

Contents

Section 1 Background	Introduction, Purpose, Local Development Framework and Background	3
	How this document we be used and how we have got to this point	4
	How much new development is being planned in North Chelmsford	4
	The Borough Council’s vision for the new neighbourhoods	5
	The strategic locations for new neighbourhoods	5
Section 2 Themes and objectives	LDF Strategic objectives	7
	North Chelmsford themes and objectives	7
Section 3 Land use requirements	Introduction	13
	Housing	13
	Public Open Space	14
	Employment	14
	Convenience shopping	15
	Primary and acute healthcare	15
	Education	15
	Childcare	16
	Libraries	16
	Adult health and community wellbeing	16
	Community facilities	16
	Infrastructure requirements	16
	Section 4 Spatial structure	Introduction, opportunities and constraints
Structuring principles		21
Existing environmental structure		21
Proposed transportation structure		25
Proposed community structure		30
Section 5 Site allocations and designations	Introduction	35
	Defining boundaries for planning purposes	36
	Protected historic and landscape areas	37
	Development opportunity areas	41
	Sites in NW Chelmsford	42
	Sites in NE Chelmsford	46
	Identifying potential areas for employment development	48
	Urban Capacity Site	53
	Specific locations—Gypsy and Traveller sites, Park and Ride	54
	Existing Employment Policy Areas	57
	Proposed Employment Policy Areas	58
	Special Policy Area	59
	Neighbourhood Policy Area	60
	Local Neighbourhood Centres	60
	Defined Settlement and Urban Area boundaries	62
	Great Waltham Defined Settlement boundary	63
	Little Waltham Defined Settlement boundary	64
	Broomfield Defined Settlement boundary	65
Chelmsford Urban Area boundary	66	
Protected lanes	67	
Existing open space	68	
Section 6 Implementation	Introduction, overall steering and monitoring	69
	Infrastructure and development trajectory and inter-dependencies	69
	Funding and delivery milestones	69
	Implementation agencies	70
	Operational and management specifications	71
Section 7 Design guidance	Introduction and uses	73
	Site planning and urban form	74
	Buildings	75
	Sustainability, public realm and biodiversity	76
	Landscape character and transport network	78
	Car parking, utilities and design codes	79

How to comment on this document

This consultation document—the North Chelmsford Area Action Plan—details Chelmsford Borough Council’s proposals for development north of Chelmsford.

Representations should be made using the form that accompanies this document. This representation form is available online, and online responses are encouraged to enable us to capture views in the most efficient and accurate way.

Please visit www.chelmsford.gov.uk/ldf

Paper copies of the representation form are available, and should be returned to:

NCAAP Representations
Planning Policy
Directorate of Sustainable Communities
Chelmsford Borough Council
Civic Centre
Duke Street
Chelmsford, CM1 1JE.

Tel: 01245 606330

E-mail: reponline@chelmsford.gov.uk

The closing date for representations is 4.45pm on Monday 16th February 2009.

Published December 2008

Other consultation exercises

The local community may be asked to participate in a number of consultation exercises over forthcoming weeks, relating to specific infrastructure and development work. Such consultations may, for example, be promoted by health authorities, the local education or highway authorities, the Borough Council consulting on planning applications or developers seeking views on proposals before making applications. The Council intends to ensure that public consultation is carried out in a clear and coordinated way and will coordinate anticipated consultation, following the principles in its Statement of Community Involvement.

The Council anticipates that planning applications will be made before the NCAAP is adopted. If planning applications are made the Council will carry out formal consultations on them, separate to the consultation on this document.

Abbreviations

AAP—Area Action Plan

AMR—Annual Monitoring Report

CBC—Chelmsford Borough Council

ChART—Chelmsford Area Rapid Transit

CTCAAP—Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan

DCSF—Department for Children, Schools and Families

DPD—Development Plan Document

ECC—Essex County Council

EERA—East of England Regional Assembly

Ha—Hectare

IDP—Integrated Development Programme

LDD—Local Development Document

LDF—Local Development Framework

LDM—Local Delivery Mechanism

LTP—Local Transport Plan

NCAAP—North Chelmsford Area Action Plan

PCT—Primary Care Trust

PPS25—Planning Policy Statement 25— Development and Flood Risk

RSL—Registered Social Landlord

SAD—Site Allocations Document

SHMA—Strategic Housing Market Assessment

SPD—Supplementary Planning Document

SUDS—Sustainable Drainage Systems

SECTION I BACKGROUND

Introduction

1.1 This document sets out the Council's preferred approach for managing development growth in North Chelmsford. This follows a previous consultation in August 2007 which sought responses on a document outlining the issues and options for the area.

