Bricks’ incorporated into some buildings.**
- **Sufficient Communal Recreational and Play Space within the development, reducing the need to travel for exercise.**

**We would be interested in any comment, or additions, Mistley Parish Councillors have regarding these suggestions.”**

**Kind Regards**

**Alan Coley - District Councillor**

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**01 September 2020**

**District Report on Behalf of:  
Alan Coley, Carlo Guglielmi & Val Guglielmi**

**In an emergency which requires TDC’s assistance residents can contact the council’s Control Centre on 01255 222022, available 24/7.**

**General Information: If anyone witnesses any fly tipping occurring, please contact TDC’s Waste Management Team on 01255 686768.**