

title page, photo ...
Framework for Earls Colne Neighbourhood Plan

INTRODUCTION

- What is an NP?
- Why does Earls Colne need an NP
- How the community is involved
- Planning context (Braintree District Council plan situation)

THE PARISH TODAY

- Descriptive text (location, history, assets etc)
- Demographic information (key statistics)
- Key issues / SWOT

VISION AND PLANNING OBJECTIVES

- Vision “how we want the village to be in 2033”
- Objectives “what we want this plan to achieve”

POLICIES

- Each **objective** will have a number of policies
- Each policy must have ‘reasoned justification’ i.e. the evidence that underpins the policy
- Each policy must have a statement outlining that it is ‘in conformity’ with BDC policy, national policy (and EU policy where still relevant)

ACTION PLAN

- Details of projects that are proposed

Do we need to add a list of ACRONYMS to the contents ?

INTRODUCTION

What is Neighbourhood Planning?

The 2011 Localism Act gives local communities powers to produce Neighbourhood Plans, which can be used to guide and shape future development in an area. Once adopted, a Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the Development Plan for the area and, alongside the Braintree District Local Plan, is required to be used in the determination of planning applications.

Neighbourhood Plans must be subject to public consultation, examination, and local referendum prior to adoption. Policies contained within a Neighbourhood Plan should be supported by documented evidence and sustainability appraisals as necessary. Neighbourhood Plans must meet the overall aims and objectives of the government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly in relation to supporting and promoting sustainable development.

Where a Neighbourhood Plan is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area, such as North Essex and Braintree District, neighbourhood planning can provide a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of future development for their community. *(Either footnote here to clarify that the quantity of development is non-negotiable but the type and placement of it could be, or a sentence to be added in the text to emphasise this point)*

An area with an adopted Neighbourhood Plan becomes eligible to receive 25% of CIL revenues for Community Infrastructure from development taking place.

A CIL has not yet been adopted in Braintree District.

(Note here to explain Community Infrastructure Levy (1) (CIL))

Any Neighbourhood Plan must meet the basic conditions set out below:

1. the Neighbourhood Plan has regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Housing;
2. the making of the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
3. the making of the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Local Plan;
4. prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection to proposals within the Neighbourhood Plan.

(Note here referencing Planning Practice Guidance (2): Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (3) paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B)

Why does Earls Colne Need a Neighbourhood Plan?

There is increasing pressure from central government to build more and more new homes throughout the country. Within our local area alone, Braintree District Council has been set a target of providing over 800 houses per year for the next 13 years. Following the rejection of their proposals to create new “Garden Communities” the majority of new developments will most likely be located in or around the existing three towns and six serviced villages within the BDC area, one of the latter being Earls Colne.

Sentence here to say how many more homes must be built in EC between 2011 and 2033?

(Note here referencing Braintree HNS)

Without an approved Local Plan for the BDC area, the planning authority has little control over speculative developments. Currently within the Earls Colne Parish there is a total of over 350 new homes under construction or going through the planning process *and a further 250 are required to be built by 2033.*

The creation of a Neighbourhood Plan will provide an opportunity for the concerns, priorities and aspirations of existing local residents to be clearly stated so that they can be given consideration when planning applications for new housing developments are submitted. Additionally, and crucially, the Neighbourhood Plan can provide details of how local public services and amenities should be developed to cope with the significant increase in the population of the village.

How is the community Involved?

Date	Activity
July 2018	Newsletter sent to all residents providing background on NP and asking for them to register support.
October 2018 (24 th)	Public Meeting in Village Hall to determine whether there was sufficient support to move forward with a NP.
November 2018	Halstead Gazette press release
November 2018	Engagement letters to Earls Colne Primary, Ramsey and Honywood schools
March 2019	Status posters in noticeboards and shop window
April 2019	Posters advertising questionnaire in noticeboards, shop windows, website and Facebook
April 2019	Questionnaires delivered to all homes in village
May 2019	NP drop in event at Constitutional Club
May 2019	Posters updating residents on questionnaires and encouraging further responses
July 2019	Pop up table at Earls Colne Primary School village fete
July 2019 (16 th)	Public meeting in Village Hall providing update on plan and including guest speakers
July 2019	Pop up questionnaire table outside Co-op to raise awareness and encourage completion of surveys
August 2019 (10 th)	Pop up questionnaire table at Four Colnes Show and outside Co-op

THE PARISH TODAY

*I have changed this section of the draft more than any other. I have shortened it to make the NP document easier to read as a whole. I have started with a few sentences to describe the situation, general aspect and sense of place of the village.
For those interested in reading a more detailed account of the village's history, I suggest EC Design Statement be added as an appendix.*

Earls Colne is situated near the Essex and Suffolk border, and is surrounded by mixed farmlands punctuated by ancient, mainly broadleaved woodlands. From several footpaths, there are many attractive views across the river valley and open fields; it is the type of scenery depicted by local artists Gainsborough and Constable, now considered to be the very essence English, rural landscape. The High Street has many timber framed, Tudor buildings giving an impressive and distinctive roof-scape; along the length of the main road is a rich variety of fine buildings from all periods of history that make our village visually interesting and a place its inhabitants are rightly proud of .

