



Submission Core Strategy & Development Control Policies DPD

Chelmsford LDF Background Topic Paper

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Topic Paper I – The Borough-wide Spatial Strategy

I. Introduction

- 1.1 This Topic Paper is one of five produced by Chelmsford Borough Council to provide context and baseline information to assist the Council's evidence into the Independent Examination of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD [CD/CFD/004], which will commence on 11th September 2007. Although this DPD forms two parts, for the purposes of this topic paper the term Submission Core Strategy refers to the document in its entirety.
- 1.2 This paper is structured to provide a detailed statement on the development of the Borough-wide Spatial Strategy and its key components. It seeks to anticipate the main matters that the Inspector is likely to examine, and address the representations that have been received at the Submission stage of preparing the DPD. The evidence the Council has or is in the process of preparing for the Examination will include:-
 - i) the Council's *Self Assessment of Soundness* [CD/CFD/034] which sets out the reasons why it is the Council's belief that the submitted Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD is 'sound' in relation to each of the nine tests of soundness set out at Paragraph 4.24 of PPS12 [BD/NAT017].
 - ii) The five interrelated papers; *Topic Paper 1 : The Borough-wide Spatial Strategy*, *Topic Paper 2 : Housing*, *Topic Paper 3 : Economy/Employment*, *Topic Paper 4 : Shopping and Topic Paper 5 : Infrastructure*.
 - iii) Written Statement of Evidence related to the matters and issues specifically identified by the Inspector for debate at the Examination.
- 1.3 Each of the Topic Papers provides the context and broad basis for the Council's evidence in relation to the topics identified. They should be treated as an inter-related suite of papers, which should be read together to give a strategic overview. Throughout the Topic Papers, references are made in square brackets [XXXXXX] to documents referenced in the Related Documents List and held in the Independent Examination Public Library.
- 1.4 In essence, the Topic Papers identify the relevant evidence base work, which has supported the evolution of the policy or issue, assess the main issues that arose from consultation responses and examine the information and guidance provided by the Strategic Environmental and Sustainability Assessments (SEA/SA). The Topic Papers will, where appropriate, include succinct responses to the issues raised within representations made at the Submission stage. These are provided in the form of answers to a series of questions addressing the main issues that have been raised. These questions attempt to anticipate the Inspector's Matters and Issues and provide the Council's initial and general responses to those matters.
- 1.5 This Topic Paper (No. 1 – The Borough-wide Spatial Strategy) specifically covers the development of the Spatial Strategy, in relation to Government and Regional guidance, its evolution and testing through the earlier production stages of the Core Strategy and its component elements.

2. National and Regional Context

- 2.1 It is a fundamental principle of the new development plan system that the Core Strategy should contain a spatial strategy for the area. Paragraphs 1.8 – 1.11 of PPS 12 describe the content of a spatial strategy, whilst paragraphs 2.9 – 2.14 address the more specific requirements of a Core Strategy document

2.2 The Borough Council has followed closely the principles set out in national policy guidance in developing its Spatial Strategy, which is at the cornerstone of the Core Strategy and other supporting LDF documents, notably the accompanying Submission Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan and the now emerging Site Allocations Document and the North Chelmsford Area Action Plan. The Government Office for the East of England comment, in a letter dated 15th December 2006 accompanying their specific representation (Ref: LDF0007795), that

“We acknowledge that the Core Strategy element of the document incorporates the main requirements for a Core Strategy as required in legislation and policy. In particular we welcome the fact that the document has a focussed and Chelmsford specific spatial strategy”.

The Borough Council views this comment and similar earlier comments by the Government Office, as confirmation that its Spatial Strategy complies with Government policy and guidance on that aspect of LDF preparation.

2.3 The Spatial Strategy and its accompanying strategic spatial planning objectives, also now provides a key element of the Council’s *Chelmsford Tomorrow* vision [BD/CFD/001] providing the Council’s corporate long-term vision for Chelmsford to become the economic, cultural, leisure and shopping capital of Essex and a leading regional centre in the East of England. That vision is now being translated into specific strategy documents for a number of Council services and functions and has become the key driver for the Council’s Corporate Plan. The Spatial Strategy therefore provides a framework for all elements of Chelmsford’s future growth in an integrated, comprehensive and sustainable way.

