



25th April 2025

Nadine Calder
Colchester City Council

Dear Nadine

Planning Application 250545: Land north of Coach Road, Great Horkesley

Thank you for allowing Great Horkesley Parish Council (GHPC) a little more time beyond the statutory deadline so that a public meeting and an extraordinary council meeting could be arranged in response to this application. The public meeting took place last Tuesday evening, 22nd April, followed by the council meeting on the Wednesday morning. At the extraordinary meeting **the Parish Council resolved unanimously to recommend that the application be refused.**

A resident who addressed the meeting was clearly very well-informed in planning matters and subsequently supplied a copy of his own reasoned objection to the proposal as submitted to the City Council. Since it incorporates most of the grounds for objection that residents expressed at the public meeting, Great Horkesley Parish Council is pleased to endorse his objection, which for convenience is attached as Appendix A to this letter. I am not mentioning his name here since you would only redact it.

Put simply, the Parish Council's objection to the proposal is based on the following grounds:

1. Coach Road

There is huge disbelief that the applicant will be able to address the existing traffic problems on Coach Road in the vicinity of the Bishop William Ward School (BWWS). Although a car park for school users (and others?) is offered as part of the development, there is no reason to believe it will be used. For some years the school and parish council offered parent parking at the village hall some 350m away from the school gate but very few parents took up the offer. A majority of parish councillors have children at the school; their view is that those who park near the school do so because they are in a hurry so are not likely to incorporate a walk from and to a car park inside the development into their routine. The evidence is that parking restrictions are not a deterrent to them, so it is pointless for the applicant to rely on such restrictions to mitigate the impact of their proposal on the congestion outside the school.

While it is indisputably a nuisance to local residents, there is no doubt that parking outside the school significantly reduces vehicle speeds on Coach Road. If the applicant were able to remove the parking to mitigate the impact of the proposed development, it is likely to lead to increase vehicle speeds outside the BWWS, which is highly undesirable.

The Council is also of the view that the applicant has not demonstrated control of sufficient land within the boundaries of Coach Road to deliver the proposed changes to mitigate the danger represented by increased traffic flows.

Finally, even if the changes were achievable, they would have an undesirable impact on the street scene, changing it from pleasantly semi-rural to decidedly urban.

2. The need for development to be phased

Outline consent has been granted for 100 homes on the land around Great Horkesley Manor, known as land east of Nayland Road. It is the major Great Horkesley site scheduled for housing in the current Local Plan, its inclusion having been welcomed by GHPC following successful stakeholder consultation sessions run by the land-owner's agent. The impact on BWWS was considered to be beneficial, there being capacity there due to the children of those who bought homes on the Tile House Farm development moving on to secondary education. Hopkins Homes have advertised that homes will be available on the site by December 2026; a reserved matters application is known to be close to submission.

A separate 150-home site coming on stream at the same time as the Hopkins Homes 100 would have a pronouncedly adverse impact on BWWS. While it may just be possible to expand the school buildings to accommodate the resulting "double bulge" of new pupils, once they grow and leave there would be massive spare capacity which could only be filled by children from outside the village, leading to a significant unavoidable increase in parents driving to and from the school – which the applicant has admitted is already a problem.

At present, because its admissions policy is distance based, the default secondary school for Horkesley Heath children is Trinity School in Chesterwell. However, Essex County Council has long-defined BWWS as a feeder school for St Helena School in central Colchester. Trinity School is easily accessible on foot and by bike; St Helena School is not. As proposed development closer to Trinity School is built out, fewer Great Horkesley children will be admitted to Trinity and more will need to travel to St Helena, a journey more likely to be made in a parent's car. The development of the land north of Coach Road in the absence of plans to expand Trinity School will simply accelerate that process. There should be no development in the village other than on the allocated Hopkins Homes site until there is significantly increased secondary school capacity within walking and cycling distance of the village; generating more trips under North Station bridge is unacceptable.

3. Speculative development

The applicant has made no case for the site to be developed either now or in the near future; **need has not been demonstrated**. It is not allocated in the adopted Local Plan and, given the strong objections already lodged by Anglian Water and the NHS, it may not be allocated in the emerging Local Plan. As recently as June 2024, the CCC Planning Policy

Team included the following in the Great Horkesley Settlement Boundary Review sent to GHPC for comment:

“It is desirable to prevent further ribbon development to the west to discourage further development away from village services and facilities and where character is more rural or is open countryside.”

