

Forward Plan reference number: N/A

Report title: ECC response to the Draft Basildon Town Centre Masterplan, June 2020	
Report to: Cllr Ball, Cabinet Member for Economic Development	
Report author: Steve Evison, Director, Sustainable Growth	
Date: 7 July 2020	For: Decision
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County Divisions affected: All Divisions located within Basildon Borough Council and adjoining divisions	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To outline the proposed Essex County Council (ECC) response as contained in Appendix 1, to the public consultation on the Draft Basildon Town Centre Masterplan – Supplementary Planning Document, June 2020 (the Draft Masterplan).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree and to send to Basildon Council (BC) the response to the Draft Masterplan set out in Appendix 1, before the 12 July 2020 deadline.
- 2.2 To agree that we will work with BC through the duty to co-operate process in the preparation of the new Town Centre Masterplan and the supporting evidence base towards an adopted Masterplan, and in doing so address the ECC representations to ensure there are viable and delivery proposals which include the key services and infrastructure arising from the planned additional housing growth.

3. Summary of key Points

- 3.1 Basildon is a key priority location within Essex which as a Council we have and continue to support and invest in, through a variety of different measures and workstreams. We note the Draft Masterplan and the recognition this has to the important role the town centre of Basildon in the growth and transformation objectives shared by both councils. In order to deliver these aspirations, guiding principles and proposals contained within it, the following matters will require further consideration/work to ensure that the Masterplan provides a solid foundation for the future of the town centre:
- a. The need to prepare a sound evidence base to ensure the proposals are viable and deliverable. Of critical importance is the assessment and testing of the different proposals individually and their cumulative impact on infrastructure and services, and subsequent impact on the town centre, the adjoining Basildon neighbourhoods and the wider locality. Care is also needed to align and relate this to the existing Local Plan evidence;
 - b. The Masterplan will need a clear delivery and phasing strategy and one that addresses the required infrastructure, it specifies the costs, funding and timing. This will need to be viable, and supported by the delivery partners;
 - c. ECC would be pleased to be much more actively engaged on this area of work following this consultation and will help develop a structured and focused work programme. It is therefore important to ensure that opportunities for fuller partnership working and concerted actions are not restricted in order to support the

Draft Masterplan develop and evolves. A collaborative work programme is our preferred approach;

- d. That, as the Draft Masterplan develops over time, BC ensures that links are made successfully with complementary activities and programmes, to ensure that all such actions are co-ordinated towards successful outcomes.

4. Background – Draft Masterplan preparation and Basildon Local Plan

- 4.1 In September 2019, BC approved the commencement of a new Basildon Town Centre Masterplan, to be prepared as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), to support their Local Plan. The new Masterplan would replace the existing Masterplan (2012).
- 4.2 The new Masterplan aims to deliver a comprehensive and design led development and regeneration framework for Basildon Town Centre. The objective is to develop a guide that will facilitate future growth, building on the unique characteristics to deliver a high quality, cohesive and vibrant town centre for Basildon.
- 4.3 BC submitted their Local Plan to the Secretary of State in March 2019 and are now awaiting the Examination start date. BC have advised they intends to either adopt the Masterplan as formal planning policy to enable that it becomes a SPD and will form part of a suite of supporting policies to the Local Plan once adopted, or incorporate key elements into the Local Plan as a modifications to the Local Plan as part of the examination process.
- 4.4 BC recognise that there are questions (procedurally and legal) around the status of the Draft Masterplan, and its relationship and conformity to the submitted Local Plan. This point is covered in paragraph 5.11 of this report and needs to be made as the Draft Masterplan's proposals do not fully align with what is in the submitted Local Plan. Regardless, BC has stated it is keen to make progress on the Masterplan and is proceeding with the consultation at the present time, whilst it reviews the question its appropriate status, and ECC is keen to help with this.
- 4.5 In preparing the Draft Masterplan, consultation took place between 1 June to 12 July 2020. The purpose of consultation is to give all interested parties the first formal opportunity to comment on proposals and to help shape and progress subsequent iterations. As this is the first formal stage of public consultation, there are no earlier ECC responses to refer to or draw upon and ECC officers and Members have not been part of any formal or informal discussions initiated by BC during the Draft Masterplan's preparation to guide and inform content.

