

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Neighbourhood Plan Objectives and Policies – Supporting Evidence

Introduction

1. The version of the Neighbourhood Plan (v29) for Eight Ash Green, submitted to Colchester Borough Council (CBC) under Regulation 15, set out the Context, Intent and Rationale for all of the Objectives and Policies as appropriate. V26 of the Plan, distributed earlier for comment as part of the six week, 42 days Regulation 14 consultation process, also set out all the *Supporting Evidence* for each of these Objectives and Policies. The latter, coupled with numerous other pieces of background detail, resulted in a very large document of 115 pages.

2. Following modification of the Plan, taking account both of the responses to the Regulation 14 consultation (where the Objectives and Policies themselves did not change) and those of an independent Planning Consultant, v29 of the Neighbourhood Plan was prepared and was formally submitted to CBC, by way of Regulation 15, for validation and agreement on 17th September 2018.

3. Subsequently, some tidying up of NPv29 has taken place following advice from CBC resulting in a revised version NPv30.

4. Still at this “submission” stage, the Plan now needs to focus on the essential details of what the proposed Objectives and Policies contain. It is neither necessary nor desirable for the Plan document itself to contain all the supporting evidence and other background detail gathered in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan as this information has already been in the public domain. The added advantage for the key recipients (the Local Authority, planners and developers for example) is that the Plan itself becomes a much more focused and sharper document, reduced considerably in size.

Purpose of this document

5. However, there is a necessity for the all the relevant details to be made available and the purpose of this document, is to set out the details of the Supporting Evidence that were originally contained in v26 of the Plan. It should be noted that the references below to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for example, include not just the actual reference itself but also an extract of or quote from the relevant wording. It is recognised the latter is not

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

strictly necessary but as v26 of the Neighbourhood Plan did include all this level of detail, they have been retained below for completeness.

6. The references below relate to the March 2012 edition of the NPPF. As the Neighbourhood Plan Group is being submitted for validation under Regulation 15 before 24th January 2019, there is no requirement to make reference to or consider the July 2018 edition of the NPPF¹.

FIDDLERS FIELD DEVELOPMENT (FORMERLY SITE 226)

Objectives

To provide for one new, single Strategic Site for development of 150 domestic dwellings as part of the emerging Colchester Borough Council Local Plan

To provide high quality housing that reflects the existing, distinct open character area of the village and meets the appropriate needs of the community both now and in the future

Policy

FF1 – To designate Fiddlers Field as a single Strategic Site for the development of 150 dwellings

Supporting evidence

- Section 10 of v26 of the Neighbourhood Plan made reference to the proposed change in the Village Settlement Boundary to include Fiddlers Field.

FF 2 – Up to 150 residential dwellings on Fiddlers Field with a layout of medium density and design to be compatible with the character and context of the village

Supporting evidence

- The National Planning Policy Framework, Core Principle 1 says:-

¹ (2018) National Planning Policy Framework – paragraph 214

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- “Planning should be genuinely plan-led, *empowering local people to shape their surroundings*, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area”.
- The Colchester Borough Council Publication Draft Local Plan of May 2017 contains Policy SS5 for Eight Ash Green which says “the Neighbourhood Plan will define the new Settlement Boundary for the village and allocate a preferred site(s) for 150 dwellings”.
- The villagers have confirmed their support for both the figure of 150 dwellings derived from the Colchester Borough Council’s Objective Assessment of Housing Need and for the development to be only one Strategic Site on several occasions:-
 - by way of the village consultation exercise that took place in March and April 2016 to rank the nine proposed sites for development in the village where amongst 239 ranking forms completed, Fiddlers Field achieved the highest level of support;
 - at the 2016 AGM of the Neighbourhood Plan Group which took place on 16th November;
 - by way of the further ranking exercise undertaken by 254 villagers of four proposed sites for development in the village that took place on 21st January 2017 (Fiddlers Field supported by 68.9%; two revised sites [155 and 063] supported by 14.7% and 11.6% respectively; and one new site HF supported by 4.8%);
 - by way of their responses to question 8 of the spring 2017 village questionnaire where some 73 per cent of the 477 respondents supported the building of 150 houses on one site;
 - at the Parish Council meeting of 8th February 2017; and
 - at an Objectives and Policies Focus Group meeting on 25th February 2017.
- The Area Profiles - Section A5 Colne River Valley Slopes, of the Colchester Borough Council’s Landscape Character Assessment of November 2005 refers to:-
 - The Key Characteristics that includes “the settlement pattern of small linear village settlements such as Eight Ash Green...”.
- Paragraph 1.3.2 of the Planning Context section of the Colchester Borough Council’s Landscape Character Assessment of November 2005 refers to:-

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- “The need to protect landscape character has been recognised by Essex County Council and the need to protect the distinctive character of the towns, villages, countryside and coast of the County...”.
- In our various meetings and discussions with villagers, the rural feel of the village and the open nature of the existing housing are often quoted back to the Neighbourhood Plan Group as being of paramount importance. It is one of the reasons why people have come to live in Eight Ash Green.
- Support for this element of the Policy comes from Design Guide 33 of our Village Design Statement which states “Should any further housing be constructed in the village, it should be of similar size, type, layout and materials to those found in Heathfields, e.g. to include open front gardens, personal off-road driveways for two cars per household and roads of similar width and construction”.
- The Colchester Borough Council Core Strategy (Revised July 2014) H2 Housing Density states:-
 - “Other locations [i.e. not Town Centres and Urban Gateways] with lesser access to centres and public transport should involve more moderate densities. The density of developments also needs to be informed by the provision of open space and parking, the character of the area, and the mix of housing”.
- Outside of the Hythe, Colchester Borough Council does not allow for over 35 units per ha.²
- As part of the on-going consultation process with the villagers, a specific Focus Group meeting was held on 25th February 2017 asking for views on a number of draft Objectives and Policies. Support for medium density of housing was extremely high – some 90 per cent. Written comments included “Not high density” and “Essential”.

FF 3 – A mix of residential dwellings comprising houses, bungalows and flats of no more than 2 storeys high which meet the evidenced housing needs of the village offering homes for first time buyers, downsizers, families and executives

Supporting evidence

² (28th July 2017) Colchester Borough Council email

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- The National Planning Policy Framework, Delivering sustainable development – paragraph 50 says:-
 - “To deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should:
 - plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as but not limited to families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes)”.
- The National Planning Policy Framework, Promoting healthy communities –paragraph 69 says:-
 - “The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities.”
..... “Planning policies and decisions, in turn, should aim to achieve places which promote:
 - Opportunities for meetings between members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other...”
- As set out in the Housing Diversity section of the Colchester Borough Council Preferred Options publication of July 2016, page 179 states that “All housing developments in Colchester should be inclusive and accommodate a range of households and housing need to create mixed communities”.
- Policy DM 10 (Housing Diversity) as set out in the May 2017 Publication Draft of the Local Plan refers to:-
 - “....securing a range of housing types and tenures on developments across the Borough in order to create inclusive and sustainable communities. Housing developments should provide a mix of housing types to suit a range of different households”
- In addition, of the 477 respondents to the March 2017 questionnaire who expressed a preference by way of their responses to question 5 (What types of property do you think we need to have on any new site in the village?), there was a clear level of support for this element of the Policy by indicating a desire for a mixture of homes:-
 - family homes (2-4 bedrooms) - 83 per cent
 - first time buyers and downsizers (1-2 bedrooms) – 78 per cent