This survived in the revised document approved by GHPC and returned to Planning Policy, a copy of which is attached as Appendix B to this letter. No argument has been put since June 2024 that this policy is flawed – the land is still open countryside, well away from any main road and most village facilities – so GHPC would expect the current proposal to be tested against it: it would undoubtedly fail.

GHPC recognises that as a result of central government policy, at some future time and in an orderly fashion within the local plan process, there is likely to be a need to identify a site for another significant development in the parish of Great Horkesley. GHPC would expect to be an active partner in that selection process, as it was for the Tile House Farm development and the forthcoming Hopkins Homes development. Both of those major developments were anticipated in the local plan of the day in which significant benefits to the village were identified. GHPC was able to support them both and many local residents recognised the expansion of the village could lead to it becoming a better place to live.

In contrast, because the current proposal relates to unallocated land and despite having run consultation exercises in the village, the applicant has been unable to identify any worthwhile benefit to the village whatsoever within the outline application. (This point was made at the meeting on Tuesday by people who had participated in the applicant’s consultation.) There is no reason to believe that the village would become a better place to live as a result of what is now proposed, nor that the character of its community could survive the addition of 250 homes on both developments simultaneously. A change of that order would need careful management: there is no proposal for such management within the application.

4. Sewerage and surface water drainage

GHPC has been a partner in Multi Agency Group 10, initiated by Anglian Water, so the objection to the proposal from Anglian Water based on lack of capacity to process sewage from the development has the council’s strong and informed support. Maintaining effective sewage disposal across the parish and treatment elsewhere is evidently a constant challenge, but that difficulty is not allowed for by the applicant.

While the Hopkins Homes proposal to the east of the A134 is on a slight slope and can, via a SUDS scheme, discharge surface water into the Black Brook, the present proposal is for the development of land which longer-term residents can remember is prone to flooding because it is flat and the underlying clay is impermeable. The applicant does not appear to have investigated this problem thoroughly and proposed a workable solution.

5. GP Services

GHPC notes the objection to the proposal from the NHS and can bear witness to the difficulty in obtaining local treatment. Residents talk of having to attend the Cavalry Barracks surgery on the other side of Colchester in order to get timely treatment. Another major development in Great Horkesley can only make this worse for all residents. Expansion of the village should wait until the Government's promise to provide more capacity at GP surgeries has been fulfilled.

6. Biodiversity

It was noted with some disbelief, because the owner of the site also owns significant tracts of countryside elsewhere in the village (which, incidentally, are very poorly served by existing PROWs for two legs or four) that the would-be developer has been unable to locate anywhere within, or close to, the application site on which biodiversity could be increased. This is as unacceptable as it is ridiculous (it was met by expressions of disbelief at the public meeting).

7. Impact on A134

GHPC is aware that, under National Grid's proposal for a haul road hub and a massive semi-industrial development in the village at which their new Norwich-to-Tilbury transmission cables would emerge from the ground and return to pylons, all of the traffic management features on the A134 between Junction 28 on the A12 and a point north of Great Horkesley Post Office Stores would be removed to facilitate its use by exceptionally large construction plant. National Grid's estimate is that there would be an additional 321 vehicles **per day**, including 193 HGVs, over the construction period 2027 – 2031.

This proposal appears to have Government blessing, so commonsense would indicate that this is not the time to approve a speculative development that would bring extra traffic onto the A134 via the Coach Road mini-roundabout. Once again, GHPC believes that an orderly approach to development, taking into account all matters known to be "in the pipeline" will better serve the village.

