



West Mersea Town Council

Strategic Aims of West Mersea Town Council 2026 - 2029 (combined with Reserves Policy - Appendix 1)

1. Introduction

The following sets out the background policies and relevant information to this overview of the aims and intentions of West Mersea Town Council for 2026/7 and beyond. Some of the planned actions will stretch beyond 2029 and many more will be introduced as circumstances change and new opportunities and challenges present themselves.

The Council recognises that Mersea Island is very special and as such we will be working towards maintaining and enhancing all that makes Mersea Island the place that visitors and residents alike wish to visit and live.

2. Policies and national developments that will guide the Council's thinking

a. Our Neighbourhood Plan.

On the 14th April 2022 the Neighbourhood Plan was formally adopted. This was approved by then Colchester Borough Council by resolution under the Full Council urgency measures. The full Plan with the supporting documents is set out at www.colchester.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning/west-mersea/

The cornerstone of this overview is the adopted West Mersea Development Plan. The Plan was approved by a referendum of residents with 88% in favour. The Council regards this as conferring substantial support and provides a very strong basis for forward planning.

b. Colchester City Council current Local Plan

The WMTC Neighbourhood Plan also follows the approval by the National Planning Inspectorate on 19th May 2022 of the Colchester Local Plan Section 2 – 2017-2033 and with it the parts that refer to West Mersea - www.colchester.gov.uk/local-plan/inspectors-report

c. Colchester City Council Emerging Local Plan

The Local Plan is being updated for the period to 2041 – [New Local Plan to 2041 · Colchester City Council](http://www.colchester.gov.uk/new-local-plan-to-2041) Regulation 18 was issued in the Autumn of 2025 and it is anticipated that it will move to a Regulation 19 late in 2026 and then, if there is approval, to an Examination by the Planning Inspectorate. West Mersea Town Council has published its response to Regulation 18 - <https://www.westmerseatowncouncil.gov.uk/local-plan> WMTC has indicated that it does not support the allocation of a further 300 houses for West Mersea.

d. Local Government Reorganisation

The formation of a North-East Essex Unitary Authority incorporating responsibilities held by Colchester City Council, Essex County Council and others. The North-East Essex unitary will take over all major local government functions and come into force on 1st April 2028. This will bring with it changes to the way that WMTC deals with higher levels in local government.

The role of parish and town councils in the planned changes to local government structures is being considered and is being covered by the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill currently going through Parliament.

3. WMTC's overarching objectives are –

- a. Consideration given to the West Mersea Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- b. Maintaining the unique and distinguishing features of West Mersea which create a strong sense of place.
- c. Retaining and developing key services and facilities which fall within our remit.
- d. Sound financial management and financial provision for the future whilst continuing to give residents value for money.

4. Developments already agreed in principle that will form part of future thinking

- a. An initiative from the Town Council has now been agreed, but not yet finalised, with the developers of Sanderling Reach and Colchester City Council for a number of Almshouses to be gifted under S106 to the newly set up Mersea Almshouse Trust. The principle of Almshouses will be promoted by WMTC on any new site (s) included in the emerging Local Plan.
- b. Agreed in principle with the developers of Kingsfield (Dawes Lane estate) that 2 plots of land (known as CL1 and CL2) will be sold to WMTC at nominal price for use as community land. The final use of this land is yet to be determined.
- c. S106 funds from the Sanderling Reach and Kingsfield sites to be put towards the development of a multi-use facility to replace the existing sports pavilion at the Glebe. Initial draft plans for this facility and a draft business plan have been commissioned and will be worked on during 2026. Completion may take several years.
- d. S106 funds from the Kingfield development to improve play/fitness facilities on Glebe 2. These funds are expected to be released in the next 18 months.

