

Wivenhoe Society

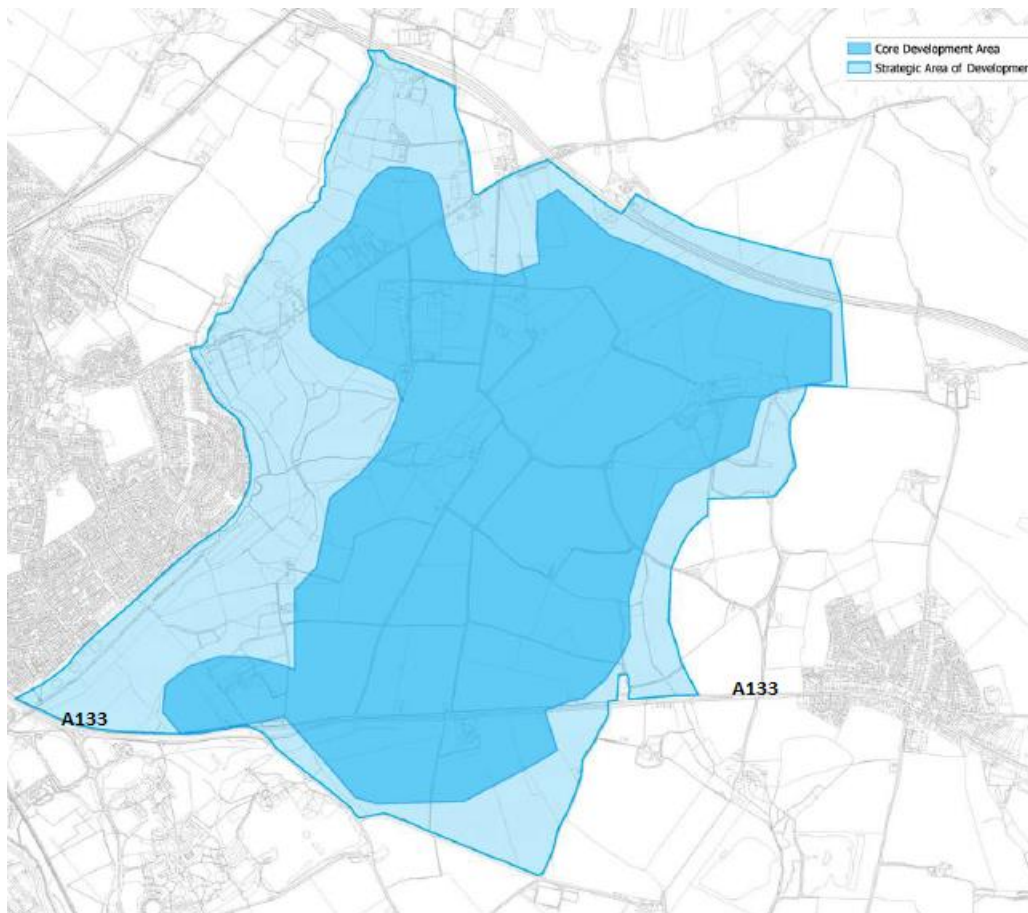
Hearing statement relating to matter 6 and matter 8

The Inspector poses the following question for matter 6

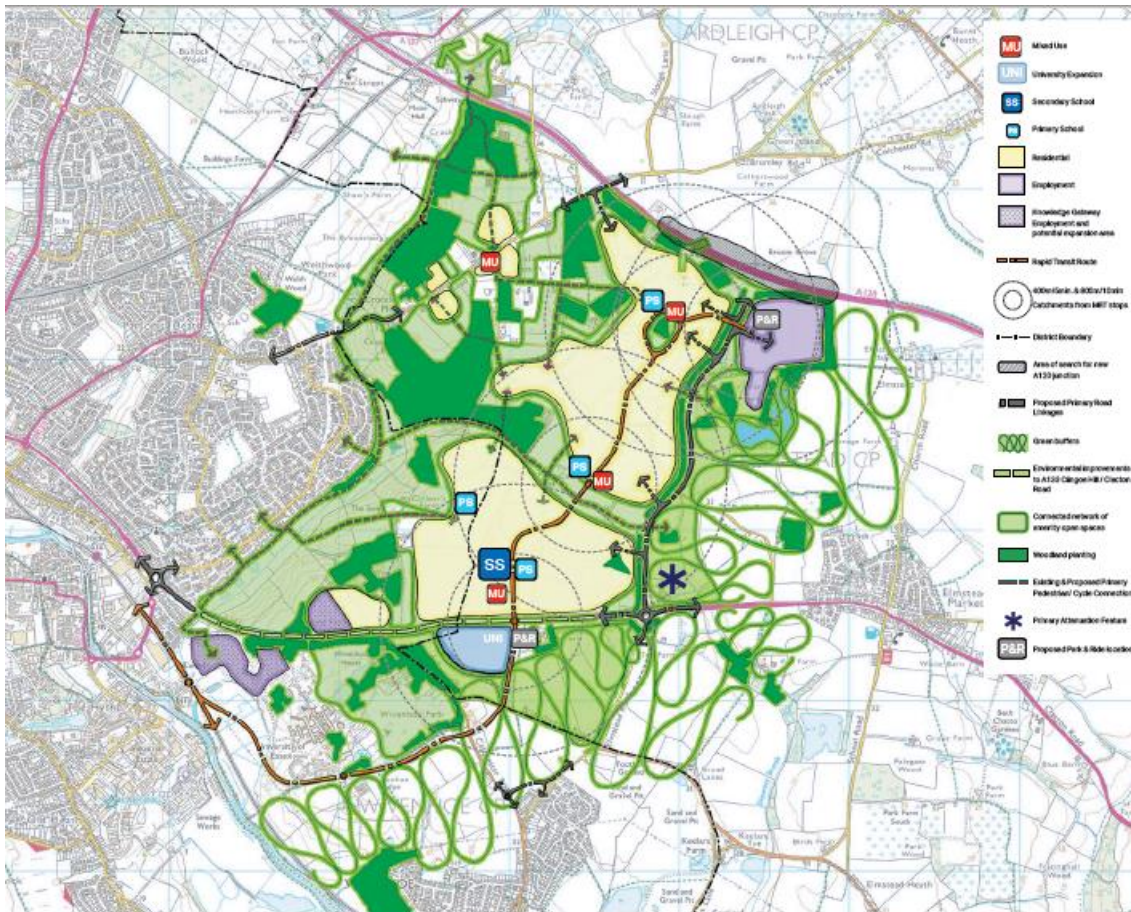
4) Are the locations for the proposed garden communities and any associated green buffers adequately and accurately identified on the Policies Maps? Should they be more, or less, clearly defined?

