

Response to Colchester City Council

Preferred Options Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation 2025

Messing cum Inworth Parish Council (McIPC) submits this formal representation on Policies ST5, PP19 and PP48 in Colchester City Council's 'Preferred Options Draft Local Plan'.

McIPC also submits formal representation on the following Evidence Base and Supporting Documents:

- Summary of Sites Evidence Colchester Local Plan. October 2025 - Policy PP19
- Summary of Sites Evidence Colchester Local Plan. October 2025 - Policy PP48

It has strong concerns as follows:

Policy ST5 Colchester's Housing Needs

Paragraph 3.51 States that allocation PP19 includes land within Tiptree Parish and Messing cum Inworth Parish. McIPC believe the entire allocation for PP19 is within the Messing cum Inworth Parish, including the proposed 27 hectares of open space. McIPC therefore welcomes the opportunity to comment below.

Policy PP19 - Summary of MCiPC Concerns:

McIPC has concerns regarding this 600-house allocation that borders Tiptree but sits within McIPC, opposite the woodland band separating Tiptree from Messing, as follows:.

- Traffic from this site could cut through Messing and along New Road.
- The plan does NOT include any mitigation to stop rat-running into Messing roads.
- The site is admitted to be in Messing-cum-Inworth Parish, even though it functionally serves Tiptree.

The Policy sets out mandatory requirements as follows:

- 600 new dwellings and required Northern Link Road (B1022 ↔ B1023).
- Delivery of a Tiptree Country Park (27 ha).
- Must buffer Eden Wood and Inworth Wood.
- Provides pedestrian links and green corridors.
- Consideration to the inclusion of a mobility hub.
- Warns of possible heritage and archaeology impacts.
- Requires a detailed masterplan developed with the community.

Summary of Sites Evidence Colchester Local Plan October 2025 Policy PP19

This acknowledges:

- Some highways constraints, but “not significant enough” to stop deliverability.
- Harm to biodiversity due to ancient woodland proximity.
- Need buffers and retention of hedgerows including a “green lane”.
- The site lies in Messing-cum-Inworth Parish, not inside the Tiptree Parish boundary.
- Greenfield land.

Site allocated in Policy PP19 Tiptree (but allocation in Messing cum Inworth Parish Council) – Land North of Oak Road

The evidence summary for this site notes only minor “constraints” on highway access. Policy PP19 proposes 600 homes and explicitly requires delivering the northern link road as per the Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan. This link road would relieve Tiptree centre. However, until this is built, new traffic from this development could divert through New Road into Messing. This narrow country lane is very unsuitable.

MclPC request that strict traffic mitigation is required, and any planning permission for this allocation should require a construction traffic management plan preventing heavy vehicles from using the country lanes leading into Messing. Weight limits should be imposed on Messing village roads during works. This should be a stipulation of the Master Plan or included in Policy PP19.

The policy’s encouragement of a “mobility hub” or public transport provision is welcomed, as there are no local bus services.

MclPC agree with the requirement in PP19 that the link road should be delivered, but MclPC request that no additional traffic is routed through Messing’s country lanes whilst awaiting the completion of the link road.

Environmental points are also noted, with the site containing parts of Eden Wood and Inworth Wood (ancient woodland and Local Wildlife Sites). The Preferred Options allocation excludes the Eden Wood area, and PP19 mandates buffering both protected woodland and retaining the “green lane” hedgerow network. MclPC consider that these ecological safeguards must be enforced, with no encroachment and the creation of meaningful buffers, and the proposed 27 ha country park to benefit the local area.

MclPC welcome the opportunity to be involved from the early stages of the consultation process for the Masterplan for this development.

Policy PP48 - Summary of MCiPC Concerns:

McIPC has strong concerns for:

- Transport: No bus service, unsafe roads, long walking distances to bus stops.
- Traffic impacts: Narrow lanes; high volumes; Oak Road Tiptree traffic also likely to use New Road → Messing → Inworth Road.
- Flooding: 2015 surface-water problems affecting site 10634.
- Sewage capacity: Pumping station frequently fails; tanker reliance.
- Heritage: Conservation Area and danger of HGVs on the tight bend near the churchyard wall.
- Services: School oversubscribed; poor electricity and internet.

The Policy sets out mandatory requirements as follows:

- Approximately 25 dwellings, compatible with surrounding development.
- Access from Kelvedon Road and must not harm highway safety or be detrimental to highway capacity
- Require pedestrian links to existing footways and green infrastructure connections.
- Must provide 1.7 ha open space (important for drainage and buffering).
- Must deliver standing freshwater habitat (supports McIPC's drainage concerns).
- Requires screening with hedgerows/woodland to preserve rural character.
- Must conserve heritage assets (Conservation Area and many listed buildings).
- Must not discharge surface water to foul sewer (aligns with McIPC's concerns over sewer capacity).
- Wintering bird surveys required.