2.4 Draft East of England Plan (RSS 14)

The Borough-wide Spatial Strategy takes as its starting point the policy guidance and objectives contained in the Draft East of England Plan (RSS 14) [CD/REG/01] and more recently the Secretary of State’s Proposed Changes to the East of England Plan [CD/REG/03]

In summary form, the key aspects of that guidance and those Proposed Changes are as follows:-

- Policy CHI: Chelmsford Key Centre for Development and Change (contained within [CD/REG/03])

“The strategy for Chelmsford should:

- provide for substantial growth of housing within an allocation of 16,000 for the District as a whole;
- seek to strengthen the town’s role as county town and further increase and diversity its employment base;
- maximise the re-use of previously developed land and also provide for sustainable urban extensions; and
- assist the development of more sustainable transport systems within the town and capitalise on and improve its strategic links to London and other regional centres.”

- Policy SS3: Key Centres for Development and Change (contained within [CD/REG/03])

To achieve sustainable development, new development should be concentrated at KCDC’s including Chelmsford.

- Policy SS7: Green Belt
(contained within [CD/REG/03])

The broad extent of Green Belt in the East of England is appropriate, and will be maintained. Strategic reviews of Green Belt boundaries are identified as being necessary for certain locations, but not for the Borough of Chelmsford.

- Policy E1: Job Growth 2001 – 2021
(contained within [CD/REG/03])

The following target for net growth in jobs for the period 2001 – 2021 is adopted as a reference value for monitoring purposes and guidance for regional and local authorities, EEDA and other delivery agencies in their policy and decision making on employment matters.

Central and North Essex - 42,000
(Harlow / Uttlesford / Chelmsford / Braintree / Maldon)

- Policy E3: Regionally Strategic Employment Locations
(contained within [CD/REG/03])

Local development documents should identify readily serviceable regionally strategic employment sites of the quality and quantity required to meet the needs of business as identified through employment land reviews. Such sites should be provided at, inter alia:

- other Key Centres of Development and Change, including Chelmsford, to meet needs as may be identified in Local Development documents.

- Policy E5: Regional Structure of Town Centres
(contained within [CD/REG/03])

The cities and towns of strategic importance for retail and other town centre purposes are:

- Regional centres includes Chelmsford

- Policy H1: Regional Housing Provision 2001 – 2021
(contained within [CD/REG/03])

The district allocation for Chelmsford is:-

<u>Minimum Dwelling Provision 2001 – 2021</u> (net increase, with annual average rates in brackets)			
	Total to build (April 2001 to March 2021)	Of which already built (April 2001 to March 2006)	Minimum still to build (April 2006 to March 2021)
Chelmsford	16,000	3580 (720)	12,420 (830)

- Policy H3: Affordable Housing
(contained within [CD/REG/03])

Within the overall housing requirement in Policy H1, LDD's should set appropriate targets for affordable housing. At the regional level, delivery should be monitored against the expectation that some 35% of housing coming forward as a result of planning permissions granted after the adoption of the RSS are affordable

- Policy T5: Inter Urban Public Transport
(contained within [CD/REG/03])

Improvements to inter-urban public transport should be focused on the Regional Transport Nodes – including Chelmsford

- Policy T15: Transport Investment Priorities
(contained within [CD/REG/03])

Investment in transport should be prioritised according to its contribution to the RTS objectives and outcomes in Policy T1, the priorities and objectives in Policies T2 to T14, and the transport priorities in the policies for the sub-areas and Key Centres for development and change. Areas are identified where further work should be focused to identify the interventions required – including the London to Ipswich Corridor, including Chelmsford and Colchester urban areas.

2.5 The above summary of Key Issues is drawn from the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Draft East of England Plan, which were published in December 2006. These Proposed Changes post-dated the Submission of the Core Strategy and the Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan, but were, in many respects, anticipated within the Borough-wide Spatial Strategy, and specifically addressed at paragraphs 2.64 – 2.68 of the Submission Core Strategy. In particular, it is relevant to note that paragraph 2.66 states that *“The Borough Council believes that these increased growth requirements could be met entirely within the parameters of the Spatial Strategy described in this Chapter without necessitating the consideration of any further spatial options for growth.”*

2.6 The East of England Regional Assembly considered a report (Ref. LDF0003535) on the Submission Core Strategy at its Regional Planning Panel Sub-Committee on 4 December 2006. Paragraph 4.1 states:

“The Submission document responds well to the draft East of England Plan, and seeks to take forward the regional and sub-regional policies as they apply to Chelmsford Borough. It is considered that the spatial strategy as set out in the Vision and Core Policies conforms to the draft EoE Plan.”