Basildon Town Centre Regeneration

Existing Town Centre Masterplan

- 4.6 In 2012, the Basildon Town Centre Master Plan as interim SPD (Adopted MP), in conformity with the 1998 Saved Local Plan Policies. This Adopted MP has informed the evidence base for the BC Local Plan that has now been submitted for examination.
- 4.7 The Adopted MP promotes the Town Centre as the primary focus for all future major retail, leisure and entertainment development, and up to 2,128 residential units, a Further Education college, and a mix of businesses and community and open space uses. The Adopted MP includes provisions for its review at least every seven years, which is why BC is now preparing and consulting on an updated Masterplan.

- 4.8 Since 2012, ECC has worked with BC on the implementation of the Adopted MP, including ongoing work as the Highways Authority, covering works to St Martins Square to enable the relocation of the market, which released the site for the relocation of South Essex College to the town centre. Other works include re-development/enhancement of the bus station and new signalised pedestrian crossing to the rail station to replace the underpass - now due to be infilled. BC have separately approved planning permission for the new college and a cinema complex in East Square, to improve the town centre's evening economy.

National Infrastructure Commission Intra Urban Study

- 4.9 In January 2019 BC and ECC, working in partnership, commenced an Intra-Urban Infrastructure case study with the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) focussing on Basildon and Wickford. This is one of five case studies commissioned by the NIC in the UK and is the only two-tier authority case study. BC and ECC have worked collaboratively to prepare an Intra Urban Infrastructure Strategy, to enable long term transport, economic and housing aspirations to 2050 in respect of transport and connectivity (including digital), economic growth and housing. There is a strong transport element to promote sustainable modes and to improve areas of deprivation. The strategy is to be published autumn in 2020, with NIC publishing the successes of the approach and emphasising the need for certainty in long term funding for local authorities to deliver strategic projects that meet central Government's priorities. The relevance and links to the NIC work stream is discussed as part of the ECC response to the Draft Masterplan and is outlined in Section 5.

New Draft Basildon Town Centre Masterplan (this consultation)

- 4.10 BC states the goal is for total transformation of the town centre – to reimage its purpose and to be the “beating heart” and centre for South Essex. This would see it transform from primarily from a shopping centre into a home for thousands of people - an attractive destination for people region-wide seeking leisure and entertainment and a creative and dynamic place to work and do business.

- 4.11 The Draft Masterplan includes eight ‘Guiding Principles’ for developers to address in their engagement with BC and the headlines include:

- provision for a new major flexible convention centre and multi-use arena space, this would complement and support the new cinema and college and create a multi-use town centre;
- the town centre is to become a strategic hub for business and innovation, with new cultural, educational and entertainment facilities, to attract talent from the wider south east region to move into the area, whilst delivering public sector and community services; and
- seeking to improve accessibility to the town centre by all modes of transport, and improving wider connectivity, with an integrated greener landscape to create attractive safe spaces in a vibrant town centre.

- 4.12 The Draft Masterplan's ‘Proposals’ (which reflect the Guiding Principles) seek to establish a night-time economy in the heart of the town, with up to 4,200 new homes, and approximately 90,000 sqm of retail space, 61,000 sqm of leisure/entertainment space and 22,000 sqm workspace. New homes (apartments) are to be located within the town centre and on the periphery, many resulting from the redevelopment of existing extensive car park provision. The mass and form of the town centre would

change with an overall increase in building height ranging from up to 4, 4 to 8 and over 8 storeys.

4.13 The town centre is divided into five focus areas, each with their own purpose, spatial strategy, growth and links between the respective areas and adjoining urban area.

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|----|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. | St Martin's Quarter and Westgate Area | (Gateway & Civic Hub) |
| 2. | Town Square and East Square | (Leisure & Entertainment Hub) |
| 3. | Station Environs and Transport Hub | (Transport) |
| 4. | Eastgate | (Retail Quarter) |
| 5. | Great Oaks | (Residential) |

4.14 Delivery and phasing is to be split over the short, medium and long term, with the Draft Masterplan stating that BC will work with landowners and through their own acquisition to implement change. The Draft Masterplan also recognises there is a need to work with public sector and infrastructure providers, where ECC is mentioned.