Purpose

1.2 The North Chelmsford Area Action Plan (NCAAP) will manage change by:

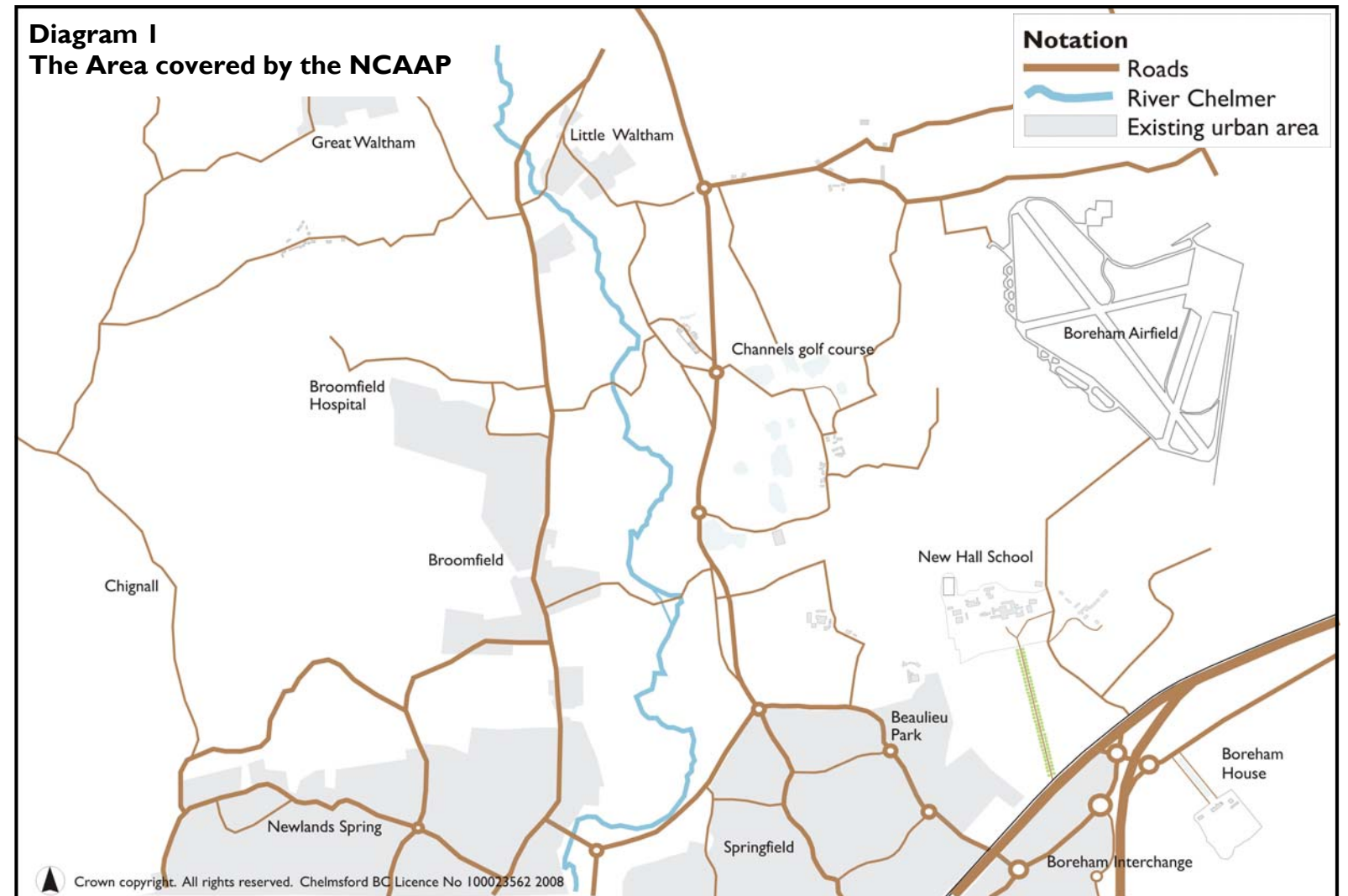
- Allocating land for new development;
- Provide a planning framework to shape development around areas of constraint, opportunity or those requiring protection;
- Provide the spatial expression for existing planning policies;
- Setting out an implementation programme to enable the delivery of new development.

