

Nicola Baker writes

LOCAL PLAN

Colchester Borough Council is now in the later stages of developing its new Local Plan, which is the strategic document setting out the policies and vision for planning for the next fifteen years. The plan is in two parts, the first of which sets out the strategies for the three North Essex authorities (Colchester, Braintree and Tendring). The second part relates to the Borough of Colchester.

The plan sets out a spatial hierarchy for all settlements in the borough. Dedham is regarded as a 'sustainable settlement' but has been separated from Dedham Heath which is designated as one of the 'other villages'. Despite Dedham village's status as a sustainable settlement, the document notes that it is heavily constrained by its location within the AONB and that, furthermore, a lack of suitable and available development land means that no growth has been proposed for Dedham village during the plan period.

A number of sites around Dedham Heath were proposed as development sites earlier in the process. The Parish Council was asked to consider the merits of these sites and did so using a clearly specified set of criteria. One of the sites, in Long Road East (not Long Road West as stated in the July edition of the parish magazine) met the criteria and therefore its inclusion as a potential small development site was not opposed by the Parish Council. However, this site was not included by CBC in this final version (subject to consultation) of the local plan.

Another item of note is that proposals for additional car parking in Dedham will be supported where they comply with all other policies in the Local Plan. The full document is available on the Colchester Borough Council website and is well worth a look. The consultation closes on Friday 11 August.

FOOTPATHS

We have previously reported in this magazine the unsatisfactory position relating to footpath maintenance, the responsibility for which lies with Essex County Council. In order to supplement the limited maintenance undertaken by contractors working for ECC, the County Council supports a volunteer scheme in a number of parishes. A local resident, Mrs Val Blaker, has come forward and indicated that she might be willing to co-ordinate such a scheme in Dedham. ECC provide training and equipment to volunteers so that they can 'trim' local footpaths. In order to gauge support for this idea, it would be helpful if anyone who might be able to become a footpath volunteer could contact Mrs Blaker on (322 471 (afternoons only).

PARISH COUNCIL OFFICE

Unlike many parishes, Dedham does not have a Parish Council office. We are in the process of trying to set one up in a village centre location to make it easier for residents to contact the Parish Council about local matters. The plans are at an early stage at present – but watch this space!

NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

This will be on Monday 4 September at 7.30pm in the Duchy Barn. No meeting is scheduled for August.

clerk@dedhamparishcouncil.org.uk Tel:01255 871483