It is the Borough Council's contention that the Borough-wide Spatial Strategy is therefore fully in conformity with the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy, as confirmed by the Regional Planning Body.

3 Preparing the Strategy

3.1 Following the withdrawal of the revised Chelmsford Borough Local Plan 2001 – 2011 by the Council in July 2003, work then commenced immediately on preparing the Chelmsford Borough Local Development Framework in order to meet the requirements of the then emerging legislation reforming the development plan system.

3.2 Initially, work was directed at commissioning and establishing a robust and credible evidence base to support the requirements of the entire Local Development Framework, including the Submission

Core Strategy and Submission Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan. The Council has now put in place a substantial evidence base for its LDF, as listed at Appendix A of the Core Strategy, and in this respect has followed, and is continuing to follow, the guidance at paragraphs 4.8 – 4.11 of PPS 12. The LDF process requires that the evidence base is continually reviewed monitored and updated, particularly to provide data for the Annual Monitoring Reports. This is not to say that the evidence base was insufficient or incomplete at the date of Submission for the Core Strategy or the Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan, but it is part of the Council’s desire to keep the evidence base up to date and confirm the direction of travel for the LDF as a whole, and specific local development documents in particular.

- 3.3 Alongside the identification of the key planning issues affecting the Borough for the period 2001 – 2021, arising from work on the evidence base, the emerging regional plan and the expressed views of stakeholders and the wider community, the Council also issued a specific invitation in Autumn 2003 to private developers and landowners who had submitted major development proposals to the withdrawn Local Plan to ask whether they wished their proposals to be evaluated by the Council, and its retained Sustainability Appraisal consultants Entec, against the projected ‘greenfield’ housing requirements up to 2021. This invitation was issued without prejudice, to enable the Council, at the earliest possible time, to assess whether any privately- promoted development proposals could form part or all of a subsequent growth option for the Borough which would conform to the principles and objectives of sustainable development, and contribute positively to the emerging Spatial Strategy.
- 3.4 A total of 15 development options were put before the Council in response to that invitation, and the result of Entec’s Integrated Strategic Environmental and Sustainability Appraisal which assessed these options are published in their report ‘Appraisal of Private Sector Development Options’ 10 September, 2004. The Council considers that it took an open, inclusive and responsible approach to its work on generating spatial options in line with the spatial planning approach required by the Government guidance (see Ref. PPS 12, paragraph 1.8).

The 15 development options assessed in that work were:

Options	No. Dwellings (as stated in submission)
1. Battlesbridge and Runwell	7000 (2 phases)
2. Lathcoats Farm	580
3. Galleywood	400
4. North Wickford	1785 – 2535
5. Beaulieu Park	4000 – 5000
6. Baddow Meads	750
7. Howe Green	2500 – 3500
8. NW Chelmsford	5900
9. North of South Woodham Ferrers	1080 1440 or 1800 (densities)
10. Boreham Airfield Site	4500 (additional 6000-8000 post 2021)
11. Land at Great Baddow SE of Chelmsford	620 (720 if primary school not required)
12. Tabrums Farm, South Woodham Ferrers	2000
13. Sandon	1000
14. East of Broomfield	800
15. Skeggs Farm, Writtle	Not stated (and not subject to full assessment)

It is relevant to note that these options included a number within the Metropolitan Green Belt – options 1, 2, 3, 4, 11, 12 and 15. It is also the case that a number of these locations/sites have been the subject of representations at the Submission stage of the Core Strategy, although not necessarily promoting the same quantities of development as at Autumn 2003, which is now in some cases

greater and in other cases lower, and those representations have been advertised for public consultation at the Reg. 32 stage (June – August 2007).

3.5 The Council itself developed a series of options – described as Spatial Scenarios- for similar appraisal by Entec. These options encompassed ‘brownfield’ development within Chelmsford and South Woodham Ferrers as well as a range of potential ‘greenfield’ options ranging from large urban extensions through to small – scale village expansions across the Borough. Entec’s assessment of the Borough Council’s own Spatial Options was published in their Integrated Strategic Environmental and Sustainability Appraisal ‘Assessment of Chelmsford Borough Council Spatial Options’ dated 10 September, 2004.