I must now repeat that Great Horkesley Parish Council believes that this application should be refused. However, if Colchester City Council is minded to give conditional outline consent, the following points would apply:

8. Extension of cycle friendly routes in the village

The applicant has suggested a cycle route between the development site and Nayland Road via Malvern Way and then either Keelers Way or Brick Kiln Lane. The latter is narrow, of no known ownership and as a consequence very poorly maintained. Keelers Way is generally parked on both sides, including some pavement parking, and a bus route, though bus drivers can find it difficult to get through the parked cars. A better route would be via Blackbrook Road, as per the submission from Colchester Cycling Campaign; this route extends northwards to the Ivy Lodge Road mini-roundabout, which could be useful, especially if it were signed to enable cyclists to cross the A134 safely at that point. The

Cycling Campaign proposal would mean creating a gap in the barrier (again, of unknown ownership) between Brick Kiln Lane and Blackbrook Road, but that would also be beneficial to walkers. Blackbrook Road has a gentler gradient than either Keelers Way or Brick Kiln Lane, so is more likely to encourage cycling.

That said, GHPC believes that parking generated by local residents and BWWS staff is likely to make establishing an attractive cycle route on Malvern Way difficult.

GHPC urges caution re the Cycling Campaign proposal to convert a section of the Essex Way into a cycle path or to link Coach Road to a potential bridge across the A12. Funding was provided under the Tile House Farm §106 Agreement to upgrade the footpath linking it to Old House Road to a bridleway and so create an off-road cycle route. The landowner staunchly refused to co-operate and the funds had to be returned to the developer. The same landowner would be involved in the West Bergholt and A12 bridge links.

As a long stop, the developer should be required to provide the segregated cycle path to Chesterwell identified in the Hopkins Homes §106 Agreement in the event that that development does not take place.

9. Jubilee Green development

GHPC and CCC are currently discussing transfer of the ownership of the Green to GHPC with a view to it being complete by the end of 2025. A draft development plan is being worked up. It currently includes amongst other things an outdoor gym and fitness route, multi-sports games area, solid paths on the Green to make it more wheelchair- friendly, lighting on the path linking the village hall to the School and play equipment for older children including a zip wire. Any developer in the village would be expected to contribute to the funding of the enhancement of our Jubilee Green.

10. Village Hall

There are two aspects to this. First, the village hall will need to be made larger to accommodate the needs of a larger population; again, this applies to any would-be developer. Suggestions have included an extra hall, a larger committee room, more storage, a volunteer-run café and changing rooms.

Second, the village hall is heated by an air-source heat pump run on mains electricity. GHPC would like to make it carbon-neutral through the use of batteries and more solar panels.

11. Scout hut

Under the §106 agreement for the Hopkins Homes agreement, a modest scout hut is to be provided. It will be owned by the parish council and the public will be able to hire it, but it will be leased to the scouts who will be responsible for its management and maintenance. Any developer seeking to increase the population of the village should be required to fund the extension of the Scout hut or, if the Hopkins Homes development does not take place, to provide the Scout hut.

12. Allotments

It is some years since the demand for allotments in the village was tested, but it existed and resulted in the requirement under the Hopkins Homes §106 agreement for allotments to be provided on that site. Whether or not those allotments are created, another 150 homes at a considerable distance from the Hopkins Homes development would undoubtedly justify the provision of allotments within the site North of Coach Road.

13. Construction site traffic

HGV arrivals and departures should be limited to the period during the day after children have arrived at school and before they start to go home. No vehicles should be allowed to park other than within the development site. Wheel-washing should take place within the development site to ensure that no mud or clay is transferred to Coach Road.

I believe I have incorporated into this letter all of the matters which emerged in the two meetings which are pertinent to the planning application but either our parish clerk or I will be in touch again if others come to light which GHPC considers should be taken into account. Conversely, please contact me if there is anything here which requires clarification.

Kind regards

CLlr Christopher Arnold
Chairman, Great Horkesley Parish Council

Cc Cllrs Darius Laws and Lewis Barber

Appendix A

Copy of objection supplied to Great Horkesley Parish Council
by a Coach Road resident who spoke at the public meeting.

Application number: 250545

Date: 31/03/2025

Reason for comment: Object to the proposal

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Objection to Planning Application 250545 (Land North of Coach Road, Great Horkesley)

I am writing as a local resident to object to planning application 250545, which seeks outline consent for 150 dwellings on land north of Coach Road, Great Horkesley. The proposal is fundamentally inappropriate in location and scale, directly conflicting with the recently adopted Colchester Local Plan (2022). It represents unplanned speculative development in open countryside, contrary to the spatial strategy and specific policies (including SS7, SG1, SG2, OV2) that direct growth to sustainable locations. The application utterly fails to justify overriding the Local Plan, offering inadequate infrastructure and sustainability measures. In summary, it would impose an unacceptable burden on local services, harm the rural landscape, and undermine the plan-led approach. I urge Colchester City Council to refuse this application for the reasons set out below.