5. Principal aims for this Council over the next 3 years and beyond

- a. Examining and planning of the policies associated with the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan for each of the areas covered i.e. housing, open spaces, sports and recreation, traffic and transport, business, infrastructure and services, natural environment, landscape and coastal protection, tourism and heritage and development design.
- b. Promoting traditional livelihoods/sustainable tourism.

- c. Taking action to safeguard our unique local environment
- d. Ensuring maintenance and replacement of key assets.
- e. Review of proposals, along with the Highways authority and Police, to improve car parking and traffic control/calming.
- f. Seeking the NHS provides the local surgery with appropriate premises.
- g. Resistance to any further nuclear plant at Bradwell.
- h. Establishing strategic relationships, where appropriate, with neighbouring local authorities and other partners.
- i. Continuing to promote inclusivity and youth facilities.
- j. Maintaining the Precept at a level that represents value for money.

6. Itemised projects for 2026/27 included within the published budget

- a. Repairs to skate park.
- b. New play equipment for West Mersea Park.
- c. Completion of safe walkway in vicinity of the oyster beds, Coast Road.
- d. Securing title to Broomhills Greensward via the Land Registry.
- e. Continued planning of the multi-use facility at the Glebe.
- f. Improved drainage in Youth Field.
- g. Improvements to play areas on Glebe 2 (subject to S106 funds becoming available).
- h. Improvements to Fairhaven Public toilets.
- i. Planting of semi-mature trees to replace trees felled for safety reasons.
- j. Noticeboard Coastguard Compound.
- k. Removal of bike humps on Glebe.
- l. Replacement picnic bench School Gardens.
- m. Re-instatement of beacon – Victoria Esplanade.
- n. Improvements to Sensory Garden.
- o. Continued maintenance of trees (see report).
- p. Wildflower meadow Willoughby car park.

- q. Upgrade to disabled toilets – Willoughby.
- r. Re-instatement of rafts.
- s. Improvements to Feldy View Woodland, Firs Road and Barfield Road cemeteries.

7. Priority items for consideration in 2026/27

- a. Continued liaison with Colchester City Council on the emerging Local Plan in relation to West Mersea.
- b. Discussions with Colchester City Council in respect of potential transfer of assets to WMTC.
- c. Working with Colchester City Council on PSPO for seaward areas of Mersea.
- d. Glebe project.

8. Other longer term projects for which funds are/will be earmarked within reserves (see Appendix 1 for Reserves Policy Statement)

- a. Re-surfacing of publicly owned tennis courts on the Glebe.
 - To be funding annually from Precept. Current funding 2026 £1500.
- b. Re-painting of tennis courts in 2027 or 2028.
 - To be funded annually from Precept – not currently funded.
- c. Purchase of land to extend cemeteries at Firs Road.
 - To be funded annually from Precept. Current funding 2026 £70,000.
- d. Possible extension to skate park.
 - To be funded from Precept. Current funding £10,000.
- e. Repair to entrance road into Firs Road cemetery.
 - To be funded from Precept. Current funding 2026 £44,000.
- f. Possible repair and deployment of bathing rafts to Esplanade beach.
 - Already funded and held in Reserves. Current funding 2026 £12,000
- g. Possible VAS to deter speeding.
 - Already funded and held in Reserves. Current funding £10,000
- h. Fund to cover repayments of possible PWLB loan – not yet funded.

9. Other earmarked items in reserves

- a. Funding of £60,000 to fully cover pre-paid burials liability. Held in separate savings account.

10. General Reserve

- a. £150,000 held in Reserves in accordance with Appendix 1 requirements.

11. Major project not currently in earmarked reserves

- a. Glebe Project – capital funding via –
 - i. S106 (see 4 c) – £430,000
 - ii. Sports Association funds - £250,000
 - iii. Possible PWLB - £500,000 (interest to be funded via precept)
 - iv. Small miscellaneous grants - £20,000
 - v. 2026/7 budgeted funds - £10,000
 - vi. Possible grant funding from CCC (not included in our calculations)

July 2026