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- larger family homes (5+ bedrooms) – 31 per cent
 - the provision of flats was very low – 10 per cent.
- As to the style of properties, 70 per cent favoured houses with 26 per cent favouring bungalows. In addition, some 90 per cent of those who expressed an opinion, favoured some adapted homes (independent living for elderly or disabled).
- The National Planning Policy Framework Sustainability Objectives, Requiring good design, paragraph 58, bullet point no 4 says:-
 - “respond to local character and history and reflect the identity of local surroundings...” (There are no buildings or houses at the western end of the village, where Fiddlers Field is located, which have more than a 2 storey height).
- Policy DM 12: (Housing Standards) of the May 2017 Publication Draft of the Local Plan states:
 - “New buildings or extensions should be designed to minimise the overshadowing of neighbouring properties
- Policy DM 15: (Design and Amenity) of the May 2017 Publication Draft of the Local Plan states:-
 - “Respect and wherever possible, enhance the character of the site, its context and surroundings in terms of its layout, architectural approach, height...”
- Of the 477 respondents to the March 2017 questionnaire who expressed a preference by way of their responses to question 10 (buildings no more than 2 storeys high), some 92 per cent agreed with the proposal that the Neighbourhood Plan should say there should be no buildings more than 2 storeys high.
- In addition, Design Guide 6 of the 2013 Village Design Statement stated “Any new houses or flat developments should be limited to 2 storeys, in keeping with the existing character of Eight Ash Green”.

FF 4 - A new direct access road built to a standard which can accommodate HGV traffic and to the satisfaction of the local Highways Authority, will be provided directly linking Fiddlers Hill to the A1124 with access to the said road being provided by way of priority junctions

Supporting evidence

- Some 78 per cent of the 477 respondents to the March 2017 questionnaire who expressed a preference to question 9 (Do you

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

support a link road?), fully supported the introduction of a direct link road between the A1124 and Fiddlers Hill.

Neighbourhood Plan Group assessment of the need for a link/spine road connecting Fiddlers Hill directly to A1124

THE PROBLEM

1. Eight Ash Green is at the southern end of an increasingly popular PR2 route between B1508 at Wormingford, Fordham and the A1124 (and onwards to the A12). In addition, the section between Wormingford and Fordham passes through areas of significant HGV activity. Colchester Skip Hire has its base at Packards Lane (up to 150 HGV movements per day). Several other waste and bio-disposal disposal companies are also operating in the same area.

2. The public consultations in the preparation of the Eight Ash Green Neighbourhood Plan showed considerable disquiet at the effects on the village. The choice of Fiddlers Field on the West side of the village for 150 houses will neutralise the opportunity to provide a shorter link to the A1124 which avoids the community of Fordham Heath.

3. If a suitable spine road is not provided in conjunction with this land allocation, then the opportunity will be lost for ever.

4. Traffic volumes on this route have shown a steady increase over recent years. Recent traffic counts in Wood Lane, close to the junction of the route with the A1124, show a weekday 12-hour count of 1963 in a southbound direction and 1782 in a northbound direction.

5. The principal concern of local residents is the high proportion of Heavy Goods Vehicles that are now using this route. This is illustrated in the table below:

ROAD SAFETY

6. The principal safety concern centres on the PR2 route passing Eight Ash Green Primary School, located at Fiddlers Folly, some 20m off the PR2 route. At this location the road is narrow. The hazards caused by two HGVs passing in opposite directions are significant, particularly when school pupils are arriving or leaving.

7. The Route has a sharp 90 degree turn from Porters Cottages into Wood Lane just past the school. To reduce the risks caused by HGVs mounting the

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

pavement ECC Highways have created over-run areas around the bend. However, while these are concrete, the lane has no proper foundations, so the over-run area is constantly deteriorating under the heavy traffic load, and Essex County Council have not found a cost effective solution.

TRAFFIC VOLUMES

8. At its junction with Wood Lane, the A1124 is already operating near maximum capacity. Although the carriage width complies with the minimum for an A Road, the junction is on a tight-radius bend with poor visibility in both directions. Therefore most A1124 traffic wisely slows down, thus further decreasing the capacity of the A1124 at that point.

9. Most of the southbound traffic arriving at the Wood Lane / A1124 junction turns left towards the A12. The resulting bunching of vehicles on the A1124 reduces the opportunity for traffic to turn out from Wood Lane onto the A1124.

10. The effect on the A1124 from the A12 direction of traffic turning right into Wood Lane is much more significant. West bound traffic on the A1124 comes to a complete halt until there is a break in the traffic in the other direction. Fortunately the traffic lights at Ford Street, Aldham, helps control the traffic flow, causing occasional breaks in the flow on the A1124 in the direction of the A12, otherwise there would be little opportunity for traffic to exit from Wood Lane.

11. The overall effect is significant queueing at morning and evening peak times at this junction. This constitutes a substantial commercial loss for HGV operators whose vehicles are delayed by the queueing.

MINI ROUNDABOUT SOLUTION AT JUNCTION OF WOOD LANE AND A1124

13. The most obvious solution is a mini-roundabout at the junction of Wood Lane and the A12. The land necessary for a mini roundabout has been safeguarded in the west direction towards Aldham, but not in the easterly direction towards the A12. Compulsory purchase of the forecourt of Bungalow Stores would be necessary to layout a mini-roundabout at this location.

14. Unfortunately the A1124 also describes a shallow "S" bend as it approaches Wood Land from the direction of the A12. This would considerably reduce the

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

visibility when approaching a mini roundabout at this location. It is unlikely to comply with the geometry options set out in TD54/07.

15. So in summary, a mini roundabout at the junction of Wood lane and A1124 is an unlikely prospect due to restricted sight-lines and land acquisition restrictions. See diagram below.

NEW SPINE / LINK ROAD FROM FIDDLERS HILL TO THE A1124

16. The production of the Eight Ash Green Neighbourhood Plan has raised the possibility of diverting the PR2 route from Wormingford and Fordham from Fiddlers Hill directly to the A1124, cutting-out the somewhat tortuous route through Fordham Heath.

17. The design opportunity would permit a link road across Site 266, capable of carrying HGVs, with the 150 houses accommodated on estate roads either side of a new Spine /Link Road. See diagram below.

18. The junction at the north of the new Spine/Link road would be relatively simple because most of the traffic does not have Fordham Heath as its ultimate start point or destination.

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

19. The Junction of the new Spine/Link road with the A1124 would require consideration of a mini-roundabout. At the proposed location, just east of Choats Cottages, there is slight curvature to the A1124, but certainly giving adequate visibility. See diagram below.

