

The North Chelmsford Area Action Plan

Issues and Options Report

Draft working document

Harnessing Growth for Community Benefit

July 2007

CONTENTS

- 1. Introduction**
The Borough Council's Spatial Strategy (part of the LDF) sets
Why North Chelmsford
- 2. Setting out the Vision**
The heart of Essex
The North Chelmsford Area Action Plan
- 3. Role of the North Chelmsford Area Action Plan**
A planning framework for areas of significant change and conservation
The suite of policy documents
- 4. How we reached this stage**
The case for urban expansion in North Chelmsford
Earlier extensive consultation undertaken
What you have told us so far
- 5. The scope of the plan**
- 6. Issues facing North Chelmsford**
Green Network issues
Transport
Community Issues
Utilities
- 7. Development Constraints**
Landscape character of Chelmer River Valley
Road Network
Nature conservation designations
Historic features
Limitations on infrastructure Capacity
Need for integration with existing neighbourhoods
- 8. Development Opportunities**
Local Distinctiveness and landscape character
Meeting our communities housing needs
Regeneration benefits
Enhanced public transport links
Enhanced footpath and cycle links
Enhanced and new community facilities e.g. schools & health centres
The provision of Open Space
Enhanced Employment Opportunities
Promoting High Quality of Urban Design, Landscape and Architecture
Flexibility

9. Options for accommodating growth

Level of focus between Springfield and Broomfield
Potential options therefore to accommodate growth.
Strengths and Weaknesses of Options

10. Related issues and Options

Broomfield Hospital
New Hall School
Boreham Interchange Employment Area
Essex Regiment Way Employment Area
The Chelmer River Valley Green Wedge - extent and role the designation
Education provision
Green infrastructure
Gypsy and traveller accommodation

11. Wider Issues - Strategic Road Connections.

12. Implementation

13. How to have your say?

14. What happens next & timetable

I. Introduction

- 1.1 The medium term future of Chelmsford, up until 2021, is being planned through a new mechanism called the Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF is made up of a number of documents, like files in a folder, as shown below. The LDF provides the planning policies and proposals for meeting the different future economic, environmental and community needs.
- 1.2 The Borough Council's approach to planning this future is based on our earlier consultation document 'A vision of the future' the key aspirations of which are summarised in Section 2.
- 1.3 The way that key aspects of future change may affect specific areas of the Borough is set out in the **Core Strategy** and Development Control Policies Submission Development Plan Document (DPD), published in November 2006. The summary diagram illustrating how things are applied across space in the Borough is known as the Spatial Strategy.
- 1.4 The Core Strategy sets out the long term vision and objectives for the Borough including
- policies for steering and shaping development, identifying broad locations for new housing and employment growth and
 - proposals for new infrastructure including schools, open space, health centres, shops and other community facilities, a new rail station and new footpaths, cycleways, road and bus links.

The Chelmsford Local Development Framework



2. Setting out the Vision

2.1 We have set out a very positive Vision for Chelmsford in our **Core Strategy** of 2006. This Vision seeks to reinforce the role of Chelmsford as the **Capital of Essex**, at the heart of a growing economic and administrative sub-region within the East of England. Fulfilling this potential, which is important to support the wider area of Mid Essex, as well as for Chelmsford itself, is expected to generate a further 20,000 jobs by 2021.

The Borough of Chelmsford will be at the leading edge for economic, social and environmental excellence at the heart of Essex, where people choose to live, work and visit because of the ever-improving quality of life available to all, now and for future generations.

2.2 This Vision of a prosperous, growing Chelmsford is supported by the government's Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the East of England, in which Chelmsford is identified as a **Key Regional Centre**. To enable Chelmsford to fulfil this changing role to serve the wider area, some key improvements to the town are proposed. Central to the strategy are

- the improvement and regeneration of Chelmsford Town Centre with new investment and development
- the creation of a new Gateway to the town, a 'hub' located to the eastern side, and
- some settlement growth located in the areas towards the north to provide for our increasing household population and to support the important role of Broomfield Hospital

All of these will require some associated infrastructure improvements. A new north east bypass, north of Boreham Interchange, is one such proposal.

Why North Chelmsford?

2.3 The Core Strategy seeks to regenerate the town by strengthening the Town Centre, giving priority to the re-use of previously developed, 'brownfield' land. However, although the majority of housing growth is anticipated to be met on these brownfield sites, it is clear we cannot meet all our future needs this way. The balance of our future needs will have to be met by using some undeveloped land beyond our current built up edge.

