



# Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community

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**Engagement and Consultation Strategy:**  
Planning for the development of the  
Garden Community





# Contents

Introduction	3
Engaging in a New Way	4
Our Engagement and Consultation Principles	5 - 6
Our Audiences	7 - 8
What We Mean by 'Engagement' and 'Consultation'	9
Our Strategy	10 - 11
Engagement and Consultation Timeline	12 - 13
Keep in Touch	14

# Introduction

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In October 2017 Braintree District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council submitted Local Plans to the Secretary of State proposing three new Garden Communities across North Essex.

Examination hearing sessions on these proposals took place in January and May 2018, with further hearing sessions taking place in January 2020.

In May 2020 the government appointed Planning Inspector wrote to the three authorities to say that whilst the proposed Garden Community on the Tendring/Colchester Borders had strong viability and could proceed, the other two at Colchester/Braintree Borders and West of Braintree should be removed from the plans.

To progress the Garden Community at the Tendring/Colchester Borders, Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council (along with Essex County Council) will need to prepare a Development Plan Document for it.

Previous consultation exercises have taken place related to the Tendring/Colchester Border Garden Community including (but not limited to); an Issues and Options Consultation; a Draft Local Plan Consultation; and a consultation on the Essex Highways A120/A133 Link Road and Rapid Transit System.

This 'Engagement and Consultation Strategy' outlines how we will engage and communicate with various audiences in order to help produce the content for the next stage of the process – the preparation of the Development Plan Document.

**Local Plans** have been prepared to set out the strategic policies for the future development of each of the Council areas, drawn up by the Local Planning Authorities.

The **Development Plan Document** will be produced to guide development for the specific Garden Community area. It will evolve the vision, allocate land uses and detail core policies, which planning officers use to make their decisions on planning applications.



# Engaging in a New Way

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The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about many new challenges for engagement and consultations, especially when it comes to holding events and meeting face-to-face.

We will prepare for our engagement and consultations to be delivered in a different way by making the most of digital opportunities<sup>1</sup>. It is important that we all stay safe, respectful of what people feel comfortable doing and that we do not put up any barriers which may prevent people from engaging with us, or responding to our consultations. We will, of course, offer non digital ways to engage and feedback too as circumstances allow.



As well as the obvious restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic, there are other restrictions which may have prevented people from engaging and responding to our consultations in the past. These include: a lack of will to read dense and complicated planning documents; a lack in confidence to engage or a lack of transport to attend events in places like village halls in order to

participate; a feeling that a minimum level of knowledge of the planning process is needed; and a lack of time, among many others.

We want to break down these barriers, by engaging in a new way – a way that goes beyond village hall events and embraces modern, efficient and accessible activities.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making> (paragraph 78)

# Our Engagement and Consultation Principles

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As per the Town and Country Planning Association's Garden City Principles<sup>2</sup> and our own Charter<sup>3</sup>, Community Engagement is a crucial principle when planning a Garden Community. This is a Garden Community for generations of the future. For our children and our children's children. This is why it is so important that those of us living now should contribute to planning for the future and help shape what future living in this Garden Community could one day look like.

We want to make sure that no-one feels put off from taking part in our engagement and consultation exercises. Our priority is to make sure that people have the opportunity to share any idea or thought and to encourage those who wouldn't normally take part in this kind of engagement/consultation to do so.

**We will do this by committing to these principles:**

## **Inclusiveness**

We will actively reach out to younger audiences, audiences who may not usually engage in such activity, audiences from diverse groups and backgrounds, and to those living near to the Tendring/Colchester Border Garden Community, as well as the wider Essex community and beyond.

## **Simplicity**

The planning process can be complicated. We will use jargon free, easy to understand language and present information in a simple way. We do not want people to become bogged down or put off by complicated language and terminology.