Summary of Sites Evidence Colchester Local Plan October 2025 Policy PP48

The Site passes SLAA Stages 1 & 2 under site allocation 10634

Issues noted:

- Some access constraints but deemed manageable.
- No potential harm to heritage assets (although it does state that a Proforma Heritage Impact Assessment is required)
- Opportunities for green infrastructure.
- States site is a logical extension, reduced in size from what was promoted

McIPC however note the following issues with The Sites Evidence Document:

- It does not identify flood risk as a constraint.
- It identifies access issues. – (But not significant enough to affect deliverability)
- It identifies no heritage or character issues

- It does not identify any issues relating to density and impact on character
- It does not identify issues with utility provision.

Settlement Evidence Stage 1 - November 2024 Document

MclPC would like to clarify that although the population of the parish of Messing-cum-Inworth is circa 166 households, 34 of these households are located in Inworth. The village of Messing has only 132 households

The 2017 Settlement Boundary Review identified the sewage, drainage and surface water capacity and (surface water) flooding issues that would need to be addressed if any development were proposed. This was not identified in the November 2024 Settlement Evidence Stage 1 Report. The 2017 Settlement Boundary Review stated that Messing should only be considered for limited small-scale growth. It concluded that an earlier promoted site for 21 houses was too large and vehicular access would be difficult to achieve. Messing was not considered sustainable or suitable for planned housing growth. Since 2017, none of these facts have changed.

Policy PP48 – Kelvedon Road, Messing

MclPC consider the City Council's evidence presents an overly optimistic view of the site's suitability and its lack of harm.

The City Council's Summary of Sites Evidence (October 2025) states that highway constraints are "not significant enough to affect deliverability", that there are "no known issues with utility provision", and that no adverse heritage or archaeological impacts are anticipated. It also concludes that the site would form a "logical extension to the village."

a) Transportation and Accessibility

- The Local Plan's description of bus access and bus stop locations is factually inaccurate. Colchester Preferred Options Local Plan document (Point 5.424) includes the statement "Site 10634 is located some distance from a railway station and cycling route, although it is close to multiple bus stops". MclPC would like to clarify that the closest bus stops are 0.9 miles (20 minute walk), 1.1 miles (25 minute walk) and 1.2 miles (25 minute walk)
- Walking routes to bus stops pose measurable safety risks. The village is served by narrow, twisting country lanes with no pavement and a 60mph speed limit.
- The site (PP48) fundamentally conflicts with Paragraphs 109 to 118 of the NPPF and also Colchester's sustainable transport policy. With just 2 buses per week, (both on the same day) and a road network that is conducive to neither cyclists nor pedestrians, cars are the only practical means of transport. Siting development in the village goes against Colchester City

Council transport policies and objectives. Policy PC2 (Active and Sustainable Travel) states “All new development should be planned around a network of safe and accessible active travel routes, creating places that maximise opportunities for active and sustainable travel”.

- To achieve compliance with sustainability duties and requirements in accordance with National and Local Planning Policy, the proposed policy should require the submission of a Travel Plan (Paragraph 118 of the NPPF).

b) Road Infrastructure and Traffic

- The City Council’s evidence underestimates the severity of local road constraints and does not account for the combined impact of committed developments in Tiptree, Feering and Kelvedon. (NPPF paragraph 116 refers to the cumulative impact on highway safety....taking into account all reasonable future scenarios). High volumes of traffic from Land North of Oak Road, (PP19 allocation for 600 houses) is likely to use New Road as a cut through to Messing and onto the Inworth Road. This road is VERY narrow and totally unsuitable for traffic volumes.
- Local traffic volumes are already high. The levels of development included in the Local Plan for the Tiptree area, added with the plans that Braintree District Council are working on for the development of Feering and Kelvedon, will lead to a large increase in vehicle traffic in the district. There are already pinch points creating long delays at peak times at the Blue Anchor and Factory Corner in Tiptree. With no plans to increase the current road infrastructure, there is no doubt that delays will become more frequent and more widespread.
- The road network servicing Messing village is largely narrow single-track with passing places forced from farmer’s fields, unadopted and therefore not maintained (with large potholes and ditches presenting major dangers to road users). This road network also presents specific dangers to pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Junctions leading onto local B-roads are also narrow with impeded sight lines. On the assumption that each dwelling will have at least 2 vehicles, the proposal for 25 dwellings in Messing village will represent a significant increase in traffic volume in the surrounding road network, especially when the almost total lack of public transport is taken into account
- McIPC strongly request that a weight limit for vehicles entering and leaving the conservation areas should be enforced during the construction phase.