2.4 Any additional urban expansion should ideally be integrated with the Town Centre and existing communities, and protect the environmental setting of the town, in particular the Green Belt to the south and west of the town. Having examined a number of options, the Council proposed that future growth should be at two locations on the northern fringes of the town, around Broomfield and Springfield. This approach also

offers the potential to create a major new transport hub in the east, at Springfield, and address the deficiency in community infrastructure in this part of the town.

2.5 This approach will be achieved by reinforcing the area around the Boreham Interchange as a major new **North-east Gateway** for Chelmsford, expanding the overall economic capacity of the town outside the town centre. Investment is proposed in new transportation infrastructure, including a mainline station, to help develop this part of Springfield as a focus of employment and services.

2.6 The planning framework for the new growth and regeneration will be undertaken in the production of a North Chelmsford Area Action Plan (NCAAP). This Area Action Plan will also set out the framework for the creation of proposed **New Neighbourhoods** in Springfield and Broomfield, potentially providing for up to 6,000 homes by 2021, as well as community infrastructure to serve existing and new households in this part of the town.

2.7 Striking the right balance between regeneration, environmental protection and sustainable expansion with good transport provision, provides us with our best option of achieving future prosperity for our citizens and maintaining an attractive location to live, work and invest.

2.8 We are determined to ensure that the planned growth is used positively for the benefit of the community as a whole for both existing and new residents.

3. Role of the North Chelmsford Area Action Plan (NCAAP)

3.1 The transformation and expansion of Chelmsford for the 21st century is a big challenge. It needs the involvement and support of agencies, partners, developers, communities and a wide range of groups, organisations and other interested parties to help us shape the future. We are therefore now preparing an Area Action Plan document to guide change around North Chelmsford.

3.2 This North Chelmsford Area Action Plan (NCAAP) will provide the vehicle for the delivery of the major changes, including the 'greenfield' element of the Borough Council's Spatial Strategy. It also takes account of other relevant plans and strategies, which have spatial implications for Chelmsford including the Community Plan.

3.3 The NCAAP is part of a set of policy documents which collectively will enable the Core Strategy for Chelmsford to be implemented. These include a Site Allocations Document and the SPD on Planning Contributions. In addition, we are also obliged by the regulations to provide a Sustainability Appraisal Report alongside this document.

3.4 This current document is the ***NCAAP Issues and Options Report***, which follows earlier consultation by the Council on the development of its Core Strategy. Through this earlier consultation, the Council had identified a number of options and we have continued to test the implications of these through workshops with agencies and community representatives during 2006 and 2007.

3.5 We are now consulting on your opinions about the Issues and Options for North Chelmsford. Your comments will help us shape the final Area Action Plan document that we submit to Government in 2008. Covering the period up to 2021, this will affect everyone that lives, works in or visits the Borough - so please get involved and have your say.

4. How we reached this stage

4.1 The Council's Core Strategy for planning the future of Chelmsford was prepared following extensive consultation with stakeholders including the public. This included an Issues consultation with stakeholders and the wider community in March 2005. This examined a range of issues to be considered including the protection of the environment, the location of new housing, the provision of community facilities and major infrastructure and meeting future employment needs.

4.2 This was followed by consultation on a Preferred Options document in November 2005. This examined a range of different options that could be used to deliver the Borough's future housing and employment growth up to 2021. We also undertook sustainability appraisals of the social, environmental and economic effects of the strategies and policies we are developing.

4.3 The Core Strategy has also been supported by the evidence and data that has been assembled. This provides information on the key social, economic and environmental characteristics of the Borough, as well as national and regional trends.

4.4 One major outcome of this process, and Chelmsford's need to maintain a positive role, is the requirement to accommodate 14,000 dwelling units with a potential of a further 16,000 new dwellings in the town up to 2021. Whilst the majority of these new houses can be provided by recycling sites in Chelmsford, up to 6,000 homes will need to be provided in new neighbourhoods in the Springfield and Broomfield areas to the north of the town.

What you have told us so far

4.5 The consultations we have already undertaken revealed widespread support for the Council's vision. People also sought a mix of key guiding principles and detailed points and adjustment.