## **Creativity**

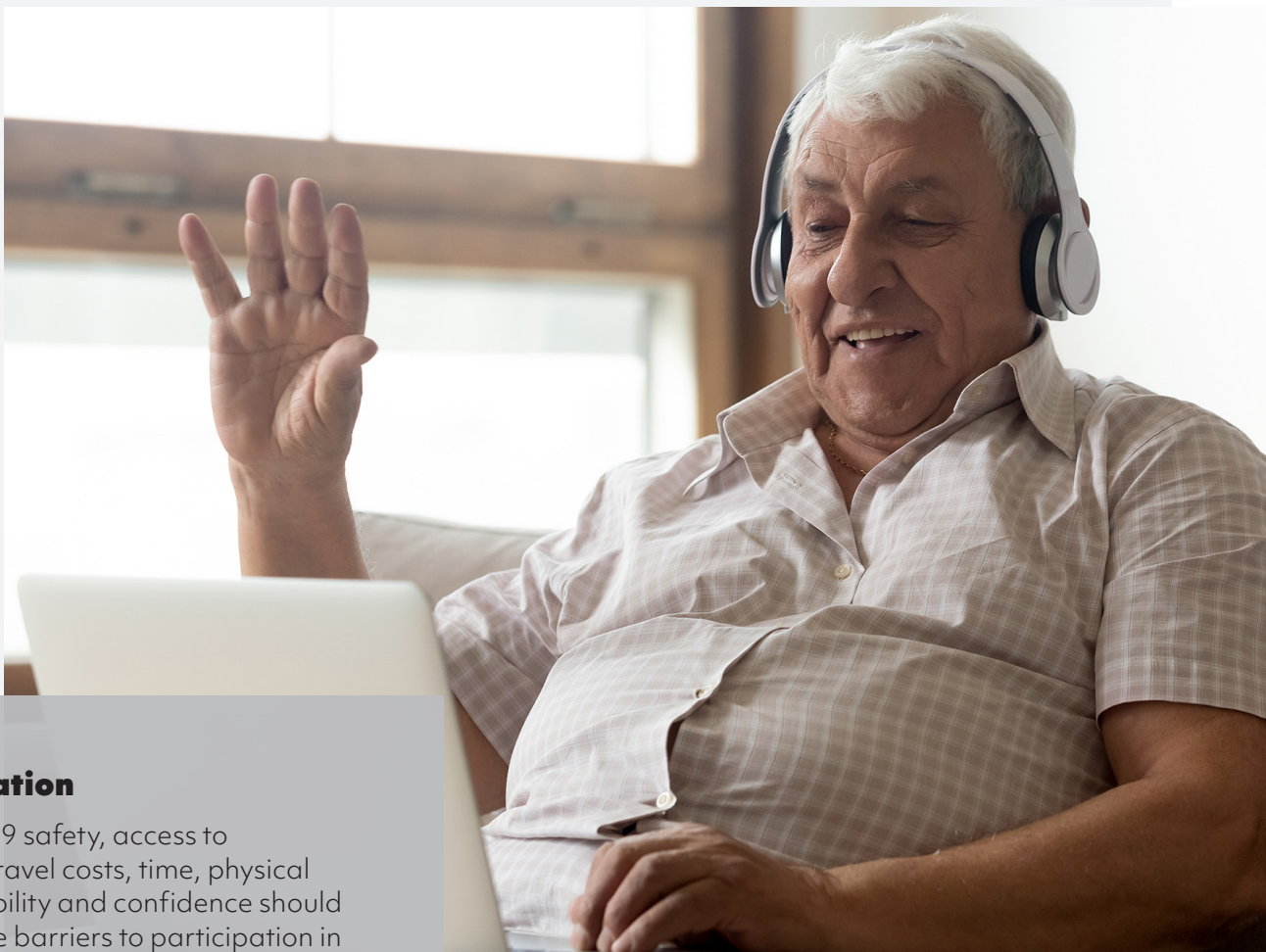
We don't want to put people off with very long surveys and complicated documents. We want to attract everyone to participate in our engagement and consultations, including those who may be time poor or those who may prefer alternatives to traditionally text and map-based methods of engagement.

We will make best use of creative content such as graphic design, infographics, videography and photography, as well as other content such as quick polls, quizzes and encouraging 'user generated' content, such as discussion forums.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/garden-city-principles>

<sup>3</sup> <https://tcbgardencommunity.co.uk/>



## **Innovation**

Covid-19 safety, access to travel, travel costs, time, physical accessibility and confidence should not pose barriers to participation in our engagement and consultation activity. Nor should any other barrier that might prevent an individual from leaving their home in order to offer feedback to our engagement and consultations. Therefore, we will use digital methods for our engagement and consultation by default.

