



Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan

Vision and Objectives

Vision

Our proposed Vision and Objectives for the years leading to 2032 and beyond (in line with Colchester's Local Plan) is:

Wivenhoe will continue to be a thriving and vibrant community which protects and enhances its distinctive character, rich heritage and natural assets such as the river and its rural setting and will grow to be an even better place in which to live and to visit.

Where the needs of Wivenhoe's community can only be met by building new dwellings and community infrastructure it must be done sensitively, over time, by adding homes that will generally complement existing housing stock

This and any other essential building growth, must acknowledge the concerns of Wivenhoe residents about the ability of present infrastructure to cope as traffic and roads, medical and educational facilities, which must be a constraint on substantial development.

Objectives

In order to achieve this vision for Wivenhoe, the Neighbourhood Plan needs to pursue a number of objectives many of which will become policies in the Plan, and that will guide and in some cases control any future development.

The following principal objectives have been defined by the 8 Working Groups and agreed by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee at its meeting on the 4th March 2015. They are shown below together with their associated amplifying sub-objectives and action proposals.

These objectives and their following statements will eventually lead to Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan (Note: These policies are yet to be written).

Objective 1 – Conserve and enhance Wivenhoe’s heritage assets and to protect and improve positive features which contribute to the townscape

- (1) To increase the level of protection of buildings in the Conservation Area and to extend the Conservation Area
- (2) To improve the street scene in the conservation area by removing street clutter and telegraph poles and ensuring street furniture and lighting is appropriate to a conservation area
- (3) The Quay area should become a focal community heritage space
- (4) The Goods Shed should be repaired and put to use and the area around the station improved
- (5) Any infill or redevelopment of existing sites should be of an appropriate scale to blend with existing properties in their neighbourhood
- (6) The design features of existing estates should be preserved where these make a positive contribution to the townscape
- (7) Existing gardens which contribute positively to the townscape should be protected and existing gardens should only be subdivided to provide building plots provided the scale of new dwellings and garden plot sizes are in keeping with the properties in the immediate neighbourhood
- (8) Existing green open spaces within the settlement boundary are of community value and development will not be permitted on those particular spaces.
- (9) Community action should be encouraged to promote the cleanliness of the settlement area and to reduce litter.
- (10) Trees within the urban setting should be protected and further planting encouraged.

Objective 2 – Maintain Wivenhoe’s rural setting

- (1) Wivenhoe’s identity as a separate town/village must be preserved with a clear ‘green’ break between the University (on both sides of Colchester Road) and the Wivenhoe settlement area, and with a clear break between Wivenhoe and Alresford¹.
- (2) There should be a presumption against development on land presently zoned as coastal protection belt².
- (3) Land with much-appreciated and valued vistas from and towards Wivenhoe should be protected³.
- (4) The landscape and rural quality of Wivenhoe environs are to be maintained with trees and wooded planting along both sides of the A133 from Greenstead roundabout to Wivenhoe.

Objective 3 – Preserve and improve access to green spaces, countryside and the river

- (1) Create new footpaths and cycle-tracks through open spaces to increase accessibility and recreational enjoyment of the natural environment surrounding the residential area of Wivenhoe
- (2) Create additional green spaces for people and wildlife
- (3) Public access to the river will be maintained or improved for low-impact leisure use of the riverbank to conserve wildlife habitats and countryside

1 This is supported by views expressed in the survey as well as CBC policy ENV1 - Protect and enhance Colchester’s natural and historic environment, countryside and coastline. This and other policies can be found in the Colchester Borough Council’s Local Development Framework Core Strategy document Core. See <http://www.colchester.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=16187&p=0>

2 This is supported by voting preferences about sites in the WNP survey conducted December 2013 and views expressed about the value placed on the river and riverside walks. Relevant Colchester Borough policies are DP 23 and CS ENV1

3 No specific question was asked about this in the WNP survey. See the Blandford report commissioned by Colchester Borough Council in 2006 - <http://www.colchester.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=5477&p=0> CBC policy CS ENV1 is relevant.