4.15 The ECC response seeks to ensure the following ECC policy objectives are reflected in the next iteration and any adopted version of Masterplan:

- [Essex Vision and Priorities 2017/21](#)
- [Essex Organisation Strategy, 2017 – 2021](#)
- [Essex Economic Commission, January 2017](#)
- [Essex Transport Strategy, the Local Transport Plan for Essex \(June 2011\)](#)
- [A127 Corridor for Growth - An Economic Plan 2014 \(A127 Route Management Strategy\)](#)
- [A127 Air Quality Management Plan - \(Strategic Outline Case\) March 2018](#)
- [ECC Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy \(August 2016\)](#)
- [Essex Cycling Strategy November 2016](#)
- [Commissioning School Places in Essex 2017-2022](#)
- [ECC Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions \(2016\) and draft updated version \(2020\)](#)
- [Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Essex \(2007 - 2032\)](#)
- [Essex Minerals Local Plan 2014](#)
- [Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan 2017](#)
- [ECC Sustainable Urban Drainage Design Guide 2020](#)

4.16 ECC aims to ensure that local policies and related strategies provide the greatest benefit to deliver a buoyant economy for the existing and future population that live, work, visit and invest in Essex. This includes a balance of land uses to create great places for people and businesses; and that the developer funding for the required infrastructure is clearly identified, explicit, and deliverable and does not become a burden on the public purse. As a result, ECC is keen to understand, inform, support and shape the formulation of the development strategy and policies delivered by local planning authorities within and adjoining Essex, including the preparation of this Draft Masterplan. Involvement is necessary and beneficial because of ECC's roles as:

- a. a full partner within Greater Essex, the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) and, Opportunity South Essex Partnership (OSE); promoting economic growth, regeneration, infrastructure delivery and sustainable new development throughout the County;
- b. a major provider and commissioner of a wide range of local government services throughout the county (and where potential cross boundary impacts need to be considered);

- c. the highway and transport authority, including responsibility for the delivery of the Essex Local Transport Plan; Local Education Authority including early years and childcare, Special Education Needs and Disabilities, and Post 16 education; Minerals and Waste Planning Authority (MWPA); Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA); lead advisors on public health; and adult social care in relation to the securing the right housing mix which takes account of the housing needs of older people and adults with disabilities, and;
- d. an infrastructure funding partner, that seeks to ensure that the developments proposed are realistic and do not place an unnecessary (or unacceptable) cost burden on the public purse, and specifically ECC's Capital Programme.

4.17 ECC will use its best endeavours to assist BC on strategic and cross-boundary matters under the duty to cooperate (the Duty), including engagement and co-operation with other organisations for which those issues may have relevance e.g. Highways England. In accordance with the Duty, ECC will contribute cooperatively to the preparation of a new Masterplan as part of the new Basildon Borough Local Plan, particularly within the following broad subject areas,

- ECC assets and services. Where relevant, advice on the current status of assets and services and the likely impact and implications of proposals in the emerging Local Plan for the future operation and delivery of ECC services.
- Evidence base. Guidance with assembly and interpretation of the evidence base both for strategic/cross-boundary projects, for example, education provision and transport studies and modelling, and wider work across South Essex as part of the joint strategic plan.
- Sub-regional and broader context. Assistance with identification of relevant information and its fit with broader strategic initiatives, and assessments of how emerging proposals for the Borough may impact on areas beyond and vice-versa.
- Policy development. Contributions on the relationship of the evidence base with the structure and content of emerging policies and proposals.

5. Options

Option 1 – Submit ECC response to the report (recommended)

- 5.1 The full response to the Draft Masterplan's consultation is set out in Appendix 1 to this report. It is recommended that these comments form the basis for ECC's representations that are submitted to BC.
- 5.2 The response seeks greater engagement and partnership between BC and ECC so that the next iteration of the Draft Masterplan's proposals can be shaped and based on sound evidence that are viable and deliverable. Consideration is necessary by ECC on the option of working with BC to further explore and discuss ECC's representations wherever possible. Recommendation 3 of this report covers this consideration, as it is recommended that it is mutually beneficial that ECC seeks to work positively and constructively with BC towards the conclusion and successful adoption of a new Masterplan.