The key elements of the Spatial Strategy are:

- ***Focusing development on existing built-up areas including an urban renaissance within Chelmsford Town Centre;***
- ***Developing two new neighbourhoods to the North of Chelmsford with necessary infrastructure;***
- ***Safeguarding 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.***

5. The scope of the Area Action Plan

5.1 The Area Action Plan will provide the framework to deliver the future development to the north of Chelmsford. It covers the northern suburbs of urban Chelmsford, including Springfield, as well as the villages of Broomfield, Great Waltham and Little Waltham. This area will include provision for two new neighbourhoods, accommodating up to 6,000 new households by 2021, together with necessary infrastructure such as schools, community facilities and transport.

5.2 This represents a major opportunity to enhance the identity and profile of Chelmsford by the creation of highly valued communities to provide for our future community, both old and young. Unlike most Growth Areas being planned within England the proposals for Chelmsford are being led by the Council and local community. The Action Area Plan therefore presents a real opportunity for local control and influence in shaping the future of our town to provide prosperity and wellbeing for all.

6. Issues facing North Chelmsford

Ongoing consultation and participatory workshops with agencies and community representatives over the last year have drawn out a number of opportunities, constraints, and possible ways forward. These issues – and later options – are set out in the following sections.

Addressing housing pressure and building communities

6.1 As with many areas of the country, but particularly in the South East, there is a pressing need to provide homes for a growing number of households. The issue is not simply the provision of 16,000 new homes by 2021, but doing this in a manner that creates real communities, with a mix of house types and tenures, as well as a range of community facilities and services nearby. The aim is also to do this in a manner that supports the existing neighbourhoods and identities by supporting more local services like shops, schools and public transport.

6.2 In the consultation we have undertaken there has been an emphasis on creating real and enduring neighbourhoods, set within a positive landscape and open space network, as very distinctive places. Simply building homes will not create the quality of Chelmsford we aspire to.

Building the Green Network

6.3 The existing environmental resources provide a useful framework in which to develop a wider Green Network. For instance, the Chelmer Valley “Green Wedge” needs to be protected by being safeguarded in the Plan. Principles need to be developed to address buffer zones between new development and wildlife areas, and to address the impacts of any cross-valley link road.

6.4 A positive Green Network can be built beyond the valley itself. All green areas could be linked to the wider green network, enhancing opportunities for wildlife and a mature landscape setting for neighbourhoods. The delivery and management of the Green Network could be built into developer requirements.

Improving the Transport Network

6.7 There are issues related to existing transport problems, the impact of any new development and the need for an integrated overall transport strategy. A new North East Bypass is being promoted by Essex County Council to relieve congestion especially around existing pinch points, for instance at Broomfield Road – Springfield Road and around White Hart Lane. In addition there are difficulties in designing effective bus priority on an existing congested route.

6.8 The demand for non essential travel by car will need to be minimised in both new and existing areas. This will be assisted by promoting other modes of travel, such as

guided bus, cycle routes and walkways and by locating houses close to rail/school/shop access.

6.9 The proposed new rail station will create increased rail capacity to accommodate increased passengers into and out of Chelmsford. There is a need to maximise the benefit of a station, for example by connection between rail station and new secondary school, and to the provision of Park and Ride to Braintree – North Chelmsford and for Springfield.

6.10 Concerns have also been raised about the need for, and any impact of, the cross valley route i.e. by the use of the existing Essex Regiment Way

Community Needs

6.11 There are issues related to meeting the needs of 6000 new households, in addition to providing for existing community needs. The earlier consultative process highlighted the need for an integrated approach to community planning. In particular there is a need accessible localised services, ideally within walking distances of most of the population. These include schools, GP Surgeries, shops and play space.

Provision of Utilities

6.12 Within the area of North Chelmsford there are specific challenges to be met. Concerns have been raised on foul water sewerage capacity in town. Water and power will also need to be addressed. There will also a need for the master plan for the new neighbourhoods to provide service corridors and land for substations across development areas.

Climate change and flooding

6.13 The potential impacts of climate change will also need to be taken into account whether this is in terms of the impact on the town centre sewers and increased risk of flooding & water discharges, or in terms of the requirement to provide renewable energy in the development of area.

7. Development Constraints

Landscape character of Chelmer River Valley

7.1 The Core Strategy promotes a green network that will provide the landscape framework for the town and new developments. Key components of this are the Green Wedges identified in the proposals map. In addition there is an opportunity to use the proposed peripheral urban development to facilitate access to the wider countryside network of footpaths. The Action Plan will have to identify which links to the Green Wedges and wider countryside should be required to be provided by developers.