SUMMARY

20. The inclusion of Spine/Link Road to directly connect Fiddlers Hill to the A1124 is therefore supported for the following reasons:

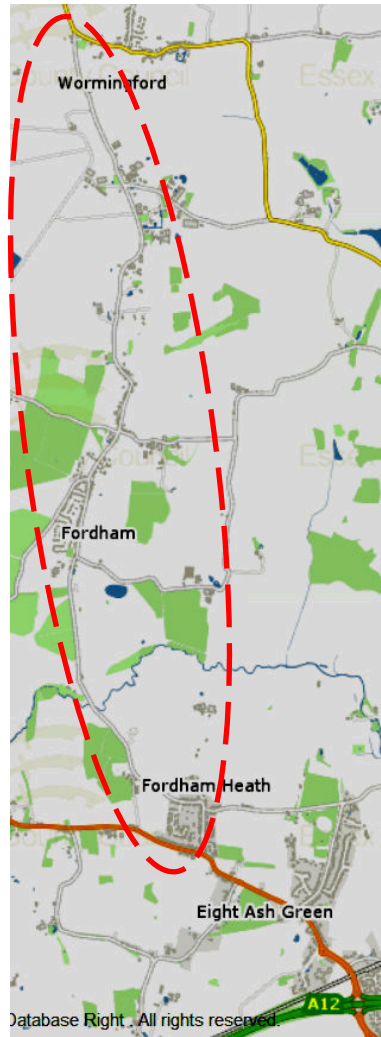
- a. It was the preferred option of the residents of Eight Ash Green in the Neighbourhood Plan consultations
- b. Recent Traffic counts conducted by Essex County Council Highways show a continued growth in traffic using the PR2 route between the B1508 at Wormingford and the A1124 at Eight Ash Green.
- c. Vehicle count analysis shows a significant proportion of HGVs, due to the proximity of Colchester Skip Hire's base at Packards Lane, and several other waste disposal companies having bases along the PR2 route.
- d. The southern end of the Route at Eight Ash Green winds through the community of Fordham Heath. This includes a primary school and a sharp 90 degree bend where Essex County Council has been unsuccessful in providing a permanent safety solution to HGVs passing in opposite directions near to a school.
- e. The option of a mini-roundabout at the junction of Wood Lane and A1124 is doubtful without firstly straightening out the A1124 to improve visibility sightlines. The cost of this would be disproportionate to the benefit, given the alternative of a new Spine/Link road deliverable with significant developer contributions.
- f. A new Spine/Link Road could be accommodated without reducing the ability to deliver 150 Houses on Site 226 as part of the neighbourhood Plan. The Link Road would provide egress and access at both end of the new residential development, and assist the retention/delivery of the small commercial area at the North end of the proposed Link Road.

Essex County Council survey³

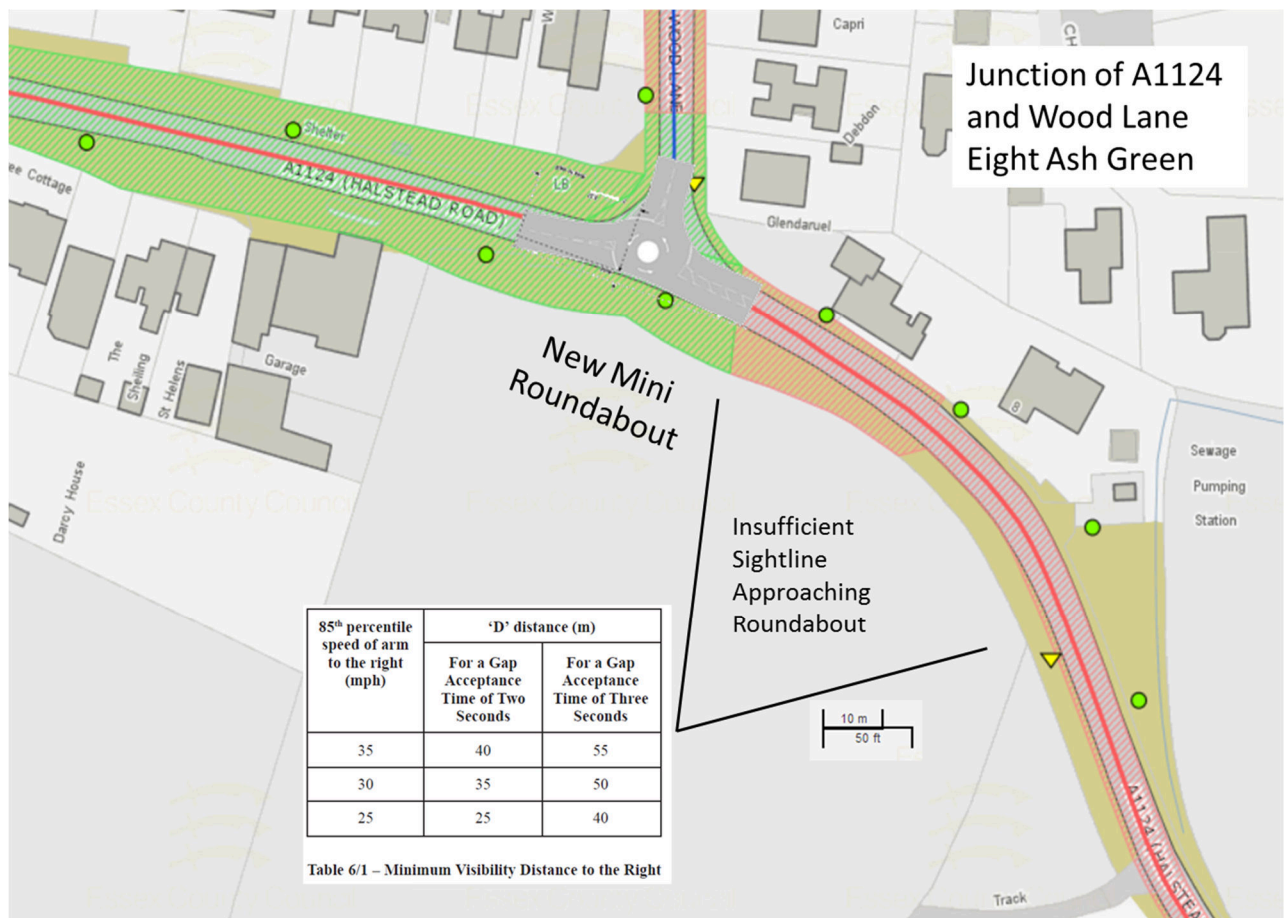
	TOTAL MOVEMENTS	MOTORCYCLES	CARS	CARS AND TRAILERS	FIXED AXLE TRUCKS/BUS	ARTIC TRUCKS
FULL SEVEN DAYS COUNT	27705	237 (0.85%)	24974 (90%)	127 (0.45%)	2228 (8.0%)	139 (0.5%)
AVERAGE/DAY OVER SEVEN DAYS	3958	34	3568	18	318	20
WORKING WEEK COUNT	21404	187 (0.87%)	19088 (89%)	95 (0.44%)	1904 (8.9%)	130 (0.6%)
AVERAGE/DAY DURING WORKING WEEK 5 DAYS	4281	37	3818	19	381	26

³ 18403 Eight Ash Green: location ATC02 Wood Lane: TP 25m N of junction with Beech Grove: Start 23/10/2018: Finish 20/10/2018