Option 2 – Do not submit a response to the report

- 5.3 If ECC does not submit a response to the Draft Masterplan, the risk is that ECC does not shape or influence the proposals and ECC's statutory role and responsibilities in delivering the proposals could be compromised.

6. ECC response

Overview

- 6.1 The proposed ECC response to this consultation is set out in Appendix 1 to this report and summarised below. This consultation is the first stage in ECC responding to BC's new proposals of town centre development and regeneration.
- 6.2 It is recommended that ECC welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the Draft Masterplan. This is the first opportunity for ECC to review and comment on the vision, guiding principles, strategic aim and proposals and we are committed to working with BC through focused collaborative discussions to ensure the Masterplan's aspirations and proposals are sound, viable and deliverable.
- 6.3 ECC's response identifies areas of support, where refinement and further consideration is needed, and issues where focused engagement between our two local authorities can secure the 'mutually beneficial outcomes' for Basildon and South Essex.
- 6.4 The importance of Basildon as a place, its people, businesses and environment are central to both councils' activities, as demonstrated by our partnership working to deliver the Intra Urban Infrastructure Strategy, in partnership with the NIC. ECC sees this as a successful approach that can be used by the two authorities to engage, align priorities and secure outcomes for the town centre as the Draft Masterplan is reviewed and refined following this round of consultation.
- 6.5 The need to transform and re-imagine Basildon town centre is vital for it to be a place where people want to live, work, play, shop, do business and invest but the ambition in the Draft Masterplan for the long term future of the town centre needs to have a sound evidence base to ensure that the ambitious proposals are viable and can be delivered by all parties, including ECC.
- 6.6 Of critical importance is the assessment and testing of proposals for their individual or cumulative impact on infrastructure and services, and subsequent impact on the town centre, adjoining Basildon neighbourhoods and the wider locality.
- 6.7 Planning Practice Guidance states that "masterplans can benefit from a collaborative approach" and that "care should be taken to ensure that masterplans are viable and well understood by all involved". [Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 26-007-20191001]. Moving forward, further consideration will be required by BC (working with ECC and other key delivery partners) to ensure that the ensuing Masterplan is shaped and informed by necessary and sound evidence to provide a solid foundation for the future of the town centre in an integrated and strategic manner.
- 6.8 This is a unique opportunity in which BC working collaboratively in partnership with ECC and other public sector partners, can reshape the town centre, including the delivery of services such as the civic hub, or through the re-development work programme to identify and implement strategies to address inequalities or opportunities, to enhance the skills offer for apprenticeships and training (such as construction) and deliver improved connectivity, both transport and digital.

Key issues and messages of the ECC response

- 6.9 It is recommended that ECC notes and welcomes the Draft Masterplan's recognition of the important role of the town centre to support Basildon's growth, transformation of the wider area, and its role in South Essex;
- 6.10 It is recommended that BC clarify the status and planning procedures to progress the Draft Masterplan in compliance with national planning policy and guidance, be it as SPD as initially intended, or incorporated into the submitted Basildon Borough Local Plan as main modifications, as now indicated by BC. The latter will have statutory implications for ECC as a delivery partner where any modifications will need to address soundness and reflect the duty to cooperate.
- 6.11 Notwithstanding this, it is critical that the next iteration of the Masterplan recognise the full extent of the challenges involved in ensuring the town centre itself is developed and improved to fulfil this future role;
- 6.12 It is recommended that the additional evidence is required to establish and assess the extent of growth possible, the wider intra-urban relationship of this growth, and to identify the necessary additional supporting infrastructure and services arising from the proposals and how this relates to the submitted Local Plan evidence. This is likely to necessitate:
- further transportation and highways assessments and modelling, including a review and assessment of bus station, its capacity and relocation proposals;
 - a review of parking requirements and standards;
 - an assessment of education (including early years and childcare) and community services and facilities;
 - employment and retail issues; and
 - ensuring housing provision and type reflects identified local need.