Road Network

7.2 The Chelmsford Core Strategy identifies the provision of the Chelmsford North-east Bypass, promoted by Essex County Council, and Cross Valley Link Roads. The North-East Bypass is included in the second Essex LTP at an estimated cost of £140m (including the cross valley link road) to be part funded by developer contributions. Its line and access are critical to determining the appropriate form of development in North East Chelmsford. The County Council has indicated a preferred line (Refer Diagram X) which will be identified in the Action Area Plan.

7.4 The need for and nature of a Cross Valley Link Road is related to the future of Broomfield Hospital in particular. The options for this connection range from a completely new distributor all-purpose road to an enhanced public transport priority route. It is proposed to confirm the appropriate form of connection across the Chelmer Valley during the consultation process. Unless there is contrary evidence that emerges through this process it may be appropriate to reserve the line of such a route to protect the long term option for re-structuring the Chelmsford road system.

Conservation of the Natural Heritage and Historic Features and Resources

7.5 In addition to the range of natural and historic features that will need to be safeguarded, the proposed new neighbourhood at Springfield would have an impact on the Registered Park and Garden and the setting of the Grade I Listed Building, New Hall. Although the Council will prepare a detailed development brief to ensure that the proposals are satisfactory the preservation of this site and its setting must be a key determinant in defining the broad extent of the development area of Springfield. In addition it will be important that there is no detrimental impact in the Channels Golf Club wildlife site.

7.6 In addition to these designated resources there will be constraints placed upon the development by the emerging mineral safeguarding policies of Essex County Council. These will be taken into account in the finalised Action Area Plan.

Limitations on infrastructure Capacity

7.7 Initial estimates suggest that the sewage system would be constrained to take more than about 800 new dwellings. Any extra capacity would require a new connection to the sewage works South East of the town. This is not considered to be over-riding but will affect the practical phasing of development, since the Springfield area will be easier to service than Broomfield.

7.8 There is also limited capacity in the electricity network, requiring a new substation in the next five years. Consideration will also be given to the re-routing of the high voltage electricity overhead transmission line.

Lack of integration of existing neighbourhoods

7.9 The Core Strategy preferred option for the future expansion of Chelmsford is based upon consolidating new development around the existing communities, rather than seek new freestanding developments.

8. Development Opportunities

Local Distinctiveness and landscape character

8.1 Existing woodlands, trees and hedgerows, and historic features contribute to and enhance the visual appearance and quality of the environment. These provide a strong landscape a network of green spaces linking to the Chelmer Valley green wedge, and ensure a high level of amenity on the new urban fringe enabling access to the wider countryside.

8.2 Local distinctiveness can be achieved in the new development by having regard to the varying landscape features of the area which is generally split into three zones – the Chelmer Valley and the areas to the east and west. The Upper River Chelmer Valley is a narrow valley, with a restricted valley floor with dense riverside trees and valley sides with a fairly open character. The historic watermills and Second World War pillboxes are distinctive features. The area to the west of the River Chelmer has a irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields, marked by sinuous hedgerows and ditches and small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape. The area to the east of the River Chelmer Valley is rolling arable farmland, marked by hedgerows, banks and ditches with small woods and copses.

Meeting our communities housing needs

8.3 There are significant shortfalls in the availability of affordable housing. The growth areas offer the opportunity to make major new provisions to meet these requirements.

Regeneration benefits

8.4 The enhancement of Springfield as a strategic transport interchange creates the opportunity to develop employment areas within the new neighbourhoods nearby in line with the Core Strategy. This would be most appropriately focussed upon the regeneration of the existing employment areas in the vicinity of the interchange at Boreham-Springfield, and creation of new employment areas being to the north of the interchange, as part of a new district centre to serve the new neighbourhoods.

Enhanced Employment Opportunities

8.5 In order to secure a diverse and successful economy for Chelmsford the Action Area Plan will identify proposals for the regeneration of existing employment sites in the Springfield area in order to maximise the employment opportunities to be achieved in the area by a new railway station. This could be supported by the identification of new 'greenfield' neighbourhoods to include provision for employment opportunities mixed-use development schemes and the establishment of new neighbourhood centres. In addition land could be allocated on the previously used site at Essex Regiment Way, Broomfield to meet the needs of new local and expanding businesses.