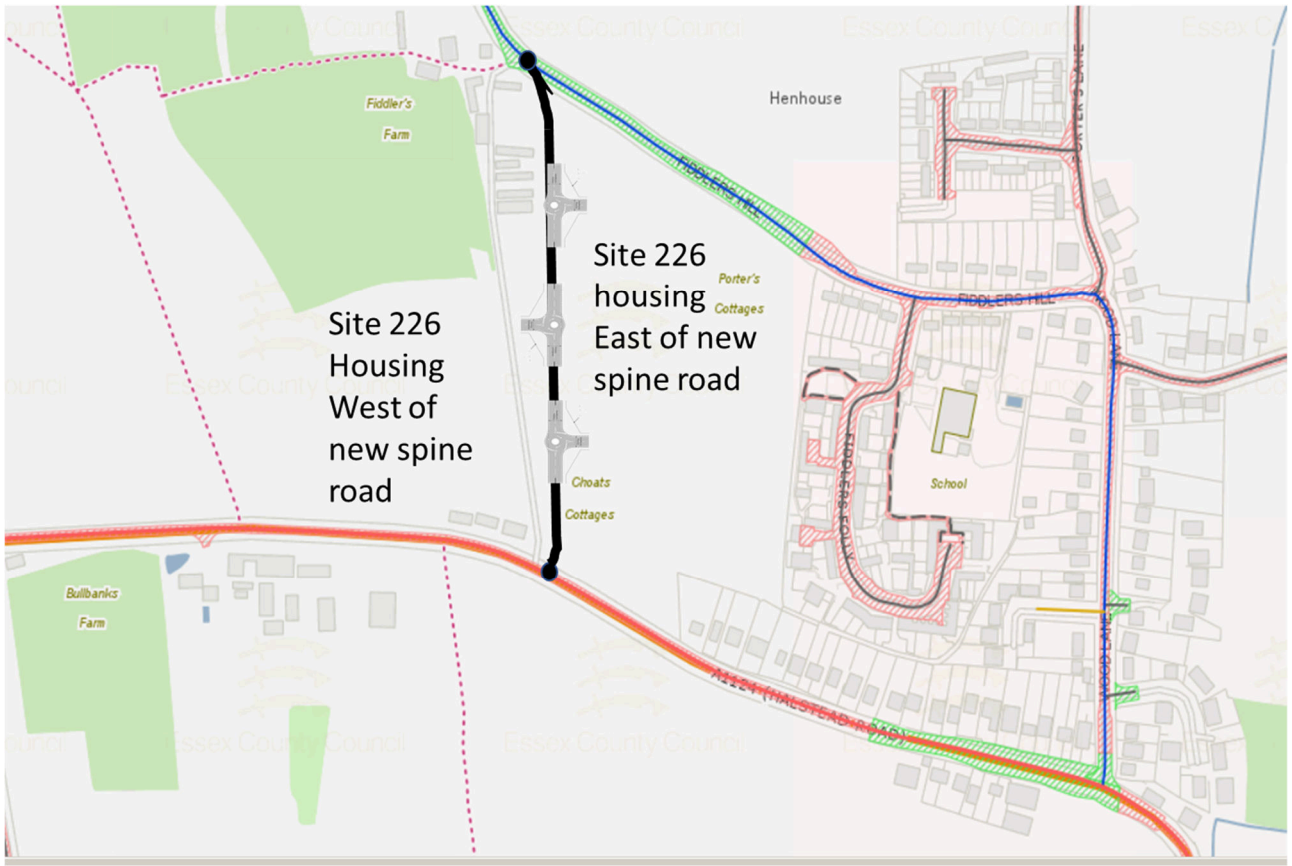
EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



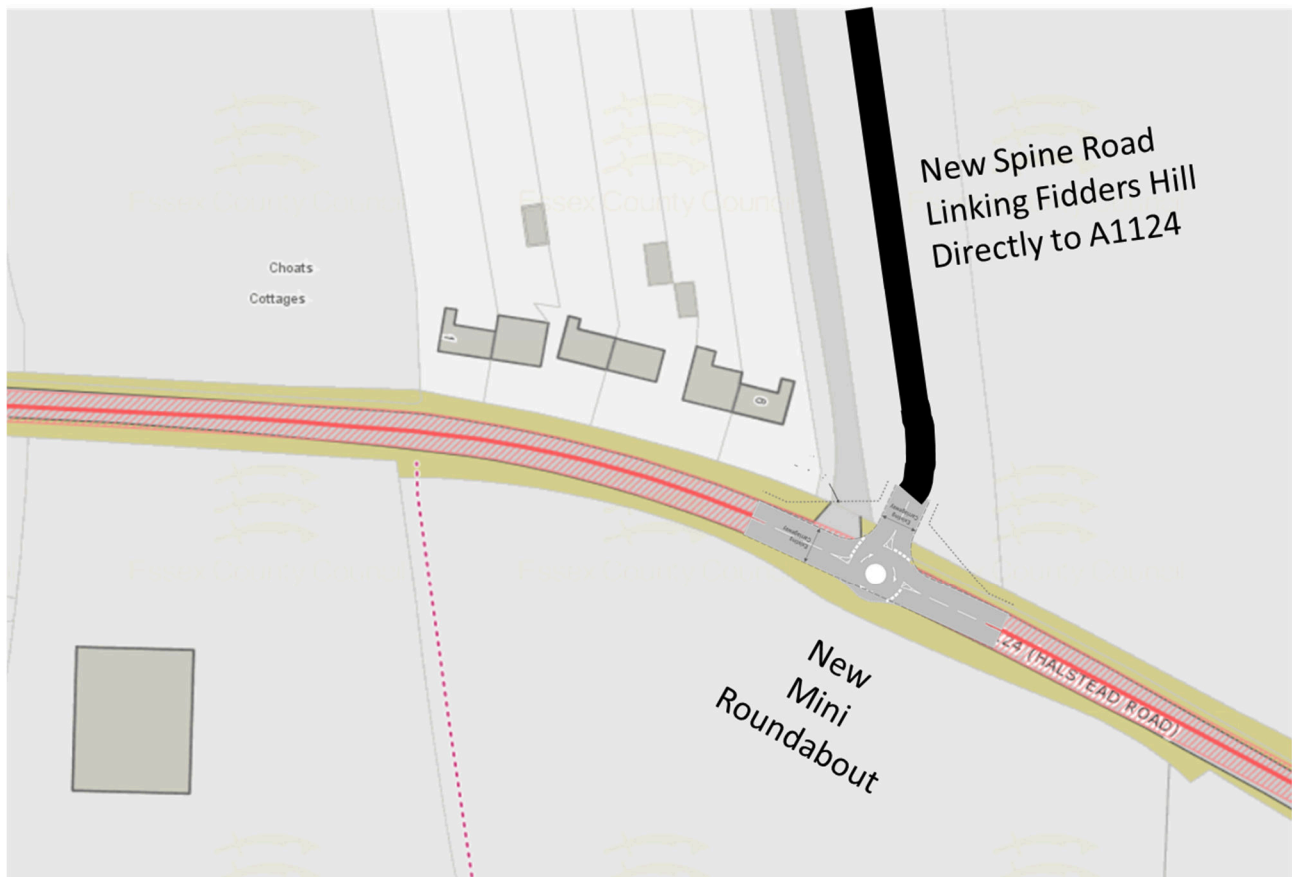
EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



FF 5 – A specific speed limit and other speed limiting measures that are appropriate to the residential roads within Fiddlers Field site

Supporting evidence

- The Delivering sustainable development section of the National Planning Policy Framework in paragraph 35, third bullet point refers to:-
 - “creating safe and secure layouts which minimise conflict between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians...” A key element to having a safe layout would be to slow traffic down by introducing a 20mph zone throughout the residential part of the development on Site 226.
- Policy DM 21 (Housing Diversity) as set out in the May 2017 Publication Draft of the Local Plan refers to:-
 - “creating safe, secure, convenient and attractive layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic, cyclists and pedestrians...”