However, we will make it clear that where possible (in light of the Covid-19 pandemic), and as advised by Government<sup>4</sup>, we will also offer alternative non-digital options and consider digital poverty in our approach<sup>5</sup>.

## **Transparency**

We will listen to all ideas and will make sure that it is clear where, when and how our communities and stakeholders have helped shape our Development Plan Document. As and when we run activities, such as polls or surveys, the results of these will be available for everyone to see.

## **Positive Collaboration**

We will integrate a broad range of interests and themes, including technical inputs alongside local insight and knowledge, with an objective to work positively and collaboratively. Plans for the Garden Community will benefit from a process of active participation, co-design and joint working.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/articles/exploringtheuksdigitaldivide/2019-03-04#introduction>



# Our Audiences

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We recognise how important it is to involve our communities and stakeholders in the development of the Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community. Our various audiences will play a very important role in contributing to the preparation of the Development Plan Document.

We want to be clear on how we define 'communities' and 'stakeholders' and the roles that each will have. We believe it is important not to silo our audiences too much and, as such, will broadly theme them as follows.

## **Communities**

As well as all of those listed below, we will promote and actively encourage involvement in our engagement activity and consultations to:

Individual residents in existing very local communities; Individual residents in existing communities in the wider area; Local community/hobby/interest groups of all kinds; Local action groups; All age groups with an emphasis on young people who will grow up with the Garden Community; Local schools, Colleges and the University; Local charities; Audiences from diverse groups and backgrounds; Disabled people and access groups; and people who expressed interest in previous consultation/engagement exercises, among others.



## Stakeholders

As well as those listed above and below, we will make sure that organisations are involved in, and kept informed of, our progress with the Development Plan Document. We will do this by organising theme-based discussions and inviting them to feedback on our activities. These organisations will include:

Neighbouring Local Authorities; Voluntary Bodies; Parish/Town Councils; Ethnic / Racial / National Groups; Essex Police; Religious Groups and Churches; The Environment Agency; Disabled Groups; Local Business Groups & Support Agencies; Health Agencies; Electronic Communication Providers; Learning Agencies; Schools; Transport Bodies and Groups; Utilities Providers; Sports Clubs; Recreation Bodies; Infrastructure and Service Providers; The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; Conservation and Landscape and Nature Conservation Bodies; Environmental Groups; Network Rail; Planning Consultants and Agents; Highways England; The Development Industry; and Public Health England, among others.

## Strategic Stakeholders

We will have a statutory Duty to Cooperate<sup>6</sup> with organisations, as exemplified below, on strategic planning issues:

Office of Rail and Road; Environment Agency; Highways Agencies; Historic England; Integrated Transport Authorities; Natural England; Sport England; Highway Authorities; Civil Aviation Authority; Marine Management Organisation; Homes England; The South East Local Enterprise Partnership; Clinical Commissioning Groups; Neighbouring Local Authorities; NHS England; and Essex County Council.



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<sup>6</sup> In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012



# What We Mean by 'Engagement' and 'Consultation'

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We want to be clear on how we define 'engagement' and 'consultation' and the roles that each will have.