Enhanced public transport links

8.6 Most of Chelmsford is dependent upon bus services whose viability could be reinforced by additional patronage. Chelmsford's existing railway station is the busiest in the Eastern Region which could be relieved by a new rail station and passing loops to the north-east of the town. A business case is being developed for the provision of a new station together with the associated works and facilities, and will be safeguarded in the Plan. The feasibility of a rail station has been established. A report by Atkins Consulting shows a station is technically feasible and has robust costings. Work on the business case is ongoing. The proposal also has strong support from the rail industry. There is therefore a key opportunity to promote sustainable modes of transport in the new development by maximising the number of homes that are within 400m of a regular bus service and 800m from the proposed rail station.

8.7 The Core Strategy also identifies two search areas for bus based Park and Ride facilities to enhance public transport and accessibility to the north of the town which will be identified through the Action Area Plan. These together with any park and ride facilities associated with the station will have to be agreed with Essex County Council

Enhanced footpath and cycle links

8.8 Bus services, cycle and footways are essential to a more green travel pattern for local journeys. There are questions related to :

- what types of transport should be provided to serve the new communities and help them connect with the rest of the Borough and beyond
- How could public transport and roads be best located,
- What should be taken into account when planning new cycle routes, bus routes etc, -
- How should the new development be linked to the station

Enhanced and new community facilities e.g. schools & health centres

8.9 It is a key principle in creating sustainable communities that they have neighbourhood centres which are the focus of community facilities such as health facilities, meeting halls, community centres, youth clubs, child care facilities, public conveniences, places of worship and libraries and the provision of recreational facilities such as sports and leisure centres and swimming pools, need to be catered for within the new developments.

8.10 Despite a general surplus of school places by 2010 in Chelmsford additional provision would be required to meet the needs of the new communities. This could help improve the distribution of school provision in the town. Similarly, the requirements for health care facilities for the new communities built into the Action Area Plan.

8.11 Other community facilities such as health facilities, meeting halls, community centres, youth clubs, child care facilities, public conveniences, places of worship and libraries and the provision of recreational facilities such as sports and leisure centres and swimming pools, need to be catered for within the new developments. There are currently no formal standards for such provision. Views are sought on the extent of such provision required and the mechanism for doing so.

The provision of Open Space

8.12 In 2004 the Borough Council commissioned a PPG17 Open Space Assessment. This provided an integrated assessment of open spaces, playing pitches, and indoor sports and recreation facilities. This assessment considered provision of a range of open space types. New development can provide the means for redressing the deficiencies identified.

Promoting High Quality of Urban Design, Landscape and Architecture

8.13 The planning of new neighbourhoods will be design and community led to secure high quality sustainable development. This will require the integration of the means of access, public open space, landscaping and habitat creation, recreational facilities and educational provision, community facilities, including the provision of primary health care and housing of mixed size and tenure within the new neighbourhoods and adjoining communities.

8.14 The development of north Chelmsford will therefore be guided by the following design principles:

- help meet current and future needs of town & neighbouring communities;
- creation of a sense of place with a high quality distinctive environment ;
- ensure that growth is not just about housing development; and
- provide a mix of housing types and sizes, including affordable housing.

8.15 The new communities will need to be supported by a mix of activities and uses including

- services, shops, restaurants, pubs
- health, schools, crèches, leisure and play; and
- local employment

A key principle in determining the form and pattern of development will be the capacity to reinforce or create new focal points to the new neighbourhoods or expanded communities.

8.16 In addition the Action Plan will set out wider design principles to ensure that the new development creates:

- grain and street network;
- pedestrian network;
- open space network; and
- connected and walkable neighbourhoods

Flexibility

8.17 The Chelmsford North Action Area Plan will need to be flexible to address any delivery issues that might arise.

9. Options for accommodating growth

9.1 The Core Strategy confirmed North Chelmsford as the most suitable area for growth, based on the development of two new neighbourhoods:

- 1 to the north-east of Springfield, and
- 2 to the west/north-west of the Broomfield area.

New communities in both areas have the capability to be integrated with existing adjoining communities, and support existing facilities and services.

9.2 Further testing work carried out in consultation with agencies and community representatives indicated that the Springfield area has the greatest potential to accommodate growth in terms of both development and infrastructure.