3.6 It is important to note a number of key conclusions within that report, as they were important considerations in the subsequent selection of a Preferred Option by the Borough Council. The most important conclusions are as follows:

“ The results of the assessment demonstrate that the continued urban intensification of Chelmsford represents the most sustainable form of development. However, it is recognised that this by itself will not provide sufficient sites to meet the identified housing need up to 2021. Chelmsford Borough Council has therefore sought to identify a number of alternative options to accommodate the remaining identified need and this appraisal has sought to identify the relative strengths and weaknesses of these options, against the agreed sustainability objectives and criteria.

The appraisal has identified Option 2A (New neighbourhood areas Chelmsford, Northeast and Northwest) as the most sustainable and next logical step to accommodating housing growth, following the intensification of the urban area. The larger sites that are identified as forming this option are able to generate a more favourable assessment based upon the assumption that they are able to make provision for a wider range of services and facilities due to their critical mass. They are also close to existing employment locations, have good public transport links and are able to provide the quantum of development necessary to secure internal trip.”

3.7 The Audit Trail for the development of the Spatial Options, leading to public consultation in November 2005 on the three separate Growth Options at the Preferred Options stage (Reg.26) of the Core Strategy document, is contained at Background Document BD/CFD/074. In developing the Council’s own Spatial Options, the Council clearly needed to recognise and adhere to Government objectives for the provision of land for development. In seeking to conform with Government policy and its own aspirations for the growth of Chelmsford, and also taking into account the initial SEA/SA assessments, it was clear to the Council that the greater part of the Borough’s growth requirement could, and should, be met within urban Chelmsford, and that the ‘greenfield’ element of that growth requirement could be met without the need to release land from the Metropolitan Green Belt.

3.8 Nevertheless, it should be noted that in its assessment of both private-sector development options and its own Spatial Options, the Borough Council assessed options involving development within the Metropolitan Green Belt. However, in the development of the three Growth Options for Reg. 26 consultation, the Borough Council took into account the results of the Reg. 25 Issues and Options consultation [see BD/CFD/040 and BD/CFD/041] and resolved that the need to protect the Green Belt should form a key element of the emerging Spatial Strategy. Options for development within the Green Belt were therefore discounted at that stage, as being directly contrary to that emerging strategy.

3.9 In accordance with the principles of frontloading (see Ref. PPS 12, paragraph 4.3) the Borough Council undertook extensive community and stakeholder involvement at the Reg. 25 Issues and Options stage of the Core Strategy document. This was the most extensive and successful public consultation exercise ever undertaken by the Borough Council, and is fully documented within Core

Document CD/CFD/012, together with specific Background Documents BD/CFD/040, BD/CFD/041 and BD/CFD/042. The success of that consultation, and its use of innovative and imaginative techniques, resulted in the Borough Council receiving several national and regional awards for demonstrating good practice in community involvement.

- 3.10 The Reg. 25 Issues and Options consultation was accompanied by the publication of the Integrated SEA/SA Scoping Report (Prepared by Entec) which contains the Borough Councils Sustainability Appraisal Framework, the emerging Vision for the Core Strategy and Plan objectives (CD/CFD/008). Consultation feedback documents were published following that stage in the preparation of the Core Strategy (BD/CFD/040 – 042). Key responses from the GO-East, EERA, ECC and other stakeholders are contained in BD/CFD/040, with EERA commenting that “*The Consultation Paper sets out a vision that is compatible with existing RSS and the emerging East of England Plan.*”
- 3.11 The Reg. 26 Preferred Options Core Strategy document was prepared taking full account of the responses received to the Reg. 25 consultation, further evidence base work and the accompanying Integrated SEA/SA Report (prepared by Entec) (CD/CFD/009). Paragraphs 15.1 – 15.7 of the Preferred Options document describe the process by which options for meeting the ‘greenfield’ element of the Borough’s growth requirement were examined, and either discounted or carried forward for further assessment. That process is further set out within the reports considered by the Council’s Development Policy Working Group and Development Policy Committee – as contained in the Spatial Options Audit Trail at document BD/CFD/074. Amongst the options discounted during this process as being contrary to the strategic approach being developed for the Preferred Options document were all options within the Metropolitan Green Belt, Boreham Airfield, Land North of Sandon and options at the periphery of South Woodham Ferrers
- 3.12 The Borough Council published three growth options for consultation at the Reg. 26 stage, together with its Preferred Borough-wide Spatial Strategy. The principles defining the development of that preferred strategy are set out at pages 26 – 29 of the Preferred Options document (CD/CFD/014), with the preferred strategy set out at pages 30 – 35, and the three growth options described at pages 38 – 48 of that document.
- 3.13 The Borough Council identified (at paragraphs 17.1 – 17.2) Option I as its Preferred Option, noting that “Option I offers the best prospect for achieving a sustainable pattern of development in the borough up to 2021 and beyond. By the creation of two new neighbourhood areas to the north-east and north-west of the existing urban area of Chelmsford, the benefits that can be secured by the delivery of new social and transportation infrastructure linked to new development will be available to much wider sections of the community than would be the case with other options, which are only likely to achieve more realised benefits.” It is further noted “It is a key objective of both the Community Plan and the Local Development Framework that new development achieves a broad range of socio-economic, environmental and accessibility objectives, and Option I is the best performing option in this respect.”
- 3.14 The accompanying Integrated SEA/SA report summarises Entec’s sustainability assessment of the Preferred Borough-wide Strategy and the Growth Options at Section 4.2 – 4.3 of that document (CD/CFD/009). Entec conclude, inter alia , at Section 7 that:

“The Preferred Borough-Wide Strategy for the future development of Chelmsford Borough is outlined within the accompanying Preferred Options Consultation Document which is issued with this report. The Council’s preferred option is one that seeks to concentrate development within existing urban areas protecting and enhancing the environment, protecting the Metropolitan Green Belt and supporting the rural communities that lie beyond it. Furthermore the Council seeks to support the continued promotion and development of Chelmsford as a key regional centre whilst recognising the need to secure local improvements in South Woodham Ferrers. Accessibility and the securing of new infrastructure are also seen as essential components

of this vision. Finally, the Council recognises that the housing targets set for it are such that there will be a requirement for the development of 'greenfield' sites beyond the existing urban boundary of the town. It is the intention that, if required, they will be developed mainly towards the end of the LDF period.

Entec has appraised the options for Chelmsford and considers that the emphasis on a concentrated approach to development, focussed upon the existing urban area of Chelmsford, will contribute to sustainable development. This is because a concentrated approach to development supports the viability of existing services, including public transport provision, and can also support the provision of new services over and above a more dispersed approach to growth.

The Preferred Borough-Wide Strategy is focussed on the accommodation of 14,000 homes over the period to 2021. It will be essential for the Core Strategy to also deliver sufficient employment provision over the same period so that Chelmsford's role as sub-regional centre is strengthened and thereby its role as a commuter town to London reduced.

Chelmsford's urban area, including the town centre, supports the greatest range of employment opportunities, open space, social and cultural, health and education facilities within the borough. A resident population focussed upon this area has shorter distances to travel to access these facilities and a choice of modes of transport is often more readily available. A concentrated approach to development therefore has the potential to reduce emissions, particularly those related to climate change, over a dispersed approach."

- 3.15 The Borough Council evaluated the responses received to the Reg. 26 consultation, and again published consultation feedback documents summarising the issues raised (BD/CFD/043 – 047/086). Section 2 of the report prepared for the Council in May 2006 by Marketing Assistance Ltd. (BD/CFD/086) summarises the questionnaire responses, which were largely from the general public. It demonstrates strong and positive support for all aspects of the Preferred Spatial Strategy, with very strong support for Option 1 – the Borough Council's preferred option – for meeting the requirements for new housing in the Borough.
- 3.16 Consultation responses from the specific and general consultation bodies and stakeholders are identified in document BD/CFD/043. It is relevant to highlight the response received from the East of England Regional Assembly, recorded at pages 39 – 41 of BD/CFD/043.

EERA's response includes the following comments:-

"Welcome the vision, the link with the community plan and the broad consistency with the draft East of England Plan."

"Welcome the intention to introduce a new policy and an SPD that will clearly set out the need for developers to provide infrastructure required to mitigate the impact of their development via a tariff based approach. It would, however, be helpful if other approaches are explored in the light of the new planning gain supplement outlined by government."

The Assembly would wish to be satisfied that if Option 1 is taken forward it will be able to deliver sustainable growth within the Plan period and fund necessary infrastructure (social, environmental, economic and physical)."