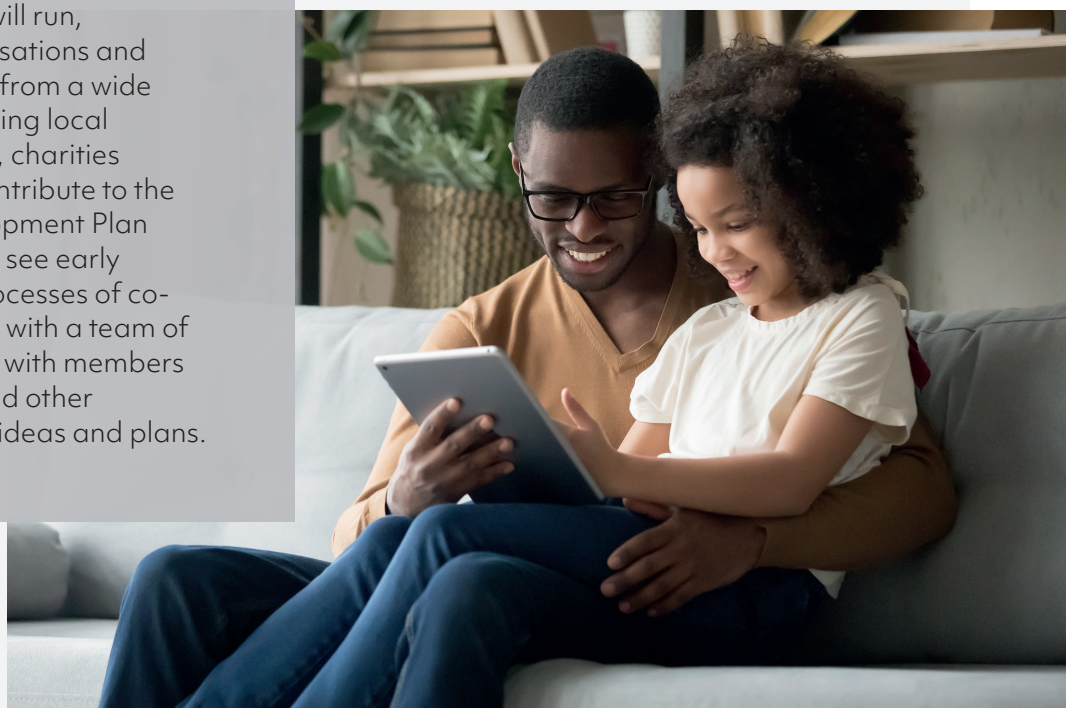
For this strategy we have adopted the following definitions which will apply to all our activity as we prepare, and eventually publish, the Development Plan Document for the Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community:

## **Engagement**

A variety of activities we will run, informally, to have conversations and gather ideas and insights from a wide range of audiences including local organisations, businesses, charities and individuals to help contribute to the preparation of the Development Plan Document. We very much see early engagement involving processes of co-design and collaboration, with a team of technical experts working with members of the local community and other stakeholders to shape up ideas and plans.

## **Consultation**

Statutory consultations we will run for the Development Plan Document, prior to it being examined. This will encourage formal feedback and comments on information we share. This type of consultation is in accordance with our duties to the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.



# Our Strategy

In order to deliver our engagement and consultation activities for the Development Plan Document we will involve our Communities, Stakeholders and Strategic Stakeholders throughout the whole process.

**We will achieve this by:**

## **A Digital Engagement Portal**

We will establish a designated online presence for all our engagement and consultation activity. The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic means that at least in the short term this will need to play a major role in enabling people to get involved. More people than ever now have internet access<sup>7</sup> and this will give the wider public an easy opportunity to feedback their ideas on set themes, in a multitude of ways such as quick polls, surveys and commenting on imagery etc. The portal will be easy to use and easy to find.

All communities and stakeholders will be encouraged to use the digital portal.

## **Non-Digital Alternatives**

For those with limited, or without, internet access we will offer non-digital ways to supply their feedback. Depending on the circumstances of the time, considering the Covid-19 pandemic, this may include initiatives such as posted documentation which can be returned by FREEPOST.

Should circumstances allow it, and people being comfortable with more direct interaction, we will consider direct face-to-face activity such as drop-in events and workshops.



## **A Community Liaison Group**

We will set up a Community Liaison Group. This group will be carefully researched and recruited to ensure it has a wide, representative and fair balance of individuals. We will welcome all levels of knowledge and experience in this group.

This group will be given the opportunity to propose and discuss ideas, to give feedback and to help contribute towards the Development Plan Document as it evolves. We will communicate to this group how we use their feedback by demonstrating to them how and where they have made an impact.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/householdcharacteristics/homeinternetandsocialmediausage/bulletins/internetaccesshouseholdsandindividuals/2020>

We will welcome all ideas, and these will all be considered throughout the process. However, it may not always be possible for every suggestion put forward to form part of the Garden Community. It may be the case that competing ideas are presented or through further discussions and collaboration ideas evolve from the original suggestion.