- **The Springfield area** could potentially accommodate up to 6,000 housing units. The extent to which all the capacity in the Springfield area will actually be required before 2021 is dependent on how much is built elsewhere, such as Broomfield or other brownfield sites in Chelmsford. The Springfield area could provide
 - a link to the NorthEast Bypass
 - access the proposed new rail station
 - a larger scale of development less landscape impact
 - generate enough development to contribute significantly to the provision of social infrastructure
 - the potential to establish a high quality landscape; and
 - long term potential beyond 2021
- **The Broomfield area** could potentially accommodate up to 800 housing units and could link to the existing communities. It is however more suited to absorb a smaller scale of development because of:
 - its more sensitive landscape setting and the pattern of existing communities
 - its greater dependency on the existing road network and local community and social facilities; and
 - infrastructure capacityIt would however allow early development of sites to create a level of choice in the development options.

9.4 After a series of testing stages, a number of potential options for the new neighbourhoods in North Chelmsford were developed to accommodate our growth needs. These were based on two main elements:

- (i) Development in the Springfield either as continuous crescent of development around the New Hall environmental corridor (referred to as Springfield Area A below), or as two areas separated by the New Hall environmental corridor (referred to as Springfield Area B below); and

(ii) Development in Broomfield being consolidated around one main centre or else distributed around a range of existing villages which are referred to as Broomfield A, B, C and D below.

OPTIONS	OPTION 1		OPTION 2	OPTION 3
Description	Most growth in Springfield Area A, with some growth around Broomfield Hospital (Broomfield Area A).		Most growth at Springfield Area , with some growth around Broomfield)	Most growth at Springfield and around Broomfield Hospital and Broomfield village
Scale of development (North West-North East)	800 (north-west) 4500-5000(north-east)		800 (north-west) 4500-5000 (north-east)	800(north-west) 4500-5000 (north-east)
Distribution in north western area	located to north of Broomfield		More evenly distributed NW Chelmsford, & Broomfield	Three areas of development associated with Broomfield Hospital
Walking distance from centres in north west	peripheral to centres		well located in relation to existing centres	Less well located
access to countryside	connects to existing footpath network		connects to existing footpath network	connects to existing footpath network
context	edge of built-up area		edge of built-up area listed buildings and historic green space – quality setting	edge of built-up area context & focus on hospital
access to public transport	part good – part peripheral		Walking distance	Less well located in terms of walking distance
access to road network	part good – part peripheral		part good – part peripheral	part peripheral
landscape impact	Medium high		medium	Medium-high

Broomfield Area Option I

- A development of up to 800 dwellings on two sites
 - The larger site wraps around the west boundary of the Hospital Masterplan Area
 - The smaller site lies to the east of the Hospital Masterplan Area adjacent to the B1008
- The larger site is peripheral to existing centres – smaller site is better placed
- Both sites connect directly to the countryside and the existing footpath networks
- The context of the larger site would redefine the edge of the built up area
- The landscape assessment for the area is:
 - irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields, marked by sinuous hedgerows and ditches
 - small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape
 - scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets, typically with greens and occasionally ponds
 - comprehensive network of narrow, winding lanes
 - strong sense of tranquillity
- Access to public transport is directly onto the adjacent B1008 for the smaller area but more remote for the larger area, certainly greater than 400metres or 5 minutes walking distance
- Access to the road network is easy for the smaller area and more difficult for the larger area, requiring access through the hospital and/or the upgrading of country lanes
- The landscape impact of the larger area is likely to be medium-high and low-medium for the smaller area

Broomfield Area Option 2

- A development of up to 800 dwellings on one site
- Based around the high quality environment of East of the Hospital, west of School Lane and south of Hollow lane
- The site connects directly to the countryside and the existing footpath networks
- The context of the site is redefining the edge of built up area
- The landscape assessment for the area is:
 - irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields, marked by sinuous hedgerows and ditches
 - small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape
 - scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets, typically with greens and occasionally ponds
 - comprehensive network of narrow, winding lanes
 - strong sense of tranquillity
- Access to public transport is around 400metres or 5 minutes walking time from the B1008, depending on the particular part of the site
- Access to the road network is from School Lane and Hollow Lane – these may require to be upgraded
- The landscape impact of the larger area is likely to be medium

Broomfield Area option 3

- A development of up to 800 dwellings on three sites
- The three sites at a) on the east boundary of the Hospital Masterplan Area in North Broomfield, b) in the vicinity of School Lane in South Broomfield and c) south of Hollow Lane.
- the sites connect directly to the countryside and the existing footpath networks
- the context of the sites is edge of built up area
- the landscape assessment for the area is:
 - irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable fields, marked by sinuous hedgerows and ditches
 - small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape
 - scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets, typically with greens and occasionally ponds
 - comprehensive network of narrow, winding lanes
 - strong sense of tranquillity