"It is also very important to ensure that any proposed new neighbourhoods are integrated with other parts of Chelmsford."

"Either Option 1 or Option 2 could form the basis for the Preferred Strategy. In deciding between the merits of Option 1 and Option 2, we would particularly draw the Council's attention to Policy SS3 in the draft RSS"

which required significant urban extensions to be large enough to provide a sustainable form of development – which includes provision of appropriate education and other infrastructure.”

“Broadly welcome the tone of your Core Strategy with regards to Green Belt which is consistent with the draft RSS and PPG2. The strategy should continue to discount any major release of land within the Green Belt up to 2021.”

Broadly welcome the link between the Core Strategy themes and the community plan which is consistent with Policy SS2 of the draft East of England Plan.”

- 3.17 The Borough Council evaluated the responses received to its Reg. 26 Preferred Options consultation which demonstrated widespread consensus and support for the Borough-wide Spatial Strategy, and on this basis prepared its Submission Core Strategy document accordingly with Option I embedded within that Spatial Strategy. It is the Borough Council’s contention that the extensive and successful community and stakeholder engagement undertaken at both Reg. 25 (Issues and Options) and Reg. 26 (Preferred Options) has laid the foundations of a robust, long-term Spatial Strategy within the Submission Core Strategy, which benefits from significant consensus and support from partner bodies, other key stakeholders and the wider community within the Borough. It represents, for the first time in the Borough Council’s history as local planning authority, an enduring long term strategy that provides certainty and direction for the growth of the Borough. It provides a template for growth up to 2021, and then beyond, and critically allows the Borough Council and its partners to match growth to infrastructure delivery. It will shape the growth and development of the Borough to meet the challenges of its regional role.
- 3.18 In recognition of the challenges that the Borough faces, and its pivotal role in delivering growth, the Borough Council is firmly committed to driving forward the Spatial Strategy and its key elements both through the LDF process but also through other avenues such as “Chelmsford Tomorrow.” To that end, the Council has recently written to the Regional Director of the Government Office for the East of England asking that consideration be given to bringing Chelmsford within the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough growth area, as identified within RSS 14. The initial response to that request is attached as Appendix I.
- 3.19 In summary, the Council’s Borough-wide Spatial Strategy is a total planning strategy designed to secure a step change in the delivery of new housing, new jobs and new infrastructure for the benefit of the community as a whole. For the first part of the plan period, up to 2011, the primary focus will be on continuing the renaissance of Central Chelmsford with strong growth in mixed-use schemes, retailing and office development, including the regeneration of key ‘brownfield’ sites such as Chelmer Waterside. The implementation of this renaissance will be achieved through the Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan. After 2011, ‘greenfield’ land in North Chelmsford will be released for the development of over 4,000 new homes within two sustainable new neighbourhoods, supported by employment development, new primary schools, a new secondary school, primary healthcare facilities and recreational facilities. The implementation of this phase of development will be led by the North Chelmsford Area Action Plan – now in preparation, with Reg. 25 Issues and Options consultation approved to commence in July 2007.
- 3.20 The Borough Council has advertised all alternative development sites and boundary changes that were the subject of representations made at the Submission stage for the Core Strategy document under Reg. 32 for consultation between 26 June and 7 August 2007

4. The Main Components of the Spatial Strategy

- 4.1 This section of the Topic Paper provides a resumé of the main components of the Spatial Strategy, and serves an introduction to further Topic Papers in this series.

4.2 The key elements of the Spatial Strategy are:

- The focus of development on existing built-up areas including an urban renaissance within Chelmsford Town Centre;
- The development of two new neighbourhoods to the North of Chelmsford with necessary infrastructure;
- The safeguarding of the Metropolitan Green Belt and the protection and enhancement of valuable landscapes and the natural and historic environments;
- Promoting the economic and cultural role of Chelmsford as the 'Capital of Essex' and the revitalisation of an economic gateway in North East Chelmsford.

4.3 A Vision for Growth

The overarching vision that the Borough Council has adopted for its LDF is set out at page 13 of the Submission Core Strategy. The vision, which is the same as that for the Community Plan (BD/CFD/012), seeks to place Chelmsford as the economic, cultural, leisure and shopping Capital of Essex, synonymous with its regional role identified in RSS 14.