The group is intended to be made up of individuals that can best represent the various communities and stakeholders.

### **A Youth Liaison Group**

As this is a Garden Community for generations of the future, it is crucial we actively reach out to a younger audience, who are traditionally harder to engage with<sup>8</sup>.

We will set up a Youth Liaison Group. This group will be carefully researched and recruited to ensure it has a wide, representative and fair balance of individuals.

Similar to the Community Liaison Group, this group will be given the opportunity to propose and discuss ideas to give feedback and to help contribute towards the Development Plan Document as it evolves. It will be particularly important to understand the issues and needs that relate to young people, as it will be the younger generations that will grow up alongside the evolution of the Garden Community over the coming decades.

We will welcome all ideas, and these will all be considered throughout the process. However, it may not always be possible for every suggestion put forward to form part of the Garden Community. It may be the case that competing ideas are presented or through further discussions and collaboration ideas evolve from the original suggestion.

The group is intended to be made up of younger communities in the local area.

### **Stakeholder Conversations**

We will keep in touch with stakeholder groups such as faith networks, parish/town councils and educational establishments etc via conversations, e-newsletters and by sharing marketing material. Keeping in close contact with local networks such as these will help us reach wider groups across the community.

### **Strategic Stakeholders**

We have a statutory Duty to Cooperate with strategic organisations. This is especially important for the 'infrastructure first' approach of a Garden Community. Strategic Stakeholders will be involved in the preparation of the Development Plan Document throughout.

### **Awareness Raising**

We need to make sure that as many people as possible hear about our engagement and consultation activities. We will use a varied mix of communication methods to reach a wide audience, in the most efficient and economical way as possible. Our digital methods will include, but not be limited to: blogs; social media; online advertising; and e-newsletters. Our non-digital methods will include public relations; local newspaper/magazine advertising; and posters in community areas.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.social.co.uk/news/local-plans-fail-to-engage-people-about-the-future-of-their-areas/>



# Indicative Engagement and Consultation Timeline

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We know how important it is for people to know when they can contribute ideas and take part in the process. We will have to align the process to the outcome of the current Local Plan Examination in Public process and as that is not fully complete, the timeline set out below is indicative and may be subject to change. We will maintain a timetable as part of the digital engagement platform and our work with the Community Liaison and Youth Group. The programme will be monitored, updated and any changes communicated throughout the process.

## **Early – Mid 2021:**

- Set up Community Liaison Group and Youth Liaison Group and begin initial engagement activity
- Set up and begin early community engagement on the digital engagement portal
- Keep the community and stakeholders up to date on key milestones and developments
- Work with other stakeholders on matters as they arise
- Begin to explore the vision for the Garden Community, set themes and ideas with the Community Liaison Group, Youth Liaison Group and with the wider community

## **Mid - Late 2021:**

- Continue exploration of themes and ideas with the Community Liaison Group, Youth Liaison Group and the wider community
- Begin to evolve and consider the layout of uses across the area
- Keep the community and stakeholders up to date on key milestones and developments
- Work with strategic stakeholders on statutory matters