There is also benefit in undertaking a Health Impact Assessment to ensure health and wellbeing is comprehensively considered and integrated into the Masterplan's proposals – an area where ECC can advise and assist, and one we have successfully implemented in other areas across Essex.

- 6.13 It is recommended that within all of this, consideration should be given to the challenges arising from Covid-19 and how these can be addressed to ensure the Masterplan's ambition and vision is realised. There may need to be a reassessment of the assumptions and resulting proposals focusing on how the town centre will function in all its components; the quantum and type of office space; the type, size and quality of housing, and who will live there; and the quantum of retail space given the accelerated move to an online retail environment.
- 6.14 It is recommended that the Masterplan is supported by a clear delivery and phasing strategy and one that covers the required infrastructure, its cost, funding and timing, which must be viable and is agreed and is supported by the full range of delivery partners. This includes ECC where we can assist in this matter.
- 6.15 Therefore, the level of ambition required to achieve a transformed town centre attractive to all users, residents, visitors and commerce needs to be recognised and accordingly a fresh collaborative approach towards the town centre, involving substantial change, appears necessary.

- 6.16 ECC wishes to see BC undertake more active engagement with all ECC service areas following the end of the Draft Masterplan's consultation and develop a structured and collaborative work programme in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate. It is important to ensure that opportunities for fuller partnership working and concerted actions are not restricted as the Masterplan evolves given its status and changing statutory relationship with the submitted Local Plan. Consideration is also being given internally as to the wider role for ECC including potential interventions to help enhance the town centre, an over-arching aim to which ECC seeks to contribute. ECC is also currently engaging on a wide range of work, activities, and initiatives to bring forward improvement in Basildon Town Centre, focusing on delivering high quality, inclusive, sustainable growth.
- 6.17 It is recommended that given the planning and development activity already taking place in the town centre, BC should ensure pre-application discussions for town centre sites currently coming forward are coordinated with ECC in a holistic way so that we can establish a clear picture of the scale of development coming forward in the short term to ensure alignment between Local Plan and Masterplan proposals.
- 6.18 That as the Draft Masterplan develops over time, BC can facilitate the links between complementary activities and programmes across the full range of partners, so that all such actions are co-ordinated and deliver successful outcomes.

Specific issues

Transport and connectivity

- 6.19 The content and approach on transport has not derived from engagement with ECC as highways authority (and given ECC's broader strategic transport role). This includes some changes being mooted to key transport routes and details of sustainable transport proposals (that need to reflect the current NIC work and study). The potential relocation of the bus station and bus stopping changes is raised and any such matters also need to be subject to engagement with ECC including assessment of capacity, waiting areas and impact on road network (partly in the interests of practicality). Similarly, consolidation of car parking provision changes, car parking standards or restrictions need to be planned so as not to cause adverse highways and environmental impacts (such as increased parking on verges or open space together with a passenger transport assessment. The ambition and concept for sustainable travel are welcomed and supported in principle but need to align with the Local Plan requirements and the NIC study. Provision for electric vehicle charging and cycle storage should be enhanced.

Economic

- 6.20 The Draft Masterplan seeks to address the future economic role of the town centre and suggests the option of promoting its role for small businesses and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), which ECC supports. This would rely on providing the right kind of adaptable modern office space and this being delivered as part of phased redevelopment that changes the look, user-friendliness and feel of the town centre. This would seek to address the current market failings and the need for the provision of modern 'grow on space', flexible space and the provision of integrated digital connectivity (Smart technologies and the provision for digital connectivity to future proof internet access through full fibre network or 5G mobile) that is designed in as a requirement from the outset. These proposals thus place the town centre at the heart of activity, with a role that could complement Basildon's A127 economic growth

corridor. Again, this needs to be part of a transformational change, promoting innovation, to encourage business confidence and the conditions needed for new investment.