Through this consultation document the Council is seeking views on the options and detail of how this can be achieved up to 2021.

The Local Development Framework

1.3 The Local Development Framework (LDF) contains a number of separate planning documents, of which the NCAAP is one, that address the borough's planning and development needs to 2021 and beyond. The Council has already adopted its Core Strategy and an area action plan for Chelmsford Town Centre. The Core Strategy provides the long-term vision, principles, strategic objectives and spatial strategy for managing development growth in the borough and provides the strategic context for the NCAAP. The Core Strategy identifies the need for new neighbourhoods in NE and NW Chelmsford.

1.4 The Council's adopted Core Strategy identifies the need for an Area Action Plan for North Chelmsford and provides the policy basis for the North Chelmsford Area Action Plan (NCAAP). The NCAAP Plan area has already been identified in the Core Strategy and is shown at Diagram 1.



Background

1.5 The Council is proposing urban extensions to the north of the town – this is necessary to meet the requirements for future growth of housing and jobs in the Borough. The development of two new neighbourhood areas will be accompanied by the provision of strategic transport infrastructure – roads, rail station, Park and Ride, as well as infrastructure essential for a sustainable community - education, water, sewers, shops, energy and green space.

1.6 The NCAAP will set out the extent, structure, movement pattern and land use content of new neighbourhoods. It will direct development to ensure long term, social and environmental planning objectives are met. It will also seek to ensure that landowners and developers work towards these objectives in a coordinated way. New developments will only be delivered by private investment— development

companies (for housing and workspaces), housing associations, utility companies, transport providers. Therefore the NCAAP is mindful of commercial development processes, the need for private sector confidence and minimising risk.

1.7 This private investment is guided by public authorities – Chelmsford Borough Council (CBC) as the plan-making authority who ultimately grants planning permission, Essex County Council (ECC) as the Highway and Local Transportation Authority, plus regional and government bodies who provide funding for infrastructure based on planning and delivery strategies. These public authorities all want to ensure the NCAAP reflects the opportunities and meets their respective aspirations for the future.

1.8 The NCAAP also sets the policy for the countryside and villages around the urban extension – the essential rural context that defines the Borough.

Notes

CBC (the Council) is the local planning authority responsible for production of a statutory development plan for the borough, of which this document will form part.

Evidence Base

This consultation document is published in accordance with Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended)

Reference to the adopted Core Strategy refers to the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD (2008)

1.9 The NCAAP is the most suitable means of achieving visionary new neighbourhoods that make Chelmsford a stronger, richer, more dynamic community. The threats to achieving this are:

- Landowners acting independently or in isolation;
- Dominance of short term delivery objectives;
- Property market fluctuations;
- Changes to infrastructure funding regimes.

The Structure of this document

1.10 The document is divided into the following sections:

Section 1	provides the Background and Context for the consultation document and how the Council has reached this stage.
Section 2	sets out the Themes and Objectives for north Chelmsford and provides objectives based upon the strategic objectives set out within the Core Strategy.
Section 3	provides the Land Use principles for new development i.e. the type and mix of new housing, the role of neighbourhood centres.
Section 4	sets out the Spatial Structure of the Plan area and the structuring principles that will determine the spatial shape and extent of new development in North Chelmsford.
Section 5	sets out the Council's Preferred Options and options considered for elements of the strategy that require land allocations including new housing and employment areas.
Section 6	sets out the delivery framework for the Plan's Implementation i.e. infrastructure delivery.
Section 7	sets out design guidance to achieve a consistent standard of quality in the individual elements that will form new development.

How to use this document

1.11 Background information is included as notes in the margin, in a grey box. This includes references to evidence base material, other information, and reflects the NCAAP themes. Where other options were

considered, these and the reasons for their rejection are contained in a light orange box.

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

1.12 This document is accompanied by an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal prepared by independent consultants Entec UK Ltd which is available to download from the Council's website.

How this document will be used

1.13 This NCAAP builds on the Core Strategy policies. The *Area Action Plan* and the *Borough-wide Site Allocations Document* add site specific policy. These are founded upon an evidence base, public and stakeholder involvement.