Conflict with Local Plan and Spatial Strategy

The proposal conflicts with the adopted Colchester Local Plan (Section 2, 2022), which should be the primary basis for decision-making. Great Horkesley is identified as a "Sustainable Settlement" in the spatial hierarchy, but the Plan carefully limits its growth through specific site allocations. Policy SS7 (Great Horkesley) allocates only 80 new dwellings at the Great Horkesley Manor site (with a further 13 at School Lane) along with required local infrastructure improvements. This planned growth (93 homes total) was considered appropriate for the entire plan period up to 2033. In stark contrast, the application seeks 150 dwellings on an unallocated greenfield site, far exceeding the scale of development envisaged for Great Horkesley. By going outside the defined settlement boundary (into what is designated countryside), the proposal also triggers Policy OV2 (Countryside), which strictly limits new housing in rural areas. OV2 permits only certain rural enterprise or small-scale rural exception housing where a local need is demonstrated—clearly not applicable to a large market-driven estate. The scheme is therefore fundamentally at odds with the Local Plan's strategy and policies.

Colchester's spatial development strategy (Policy SG1) directs the majority of growth to the urban area of Colchester and other strategic locations, with only limited, plan-led growth in villages. Great Horkesley's modest allocation in Policy SS7 reflects this strategy of concentrating development at the most accessible, sustainable locations (main town, garden community, etc.) and protecting the character of smaller settlements and countryside. Approving 150 homes here would override the spatial hierarchy and set a damaging precedent, inviting unplanned sprawl in other villages. It also undermines Policy SG2 (Housing Delivery), which commits to delivering the Borough's housing need (14,720 homes 2017–2033) through the planned sites. The Council has an up-to-date plan and can demonstrate a robust housing land supply; there is no housing shortfall that necessitates this development. As such, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that proposals conflicting with an up-to-date plan "should not usually be granted". Granting permission here would contradict the NPPF's plan-led approach and erode public confidence in the Local Plan.

Inappropriate Location and Scale

The scale of 150 dwellings is grossly disproportionate for Great Horkesley and its location on the edge of the village is unsustainable. The site lies on open agricultural land north of Coach Road, beyond the established village envelope. Developing this tract would extend the settlement dramatically north-west into open countryside, effectively merging into rural land with no defensible boundary.

Notably, during the Local Plan process the Council itself recognised the unsuitability of this very site (RNE46). The Council's assessment concluded that a large scheme north of Coach Road "would not represent an appropriate level of growth and would extend the settlement too far north and west into open countryside... A site north of Coach Road would inevitably result in more traffic passing the village school... It would be comparatively remote from the more regular bus services... The site would be highly visible on the edge of the settlement and would impact on landscape character." These points remain entirely valid. The proposal constitutes a major urbanising incursion into the rural setting of the village, on a site that was considered and rejected in the adopted Plan as inappropriate.

Despite the developer's description of a "sustainable community", the location is inherently unsustainable for a development of this size. Great Horkesley has very limited services: a primary school and village hall are nearby, but there is currently no GP practice, very limited shopping facilities, and minimal local employment. Future residents would be highly car-dependent for most needs (commuting to work, secondary schooling, medical appointments, supermarkets, etc.). The application claims the site is close to bus stops on the A134, but in reality the public transport options are limited (infrequent rural bus routes) and the distance to Colchester's facilities means many trips will inevitably be by car. Locating 150 homes here conflicts with the NPPF's core aim to locate development in places that reduce the need to travel and encourage sustainable transport. The "sustainable location" claim is not borne out by the evidence—on the contrary, this is a peripheral village site that would generate hundreds of additional private car journeys daily, contrary to Colchester's climate change commitments. The scale (150 units) is also excessive relative to the village size, equating to a roughly 25–30% increase in dwellings in one blow. Such rapid expansion, in an unplanned manner, would overwhelm the community's character and social capacity.