- Access to public transport is directly onto the adjacent B1008 for the North Broomfield area or within 400m or 5 minutes walking distance of the B1008 or for the other areas onto Patching Halt Lane
- Access to the road network is either directly onto the B1008 or on to School Lane or Patching Halt Lane – these would require to be upgraded
- The combined landscape impact of the areas is likely to be low-medium

Springfield Area

- A development of between 4,500 and 5,000 dwellings in a single integrated urban extension with new schools, community facilities and mixed use centres
- The development extends the Springfield area of Chelmsford to the north east around the New Hall listed building and landscape setting and east to General's Lane – the development area will be bounded by the proposed North East Bypass
- The site integrates with existing built up areas and with existing transport networks, including rail linkage from a proposed new station within the new development area
- The site connects directly to the countryside to the north and east and integrates with existing footpath networks which in turn link to the neighbourhood's internal greenspace network – to the west it integrates with the Chelmer Valley Green Wedge
- The context of the site is edge of built up area and urban fringe
- The landscape assessment for the area is:
 - irregular field pattern of mainly medium size arable and pastoral fields, marked by hedgerows, banks and ditches
 - small woods and copses provide structure and edges in the landscape
 - scattered settlement pattern, with frequent small hamlets
 - a concentration of isolated farmsteads
 - network of narrow winding lanes
- Access to public transport is directly onto Essex Regiment Way, White Hart Lane and Chelmer Road and it is anticipated that the development will have internal transport linkages which will ensure convenient access to public transport within 400metres or 5 minutes walking distance
- Access to the road network is either directly Essex Regiment Way, White Hart Lane and Chelmer Road – eventually it will also connect to the North East Bypass
- The landscape impact of the areas is likely to be low-medium

9.5 These variations are set out as four strategic options for the development of North Chelmsford as follows:

Option 1 Most growth at N Springfield, some growth around Broomfield Hospital.

Option 2 Most growth at N Springfield, some growth west of Broomfield and at Hollow Lane

Option 3 Most growth at N Springfield, three areas around Broomfield.

The main characteristics of the different elements are summarised on Table X.

9.6 In all cases the options will need to consider the provision of new facilities such as schools, neighbourhood centres, public open space, employment sites, access and enhanced public transport.

9.7 The options will also need to consider the extent and role the designation of Green Wedge, and how it will provide opportunities for informal recreation and leisure, enhancing biodiversity and facilitating access between existing communities and the new neighbourhoods and the countryside beyond.

9.8 All options reflect the main transport options of the Plan including a new rail station, potential locations for park and ride sites, a NorthEast Chelmsford Bypass (Essex County Council's preferred route) and a potential cross valley link.

10. Related issues and policy approaches

10.1 The Plan will also provide an opportunity to review the settlement boundaries of the existing villages of Broomfield, Great and Little Waltham (defined settlements) and of Special Policy Areas. The review of settlement boundaries is considered separately in the Site Allocation Document. The potential Special Policy Areas are considered below.

10.2 **Broomfield Hospital:** Broomfield Hospital is the largest employer and visitor attraction in Chelmsford and this contributes to traffic movements particularly in Main Road, Broomfield and southwards into Chelmsford. This is one of the issues that will need to be considered when assessing the future need for a Cross Valley Link. Although the current plans for the hospital do not envisage a major physical expansion of its facilities, it might be prudent to safeguard this option given the long life span of the Action Area Plan.

10.3 **New Hall School:** The special environs of New Hall School are likely to dominate the form of development of the Springfield area, including maintaining a

functioning school. This raises the question about what form and scale of safeguarding should be put in place, including :

- (i) whether new development is precluded in certain areas
- (ii) the relationship of new development along its perimeter
- (iii) the need for any remedial landscape action to restore and manage the setting of school buildings.

Although much of the historic landscape and buildings are no longer present, there is an opportunity to create a new contemporary character that draws positively from the past.

10.4 Springfield Employment Area: There are some existing industrial and business units in the Springfield area. The issues that need to be addressed in the Action Plan are the extent to which this area needs a more explicit development framework in terms of:

- (i) site preparation for particular types and quality of employment
- (ii) transport management
- (iii) environmental enhancement; and
- (iv) promotion and marketing.

