

Suggested Revision for Local Plan Review Settlement Evidence for West Mersea 11th January 2025

West Mersea

Settlement profile

The population of the parish is 7,220 (census date 2021 ten years earlier 7,183 at 2011 census). Number of Households 3,400 and 3,651 dwellings (3,300 and 3,551 respectively in the census data 2011) The population of the built-up area (Census 2021 definition) is 7,100 and the size of the built-up area is 2.84km², making it one of the largest built up areas in Colchester. The 60 plus age group in the 2021 census data was 3,193 at 44.3 % of the population, the UK average is 24.2% (the 2011 census data 2,865 at 39.9% of the then population). 13.1% of the population is school children and students, which is lower than the England average and other Colchester parishes.

School provision

West Mersea primary school had 375 pupils on roll in the 2022/23 School Census. The primary forecast states that there are 348 pupils in 2023/24 and 369 expected in 2032/33. The January 2024 [School Census](#) indicates that the Published Admission Number for Reception for Mersea Island school is 60 and the Number on Roll in reception is 47.

The priority area admission (catchment) secondary school is Thomas Lord Audley. The school census 2022/23 shows that there are 872 pupils on roll. Thomas Lord Audley is part of the Colchester Secondary A: Mid (Colchester) cluster. The cluster includes 12 secondary schools in Colchester. The pupil forecast shows 12,125 pupils in 2023/24 and 11,900 in 2032/33.

Neighbourhood Plan

West Mersea [Neighbourhood Plan](#) was made by Colchester Council in April 2022. The vision of the neighbourhood plan is: 'To maintain and enrich West Mersea as a vibrant and cohesive community ensuring new development will be both sustainable and improve life for ourselves without prejudicing lives for future generations. Support the local economy, provide high quality accommodation for all in our community while respecting the individual character of the town and protecting our natural environment.'

The neighbourhood plan does not allocate land for housing but includes policies for the two adopted Local Plan housing allocations.

Infrastructure

West Mersea has numerous shops along the main spine road through the Town including, Tesco Express, Co-op store, two Spar outlets, Fuelling station with shop, hair/beauty salons, butcher, bakery, three pharmacies, estate agents, funeral parlour and DIY shop. There is a Doctors surgery, separate Clinic and a Dentist Surgery. There are numerous public houses, restaurants, take aways, fish and chip shops and cafes. There are several community halls such as church halls, clubs with venues and a large Community Centre, also many voluntary organisations supporting community activities. A Primary School and two Pre school venues and a Museum. Varied social activity venues and sporting facilities, two yachting/sailing clubs, rowing club, two bowls clubs one with indoor rink, and recreation ground with tennis courts,

pavilions, basket ball court, cricket nets, football clubs, rugger clubs, tennis and croquet club. Also allotments at the eastern end of the town.

The main “industries” of employment being in wholesale and retail trade and motor vehicle repairs 17.1%, construction 12.2%, Health and social work 11.2% and education 10.4%, all figures from the 2011 census data and WMNP.

Sustainable travel

Bus service 86 runs to Colchester city centre Monday-Friday starting 0655 and Saturday from 0725 at approx. every hour until 18:40 some 13/12 buses during the day and then there is an evening bus service No.68 of 4 buses from 1955 every hour to 2255. On Sundays the 86 service runs from 0840 every two hours until approximately 20:33. some 7 buses. There is also Heddingham Bus service No. 63 running five buses a day Monday-Saturday from 0903 till 1803 which goes via Mill Road and Peldon with no Sunday service.

The 2011 census data stated almost 50% of those employed travelled in excess of 10 Km to get to work, whilst 15% worked from home. 44% of the population that worked, some 1/3 of these only worked part-time.

Green network and waterways

West Mersea is surrounded by the Colne and Blackwater estuaries and has a beach along the southern boundary. There are green spaces and recreation grounds throughout the town, including a number of cemeteries, see map below.



Natural England has created Access to Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt). Parts of the town meet the doorstep standard (a green space of at least 0.5 hectares within 200 metres), but the west is lacking.