Strain on Infrastructure and Local Services

Local infrastructure and services are simply not equipped to absorb a development of this magnitude. The application fails to demonstrate that essential services can cope, and it offers few firm commitments to new infrastructure beyond the site itself. Key concerns include:

Education: The village primary school (Bishop William Ward C of E Primary) is a small school that is near capacity. An influx of children from 150 new families would require significant expansion of school places. Yet the proposal does not include a new school or guaranteed expansion land/funding, apart from what would presumably be a basic financial contribution. Even with contributions, there is no evidence the school can be expanded on its constrained site or that alternative nearby schools have spare capacity. This raises the real risk of local children having to travel out of the village for schooling, undermining the sustainability of the settlement.

Healthcare: Great Horkesley has no doctor's surgery. Residents rely on GP practices in surrounding villages or the outskirts of Colchester (e.g. West Bergholt or Mile End), many of which are already oversubscribed. Adding approximately 150 families (possibly 300–400 people) will worsen the strain on local healthcare provision. The application offers no mitigation for healthcare—no medical facility on site, no evidence of coordination with NHS providers—meaning the development would dump additional patients onto neighbouring surgeries. This is contrary to NPPF advice on promoting healthy communities (which expects planning decisions to ensure development is supported by sufficient healthcare facilities).

Roads and Traffic: The proposal would add a substantial volume of traffic to Coach Road and the A134. Coach Road is a small country lane with no footways at present. Although the developer promises to add a footpath along the site frontage, pedestrians beyond that point would still face unsafe conditions. Crucially, traffic from the site must pass by the primary school and village hall area to reach the A134. The safety of children and other pedestrians is a serious concern, even with any minor highway tweaks. More vehicles at peak school times heighten the risk of accidents. The junction of Coach Road with the A134 will experience increased congestion; the A134 itself is a busy radial route into Colchester that already suffers from queues and delays at peak hours. The Transport Assessment (if provided) has not convincingly demonstrated that the road network can accommodate 150 extra homes (300 cars) without adverse effects. Additionally, increased traffic through the village contradicts the Plan's intention that new large developments be in locations served by better transport links.

Utilities and Drainage: The capacity of water, sewerage, and other utilities in this rural locality is uncertain. Great Horkesley's sewer network may require upgrades to handle significantly increased flow (150 homes' worth of wastewater)—yet the application gives no clear plan for this, implying reliance on already-stretched infrastructure. Any required upgrades to sewage treatment or water supply (via Anglian Water, etc.) are left unspecified, creating a risk of overload or future public expense. Surface water drainage is another issue: the site is greenfield today, and replacing it with hard surfaces will increase runoff. While the developer indicates attenuation basins on-site, it must be ensured that downstream flood risk is not increased. The burden on utilities and the environment has not been robustly addressed in the application.

In summary, the developer's infrastructure proposals are woefully inadequate. They amount to token on-site measures (some footpaths, an attenuation basin, land for a car park) and standard financial contributions, which do not resolve the fundamental capacity issues. There is no new school, no healthcare facility, and no major transport improvement proposed that would genuinely support an additional 150 houses here. Approving this would place unfair strain on existing residents who would face more crowded schools and surgeries, and more dangerous roads, with little or no mitigation. This fails to meet the infrastructure requirements of Local Plan Policy SG1 (which seeks to align growth with infrastructure) and the development would not be "sustainable" in the proper sense.

Landscape and Environmental Impacts

The scheme would cause significant harm to the rural landscape character and local environment.

The application site is presently open farmland that provides a green rural setting at the village's edge. Developing it with 150 houses, roads, and associated urban infrastructure will irreversibly transform the landscape from countryside to housing estate. The earlier planning assessment correctly noted the site is "highly visible on the edge of the settlement" and development would "impact on landscape character".

The proposed token landscaping (planting some new woodland strips and retaining some existing trees) is insufficient to screen or integrate a development of this scale. The character of Coach Road would change from a quiet green lane into a suburban street. There would also be adverse impacts on the setting of nearby heritage assets—for example, the village's historic buildings (like All Saints Church and nearby listed structures) derive some of their rural context from the surrounding open land, which this development would erode (even if not directly adjacent, it changes the wider village setting).