4.4 This vision now forms part of the *Chelmsford Tomorrow* initiative, and demonstrates as one example, the Borough Council is taking forward the Core Strategy into its implementation and delivery mechanisms. This is considered in greater detail within in Topic Paper 5 – Infrastructure.

4.5 Securing Infrastructure

It is a fundamental objective of the Submission Core Strategy to secure the necessary social, community and transportation infrastructure which not only meets the needs of new development within the Borough, but also seeks to remedy identified weaknesses and deficiencies in the existing level of infrastructure provision.

The timely delivery of such infrastructure is therefore critical to the successful implementation of the Spatial Strategy. To this end, the Borough Council has been developing an innovative and co-ordinated approach for securing contributions from future development for necessary infrastructure required to deliver the strategy. In this respect, the term “infrastructure” encompasses a wide range of works and facilities which ranges from major transportation projects to localised community facilities. The range and scope of infrastructure required for the Spatial Strategy has been identified in the Submission Core Strategy (at pages 64 –66) some of which will require a direct contribution from future development. Policy CP4 will allow the Borough Council to secure contributions from new development through the use of pooled standard changes and/or formulae, and the Council has now prepared a draft Supplementary Planning Document on Planning Contributions to provide detailed policy guidance to support this approach.

4.6 Delivering New Housing

The Spatial Strategy establishes a framework for delivering the Borough's allocation of new housing up to 2021, as set out in the Draft East of England Plan and the Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to that document – 14,000 and 16,000 new dwellings respectively. Topic Paper 2 – Housing addresses this issue in detail, but it is relevant to highlight that the baseline information (as at 31st March, 2007) shows that the Spatial Strategy is already on course to deliver over 16,000 new dwellings up to 2021 without any need to identify any further 'greenfield' locations for development. In this respect, it is the Council's contention that the position described at paragraph 2.66 of the Core Strategy is affirmed.

4.7 Retail Expansion

The growth in retail floorspace, by up to 100,000 sq. m. the period up to 2021, is central to the Council's aspirations for the regeneration and growth of Chelmsford Town Centre and recognises the regional role for Chelmsford in terms of its position in the regional shopping hierarchy, as contained in the Draft East of England Plan. This matter is addressed in the accompanying Topic Paper 4 – Shopping.

4.8 Safeguarding the Metropolitan Green Belt

The protection of the Metropolitan Green Belt is a central element of the Spatial Strategy. It is the Borough Council's case that, through the preparation and selection of its options for meeting the Borough's growth requirement up to 2021 and beyond, those requirements can be met in a sustainable way, without any major releases of land within the Green Belt. As noted above, this approach is in conformity with the Draft East of England Plan, and is supported by EERA. There will be no major releases of land from the Green Belt within the LDF, with the exception that the 'brownfield' employment site at the Temple Farm, West Hanningfield will be promoted for employment regeneration in view of its strategic location close to the A12.

4.9 Improving Transportation

A key and vital components of the Spatial Strategy is its transport strategy. This follows on from the Essex Local Transport Plan, the objectives therein include tackling congestion, delivering accessibility, creating safer roads, and promoting better air quality. The policy framework includes demand management, reducing the need to travel by car, provision of appropriate additional infrastructure and influencing land use development so as to produce sustainable communities.

4.10 The Borough Council is working closely and productively with Essex County Council, the Highways Agency, the bus and rail industry and other key stakeholders, often acting as a facilitator, to deliver a co-ordinated and enhanced transport system; to improve accessibility to existing development; and to ensure that all new development is accessible by a range of sustainable transport modes.

4.11 A number of items of transport infrastructure have been identified to deliver the objectives of the Spatial Strategy including the Chelmsford North East Bypass, Cross Valley Link Road, a new rail station to the north east of Chelmsford, capacity improvements at the existing rail station, additional Park & Ride sites, and bus based rapid transit.

4.12 The transport strategy is supported by policies to cover transport assessments at new developments including provision for walking, cycling and public transport and vehicle parking standards.

4.13 Achieving Economic Property

The development of a growing and sustainable economy is central to the aspiration of the Council and the wider community to promote stable employment and improved prosperity. This is one of the seven priorities of the Chelmsford Community Plan and a key element of the Council's future vision for the Borough contained within *Chelmsford Tomorrow*. The Core Strategy sets out the spatial dimension for delivering this.