### **Early - Mid 2022:**

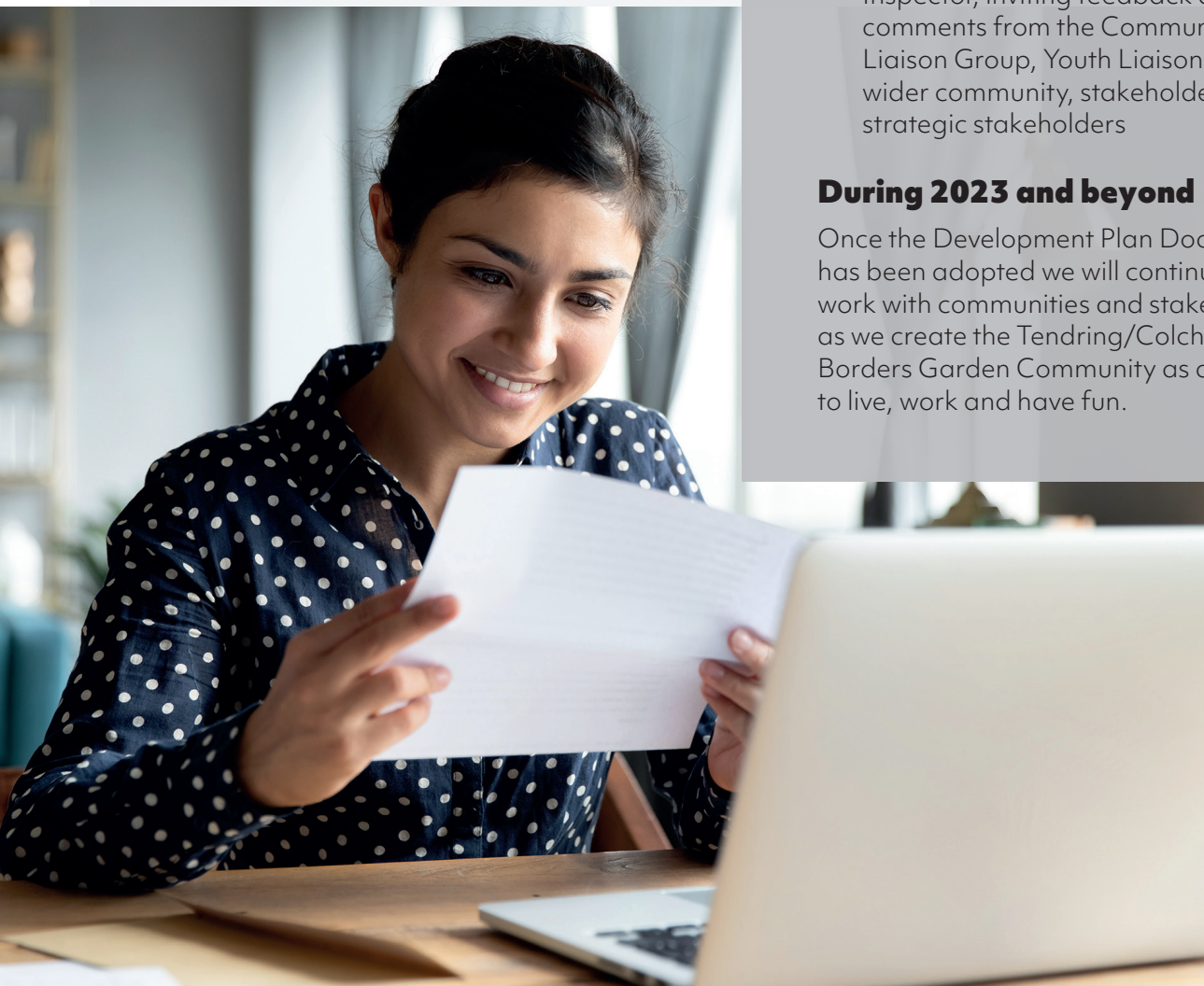
- Formalise ideas, visions and principles to include in the Development Plan Document with the Community Liaison Group, Youth Liaison Group, wider community and stakeholders
- Consult widely on issues and options for the Garden Community
- Keep the community and stakeholders up to date on key milestones and developments
- Work with strategic stakeholders on statutory matters