From an ecological perspective, the site's current use as agricultural land means it likely has some existing habitat value (hedgerows, field margins, mature trees). The developer asserts a 10% biodiversity net gain, but no detailed plan is given, and in any case a 10% net gain is now a minimum legal requirement for major developments, not a special benefit. Replacing arable land with housing will inevitably disturb wildlife; protected species (such as bats in hedgerows or nesting farmland birds) could be affected. There is no information on thorough ecological surveys or how impacts will be mitigated beyond generic promises. Furthermore, the loss of productive farmland itself is an environmental negative—once built over, this agricultural resource is gone forever. In an era where food security and conserving countryside are important, building on greenfield land should be the last resort.

It is also worth noting the climate impact: building 150 new homes on a greenfield site far from major amenities is contrary to sustainable development principles aimed at combating climate change. Future occupants will generate higher carbon emissions through car travel. The construction will release carbon from soil and construction processes. The proposal does not indicate any exceptional measures (such as Passivhaus standards or on-site renewable energy) to offset this. In short, the environmental costs—in landscape, ecology, and climate terms—would be considerable. This conflicts with Local Plan Policy ENV1 (if applicable) and the NPPF's environmental objectives. The harm to the character and appearance of the countryside is in direct conflict with Policy OV2, which requires any development in the countryside to respect and preserve landscape character—a test this application clearly fails.

Lack of Justification & Absence of Public Benefit

No compelling public interest or need exists that would justify overriding the Local Plan in this case. The developer's planning statement and consultation materials highlight certain purported “benefits” of the scheme. I have considered these and find them either insubstantial or achievable without this development:

Housing and Affordable Housing: While new homes (including 30% affordable) are generally needed nationally, Colchester has an identified housing supply in line with its adopted targets. The Council has allocated sufficient sites (including the 93 in Great Horkesley and larger sites elsewhere) to meet needs. This speculative proposal is not responding to an unmet local housing need; rather, it is driven by the developer's interest. Affordable housing on site (potentially around 45 units at 30%) would be welcome if in the right location, but here it comes at the cost of unsustainable location and policy breach. If there is a specific local affordable need in Great Horkesley, that could be met by a genuine rural exception site or the existing allocations—not by tacking it onto a large market development that primarily delivers profit. In summary, the housing provided by this scheme is not a unique benefit but something that can and should be delivered on plan-compliant sites.

Convenience Store Land: The application originally offered land (0.2ha) for a small village shop. This was presented as a community benefit given the current lack of a shop. However, this is now proposed to be a car park, which is a token means of addressing the traffic and safety concerns during school drop-off. However, the car park does not go far enough to address the highways and traffic issues and the community shop is now entirely omitted from the proposal. One must question whether a large housing estate is a proportionate price for a small community car park and the village could potentially support a community shop or small store through less intrusive means. This benefit is thus not sufficient to outweigh the harm.

Public Open Space and Play Areas: The scheme includes 2.5 hectares of open space, play areas, and landscaping. This, however, is largely on-site provision for the new residents—it is a policy requirement that developments provide open space. Great Horkesley is already surrounded by open countryside, and has a village green/play area by the hall; the marginal addition of some paths or a play area within the new estate does not significantly benefit the wider community (and certainly not enough to justify breaching policy). The open space is also in parts functioning as drainage attenuation for the development. In essence, this is mitigation, not an extraordinary public gain.

Highway and Footpath Improvements: The developer proposes to create footways along Coach Road and links into existing footpaths/cycle routes. These are clearly mitigations needed for safety due to the development's own traffic generation—not gifts to the community. The footpath on Coach Road should arguably exist already for current residents' safety, but it is the development that necessitates it now. Minor junction works or crossing points (if proposed) similarly are standard requirements to make the scheme acceptable in highways terms. They do not outweigh the permanent loss of countryside and planning harm.

Economic Boost: Claims of job creation and local spending are overstated. Construction jobs are temporary and will happen wherever houses are built (preferably on allocated urban sites instead). New residents will spend money, but much of that will be in larger Colchester shops or elsewhere, not significantly boosting Great Horkesley's economy (aside from perhaps supporting a small shop if it is proposed). Meanwhile, existing residents could suffer economic disadvantages (e.g. decreased property values adjacent to the estate, or costs from increased congestion). The net economic benefit is minimal and certainly not unique to this location—housing development in appropriate locations would yield the same.