4.14 In the context of the Regional Spatial Strategy there is now a requirement to meet job growth targets (across all employment sectors) during the plan period, rather than to provide specifically for the allocation of employment land. However, the East of England Plan does not set a specific target for job growth for the Borough of Chelmsford, but sets a target for Central and North Essex

(Chelmsford, Braintree, Uttlesford, Maldon and Harlow) of 42,000 jobs in the plan period 2001 – 2021. Chelmsford has already delivered a significant proportion of this growth since 2001. In addition, Chelmsford is identified as a Key Centre for Development and Change within the Secretary of State’s Proposed Changes to the East of England Plan. This proposed change recognises the key regional role that Chelmsford has to play in terms of delivering future economic and employment growth within the East of England.

Topic Paper 3 Economy and Employment shows that 20,600 additional jobs will be created during the plan period equating to a potential job/ housing ratio of 1.35 over that period.

4.15 Chelmsford Borough Council considers that Chelmsford can contribute a significant proportion of new jobs, beyond existing estimated regional forecasts through the Core Strategy, Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan and North Chelmsford Area Action Plan Development Plan Documents.

4.16 The guiding principles of the Submission Core Strategy in respect of economic development are to:

- Make the best use of previously developed, or under utilised land, within the town centres of Chelmsford and South Woodham Ferrers
- Encourage employment in accessible locations where the need to travel by car can be minimised
- Protect existing employment areas from inappropriate development where they clearly have a role to play in sustaining employment into the future
- Provide for a range of sites and locations capable of meeting the Borough’s employment needs and aspirations for future growth

4.17 The spatial approach to delivering this through the Core Strategy is to:

- a) Maximise the potential for new retail, economic and employment growth within Chelmsford Town Centre, through the development of sites well served by public transport to encourage sustainable travel patterns, and leading to the regeneration of key ‘brownfield’ sites such as Chelmer Waterside.
- b) Identify a range of locations to meet varying employment needs across the Borough, including making the best use of ‘brownfield’ sites at Temple Farm, West Hanningfield and Essex Regiment Way.
- c) Regenerate and develop an enhanced commercial gateway in North Chelmsford around Boreham Interchange, linked to the new rail station and North East Chelmsford neighbourhood, to provide a growth node for economic development.
- d) Protect of existing employment areas across the Borough from non-employment uses

4.18 Through the implementation of this approach, the Borough Council considers that the Core Strategy is fully in accordance with national and regional advice and that the Borough will be able to continue to develop a sustainable local economy that will contribute to the local, regional and national economies.

5 Conclusion

5.1 The Borough Council believes that its has prepared a Borough-wide Spatial Strategy which addresses the need of the Borough up to 2021, and beyond , and which is firmly in conformity with national and regional guidance. It is a strategy which enjoys the broad consensus and support of the community and stakeholders that it will serve.

Appendix I

GO-East



GOVERNMENT OFFICE
FOR THE EAST OF ENGLAND

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Our Ref: MSB/TF
Your Ref: SWP/jf

10 July 2007

Dear Steve

GROWTH AREA STATUS

Thank you for your letter of 26th June, signed by Roy Whitehead and yourself, asking that consideration be given to bringing Chelmsford within the LSCP growth area. Brian Hackland has asked me to reply on his behalf.

You will know from our previous discussions that Ministers are very supportive of Chelmsford's desire to harness the opportunities presented by growth, and to become a leading centre in the East of England. Your letter is a further indication of the positive approach that the Council and its partners are taking to the town's future, building upon its identification in the RSS Proposed Changes as a Key Centre for Development and Change.

Against this background your request to be included in the growth area is welcome, although you will appreciate that any decision on this needs to be made in parallel with the outcome of the RSS process. The Government has indicated previously (in Meg Munn's letter accompanying the Proposed Changes) that it will consider what additional support may be appropriate for towns experiencing high rates of growth, but which currently lie outside the growth areas. We will be discussing your letter with CLG in this context.

We hope to publish the final RSS in the autumn. In the meantime I understand that you will have received an invitation to CLG's 'Growth Summit' on 23 July, which will



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provide an opportunity to hear more about the Government's plans for supporting the delivery of housing growth and the creation of sustainable communities.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T. Freathy".

TIM FREATHY
HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

cc Brian Hackland, Go-East
Michael Bingham, Go-East
Henry Cleary, CLG



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