History

(I have shortened this to include, mostly, history that can be seen in the buildings.)

Earls Colne has a long history. There is archaeological evidence of settlement during both the Stone Age and Roman times. It is mentioned in the Domesday Book, compiled under William the Conqueror from the 11th century, and has remained inhabited since.

During Norman times, the area was given to the Earls of Oxford. Two prominent buildings, the church and the Priory, were founded by the family in the 12th century. The stars on the Church tower, built in the 16th century, relate to the family's coat of arms and participation in the crusades. Other religious buildings include a Baptist Chapel and the Quaker Meeting House: dating from the 17th century, the latter still contains one of the oldest galleries in the country.

Earls Colne also had its own Grammar School, founded in 1520 by the Reverend Swallow. This was closed in 1975 but the handsome buildings remain a feature of York Road. They were built in 1904 with generous funds donated by the Hunt family who owned the Atlas Works foundry. Other equally impressive Edwardian buildings, given to the village by the Hunt family, include the Village Hall and Library and numerous, late Victorian, worker's cottages. Along with agriculture, the foundry provided much employment for the population from 1824 until the 1980s. The site has now become a new housing development with some larger

buildings having been preserved and converted to housing, workshops, a local museum and health centre.

Other industrial estates are situated on the edges of the village, on the sites of the old wartime airfield (still used as an airfield and base for Essex Air Ambulance) and disused railway station. Occupations of residents are now very varied with many commuting to London and nearby towns.

APPENDIX see Village Design statement for further detailed, historical and geographical facts.

Transport Links

The village is situated on the main road between Halstead and Colchester (A1124) which, at times during the day, is extremely busy with something in the order of 1,000 vehicular movements per hour being recorded. The road has a 30 mph speed limit within the Earls Colne parish boundaries. It passes through the village centre which is lined with shops and businesses and includes bus stops and pedestrian crossings. There are two major junctions on this road within the village:

1. Station Road which provides access to Colne Engaine and Pebmarsh
2. Coggeshall Road (B1098) which connects to the main Colchester to Braintree road (A120) and to Coggeshall village.

The closest mainline railway station, which is on the Norwich to London Liverpool Street Line, is situated in Kelvedon which is 7½ miles from the village centre with a journey time by car of approximately 15 minutes. There is also a station at Chapel & Wakes Colne which is around 3½ miles from the centre of Earls Colne, this station is on the Sudbury to Marks Tey branch line.

A bus service operates along the A1124 between Halstead and Colchester providing an hourly service from 06.00 to 23.00 each weekday and Saturday with a reduced service on Sundays.

Village Facilities

The village has a wide range of local facilities and amenities including:

- Three centres of worship (C of E Church, Baptist Church and Quaker Hall)
- A modern doctor's surgery with four resident doctors and a range of support staff.
- A primary school with a capacity of up to 420 children (based on a maximum class size of 30 pupils).
- A Post Office / Hardware Store.
- A pharmacy .
- A supermarket, butcher, several hairdressers, estate agencies and a range of other, mostly independent, specialist shops.
- Three public houses and three social clubs.
- Two golf courses, fitness centres and a recreation club.
- A public park area (Millennium Green) and various children's playgrounds in residential areas.
- A dental practice located on the Airfield Industrial Site within the parish boundary.

See attached Plan detailing the location of Village amenities and facilities.

APPENDIX fully comprehensive list of commercial and industrial businesses, including airfield industrial park

Housing Stock

Earls Colne currently has around 1,600 residential properties ranging in age from the 15th Century, within the historical core areas, to 21st century in various mixed residential areas. The percentage of detached and semi-detached properties is significantly above the national average and, as a consequence, the percentage of flats is much lower than the national figure. This is not uncommon in long established rural communities.

The total number of dwellings remained fairly static from the latter years of the 20th century up to around 2016 when a number of new speculative housing developments started to be proposed. Currently there are upwards of 350 new homes either under construction or in the detailed planning stages. These are mostly being constructed by the National House Builders and tend to be located either on the fringes of the village or within infill sites.

