REGULATION 19 – LANDSCAPE AND HERITAGE CONSIDERATIONS

PP37 and PP38 Langham - Landscape & Heritage

Core Issue: have Colchester City Council adequately demonstrated that housing need has been balanced against environmental and heritage obligations in pursuit of sustainable development?

SOUNDNESS TEST	POSITION	WHY THE EVIDENCE DOES NOT DEMONSTRATE SOUNDNESS	WHAT IS REQUIRED
NPPF	**UNSOUND**	PP37 and PP38 raise concerns regarding consistency with the NPPF's requirements to conserve heritage assets, protect valued landscapes and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. There are significant tensions with NPPFDec2024 policies 187 b & d; 192, 208, 213 and 214. The allocation would urbanise a large area of open rural land, potentially harming the setting of the Station 152 Memorial, the wider historic airfield landscape and important views across the parish. The NPPF expects development to be sympathetic to local character and to conserve heritage significance. The scale of change proposed in Langham are contradictory to these objectives and therefore call into question the policy's consistency with national planning policy.	CCC to demonstrate compliance with NPPF policies relating to heritage conservation, landscape character and sustainable development. CCC to show that special consideration has been given to preserving heritage significance in compliance with sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. CCC must show that heritage and landscape impacts have been properly assessed and that any harm is justified by clear and evidenced public benefits. CCC must demonstrate that special regard was given to preserve heritage significance in compliance with sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
POSITIVELY PREPARED	**UNSOUND**	PP37 and PP38 are not positively prepared because they place substantial emphasis on meeting housing requirements without giving sufficient weight to the environmental role performed by the Langham landscape. The plan will destroy valued countryside, historic field patterns, established hedgerows used by wildlife and widely used public rights of way that contribute to community wellbeing, recreation and local distinctiveness. Sustainable development requires economic, social and environmental objectives to be pursued together. By proposing large-scale development in these locations with significant heritage and landscape sensitivities, the plan risks undermining the very characteristics that make Langham an attractive and sustainable rural settlement.	CCC to provide evidence that housing needs cannot reasonably be met elsewhere with materially lower impacts than on Langham's character, countryside setting and heritage significance CCC to demonstrate that it has balanced housing need with environmental, heritage and community considerations in pursuing sustainable development; and supports long-term community wellbeing while conserving important landscape and heritage assets. CCC to demonstrate that the environmental impacts have been minimised and that the chosen strategy represents the best balance between growth and protection.
JUSTIFIED	**UNSOUND**	PP37 and PP38 are not justified because CCC has not demonstrated that these sites represent the most appropriate locations for development when compared with reasonable alternatives. The proposed sites will occupy open countryside that forms the historic landscape core of Langham, separating Langham Moor and Langham Wick which contribute significantly to the village's rural identity. The sites also form part of the wider Station 152 airfield landscape, whose heritage significance derives partly from its openness and historic setting. Insufficient evidence has been provided to show that the resulting landscape and heritage impacts have been fully assessed and outweighed.	CCC must demonstrate, through proportionate and robust evidence, that PP37 and PP38 represent the most appropriate sites when assessed against reasonable alternatives. CCC must demonstrate a lawful sustainability appraisal and that adequate impact considerations of heritage and landscape effects was conducted. CCC must demonstrate that reasonable alternatives with materially less harm were properly assessed.
EFFECTIVE	**UNSOUND**	PP37 and PP38 are not effective because it has not been adequately demonstrated that the proposed mitigation measures can successfully address the scale of landscape and heritage harm likely to arise. Although landscape buffers, hedgerow retention and green infrastructure are proposed, unlikely that these measures will preserve the openness, settlement separation and historic character currently experienced across the site. The development would fundamentally change views from local footpaths and roads and would likely diminish the ability to appreciate the wider Station 152 landscape. The policy therefore lacks confidence that its objectives can be delivered effectively in practice	CCC must provide evidence that proposed mitigation, including landscape buffers, heritage protection and green infrastructure, will successfully avoid or reduce adverse impact.