- 6.21 It is also recommended that explicit reference is made to appropriate evidence documents used to shape and inform the proposals, and to explicitly recognise the role of skills in creating successful local economies and the potential to enhance and expand the education and training offer, within the town centre at South Essex College and through higher education.
- 6.22 It is recognised that the submitted Local Plan considers the future of Basildon's many local neighbourhood (shopping) centres. This raises an issue around how far each neighbourhood can be self-sufficient for its shopping and other service needs, without impacting on the town centre and its vitality. Although it is recognised that national planning policy promotes sustainable access to local facilities and services, the primacy of the town centre is also clear and in the case of Basildon, is an important objective. This brings into play the need to deliver a realistic, vibrant role for the town centre and a healthy balance of uses that will help to achieve this objective, accommodating new and evolving requirements and thereby allowing flexibility for future adaptation. The impact of the use of permitted development rights for changes of use of office buildings to residential use has led to a range of economic and social challenges for Basildon and it is recommended that ECC works with BC to help address these. This issue also indicates a need to increase the range and offer of homes in the town centre, including those to meet wider housing needs and to promote greater local expenditure and is in line with a high intervention approach. In this regard a focused review on the potential impact of Covid 19 and whether any further changes to the nature and form of the town centre including provision for office and retail space (and their type) may be required to better inform proposals.

Environment and heritage

- 6.23 ECC's environmental interests also indicate support for promoting a higher intervention approach, using opportunities to connect the town's green infrastructure optimising multiuser benefits, improving environmental quality and increasing its attraction to visitors, residents and businesses, plus encouraging investment, employment and the economy. Ensuring sufficient focus on aligning proposals with the Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy would also be beneficial, aid delivery and promote climate resilience. It is considered that ecological interests would also benefit most from a higher intervention approach including a landscape and green infrastructure strategy to shape the requirements in the Masterplan. It is recommended that development proposals for the town centre area should include measures to deliver a net biodiversity gain. It is also recommended that ECC favours an option to develop a town centre specific heritage policy / guidance to protect and enhance the historic new town character and setting of Basildon and further clarification on the approach to the built form.

Delivery, implementation and infrastructure provision

- 6.24 The Masterplan will need to be supported by a clear delivery and phasing strategy and one that covers the required infrastructure, its cost, funding and timing, which must be viable and is agreed and is supported by the full range of delivery partners; this includes ECC. This is currently an omission. It is critical that the infrastructure requirements are identified and clearly set out, and the phasing and delivery is supported by proactive monitoring and management. This includes a balance of land

uses to create great places for people and businesses; and that the developer funding for the required infrastructure is clearly identified, explicit, and deliverable and does not become a burden on the public purse. In this regard, clarification is required on the approach regarding the role of the public sector to provide or separately secure funds from other bodies / government to implement the necessary infrastructure. In terms of infrastructure provision, consideration will need to be given to the ECC Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions which, among other things, covers the requirements for transport and education.

- 6.25 It is further recommended that attention is given to ensuring that measures are taken to ensure that the Draft Masterplan is implemented effectively both through the planning system and using wider regulations and influence. This could for example, help deliver improved broadband using new technologies and approaches.
- 6.26 There is also a great opportunity for the public sector partners to work together to change the way services are delivered with mutual benefits such as civic hubs including Basildon Library and provision of Adult Community Learning, or opportunities to utilise the re-development of the town centre for South Essex College to expand their skills offer to include construction and digital technology.

ECC's statutory roles

- 6.27 Minerals and Waste Planning. ECC is the MWPA. Consideration will need to be given to the relevant policies in the minerals and waste local plans including the sustainable use of minerals, sustainable construction, minimising waste during construction and waste management.
- 6.28 Flood and Water Management. ECC is the LLFA. ECC welcomes the inclusion of reference to flooding and flood risk management and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. The town centre is in a revised Critical Drainage Area and ECC would expect to be engaged on any development in the town centre to ensure that any development does not increase flood risk. Development will need to comply with the ECC SuDS Guidance and be subject to consultation with ECC as LLFA.
- 6.29 Education. ECC as the Local Education Authority, note there is no consideration of the requirements for additional education provision (including early years and childcare (EYCC), even though a significant uplift of a further additional 2,000 new homes are proposed. This extends beyond the provision that ECC has identified for additional education and childcare provision to service Basildon, within the submitted Local Plan. In the absence of greater detail regarding the type and size of the additional new homes, now proposed for the town centre, precise pupil product calculations are not possible. It is clear, however, that the education site at "Land west of Gardiners Lane South", which is allocated under policy H5 of the Local Plan, gains additional strategic significance if the Draft Masterplan is to be supported by appropriate infrastructure. This D1 use allocation may be required to accommodate a primary school of up to three forms of entry plus an EYCC facility with at least 56 full time equivalent places. Other projects to expand schools may also be required, although it should be noted that a significant number have already been expanded to meet current demand and there are limited further options.
- 6.30 Early Years and Childcare. It is recommended that ECC seek reference to, and consideration and provision for additional EYCC settings and infrastructure.