In conclusion, the benefits cited are either policy compliance measures or minor conveniences that do not come close to outweighing the clear conflict with the development plan and the harms identified. The NPPF's balance is unequivocal in this scenario: "adverse impacts" (on countryside, infrastructure, sustainability) would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. There is no overriding public interest reason to depart from the Local Plan. On the contrary, refusal is necessary to uphold the Plan's integrity and the principle of planned, sustainable development.

Conclusion

In light of the above points, I respectfully submit that this application is wholly unacceptable and must be refused. It conflicts with the Colchester Local Plan's core policies (SG1, SG2, SS7, OV2) and the carefully considered spatial strategy for growth. The proposal would impose serious harm on the local community, through infrastructure overload, increased traffic dangers, loss of countryside character, and unsustainable patterns of travel. It fails to meet the tests of sustainable development in all aspects—environmental, social, and economic. Crucially, allowing this development would undermine the plan-led system: Great Horkesley's growth has been set out in an adopted plan, and ad hoc expansion of this scale flies in the face of that democratic process.

I urge Colchester City Council to refuse planning permission for application 250545. This decision would be consistent with national policy (NPPF para 12, which notes that development conflicting with an up-to-date plan should ordinarily be refused) and with the Council's own vision for sustainable development in the Borough. The residents of Great Horkesley and the surrounding area depend on the Council to uphold the Local Plan and protect our village from inappropriate speculative development. I trust the Council will defend its adopted policies and safeguard our community's future by rejecting this proposal.

Appendix B

Great Horkesley Settlement Boundary Review
as approved by Great Horkesley Parish Council
on 18th June 2024
prior to its submission to Colchester City Council

Great Horkesley

Settlement shape and form

Great Horkesley is essentially linear in shape and has developed over time along the old Roman road that radiates away from north Colchester (now the A134). Settlement is fragmented, with the main core in the south around Horkesley Heath, where since the 1950s development has spread westwards from the main road. There are three smaller fragments to the north along the A134. Land to the east of the main road has remained relatively free of development and is more open in character.

Great Horkesley is the closest village to urban Colchester: the southern edge of the Horkesley Heath settlement is located just north of the A12 approximately 500m from the Colchester urban edge.

Settlement profile

The population of Great Horkesley parish, from the 2021 Census, is 2700 with 2230 of those within the built up area. The area of Great Horkesley parish is 11.92km². There are 1200 households in the parish. 20% of the population are school children and full-time students and 14.5% are over the age of 70 years old. There is a higher percentage of people mainly working from home than the England average (38.2% compared to 31.5% for England) and a higher percentage driving a car or van to work (49% compared to 44.5% for England). 62.5% of residents are actively employed which is higher than the national average of 57.4%. The percentage of people with no qualifications is lower than the national average (14.6% no qualifications compared to 18.1%) but the percentage of people with level 4 and above qualifications is very similar to the national averages for England (34% level 4 and above qualifications compared to 33.9% for England). Deprivation is lower than the England average - with 61.5% of households not deprived in any dimension compared to 48.4% for England.

School provision

The Bishop William Ward C of E Primary School (BWWS) is located centrally in the built up area of Horkesley Heath. According to Essex County Council's [May 2023 School Census](#), BWWS forms part of the Colchester Primary C: City North (Highwoods) forecast group. BWWS currently has 202 on roll. The current school capacity as [GOV.UK \(get-information-schools.service.gov.uk\)](https://gov.uk/get-information-schools.service.gov.uk) is 210.

According to Essex County Council's [Primary School Planning Groups: January 2022 Number on Roll and Forecast Pupil Numbers for 2022/23 to 2032/33](#), the forecast numbers

for the Colchester Primary 01: Colchester north forecast group, of which BWWS is a part, will increase by 113 from 2023/24 (4051 pupils) to 2032/33 (4164 pupils).

The closest Secondary School is The Trinity School in Chesterwell (3km) which opened for the 2023/24 academic calendar year so census information is unavailable and the school is not operating at full capacity yet. The Trinity School falls into Colchester Secondary 01 group which [forecast](#) 11,900 pupils in 2032/33. This is a decrease of 225 from 12,125 in 2023/24.