Objective 4 – Ensure new residential development meets the needs of the local community

- (1) New housing must be spread across several locations. Small developments will be preferred to larger ones.⁴
- (2) Development should be sited to allow easy pedestrian and cycle access to the rest of the Wivenhoe settlement area and should ideally be within 400 metres of a bus stop.⁵
- (3) Sites and types of development which will not lead to a significant increase in peak hour traffic on already busy roads as Rectory Road and the Avenue are to be preferred.⁶
- (4) Any new housing development must complement existing house types rather than just add to existing house stock
- (5) New housing development should meet specific needs for size, type and price
- (6) Wivenhoe residents should automatically be given priority for social rented accommodation.
- (7) There is a strong preference for the following types of additional homes:
 - one or two bedroomed properties at affordable prices, for single occupants of any age, or young couples, for sale on the open market or for rent, these homes could be:
 - flats or apartments
 - starter homes
 - an increased range of homes suited for older people and recognising changing lifestyles: strong preference will be given to homes suited for:
 - active people over 55 years (without young children) that is preferably built to the HAPPI standard as a minimum and ideally to a Life-Time Homes standard
 - older persons potentially needing assistance to live independently which would include sheltered housing groups.
 - a residential care home for people unable to live independently with priority given to Wivenhoe residents (Note: This will include people suffering from dementia and other medical conditions who need close care and that without such an existing facility in Wivenhoe already will need to leave family and friends to be looked after in a suitable place somewhere else).
- (8) Gardens should be appropriate to the type of dwelling proposed. This may mean that for some types of dwellings such as apartments and flats, or for older people, there may not be any garden or gardens that could be provided under a service arrangement.
- (9) Adequate parking for all cars, motor-cycles and mobility scooters of adult occupants and their visitors to be provided on-site so that people are not tempted to leave their vehicles on the public highway.
- (10) Where flats are proposed, adequate provision for safe storage of bicycles must be included.
- (11) Ensure that there is adequate refuse and recycling storage incorporated into any building scheme to minimise visual impact.
- (12) Any development of family-type housing must prove that there is adequate educational and medical provision within the WNP area before they will be considered.
- (13) A proportion of new homes should be available on an affordable-rental basis and that preference for such properties must be given to people already living in the WNP area
- (14) Ensure properties take advantage of energy-efficient means such as solar-powered panels for energy production.
- (15) Any new development should:
 - be of high architectural value and construction and operation.

⁴This is supported by views expressed in the survey.

⁵ Refer National Planning Policy Framework plus also supported by CBC policies CS TA1 and TA2

⁶ Opinion expressed in survey and Colchester Borough policy CS TA1 is relevant

- should have sustainability and environmental considerations as fundamental criteria.
- be to the standard of Code Level 6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes (Note: Neighbourhood Plans can no longer force this criterion since March 2015).
- other than 'starter homes' for young families, meet the criteria for the Lifetime Homes Standard.
- design should incorporate flexibility, some with potential for future expansion or alteration for lifetime living.
- styled to complement and respect existing dwelling types in the vicinity
- use good quality materials that complement the existing palette of materials used within the area
- promote high quality interior spaces and light
- incorporation of space and facilities conducive for working from home will be encouraged
- self-build and shared-equity projects will be encouraged
- provide additional community benefits in the WNP area

Objective 5 - Development will only be supported when it is proposed in conjunction with sustainable transport solutions.

(1) Sites and types of development are to be preferred which will not lead to a significant increase in peak hour traffic on already busy roads as Rectory Road and the Avenue.⁷

(2) A contribution will be expected from any additional development that will ease existing traffic congestion through sustainable improvements to public transport and cycle, pedestrian and mobility access.

(3) Seek means to improve the flow of traffic on Wivenhoe's main roads and measures to mitigate existing traffic congestion on the busiest routes through the town.

(4) Create an enhanced network of footpaths and cycle-ways throughout Wivenhoe for both health and leisure use as well as to increase connectivity to places of work as Colchester and the University.

(5) Such footpaths and cycle-ways need to be maintained and monitored, and clearly designated to avoid conflict of use.

(6) The promotion of sustainable alternatives to car use are vital to ensure that Wivenhoe residents can move around safely and that the character and quality of life in Wivenhoe as well as environmental quality are protected for all residents as the town grows.

(7) Future development in Wivenhoe will depend on promoting and increasing the provision of practical sustainable alternatives to car use and growth of road traffic. New development which increases demand on the town's roads without such measures to manage car use and reduce the impact of traffic will not be supported by the community.

Objective 6 – Protect and improve existing community facilities and negotiate additional facilities in consequence of new development.