1.14 This document provides the context for planning applications from developers, who can realise the objectives. Planning applications must be made at the right time in relation to statutory plans and public consultation. The Council will reject applications for development which fail to meet the following tests:

- Comprehensive regardless of ownership;
- In accord with LDF planning principles.

How we have got to this point

1.15 The Borough Council has been consulting on the spatial principles for north Chelmsford through various events and documentation over the past 18 months. This process was both to help underpin and test the principles set out in the 'submitted' Core Strategy ahead of its Independent Examination and start the 'front loading' of the Issues and Options of the NCAAP.

1.16 This consultation process has taken the form of on-going workshops and consultation events with the community and stakeholders culminating in a more formal 'Issues and Options' consultation in August 2007. Informal consultation on the NCAAP has been a continuous process which is continuing through this consultation document.

1.17 The main issues that have already been identified through previous consultations are:

- The need to protect the Chelmer river valley and other areas of landscape quality;

- Protection of New Hall and its setting;
- The need to provide key transportation infrastructure in NE Chelmsford;
- Conflict between a cross-valley link road and function of the river valley as a Green Wedge;
- The need to provide educational and health facilities in new development areas;
- Need to provide employment opportunities within or close to residential development;
- Limited existing highway network capacity.

1.18 Specific issues relating to geographic locations or subjects which have been raised in previous consultation responses will be addressed at the appropriate point within this consultation document.

1.19 During consultation, evidence continues to be assembled to ensure that the eventual NCAAP proposals are sound. In particular the following work is ongoing:

- Land release and business case for a railway station;
- Research on strategic employment needs and implications for the town centre;
- Water cycle strategy;
- Flood risk sequential testing of proposed sites;
- Research into practicable renewable energy.

How much new development is being planned in north Chelmsford

1.20 The number of new homes and jobs for Chelmsford Borough are allocated in the East of England Plan. The Council's adopted Core Strategy then sets out the number of new homes, employment and infrastructure required for North Chelmsford as a general location.

1.21 The adopted Core Strategy seeks to optimise the use of 'brownfield' land especially within the built-up area of Chelmsford. The adopted Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan has already allocated opportunity areas for development. However, not all of the housing requirement can be accommodated on 'brownfield' sites and the Core Strategy has identified broad locations for new neighbourhoods to the north of Chelmsford. It is the role of the NCAAP to allocate land in north Chelmsford in accordance with these principles.

- 1.22 The general quantum of development is as follows:
- A minimum of 4,000 new homes;
 - 64,000 m² floorspace of new employment allocations.

The Borough Council's vision for the new neighbourhoods

1.23 The Council wants to secure highly attractive and successful new places to live and work. Through its spatial strategy, the Council has already expressed how the broad location for new neighbourhoods will achieve:

- Connectivity with Chelmsford town centre by means of excellent transport links;
- Integration of new neighbourhoods with existing;
- Joint delivery of housing and strategic infrastructure;
- Address existing deficiencies and structural weaknesses;
- Bring about wider economic, social and cultural benefits;
- Secure regeneration in existing residential adjoining residential areas.

1.24 In the first instance the Council wants:

- A well planned, design-led comprehensive development framework;
- A deliverable programme of investment and construction.

1.25 The Council wants to ensure a long term legacy of sustainable communities. This means that each new place will provide the conditions for:

- Housing meeting long term needs, able to adapt to changing household circumstances;
- A socially diverse and balanced population;
- Accessible public facilities to support and enable community building;
- Opportunities for residents to work locally in different and changing kinds of business;
- Local facilities related to population to ensure they are economically viable;
- A place that is safe, sociable, engendering a sense of ownership and pride;
- Very low CO² emissions from construction, energy and travel.

1.26 The Council wants the two new neighbourhood areas to go far beyond the provision of housing estates to generate quality of life related to the social and environmental circumstances anticipated this century:

- Multiple choice of travel;
- Environmental innovation;
- Exemplar solutions for housing;
- Integrated economic activity;
- Locally distinctive character;
- Places responding to history and landscape;
- Villages not suburbs.