McIPC request explicit traffic mitigation, including:

- A highways-led review of New Road
- Safety measures prior to progression of the Tiptree Oak Road allocation (PP19) and sites already consented in Oak Road.
- Construction-phase restrictions to protect the Messing Conservation Area

c) District traffic management

McIPC note that no mitigations are currently proposed in response to the cancellation of the A12 rebuild project. McIPC also note that Hinds Bridge (a narrow historic bridge, that does not allow for large vehicles to pass) on the B1023 in Inworth is also excluded from any mitigations. This is an ancient brick-arch bridge built in 1850 and closed for repairs in 2018 by Essex Highways because the structure was sub-standard and failed assessment.

d) Heritage and Village Character

- McIPC are concerned that the general level of development throughout the district will have an adverse effect on the centre of Messing, which is a Conservation Area with a high density of Listed Buildings. As set out in paragraphs 202 to 214 of the NPPF, Designated Heritage Assets and Conservation Areas need to be protected. The village already sees elevated traffic levels when there are problems with the A12. Messing has had issues with HGVs attempting to pass on the double bend by the church. Swept path analysis shows that this is impossible due to the curtilage listed churchyard wall located in the inside of the double bend. McIPC request that provision is made to ensure that HGVs are not permitted as through traffic in the village centre.

e) Flooding and Surface Water Management

- The site (PP48/10634) has a documented history of surface water run-off problems. In 2015 Essex Highways investigated incidents of surface water flooding in Messing. (See Messing Flood Study Report 2015 and its Appendices attached). Site 10634 was identified as a source of the problematic surface water run-off. The Essex Highways Flood Study Report (January 2015) made a number of recommendations (including some relating to site 10634) to resolve the problems. These mitigation works were undertaken, including works on site PP48/10634 (see Appendix D of the Flood Study Report). Any development work on site 10634 needs to ensure that the mitigation works are not affected, otherwise this could cause surface water flooding issues for both the site and the village.

- McIPC request that a site-specific drainage strategy, informed by the Essex Highways 2015 evidence, is a mandatory requirement for this site allocation. McIPC requests that clear maintenance responsibilities are set out as policy, including a program of works, maintenance and clarification as to who will take future maintenance responsibilities. In addition, discharge of surface water from the development should be carefully designed so as not to add to the local risk of flooding.

- McIPC would like to query why the historic surface water flooding issues and mitigation works were not identified in the Settlement Evidence for this site.

f) Sewage Capacity

- Messing village is served by a sewage pumping station in Lodge Road. Sewage trucks are frequently used to deal with excess volume, and residents have been informed that the pumping station is at capacity and suffers from frequent failures. Further residential development in Messing will require Anglian Water to increase the reliability and the capacity of this pumping station to avoid environmental damage to the locality.

g) Density and number of units proposed

- The site allocation is for around 25 dwellings. McIPC request that the final number of dwellings is determined through a detailed design process to ensure that the scheme reflects the established character, grain, and density of the surrounding settlement. Any development needs to integrate sensitively with the adjacent built form, maintain appropriate spacing, and respect the transition between the settlement edge and the more open rural landscape beyond.

- McIPC calculates the housing density along the section of School Road that directly backs onto site 10634 at 23 houses per hectare. The nearby Collins Green development is calculated at 14 houses per hectare, and the Messing Green development at 18 houses per hectare (excluding the Green itself). Site 10634 should be designed to provide a density no greater than the existing immediate area and definitely no more than 25 dwellings in total.

- There is an identified housing need arising from a recent survey carried out in conjunction with the RCCE. We expect that this need would be satisfied within the stated 25 dwellings.

- Sufficient on-site parking should be included in the development to allow for the expected 3 vehicles per dwelling to avoid vehicle parking on the narrow lanes and village streets.

- The site will include green space of 1.7 hectares. The responsibility for maintaining this, including the existing ditch, all hedges, trees, gardens and grassland, should rest with the occupants of the new dwellings (perhaps via a management company) and not fall to existing residents via the precept.

- Ideally, the green space should be a wetland area (swale/mere) to accommodate the additional run-off that will result from the new development. This would help to prevent surface water flooding issues at lower points in the village, including the area surrounding the village hall. The wetland area would have the added benefit of increasing biodiversity, and if the wetland area is sited between the existing houses in School Road and the new development, the impact on the rural nature of the area will be lessened.

h) Utilities, schools and medical facilities

- **Medical facilities**

Messing residents make use of medical services in either Kelvedon or Tiptree. McIPC understand that capacity is very limited for new patients in both locations. Although the scale

of development planned for site 10634 is relatively small, planned developments elsewhere in Tiptree will make the provision of additional medical services a clear and urgent requirement.

- **Electricity supply**

The existing supply to the village is unstable and residents report intermittent dimming of lights. Additional development within the village is likely to exacerbate the situation unless remedial work is completed.

- **Data connectivity**

Residents report frequent outages and slow running of broadband services. Further capacity will be required to support the planned development.

- **Education**

Messing School provides for ages 5-11 – there is no nursery or pre-school service. The school is currently over-subscribed. Alternative schools are available in Tiptree or in Kelvedon, several miles away. The closest secondary school to the village is Thurstable in Tiptree. The majority of village children aged 11+ attend that school. Other than those attending the village school, pupils travelling to school are subject to the difficulties described in the Road Infrastructure section above.

Messing-cum-Inworth Parish Council stands ready to work with the Planning department and any subsequent developers to ensure that, should the proposed development proceed, it is successful for both new and existing village residents.