- 6.31 Post 16 Education and Skills. It is recommended that ECC seek explicitly recognition of the role of skills in creating successful local economies and the potential to enhance and expand the education and training offer, within the town centre is explored with South Essex College and through higher education.
- 6.32 Community Services. It is recommended that ECC note the reference to community facilities including the relocation of Basildon Library and that ECC seek to explore options regarding the provision and delivery of public sector services, including the potential to co-locate complementary services such as Adult Community Learning, Library, Careers advice to enhance community engagement, skills and employment.
- 6.33 Public Health. It is recommended that more emphasis is placed on “health and wellbeing” and it is recommended that a Health Impact Assessment is prepared to ensure health and wellbeing is comprehensively considered and integrated into the Masterplan’s proposals – an area where ECC can advise and assist.
- 6.34 ECC will work positively with BC (and other partners) in order to ensure a sound masterplan, that conforms with the National Planning Policy Framework, is achieved and ready to adopt, with ECC issues clearly addressed. In preparing the response to the Draft Masterplan, all ECC service areas have been consulted, and officer comments incorporated into this CMA and the full response is contained in Appendix 1. A briefing has been provided to the Cabinet Member responsible for Economic Development and senior management in the Economic Growth directorate. The recommended response has been signed off by the Director of Economic Growth and Localities, and the Monitoring Officer; S151 Officer sign off is not required. The final version of the CMA and Appendix will incorporate any further comments from Members. The ECC response must be submitted by the 12 July 2020 deadline.

7.0 Financial implications:

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications in respect of ECC’s response to the consultation.

8.0 Legal implications:

- 8.1 The duty to co-operate is contained in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended by the Localism Act 2011. It requires Local Planning Authorities to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to ensure that the preparation of the Local Plan has regard to key strategic matters addressing social, environmental and economic issues which can only be addressed by effectively working with other authorities beyond their own administrative boundaries.
- 8.2 The Draft Masterplan has not been prepared as a ‘development plan document’ and therefore is not subject to the Duty. However, given BC will need to clarify the planning status of the document, and has indicated it will seek to incorporate elements of the Draft Masterplan into its submitted Local Plan as “main modifications” there is a need for BC to engage ECC in accordance with the Duty.
- 8.3 Although a Local Plan may be found unsound at Examination if the Duty has not been properly undertaken and the implications of this require careful consideration, the Duty is not a duty to reach agreement. ECC is carrying out its functions properly in submitting comments on specific issues of concern or objection, where necessary, at this stage.

9. Equality and Diversity implications

- 9.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to ECC when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 9.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 9.3 It is not considered that there are any impacts on protected characteristic from this decision. BC has prepared an Equality Impact Assessment as part of the preparation of its new Local Plan and has used this to meet its legislative obligations in preparing the Draft Masterplan.

10. List of appendices

- 10.1 Appendix 1 – full proposed ECC response to the Draft Basildon Town Centre Masterplan, June 2020.

• List of Background papers – None

I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.	
Councillor Cllr Tony Ball, Cabinet Member for Economic Development	10/07/20

In consultation with:

Role	Date
Executive Director for Corporate and Customer Services (S151 Officer) Stephanie Mitchener Director for Financial Services on behalf of Nicole Wood	(S151 Officer sign off not required)
Monitoring Officer Jacqueline Millward, on behalf of Paul Turner, Director Legal and Assurance	08/07/2020
Executive Director, Economy, Localities and Public Health Graham Thomas Head of Planning, on behalf of Steve Evison, Director, Sustainable Growth	07/07/2020