10.5 Channels Employment Area: The other employment opportunity is around the former site at Belstead. The issue is what is the most appropriate action is to rationalize the degraded land in the Belstead and find appropriate beneficial uses. Should this be promoted as a secondary / local employment location?

10.6 The Chelmer Valley Green Wedge: Consideration needs to be given to the extent to which the Action Plan should set out the framework for the longer term development of the Chelmer Valley Green Wedge to protect and promote this major environmental corridor as a community asset. This could include such matters as:

- (i) the definition of its extent and identification of public access areas within it;
- (ii) the footpath/cycleway network that serves links to and within it;
- (iii) the development of interpretative, educational and other facilities to maximise its use; and
- (iv) landscape and water management projects.

10.7 Gypsy and traveller accommodation: There is a requirement in the Core Strategy to make provision for Gypsies and Travellers. Such sites need to be integrated into the overall urban area an accessible to services and facilities (e.g. schools). It is proposed that this is a matter that should be left to the master planning stage. The Action Plan could indicate the scale and location if this were considered more appropriate.

11. Wider Issues - Strategic Road Connections

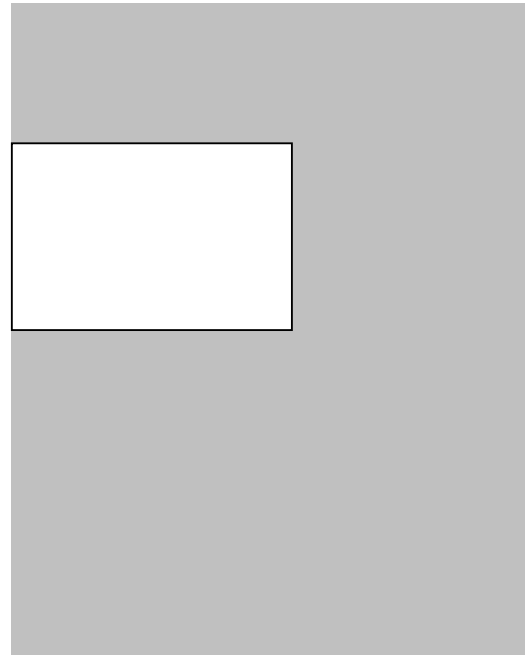
11.1 The Chelmsford Core Strategy requires the provision of the Chelmsford North-east Bypass and Cross Valley Link Roads. The North-East Bypass is included in the second Essex Local Transport Plan to be part funded by developer contributions. Its line and access are critical to determining the appropriate form of development in North East Chelmsford. The County Council has indicated a preferred line (Refer Diagram X) which will identified in the Action Area Plan.

11.2 The need for and nature of a Cross Valley Link is related to

- the future need for improved access to the hospital
- integrating the new neighbourhoods
- linking the Broomfield area to the new station to the east
- the potential for future development of the regional role of Broomfield Hospital
- the relief of localised congestion .

11.3 The options for this connection range from a completely new distributor all-purpose road to an enhanced public transport priority route. There is uncertainty about the current need or feasibility or the nature of the Cross Valley Link. Work has been carried out, and Essex County Council has been deferred for 12 to 24 months. It may be appropriate to reserve the line of such a route to protect the long term option for making a link in the future.

This needs to be considered in the context of the provision of additional park and ride sites that might address problems associated with existing traffic congestion.



12. Implementation

12.1 The Core Strategy sets out the Infrastructure Priorities that are listed in Table X. There are also a range of developer obligations that will apply to all developments and are identified in the Core Strategy development control policies, including affordable housing and open space provision. The Council currently aims to apply these on a scale of Standard Charges applied to new development.

12.2 The Council will undertake separate consultation on the issue of the proposed Standard Charges which could be affected by emerging legislation by the Government. We will also seek to confirm the level of commitment public and private sector agencies need to make in supporting the contribution that Chelmsford can make to the economic growth of Essex and East of England Region. This includes in particular its strategic partners – the EEDA, GOEE, HC and ECC.

12.3 These discussions will help identify any specific developer contributions that will be applied particularly to the development of North Chelmsford. At present this is expected to include the following:

- contribution to the development of the new rail station at Boreham; and
- The enhancement of the Green Infrastructure including Chelmer Green Wedge, New Hall environmental corridor and on the urban fringe

13. How to have your say

You can comment on the Issues and Opportunities Report in a number of ways:

14. What happens next & timetable

How to have your say [\(expand\)](#)

What happens next [\(expand\)](#)

Timetable [\(expand\)](#)