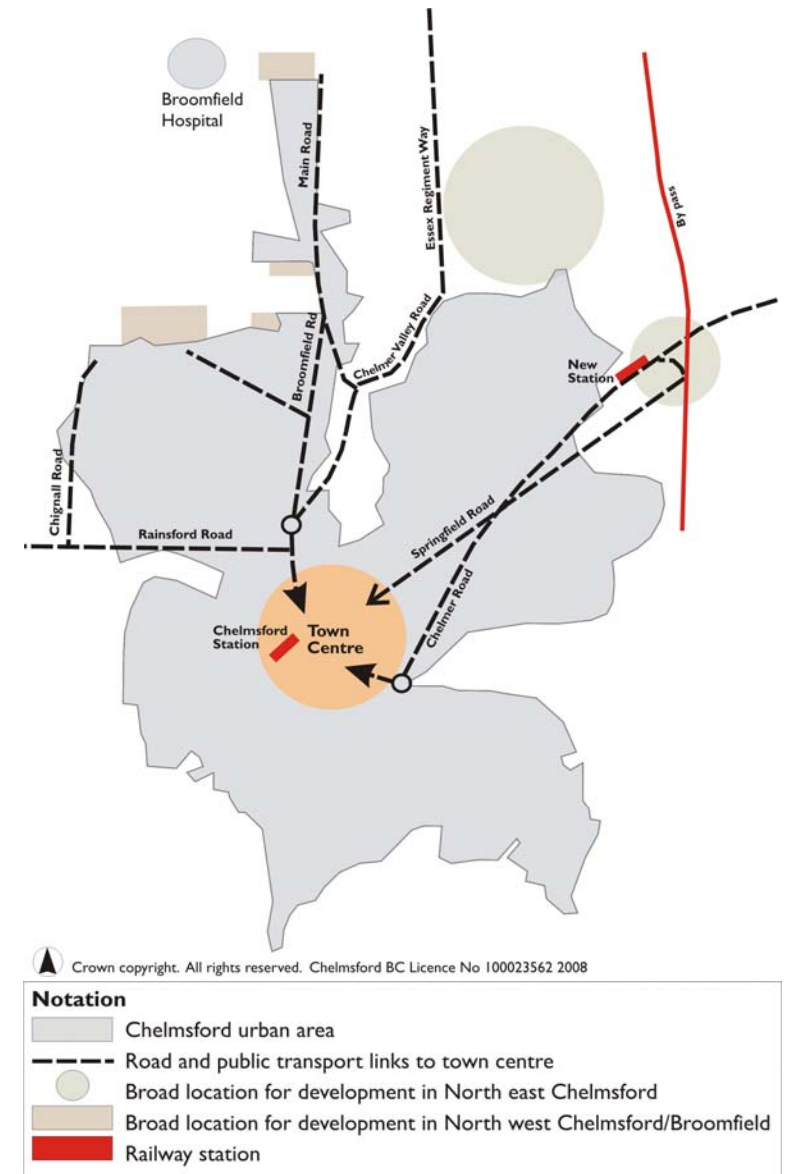
1.27 The Council wants all participants to share a vision for places fit for the future, for everyday enjoyment, embracing environment and community.

1.28 The Council requires development across the whole NCAAP area to be exemplary in relation to its environmental responsibility - the way development serves each generation of occupiers into the long term, how it will raise local environmental quality, generate safety and sociability, where mixed use and flexible premises enables viable local systems of economy, care and community, opportunity for business and social enterprise.

1.29 The Council wishes to promote a new concept of the neighbourhood. This is where sustainability derives from local interaction, a much reduced number and length of car journeys compared to now, with different working patterns, social opportunities and an all-age culture of responsibility. It will expect housing construction to be resource efficient and carbon-accounted; for occupied housing to be carbon-sensible and water efficient, for local open space to include community growing areas and support local food markets.

1.30 Development must employ the best proven technologies and be the stimulus for developing new technologies. The Council expects excellence in all respects, building for life, meeting lifelong needs, developing character. While not seeking eco-town status, the Council acknowledges that much of this thinking is fast becoming accepted wisdom and expects development in North Chelmsford to show the way forward to environmentally-driven communities.

Diagram 2
Proposed new neighbourhoods in relation to Chelmsford Town Centre



The strategic locations for new neighbourhoods

1.31 The Core Strategy identifies the broad locations for the two new neighbourhood areas in North Chelmsford. This document sets out the Council's preferred option for the actual allocation of sites to comprise:

Extending the existing Springfield built up area northwards – this would be a masterplanned place with an entirely new character (NE Chelmsford);

Strengthening existing neighbourhoods in North Melbourne and Broomfield – this would be planned as sensitive additions to areas with existing character (NW Chelmsford).

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