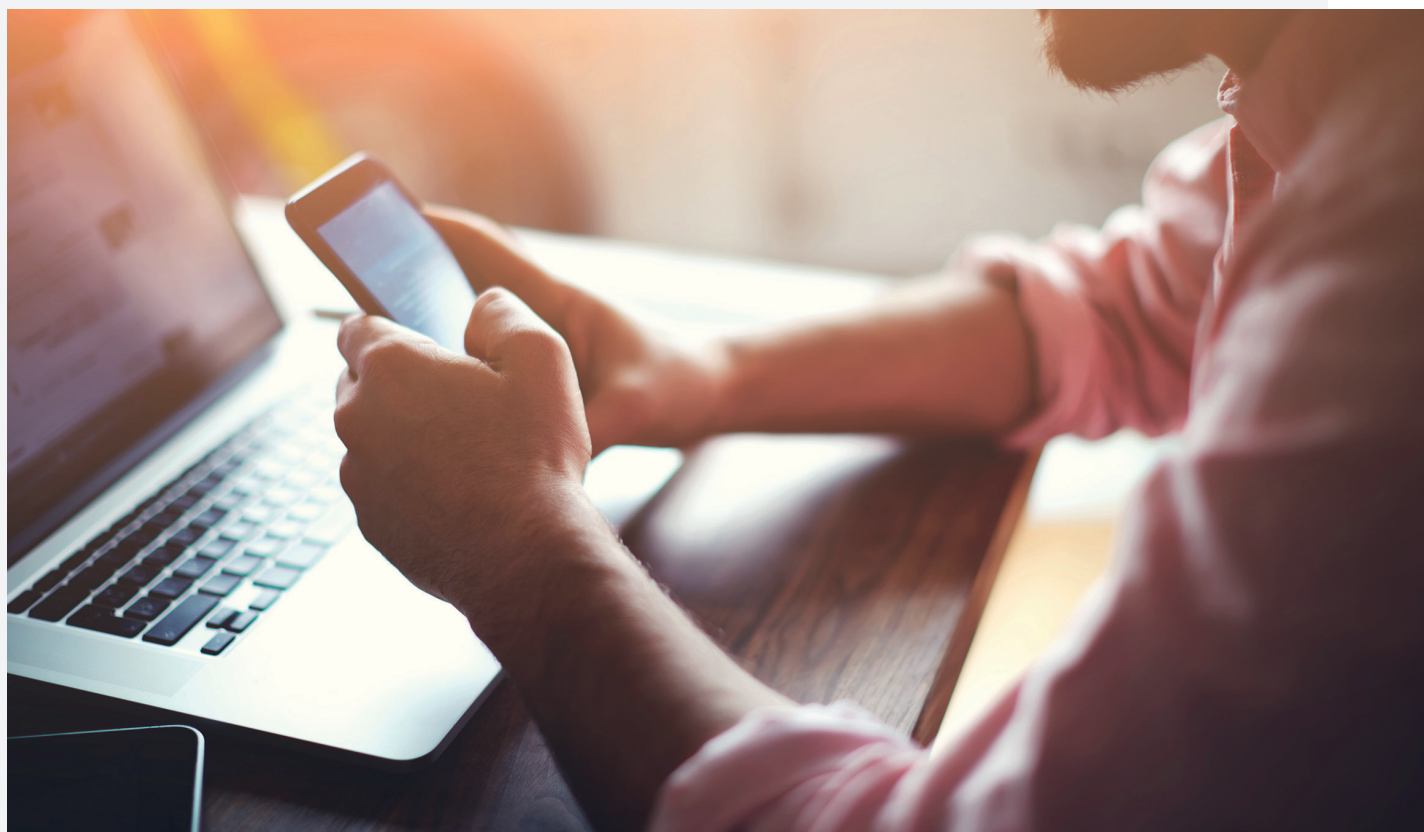
### **By the end of 2022 / early 2023**

- Submit the final draft Development Plan Document to the Secretary of State and carry out a statutory consultation on it, inviting feedback and comments from the Community Liaison Group, Youth Liaison Group, wider community, stakeholders and strategic stakeholders
- Full Examination in Public of the Development Plan Document enabling all stakeholders to engage in the process
- Following the examination of the Development Plan Document, carry out a statutory consultation on any modifications made by the Planning Inspector, inviting feedback and comments from the Community Liaison Group, Youth Liaison Group, wider community, stakeholders and strategic stakeholders

### **During 2023 and beyond**

Once the Development Plan Document has been adopted we will continue to work with communities and stakeholders as we create the Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community as a place to live, work and have fun.





# Keep in Touch

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## **Visit our website**

[www.tcbgardencommunity.co.uk](http://www.tcbgardencommunity.co.uk)

## **Email us**

[tcbgardencommunity@colchester.gov.uk](mailto:tcbgardencommunity@colchester.gov.uk)

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