As Braintree District Council does not have an approved local plan the type and size of houses being constructed tends to be dictated more by the developers' preferences than necessarily meeting the needs of existing local residents. Although BDC has consistently enforced a policy of requiring 40% of all new larger developments to be affordable housing (both rental and shared ownership). The tenure split of affordable housing generally aligns with the BDC policy of 70% rental and 30% shared ownership.

The table below could be put in an appendix, add sentence to direct people to it.

Demographic Summary

Total Population	3,695
Gender Split (Male /Female)	47.8% / 52.2%
Children under 16 years	700 (19%)
Working Age Adults	2,215 (60%)
Older Adults (65+)	780 (21%)
Lone Parent Families with Children	105
Single Pensioner Households	240
People from black or minority ethnic groups	150
People born outside the UK	150
Total Number of Homes	1,613
Detached	516 (32%)
Semi Detached	542 (34%)
Terraced	404 (25%)
Flats (Purpose Built)	117 (7%)
Flats (Other)	34 (2%)

KEY ISSUES OF CONCERN TO THE COMMUNITY

The table below sums up both positive and negative issues that Earls Colne faces in its future development: S.W.O.T

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>Rich history Lots of services Walking distance to centre Community Spirit Pretty (not chocolate box) but still functional village Place to be proud of Plenty of employment for village size Good leisure facilities Proximity to countryside/walks, especially Chalkney Woods Mix of people/demographics Good school</p> <p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>A Neighbourhood Plan would seek to : influence what is built/developed and where; make a list of historic buildings and features to be preserved, not lost sight of or over shadowed; influence village/ town planning; increase environmental sustainability; develop better transport communication in the village and between other local communities; have a say over how new developments link/integrate with existing ones; enable village to grow organically without being swamped by insensitive developments; give greater clarity on what local residents desire and allow the village to participate democratically in decisions about its future</p>	<p>Traffic – main route from Halstead to Colchester, both growing rapidly and adding traffic Parking – streets crowded because older houses were not designed for car ownership Services overstretched with limited capacity – struggling to cope with increasing demand of growing population Lack of youth facilities/young family services Lack of engagement by residents - lack of cohesion/involvement Lack of village communication* <i>*shown to be otherwise during pandemic?</i> Lack of real power for Parish Council and understanding of their role Lack of public transport (at times for commuters) No connection to airfield industrial site, Coggeshall, Braintree or mainline stations at Kelvedon Marks Tey or Braintree</p> <p>THREATS</p> <p>Sudden large increase in population that outstrips the capacity of schools, medical services and other infrastructure; village loses its character and becomes impersonal; losing village feel re size; loss of identity and loyalty to the community, a place less cherished; loss of greenfield land; additional stress on the environment and contributors to climate change such as pollution from extra traffic, building on green space that may increase flood risk, destruction of wildlife habitat, litter and wear on foot paths and other amenities; type of housing not specific to meet local demand demographics determined by new housing built not needs of the existing community;</p>

VISION

To protect and secure the rich history, rural environment and community spirit of our village. To enhance Earls Colne as a residential and business community offering wide ranging housing stock, good employment opportunities, local sport and leisure facilities within an attractive, safe and friendly environment.

OBJECTIVES

Environment and Infrastructure

- To improve the quality, condition and signage of existing footpaths as an amenity in the wider environment, and develop further a network of paths and cycle ways to facilitate travel without cars.
- Have additional provisions for traffic management and parking facilities.
- To encourage the building of energy efficient housing and use of renewable energy resources.
- To preserve wildlife by protecting habitat and encouraging measures such as wildlife corridors where needed.
- *(Combining these two categories, I have ended up with 4 instead of 3 objectives. Could this last objective be worked into the first point of community facilities - ...green spaces, wildlife habitat, public... wildlife corridors could be a matter for policy. I have left the 4 objectives here for now so as not to undermine the work of the Environment Group.)*

Community Facilities

- To preserve and enhance existing Community Facilities, including green spaces, public buildings and services.
- To encourage wider use and availability of those amenities and provide additional facilities where necessary.
- To ensure any new residential or commercial development has safe and easy access to most village facilities/amenities, preferably by walking or cycling.

Housing and Design

- To ensure that new housing developments meet the needs of existing residents, particularly with respect to affordable homes.
- To encourage the provision of shared ownership affordable homes at price levels commensurate with the incomes of local residents,

especially those currently renting or living in multi-generation households.

- To promote the provision of new housing suitable for older residents who wish to downsize from their current properties.

Economy

- To continue to attract a wide range of businesses and employers and provide better transport links between residential areas and places of work .
- Ensure that faster broadband is installed to meet the needs of homeworkers, farmers and local businesses.
- To continue to provide our village community with a vibrant retail centre with increased parking and access.

POLICY IDEAS

Environment

Community Facilities

Housing

Economy

Connectivity