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- Page 37 of the CBC “Issues and Options” document of January 2015 states, in the section **“Infrastructure for walking”**, “In any new development.....the expectation is that new developments would restrict road traffic to 20mph”.
- As part of the on-going consultation process with the villagers, a specific Focus Group meeting was held on 25th February 2017 asking for views on a number of our draft Objectives and Policies. There was 100 per cent support for this element of the policy with one written comment, for example saying “Very important”.

FF 6 – A new pavement built to standards outlined within the Highways England Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 7 Pavements Design and Maintenance⁴, will be provided along the northern edge of the A1124 to connect the site to the village facilities

Supporting evidence

A physical inspection was carried out by the Neighbourhood Plan Group on 31st October 2017, to look at the pavement that runs alongside the very busy A1124 road which borders Fiddlers Field. It showed the pavement is not only very narrow in places i.e. only just over one metre, but also the surface is well worn and on occasion, is only 25cm higher than the road. It is not possible for two adults to walk side by side on what is a very low and narrow pavement and feel at all safe with numerous and often very large vehicles passing extremely close by. A pavement of 2.5m width is required.

FF 7 – A pedestrian through route linking to the Holy Trinity School and the Fiddlers Folly development

Supporting evidence

- The Neighbourhood Plan Group consulted with the Head Teacher of the village primary school on 17th November 2017, who is fully supportive of this Policy given that there will be young children resident in Fiddlers Field who will wish to attend her school. This is reflected in the proposed increase of some 45 places recommended by Essex County Council.
- In their letter of 14th June 2018, responding to the Regulation 14 consultation, referring to the proposed pedestrian route, Essex County Council said “this is welcomed by ECC”.

FF 8 – Two new bus stops, including lay-by, raised kerb and shelters located on the A1124 within 50 metres of the site entrance

⁴ (1992) Highways England Design Manual for Roads and Bridges

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Supporting evidence

- The National Planning Policy Framework Core planning principles, paragraph 17, bullet point 11 says:-
 - “actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport....”
- The National Planning Policy Framework, Promoting sustainable transport, paragraph 30 says:-
 - Encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gases and reduce congestion. In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should therefore support a pattern of development which, where it is reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport”.
- As set out in the SP5: Place Shaping Principles section of the Colchester Borough Council Preferred Options publication of July 2016, page 30 shows *“All new development should reflect the following principles:Create well-connected places that prioritise the needs of pedestrians.... and public transport services.....”*.
- Paragraph 3.6 of the May 2017 Publication Draft of the Local Plan refers to the:-
 - “....need to manage the continuing pressures of vehicle congestion ... while developing practical solutions to provide non-car based alternatives to movement around the Borough”.
- Paragraph 7.104 of the May 2017 Publication Draft of the Local Plan states:-
 - “Public transport has a crucial role to play in Colchester. Providing a quality public transport network that offers a genuinely attractive alternative to the car is vital”.
- Policy DM 20: (Promoting Sustainable Transport and Changing Travel Behaviour) in the May 2017 Publication Draft of the Local Plan states:-
 - “Ensuring new developments are supported by quality public transport linking them to the main urban areas and major centres of employment, health and education. Access to public transport should be within walking (or cycling) distance of any new development”.
- Policy DM 21: (Sustainable Access to Development) in the May 2017 Publication Draft of the Local Plan states:-
 - “All new developments should seek to enhance accessibility for sustainable modes of transport. Proposals for development should:
 - Provide and give access to quality public transport facilities”.

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- As part of the on-going consultation process with the villagers, a specific Focus Group meeting was held on 25th February 2017 asking for views on a number of our draft Objectives and Policies. Support for this element of the policy stood at the maximum – a 100 per cent. Written comments included “Definitely required”. In addition to the very strong support for this element of the Policy, reference was made to the need not just for a bus stop but also a lay by.

FF9 – A suitable landscaping plan which provides screening to the existing businesses on Fiddlers Farm and adjacent houses, to include the Grade 2 listed Fiddlers Farmhouse, all of which border and limit any expansion of the site, to ensure that ambient noise and amenity currently enjoyed at these properties is maintained

Supporting evidence

- Following the specific Focus Group meeting on 25th February 2017 asking for views on a number of our draft Objectives and Policies, on 6th May 2017, the Neighbourhood Plan Group held a village open meeting to provide information, updates and comments on the variety of documentation to include the outline of the Neighbourhood Plan itself as well as the latest draft Objectives and Policies. Support for this element of the Policy was extremely high – some 86 per cent.
- Of the 477 respondents to the March 2017 questionnaire who expressed a preference by way of their responses to question 37 (Should native hedgerows on field boundaries be encouraged?) there was a clear level of support for this element of the Policy with some 97 per cent in favour.

FF 10 – A scheme demonstrating that appropriate surface water drainage is provided within the site

Supporting evidence

- The National Planning Policy Framework Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change paragraph 99, says:-
 - “Local Plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk..... New development should be planned to avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change.”
- Policy DM 24: (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) in the May 2017 Publication Draft of the Local Plan states:-

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- “All new residential development.....should incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) appropriate to the nature of the site”.
- “Opportunities should be taken to integrate sustainable drainage within the design of the development, to create amenity space, enhance biodiversity and manage pollution. Existing drainage features such as ditches and ponds should be retained on site where possible as part of the SuDS schemes”.
- In their letter of 14th June 2018, responding to the Regulation 14 consultation, referring to solar panels, Essex County Council said “It is positive that the Plan includes policies on Sustainable Urban Drainage systems”.

FF 11 – Appropriate wiring to be installed within each property to provide for charging for electric cars/vehicles

Supporting evidence

- The National Planning Policy Framework, Ministerial foreword says:-
 - “We must respond to the changes that new technologies offer us. Our lives, and the places in which we live them, can be better, but they will certainly be worse if things stagnate”; and
- The National Planning Policy Framework Sustainability Objectives, Promoting sustainable transport, paragraph 35 (“...developments should be located and designed where practical to...), bullet point 4 says:-
 - “incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles”.
- Policy DM 21: (Sustainable Access to Development) of the May 2017 Publication Draft of the Local Plan states:-
 - “All development should seek to enhance accessibility for sustainable modes of transport. Proposals for development should:
 - Incorporate charging facilities for electric and other ultra -low emission vehicles where appropriate, or as a minimum the ability to easily introduce such facilities in the future.”
- As part of the on-going consultation process with the villagers, a specific Focus Group meeting was held on 25th February 2017 asking for views on a number of our draft Objectives and Policies. Support for this element of the Policy was very high – some 82 per cent.
- In their letter of 14th June 2018, responding to the Regulation 14 consultation, referring to this Policy, Essex County Council said “It is positive that the Plan includes policies on Electric Vehicle Charging Point provision”.