Sustainable travel

Horkesley Heath is served by Arriva and First buses. From Monday to Saturday Arriva services 2 and 2A and First service 87 both run from Malvern Way via Colchester Station and Colchester city centre at approximately half-hour intervals during the day; a Sunday service is provided only by First. Their ultimate destinations are Highwoods and Brightlingsea respectively.

In addition, from Monday to Saturday Heddingham and Chambers service 784 between Colchester and Sudbury passes through the village on the A134 six times daily

A recently-approved outline planning application should result in provision of a shared cycle path along the A134 between Horkesley Heath and the Colchester cycle network in Chesterwell.

There are no vehicle-free cycle links between Horkesley Heath and other parts of the village. This connectivity is provided only by the A134, which carries some 5000 vehicles per day in each direction. The A134 footways are no longer maintained by the highway authority, so north of Horkesley Heath significant lengths have become too narrow to walk safely and are unsuitable for cycling.

On foot via Footpath 40, Colchester's Park and Ride terminus is 2 km from the southern edge of the village; it is also 4km away via the A134.

Infrastructure

A primary school, a dental surgery, a pub and a new Village Hall are located within Horkesley Heath; further north a petrol station, motor engineer, general store and post office, a pub and an older village hall with scout hut are located at various points along the A134. The new Trinity secondary school in north Colchester is within easy walking distance of Horkesley Heath.

The 5.5 hectare village green on Horkesley Heath opened in 2012 to coincide with the Diamond Jubilee of her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II; it is a designated Queen Elizabeth II Field and is thus protected from development. It includes play equipment and areas planted to become future copses.

The Colchester Sports Park sports and leisure facilities are 2km distant via footpath or 4km via car. The Myland playing fields are 1.5km distant.

Green network and waterways

The Essex Way, a designated Long Distance Path linking Epping to Harwich, runs through Great Horkesley.

The north of Great Horkesley lies within the Dedham Vale National Landscape (formerly the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley AONB).

The River Stour, which is navigable by small craft, forms the boundary between Great Horkesley and Nayland to the north; it is also the boundary between Essex and Suffolk.

There are several agricultural reservoirs with Great Horkesley, some of which are pleasantly landscaped and are accessible from the public footpath network.

Public footpath 39 runs through a small area of woodland in the south-west of the village which, whilst privately owned, is used recreationally by local residents.

The entire area meets the Natural England ANGst district standard and some to the far north and far south of the area meets the ANGst wider neighbourhood standard.

High level constraints (at settlement level)

- Land to the south of Great Horkesley slopes down and is within the flood zone.
- It is desirable to prevent coalescence of Great Horkesley with the main Colchester urban area to the south to retain the individual identity of Great Horkesley.
- It is desirable to prevent further ribbon development to the west to discourage further development away from existing village services and facilities and where character is more rural/or is open countryside.
- There is no GP surgery; the nearest are in Nayland, West Bergholt and Mile End.
- Secondary school catchment areas have not been revised since The Trinity School was opened, so BWWS remains a designated feeder school for The St. Helena School, 4km further the south. There is concern that as Chesterwell grows, children from the more northerly parts of Great Horkesley will be obliged to attend The St Helena School, passing The Trinity School as they do so. The St. Helena School is over 8km from the most northerly settlement in Great Horkesley.

High level opportunities (at settlement level)

- Great Horkesley is located close to the main Colchester urban area on a key transport route with a good bus service which serves the railway station. It is just over 4km from the city centre and 3km from a secondary school.
- Great Horkesley has a primary school, post office and a number of other facilities.
- Great Horkesley is the only settlement in the Great Horkesley Parish area and so is the main community focus within the parish.
- The primary school in the village (Bishop William Ward Primary School), where there appears to be physical space to accommodate any expansion required.

Colchester City Council, Local Plan Review, Settlement Boundary Review - Stage One (2024)



As part of the Council's green network and waterways engagement, the following site was submitted as an idea for a new green space in Great Horkesley:

Pitchbury Wood -A forest area, for walks and a rampart for history

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Pitchbury Wood

