

OPTIONS FOR GROWTH

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Set out below are a series of questions and answers in relation to the Council's decision on the 14th September 2023 to approve three growth options for officers to work on in terms of evidence and modelling in connection with the work of the Local Development Plan Review.

Why is the Council looking at growth options?	The present approved Local Development Plan is over 5 years old, and this means legally that the Council has to carry out a review of its policies. Part of that work is to determine where future growth is going to go. In early 2022 the Council carried out an Issues and Options Consultation and, in that document, we set out seven high level options for future growth in the District. We have now reduced those seven high level options down to three which Officers will work on in order to come up with a single preferred option.
What are these three growth options?	The three options Officers will work on are. 1. TO PURSUE FURTHER TESTING FOR OPTION 3 – GROWTH IN THE TOWNS AND LARGE VILLAGES. 2. TO PURSUE FURTHER TESTING FOR OPTION 5 IN COMBINATION WITH OPTION 3 3. TO PURSUE FURTHER TESTING FOR OPTION 7 IN COMBINATION WITH OPTION 1
What are the towns and large villages?	The towns in Maldon District are Maldon and Heybridge and Burnham-on-Crouch. The large villages are in order of size Southminster, Tollesbury, Mayland and Latchingdon, Wickham Bishops, Tillingham, Great Totham South and Tolleshunt D`Arcy.
What is option 5?	This was to create a new satellite settlement or large urban extension bolted onto one of the towns, larger villages and/or settlement adjacent to the District boundary. In terms of available land to consider for this option no site has come forward for a new settlement. The following sites and housing numbers are considered large enough for an urban extension. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is land for approximately 1,556 homes adjacent to South Woodham Ferrers.• There are sites in Althorne which could accommodate 750 homes.• There are sites in Maldon which could accommodate 1,614 homes• There is a site in Southminster which could accommodate 1,050 homes
What is option 7?	This option covers the settlements that run along the railway line in the south of the District – Southminster, Burnham-on-Crouch, Althorne and North Fambridge.

<p>How much growth are we going to plan for in the District?</p>	<p>The Council has to, as a requirement of the local plan, allocate enough land to accommodate its future growth requirements, in terms of housing, employment, retail etc. At this stage of plan making, we carry out modelling work and testing on the highest and lowest growth figure. We have to take into account the need to deliver any potential infrastructure for the district. Infrastructure is one of the most important factors for the Council and it was a clear priority in terms of residents in the Issues and Options Consultation.</p>
<p>What are these infrastructure needs?</p>	<p>The three main infrastructure needs for the District are.</p> <p>Schools - Essex County Council have in their consultation response to the Issues and Options Consultation stated that Maldon District requires a secondary school. Therefore, the Council has to examine that possibility in terms of land availability, location and the funding of that school. To build a secondary school there is the need for land of 10ha in size and at a minimum 4500 homes to fund it. These homes must not already have planning permission, because if they did, they could not contribute to the funding for the school. There will also be a need for additional primary and early years infrastructure.</p> <p>Roads - There will also be road improvement needs which at present are unknown – the Council will be undertaking technical modelling to determine what improvements are needed and how much they will cost.</p> <p>Health - The NHS will have growth needs for the District and Officers will be working with health to understand these and how much they will cost.</p>
<p>Can we not just plan without a secondary school?</p>	<p>At this stage of plan making, we have to examine the possibility of providing a secondary school because it has been raised by Essex County Council. They are a statutory provider of infrastructure and under the planning legislation the Council has a Duty to try and co-operate with them. Not planning for vital infrastructure could leave residents of the District having to travel out of the District for their needs and this is particularly pertinent to trying to get children to school near to their homes.</p>
<p>Can we not just stop building houses?</p>	<p>The LDP Review process has to take into account future growth, the Council has a statutory duty to ensure that the future housing and economic needs of the district are planned for and it will make a choice on where that growth is going to go and will be undertaking the necessary work to make that decision in the coming months.</p>
<p>Why can we not build on brownfield land (previously developed land)?</p>	<p>We can allocate growth on brownfield land but Maldon District has very little of this type of land available because it does not have an industrial past. It is therefore inevitable that new development will have to go on greenfield land.</p>
<p>What about affordable housing?</p>	<p>Affordable housing is a priority for the Council, and the need for this type of housing is worked out in a piece of evidence work called a Local Housing Needs Assessment. The last one was done in 2021 and it showed a need for 174 affordable homes a year. The Council will need to evidence for the local plan review that it has done its utmost include the delivery of this amount of affordable housing in any future growth option.</p>
<p>Will developers be able to use the growth options as a reason to bring forward</p>	<p>No, they will not. The growth options do not carry weight in planning decision because the Council has not done the technical work with providers such as</p>

planning applications ahead of the review of the local plan?	Essex County Council and the NHS yet to ascertain which option is the best for the District going forward.
Don't we have a gap in infrastructure now?	<p>The way the planning system is set up is developers pay contributions for infrastructure at certain points during the building of development, these are normally on commencement, during and at the end of build out. That means that the funding for infrastructure does not all come in until the end of construction. Infrastructure providers such as the County Council and NHS cannot start to build out their infrastructure until they receive that funding. This makes it seem as if infrastructure is not going to be provided, it is, but in most cases not until after the growth has happened.</p> <p>The Council has no control over this matter, it is a national system of provision. The exception to this in the District is the North Garden Suburb relief road which is being built as the development on the Garden Suburb is being built.</p>
What about growth in the medium and small villages?	The Council is going to be looking at types and amounts of possible growth in the smaller settlements, though this is unlikely to be allocated growth. Policies around supporting the rural economy will be strengthened and made clearer.

The Council alongside statutory partners such as Essex County Council and the NHS will have to undertake much work on the three options chosen on 14th September 2023 – this work will entail the following –

Transport Model the options

Transport Model any major sites

After transport modelling reassess the options (it might knock out some)

Work with Strategic Delivery Partners on Infrastructure requirements across the options

Heritage impact assessments (as required)

Apply the results of the SFRA to sites/settlements

Apply the results of the wildlife study to the sites

Revisit all the relevant HELAA sites

Relook for connectivity

Consult Anglian Water

IA the sites/settlements

Determine in more detail site numbers/constraints

Assess the sites for any site-specific policy that should be applied/master planning needed to positively influence outcomes

Engage with developers

Set out a draft delivery trajectory for each site linked to the above

Set out if any site should provide specialist older persons/ extra care housing or G&T provision

Set out the amount of affordable housing each site could provide

Produce and agree at Council at Preferred Options Document