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

FF 12 - Ducting to be installed to every new house on the site for the provision of either copper or fibre superfast broadband

Supporting evidence

- The National Planning Policy Framework, Ministerial foreword says:-
 - “We must respond to the changes that new technologies offer us. Our lives, and the places in which we live them, can be better, but they will certainly be worse if things stagnate”.
- The National Planning Policy Framework Sustainability Objectives, Supporting high quality communications infrastructure, paragraph 42 says:-
 - Advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable growth. The development of high speed broadband technology and other communication networks also plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services.
- The National Planning Policy Framework Sustainability Objectives, Supporting high quality communications infrastructure, paragraph 43 says:-
 - “In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communication networks, including telecommunications and high speed broadband”.
- As part of our on-going consultation process with the villagers, a specific Focus Group meeting was held on 25th February 2017 asking for views on a number of our draft Objectives and Policies. Support for this element of the policy was very high – some 80 per cent. “Very important” was one written comment made.
- Of the 477 respondents to the March 2017 questionnaire who expressed a preference by way of their responses to question 28 (intention to change to superfast broadband) some 80 per cent responded positively.

FF 13 - All the new dwellings on the site should have the potential for the installation of sustainable battery pods that stores energy from renewable sources

Supporting evidence

- The National Planning Policy Framework, Ministerial foreword says:-
 - “We must respond to the changes that new technologies offer us. Our lives, and the places in which we live them, can be better, but they will certainly be worse if things stagnate”.

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- The National Planning Policy Framework Core planning principles, paragraph 17, 6th bullet point says:-
 - “support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate.....encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy)”.
- The National Planning Policy Framework, Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change, paragraph 97 says:-
 - “To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy....” with bullet point no 1 saying (“local authorities to”) :-
 - “have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources”.
- Paragraphs 7.141 and 7.142 of the May 2017 Publication Draft of the Local Plan say:-
 - “Climate change is an important issue which underpins the Local Plan.” (7.141)
 - “In its commitment to deliver sustainable communities the Local Planning Authority is seeking to create communities that use natural renewable resources sustainability and reduce waste”. (7.142).
- Policy DM25: (Renewable Energy, Water, Waste and Recycling) says:-
 - The Local Planning Authority will support residential developments that help to reduce carbon emissions....”.
- Following the specific Focus Group meeting on 25th February 2017 asking for views on a number of our draft Objectives and Policies, on 6th May 2017, the Neighbourhood Plan Group held a village open meeting to provide information, updates and comments on the variety of documentation to include the outline of the Neighbourhood Plan itself as well as the latest draft Objectives and Policies. This element of the Policy garnered some 80 per cent support.
- In their letter of 14th June 2018, responding to the Regulation 14 consultation, referring to solar panels, Essex County Council said “It is positive that the Plan includes policies on the use of renewable such as solar panels (domestic and farms)”
- In their letter of 14th June 2018, responding to the Regulation 14 consultation, referring to this Policy, Essex County Council said “It is positive that the Plan includes policies on the use of renewable such as battery pods”

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

ENVIRONMENT

COALESCENCE

Objective

To maintain the existing gap between Eight Ash Green and Stanway/Colchester and other potential settlements such as the proposed West Tey Garden Community/New Town

Policy

Environment Policy 1 (EP1): No development is to be permitted that will and/or could result in, or provide the possibility of future coalescence of Eight Ash Green with Stanway/Colchester and/or the proposed West Tey Garden community/New Town

Supporting evidence

- Colchester Borough Council Preferred Options paper – Policy SP6 – Spatial Strategy for North Essex clearly states “Future growth will be planned to ensure settlements maintain their distinctive character and role, and to avoid coalescence between them”.
- In addition, on 11th May 2016, the Eight Ash Green Parish Council rejected Site 150 which borders Stanway. Colchester Borough Council also rejected the same Site 150 in July 2016 via their “Strategic Land Availability Assessment”⁵ – prevention of coalescence between settlements.
- Amongst the responses from the villagers to the Sustainability questionnaire of March and April 2016, comments included “it would diminish the separation from Stanway – Site 124; “reduces the gap between Eight Ash Green and Stanway” – Site 150; and “would erode the “green” division between Eight Ash Green and Stanway” - Site 208.
- In addition, 98 per cent of the 477 the responses to question 33 of the March 2017 questionnaire which asked the villagers if they agreed the green spaces that separate Eight Ash Green from Stanway, Copford, Aldham, Marks Tey, Great Tey, West Bergholt and Fordham should be preserved, agreed with this Policy.

⁵ (July 2016) Colchester Borough Council Local Plan Strategic Land Availability Assessment

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- Finally, Design Guide 13 of the Village Design Statement also stated “The existing, open green spaces that separate EAG from Stanway, Copford and Fordham should be preserved so as to protect the rural nature and feel of the village”.

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

PROTECTION FOR THE GREEN OPEN SPACES IN THE VILLAGE

Objective

To protect and where possible, enhance green/open spaces and biodiversity in the whole of the village

Policy

Environment Policy 2 (EP 2): The areas of green space shown in Annex L will be protected from development, including change of use, unless it can be demonstrated that:-

- *the chosen site represents the only available location for the given development proposal;*
- *the proposal would not result in the loss of an area important for its amenity including its contribution to biodiversity, recreation and landscape character with Eight Ash Green; and*
- *Alternative and improved provision is provided in a location well related to the functional requirements of the relocated use and its existing and future users*

Supporting evidence

- Policy DM 17: (Retention of Open Space and Recreation Facilities) in the May 2017 Publication Draft of the Local Plan states:-
 - “The Council will protect and enhance the existing network of green links and open spaces....”
- The Registered Village Greens, Fordham Heath (VG 187) and Seven Star/Daisy Green (VG 188) which includes the grass verges, are both an important medieval legacy and are registered under the same Act of Parliament, the Commons Registration Act 1965. Both areas are covered by the same 1947 Scheme of Management under the Commons Act 1899 and by the same 1948 Bye laws made pursuant to the Scheme of Management which are currently displayed on the Heath and Seven Star Green. The Scheme of Management requires that the natural aspects or features of the common must be preserved, free access to all parts be maintained and prohibits any kind of building without specific Secretary of State consent. Both of the registered Village Greens are owned and managed by the Parish Council.
- The villagers expressed their very strong support for various elements of this Policy by way of their responses to a number of questions in the March 2017 questionnaire as follows:-
 - question 34 (preservation of the Heath and associated meadow areas) where, in respect of those who responded, some 99 per cent of the 477 responses

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

received agreed the Heath and associated wild meadow areas should be preserved.

- question 36 (preservation of the Iron Latch reserve) where, in respect of the 477 responses received, some 96 per cent agreed the Iron Latch nature reserve should be preserved.
- question 35 (preservation of the Colne Valley area) where, in respect of the 477 responses received, some 96 per cent agreed the Colne Valley to the north of the village is an important setting and should be preserved.
- question 31 (preservation of the village open areas and nature reserves) where, in respect of the 477 responses received, some 99 per cent agreed the open spaces within the village should be preserved.
- Concern about protecting both the duck pond and its environment came to the fore in March 2016 when a developer put forward a proposal for a Rural Exception Site at the far south western end of Abbots Lane. Despite offering to upgrade the edge of the pond, the proposal was rejected not just because of the unsuitability of the site (Abbots Lane is very narrow) but also because of the effect the extra traffic would have on both the pond and the wildlife - ducks regularly either cross and waddle along the Lane, quite happily at present. Another example of the rural nature of the village.
- An example of how highly the villagers value both Seven Star Green and Turkey Cock Lane occurred in June 2017 when a group of unauthorised travellers occupied the Green causing significant damage and disposal of debris. This caused consternation not only with nearby residents but also across the wider village. Collective action by numerous villagers, led by the Parish Council managed to resolve the situation after a few days but a great deal of damage was done to Seven Star Green with a strong working party coming together to clear the rubbish and other mess from the site. This is indicative of the strength of feeling about the environment.
- Also, the outcome from the two rounds of consultation with the villagers in 2016 about the location for potential future development in the village, showed that Site 039 was bottom of the list of preferences.