In its response to Policy SP2 the Wivenhoe Society argued *“Without any defined proposed boundaries for the communities there is insufficient information to comment on their sustainability and impact. Much more detail on the garden communities should be provided before Part I of the Plan can be judged to be sound”*. Since the consultation on the Local Plan a further consultation is being undertaken on the various proposed garden communities which gives insight into the current thinking about the boundaries of these communities. This was not available at the time the Society responded to the Local Plan consultation. See <https://braintree-consult.objective.co.uk/portal/negc/> .

Our comments here relate to the proposed community nearest to Wivenhoe, the Tendring Colchester Garden Community. The proposals show the site straddling the A133



More detailed proposals are shown in the following map.



This latter plan shows use of some land south of the A133 for University expansion – academic buildings, student residences and possible sports provision but does not show any housing to the south. The suggested housing total is 7,529. However in the supporting text the following statement is made:

The Concept Framework for TCBGC has shown capacity for development in the middle of the target range for the eventual number of households and population. It is considered that the site could deliver up to 9,000 homes (as referenced in the draft policy). This would involve amendments to the spatial option as presented that would consider enlargements to and/or additional development parcels and review of approaches to density across parts of the site. The upper target would require residential development south of the A133 which has been resisted by local stakeholders. Commitment to delivery at that scale will provide the justification for the level of investment required over the long-term.

Land for housing south of the A133 seems to have crept into the proposals at quite a late date. It was not identified in the Tendring Strategic Housing Land Assessment (2014).

Any housing south of the A133 would make a mockery of the garden settlement principles. Having part of the settlement separated from the remainder by a dual carriageway, which is one of the two main links between Tendring and Colchester, is not consistent with the idea

of creating a new, partially, self sufficient community. It is also not consistent with the statement in policy SP8:

Clear separation will be maintained between the new garden community and the nearby villages of Elmstead Market and Wivenhoe.

The boundary of the site shown in the first attachment is only some 500 metres from the nearest point of the boundary of the Wivenhoe settlement area. People living in new dwellings to the south of the A133 would be likely to consider they lived in Wivenhoe and would look to Wivenhoe for facilities and services.

The current consultation proposals show land for University expansion to the south of the A133. This would not be well connected with the existing campus as it lies to the east of the main spine road out of Wivenhoe, which is already congested at peak times, and is not close to other academic buildings or the Knowledge Gateway being separated from them by both Colchester road and Wivenhoe Park, which has listed status. If land for University expansion is appropriately dealt with as part of the garden settlement then this should be to the north of the A133 close to any Knowledge Gateway expansion, accessed from a point opposite the existing junction to the Knowledge Gateway and the University campus off Clinghoe Hill (which has the merits of a traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing). Our view is therefore that, for sustainability, the southern boundary for all development should be the A133 with a clearly defined associated green buffer between the new settlement and Wivenhoe. If for viability 9,000 dwellings are required and the area to the north of the A133 is not sufficient for this number then the location should be judged to be unviable.

Matter 8 *The Tendring / Colchester Borders proposed garden community (policy SP8)*

The inspector poses the following question for matter 8:

21) What evidence is there to demonstrate that the Tendring / Colchester Borders proposed garden community is capable of delivering a total of 7,000 to 9,000 dwellings?

The comments made above are also relevant to question (21) in Matter 8. If development (including expansion of the University of Essex campus) is restricted to land to the north of the A133 then reaching a target number of 7,000 could be possible. The average housing density proposed in the consultation document is 38.3 dwellings per hectare so the average garden size will be small. While there appears to be a generous amount of open space the so-called garden settlement will be deficient in private garden space. It is doubtful, from the evidence provided in the current consultation document, that 9,000 dwellings could be delivered. A target of 9,000 would require even higher densities and use of land to the south of the A133. This is not consistent with the vision of a garden settlement or with the provisions in policy SP8 for a clear separation between the settlement and Wivenhoe.

Jane Black, for the Wivenhoe Society