High level constraints (at settlement level)

The town lacks a secondary school with most children attending the priority area admission (catchment) secondary school of Thomas Lord Audley in Colchester some 12 Km or Thurstable School Tiptree some 18Km away.

The closest railway station is Colchester Town approximately 13km, whilst the main train station Colchester North is other side of the City at 15.5Km

There is currently only one DIRECT bus an hour into Colchester.

Coastal boundary to the south and west of the town and sloping topography to the north west of the island, meaning parts are prominent location in the landscape.

The estuarine and coastal areas of the island are covered by international & local nature conservation designations – Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Ramsar, the Essex Estuaries Special Area of Conservation. (SAC), Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) and the National Character Area 81 – Greater Thames Estuary (NCA) These designations may be a constraining factor to settlement expansion especially when in-combination effects are taken into account.

All of the undeveloped areas of the island outside the existing Sustainable Settlement Boundary are covered by the Coastal Protection Belt designation as well as all the above. This also has the potential effect of constraining development if it impacts on the landscape character of the area.

There are low lying areas on the southern and western seafront areas of the developed area that are subject to flooding on exceptional high tides.

The only access road, “The Strood”, onto the Island serving West Mersea the B1025 is subject to tidal flooding on the spring tides, The high water is predicted to come onto the road on average approximately 411 times a year at the present time (65% of predicted tides). When the tide comes onto the road it can stop all traffic movement for a period of 5 minutes to two hours or more depending on the height of the sea water level and stranded vehicles blocking the road. This is a serious consideration with over 7000 vehicular movements between the hours of 0700 to 1900hrs

High level opportunities (at settlement level)

West Mersea has a high level and good range of services, organisations and facilities.

The built-up area is one of the largest condensed built-up areas in the district.

Some potential for growth may provide opportunities to enhance local infrastructure.

*The map above needs updating and see also WMNP for areas pages 66 and 67
Feldy View Cemetery needs adding. Also the settlement boundary should be shown.
The Glebe 1 & 2 Sports Grounds should be coloured pink.
The woodland north of Glebe 1 not shown see WMNP Item 18 page 60 WMNP
The green AGS at the new Dawes Lane development "Kings Field" needs modifying in the northern section and adding a strip all down Dawes lane and a strip across the southern end of the site.
The Brierley Paddocks development site "Sanderling Reach" needs to have added the areas of AGS added.
The playground at the north of Well House Estate not shown nor the Sanderling Reach one.*

Also the map does not cover all of the parish it needs to be extended east to cover the allotments and Waldegraves item 43 WMNP page 63

It is noted that West Bergholt, Tiptree & Marks Tey have their own Local Green Space Map Layers why not other NPs ??

Not sure about the statement that none of the other BNG standards are met (so removed) again see WMNP bearing in mind AGS has increased by 5.1 Ha at Kings field plus 3.1 Ha at Sanderling Reach. A large area of the western end of the island borders onto the shore line with access to pathways and outstanding views. AGS definition = Most commonly but not exclusively found in housing areas. Includes recreation green spaces and village greens.

See new Green Network & Waterways Guiding Principle

OTHER MATTERS

Environmental and Sustainable Implications

The Colchester City Council has declared a Climate Emergency and has committed to being carbon neutral by 2030. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are economic, social and environmental objectives. The protection of the countryside and agricultural land from unplanned development prevents loss of potentially productive agricultural land and ensures that development is directed to the most sustainable locations and allocated via the local plan. Each Development Plan Document will take into account the Climate Emergency sustainable developments objectives set out in the NPPF.

AECOM

Has the City Council asked AECOM as part of it's consultation in response to **climate change** to look into climate change effect for sea level rise on the height of sea walls, Colne Barrier, Areas below sea level behind sea walls, Strood crossing to Mersea Island and the B1025 from Pete Tye Common onto Mersea Island?

Whist it is understood that Sea level rises are under the remit of the Environment Agency, along with ECC Flood management agency and CCC for shoreline management, does this actual cover the above matters. Also emergency planning. The latest document on the Blackwater Estuary Natural Flood management Project states that some **289** properties are at risk of flooding in West Mersea and Tollesbury.

Suggest Revision for Local Plan Review Settlement Evidence for West Mersea by Town Council