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

PROTECTION FOR HEDGEROWS, TREES AND WOODS

Objective

To protect the existing hedgerows, trees and woods in the whole of the village

Policy

Environment Policy 3 (EP 3): Any developments in the village that may result in the destruction and/or removal of existing hedgerows, trees or woods, will only be permitted if these elements are replaced with similar features that are in good condition, on the same site or plot

Supporting evidence

- The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 make provision for the appropriate protection of important hedgerows in England and Wales.
- The National Planning Policy Framework, Core planning principles 7 says:-
 - “Contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment....”.
- The National Planning Policy Framework Conserving and enhancing the natural environment , paragraph 109 says:
 - “The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
 - Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes...” (first bullet point)
 - and paragraph 117 says:
 - “To minimise impacts on biodiversity planning policies should:
 - Promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats.....” (third bullet point).
- Policy ENV1: (Environment) as set out in the May 2017 Publication Draft of the Local Plan says:-
 - “The Local Planning Authority will conserve and enhance Colchester’s natural and historic environment, countryside and coastline. The Local Planning Authority will safeguard the Borough’s biodiversity, geology, history and archaeology, which help define the landscape character of the Borough, through the protection and enhancement of sites of local importance.”
- Policy ENV3: (Green Infrastructure) as set out in the May 2017 Publication Draft of the Local Plan refers to:-
 - the need “...to protect and enhance the existing network of green infrastructure features and to secure the delivery of new green infrastructure

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

where deficiencies and gaps are identified that will benefit communities, wildlife and the environment”.

- The Landscape Character Assessment referred to in Section 3 above makes reference to the “Character” of a locality by reference to a combination of factors to include its ecological component i.e. the existing hedgerows, trees and woods in our village that help to provide wildlife corridors for our native species.
- The villagers expressed their support for this Policy by way of their responses to question 31 of the March 2017 questionnaire (retention of the open spaces, trees and nature reserves around the village) where, in respect of the 477 who responded, some 99 per cent agreed they should be retained.
- The villagers further expressed their support for this Policy by way of their responses to question 37 of the March 2017 questionnaire (encouragement of native hedgerows on field boundaries) where, in respect of the 477 who responded, some 98 per cent agreed native hedgerows should be encouraged.

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

FOOTPATHS, CYCLE & BRIDLEWAYS

Objective

To protect the existing footpaths, cycleways and bridleways in the village

Policy

Environment Policy 4 (EP 4): Existing footpaths, cycleways and bridleways provide a high level of amenity value and will be protected. New developments should integrate with the current green infrastructure network, seeking to improve the connectivity between wildlife area and green spaces through measures such as improving and extending the existing footpath and cycle path network, allowing greater access to housing and retail facilities, green spaces, public open spaces and the countryside

Supporting evidence

- The National Planning Policy Framework, Promoting healthy communities, paragraph 75 says:-
 - “Planning authorities should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails”.
- Policy DM1: (Health and wellbeing) as set out in the May 2017 Publication Draft of the Local Plan says:-
 - “All development should be designed to help promote healthy lifestyles and avoid causing adverse impacts on public health through:
 - Providing a healthy living environment where healthy lifestyles can be promoted including green space and creating attractive opportunities for activities including walking and cycling”.
- The Neighbourhood Plan Group met with Sustrans, the national cycling organisation, on 24th January 2017 to discuss potential development of a network of new cycle routes in the village potential linking up with the existing National Cycle Network Route no 13 that runs through the centre of Eight Ash Green.⁶ Reference to this may be found in the Access and Leisure Project No 3.

⁶ (2013) Ordnance Survey OS Explorer Map 184 - Colchester

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- The Neighbourhood Plan Group met with the Essex Bridleway Association on 14th November 2016 to discuss the two, unconnected bridleways in Eight Ash Green. They confirmed that it is possible to divert a bridleway but this would involve a public consultation process.
- The villagers expressed their support for this Policy by way of their responses to question 23 of the March 2017 questionnaire (if there was a cycle path network in the village would this encourage you to make use of it) where, in respect of the 477 respondents, some 49 per cent said they would.
- The villagers expressed their support for this Policy by way of their responses to question 23 of the March 2017 questionnaire (do you use the public footpaths and bridleways) where, in respect of the 477 respondents, some 93 per cent said they did.
- The villagers expressed their support for this Policy by way of their responses to question 38 of the March 2017 questionnaire (protection of the public rights of way network and bridleways) where, in respect of the 477 respondents, some 98 per cent agreed they should be protected and enhanced.

PREVENTION OF FLOODING

Objective

To take steps to prevent flooding in the village

Policy

Environment Policy 5 (EP 5): Development will be supported where it can be shown that it will not negatively impact upon the existing network of drainage ditches within the village. The protection, extension and enhancement of these facilities is encouraged. Where it is necessary to enable development, the stopping up or diverting of drainage ditches will be supported if it can be demonstrated that no additional flood risk will be created

Supporting evidence

- The National Planning Policy Framework Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change paragraphs 94 and 99, respectively say:-
 - “Local planning authorities should adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change taking full account of flood risk....”

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- “Local Plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk....”
- The Colchester Borough Council Publication Draft Local Plan of May 2017, paragraphs 7.124 et seq refer to “Flood Risk and Water Management” that provides not only information about flood risk but also Policies DM23 and 24 that focus primarily on housing development.

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

HERITAGE

Objective

To protect the ancient heritage of our village

Policy

Heritage Policy 1 (Her 1): Any Listed Building or Historic Asset and their setting within the Neighbourhood Plan Area should be maintained or where possible enhanced to protect from any future development.

Supporting evidence

- The National Planning Policy Framework, Core Planning Principles, bullet point no 10, mentions the need to:-
 - “conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance...”
- Policy DM 16 (Historic Environment) as set out in the May 2017 Publication Draft of the Local Plan states “Development that will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a listed building, conservation area, historic park or garden..... will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where the harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss. Where development will lead to less than substantial harm this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal”.