(1) Contributions (cash or land) toward new or additional community and cultural facilities through new development will be expected in each case in order to improve high quality recreational and well-being for residents of Wivenhoe.

(2) Such community benefits can include:

a. green open spaces

b. community facilities eg a Community Hall with Youth Club provision (Note: This is more pressing with the loss the Phillip Road Centre)

⁷ Opinion expressed in the WNP survey and Colchester Borough Council policy CS TA1 is relevant

- c. children's play areas
- d. sports pitches
- e. allotments
- f. cemetery
- g. footpaths and cycle tracks

(3) Benefits from rival uses for a site, such as playing fields, open space, cemetery and allotments, must be assessed when judging suitability for housing use.⁸

(4) A new traditional cemetery will be sought within the WNP area and in addition a woodland site should be considered as an adjunct to traditional burials.

(5) Space for new allotments will be sought within the WNP area

(6) Provision of new play areas for very young as well as for older children will be sought in any development of more than [25] houses

(7) Wivenhoe needs a larger community hall for some events and activities than presently exists.

(8) There is a case also for a multifunctional community hall in the northern part of the Wivenhoe residential area to service the needs of people living in upper Wivenhoe.

(9) Existing community facilities should be preserved unless there is a pressing reason to close them. This includes buildings such as halls, churches, pubs and other meeting places whether privately or publicly owned and also open space the use of which is enjoyed by the public.

(10) Existing community facilities as listed in the audit of community facilities in the appendix should be retained and enhanced. Redevelopment of such facilities will only be supported if:

- An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, building or land to be surplus to requirements
- The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location
- The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss

Objective 7 – Ensure Wivenhoe's infrastructure is adequate to meet the need of its residents

(1) Ensure adequate health and well-being facilities (GP surgery and District nurses, dental practices, other health workers as home-care assistants) for Wivenhoe's population at 2014 levels which are already under pressure, before new homes are constructed.

(2) Enhance communications connectivity through environmentally and visually acceptable means in keeping with a historic setting (some local residents suffer poor mobile reception in many parts of Wivenhoe, other issues might arise as technology develops in the next 20 years.)

5.8 Objective 8 – Protect and foster Wivenhoe's natural environment for the benefit of people, flora and wildlife

(1) Land that is environmentally important for nature conservation should be protected (Indirect evidence in survey from comments in the countryside section.⁹

(2) Establish new or additional areas of woodland as wildlife habitats throughout the WNP area to complement the existing Colne Nature Reserve and to ensure that Wivenhoe be generally considered a rural area.

(3) Seek Woodland TPO status with appropriate tree wardens for all existing and new pocket areas of woodland in the WNP area to elevate their level of protection and importance to the value of visual amenity and wildlife habitats

⁸ There was support in the WNP survey for more open space, a cemetery etc. Colchester Borough Council policies DP15 and CS PR1 are relevant

⁹ Colchester Borough policies DP21, DP20, CS ENV1 are relevant

- (4) Encourage new tree plantings to create more wildlife habitats and improve the air quality.
- (5) Existing wild-life habitats should be protected and additional places also protected where wild-life can flourish undisturbed in natural habitats that enhance the rural countryside in and around the Wivenhoe neighbourhood plan area including the river and its banks which contributes enormously to the character of Wivenhoe.
- (6) Establish a new Country Park to include the Salary Brook Nature Reserve (Note: It is likely that CBC would not be willing to establish a Country Park without an endowment fund being established to help fund its future maintenance).

Objective 9 – Create more employment opportunities for local people

- (1) Create more local employment opportunities through support for:
 - Existing local businesses (retail and other types)
 - A new site for small commercial units
 - Better promotion and marketing of Wivenhoe as a destination for visitors and as potential users of Wivenhoe’s shops and businesses.
 - Encourage development of the Knowledge Gateway as a place for new businesses to form and grow in a sustainable way

Objective 10 – Foster a more engaged relationship with the University of Essex

- (1) Support the growth of the University within the campus area and the Knowledge Gateway business park.
- (2) Any University development must include plans to cut car use in order to lessen traffic on Clingoe Hill, Greenstead roundabout and Colchester Road.
- (3) Developments affecting Wivenhoe put forward by the University without pre-application consultation with Wivenhoe Town Council will not be supported.
- (4) WTC should develop the relationship between Wivenhoe and the University, creating mutually beneficial links in terms of cultural, educational and leisure activities.