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

NATURAL RESOURCES – RENEWABLE ENERGY

Objective

To encourage and support the effective and efficient use of the Earth's natural resources and promote energy efficiency in Eight Ash Green

Policy

Renewable Energy 1 - (Homes) (RE 1): Proposals for small-scale renewable energy generation associated within single residential properties will be supported provided it can be shown that they are located and designed in such a manner so as to minimise any increase in ambient noise levels and avoid any unacceptable impacts upon visual amenity

Supporting evidence

- The National Planning Policy Framework, Core planning principles, bullet point no 6, mentions the need to:-
 - "...encourage the reuse of existing resources and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy)".
- Policy DM25: (Renewable Energy, Water, Waste and Recycling) as set out in the May 2017 Publication Draft of the Local Plan says:-
 - "The Local Planning Authority will support proposals for renewable energy projects including solar panels on buildings ..."
- Following the specific Focus Group meeting on 25th February 2017 asking for views on a number of the draft Objectives and Policies, on 6th May 2017, the Neighbourhood Plan Group held a village open meeting to provide information, updates and comments on the variety of documentation to include the outline of the Neighbourhood Plan itself as well as the latest draft Objectives and Policies. This Policy garnered some 80 per cent support.
- In their letter of 14th June 2018, responding to the Regulation 14 consultation, referring to solar panels, Essex County Council said "It is positive that the Plan includes policies on the use of renewable such as solar panels (domestic and farms)".

Policy

Renewable Energy 2 - (Solar Farms) (RE 2): Proposals for commercial solar farms will be supported where they are directed towards low grade agricultural land or brownfield sites and

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

are designed in such a way so as to minimise increases in ambient noise levels and deliver adequate natural screening to avoid impacts upon visual amenity

Supporting evidence

- The National Planning Policy Framework, Core planning principles, bullet point no 6, mentions the need to:-
 - “...encourage the reuse of existing resources ... and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy)”.
- Policy DM25: (Renewable Energy, Water, Waste and Recycling) as set out in the May 2017 Publication Draft of the Local Plan says:-
 - The Local Planning Authority’s commitment to carbon reduction includes the promotion of efficient use of energy and resources..”
 - “The Local Planning Authority will support proposals for renewable energy projects including solar farms”
 - Landscape and visual impacts should be mitigated through good design, careful siting and layout and landscaping measures.”
- Following the specific Focus Group meeting on 25th February 2017 asking for views on a number of our draft Objectives and Policies, on 6th May 2017, the Neighbourhood Plan Group held a village open meeting to provide information, updates and comments on the variety of documentation to include the outline of the Neighbourhood Plan itself as well as the latest draft Objectives and Policies. This Policy garnered some 60 per cent support reflecting the mixed views with some residents firmly against the introduction of commercial solar farms (“ugly” was one comment made) with others recognising that should they be introduced, then Policy RE 2 should apply.

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

LOCAL BUSINESSES

Objective

To support and where appropriate, expand the local businesses to boost the local economy and employment

Policy

Businesses Policy 1 (BP 1): Moat Farm is designated as a business area. Proposals for the enhancement of existing facilities or for new business premises on the site will be supported provided they are of suitable design, provide satisfactory car parking for staff and visitors and have implemented a strategy for the containment and subsequent disposal of waste

Supporting evidence

- The National Planning Policy Framework, Core planning principles, bullet point no 3, refers to:-
 - “proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the ... businesses and industrial units, infrastructure ..that the country needs”.
 - The National Planning Policy Framework, Supporting a prosperous rural economy says:-
 - “To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:
 - support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas...”
 - As set out in the Economic Delivery Policies section of the Colchester Borough Council Preferred Options publication of July 2016, pp 65 and 66 show that the “creation of new jobs” as well as “creating, supporting and retaining businesses” are priorities as part of the Colchester Borough Council Economic Development Strategy.
 - Policy DM6 (Economic development in rural areas and the countryside) as set out in the May 2017 Publication Draft of the Local Plan says a) “Sites and premises currently used for employment purposes in rural parts of the Borough will be safeguarded for appropriate economic uses to ensure local residents have access to local job opportunities without the need to travel”

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

and b) “Withinrural sites providing an economic function, the following uses are considered appropriate in principle – Business (B1), general industrial (B2), storage and distribution (B8)...”,

- As part of the discussions with the owner of the Moat Farm business area, he:-
 - stated that he is very happy for that site to be declared a designated Business Area
 - also agreed the road surfaces on the site need to be improved and he has made a start on this and
 - confirmed he is scrupulous in trying to ensure waste is both contained and disposed of properly but a clear exposition of this in the Neighbourhood Plan will help him to highlight the importance of this issue for the businesses on site.
- A visit to the site on 19th August 2016 by the Neighbourhood Plan Group clearly shows that the site has room for considerable expansion within existing boundaries.
- A subsequent meeting with the landowner on 7th August 2017, confirmed he is content for Business types B1 such as administrative offices and B2 such as light engineering to come to his site providing they are two storeys or less. He would be content to accept small storage businesses but large distribution centres would not be appropriate as he is offering space for up to 3,000 square feet or less. Expansion wise, he is considering a steady build up of some 5 to 6 units.
- The villagers expressed their support for this Policy by way of their responses to question 15 of the March 2017 questionnaire (agreement to a designated business area) where, in respect of those who responded, some 68 per cent agreed.

Policy

Businesses Policy 2 (BP 2): Support will be given towards the retention of existing businesses within the Fiddlers Farm business area (shown above) to include the provision of satisfactory car parking for staff and visitors as well as for the provision of a strategy to secure the containment and subsequent disposal of waste

Supporting Evidence

- The National Planning Policy Framework, Core planning principles, bullet point no 3, refers to:-
 - “proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the ... businesses and industrial units, infrastructure ..that the country needs”.

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- The National Planning Policy Framework, Supporting a prosperous rural economy says:-
 - “To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:
 - support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas...”
- As set out in the Economic Delivery Policies section of the Colchester Borough Council Preferred Options publication of July 2016, pp 65 and 66 show that the “creation of new jobs” as well as “creating, supporting and retaining businesses” are priorities as part of the Colchester Borough Council Economic Development Strategy.
- Policy DM6 (Economic development in rural areas and the countryside) as set out in the May 2017 Publication Draft of the Local Plan says a) “Sites and premises currently used ... for employment purposes in rural parts of the Borough will be safeguarded for appropriate economic uses to ensure local residents have access to local job opportunities without the need to travel” and b) “Within ...rural sites providing an economic function, the following uses are considered appropriate in principle – Business (B1), general industrial (B2), storage and distribution (B8)....”
- The Fiddlers Farm business area has been in existence for many years providing, albeit limited, opportunities for local employment. The three businesses that exist on the site comprising a builders (office and building trades); horse stables (equine work); and a car body repair shop (motor trade).
- Question 15 of the March 2017 questionnaire (encouraging more local employment) attracted support from some 68 per cent of those who responded.

EIGHT ASH GREEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

COMMUNITY AMENITIES

Objective

To provide, support, maintain and where appropriate, introduce a range of amenities in the village

Policy

Community Amenities (CA1): To protect the allotments site from any future potential development

Policy

Community Site (CS 1): Land on the site of the Church of England Church is designated as the site for new Community Hub/Hall and shall be safeguarded for that purpose. Development proposals which promote alternative uses on the site will not be supported

Supporting evidence

- The National Planning Policy Framework, Core planning principles, bullet point no 12, mentions the need to:-
 - “take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities to meet local needs.”
- The Community Facilities section of the Colchester Borough Council Preferred Options publication of July 2016, paragraph 7.4, states that:-
 - “Community facilities are an essential element of sustainable communities providing for ... health, culture, recreation....”
- Of the 477 people who responded to question 29 of the March 2017 questionnaire (Is there a need for a new village hall?), some 60 per cent of the villagers agreed with some 48 per cent who expressed a preference, saying it should be located on the land next to the Church of England church.