

Chelmsford Draft Local Plan  
Examination Hearing Statement

Matter 2:  
Strategic priorities, vision and  
spatial principles

November 2018





## Introduction

1. This hearing statement sets out the Council’s response in relation to the Inspector’s Matters, Issues and Questions.
2. All the evidence base documents referred to in this statement are listed at **Appendix A**, with their evidence base or examination document reference numbers as applicable.

### **Matter 2 – Strategic priorities, vision and spatial principles**

<b>Question 10</b>	<b>Does the Plan set out a suitably positive vision for the future development of the area? Are proposed changes AC12 and AC13 necessary for reasons of soundness?</b>
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**Response to Q10** - This response is divided into two parts:

#### **Does the Plan set out a suitably positive vision for the future development of the area?**

3. It is the Council’s position that the Local Plan’s Vision provides a positive, forward thinking and deliverable framework for the future development of the Chelmsford area and that it has been formulated in a positive and consultative manner.
4. The Local Plan’s Vision sets out the kind of place that Chelmsford will be in 2036. In summary the Vision seeks to:
  - embrace development growth and Chelmsford’s role as England’s newest City and Capital of Essex
  - drive a sub-regional catalyst for change providing new sustainable neighbourhoods and attracting inward investment
  - create a positive change that optimises the opportunities for new and upgraded infrastructure
  - make places where people choose to live and work
  - further improve quality of life and well being
  - improve transport accessibility and make the most of Chelmsford’s assets and opportunities
5. The Vision is the starting point for the rest of the Local Plan. It identifies and embraces Chelmsford as a place for significant development growth which will fully meet housing, employment and other development needs in a sustainable manner. This positive vision creates certainty for promoters of development and communities alike.

6. This also includes a positive approach to environmental quality, such as protecting and improving important green space, protecting and promoting community facilities, addressing climate change, creating net increases in biodiversity and promoting national planning policy such as the Green Belt.
7. The Local Plan’s Strategic Priorities have evolved to inform the Vision, which in turn then informs the Spatial Principles. The Strategic Priorities are set out below:

<b>Strategic Priority 1:</b>	Ensuring Sustainable Development
<b>Strategic Priority 2:</b>	Meeting the needs for new homes
<b>Strategic Priority 3:</b>	Fostering growth and investment and providing new jobs
<b>Strategic Priority 4:</b>	Protecting and enhancing retail, leisure and commercial development
<b>Strategic Priority 5:</b>	Delivering new and improved Strategic Infrastructure
<b>Strategic Priority 6:</b>	Delivering new and improved Local Infrastructure
<b>Strategic Priority 7:</b>	Protecting and enhancing the Natural and Historic Environment, the Green Belt and valued landscapes
<b>Strategic Priority 8:</b>	Creating Well Designed and Attractive Places, and Promoting Healthy Communities
<b>Strategic Priority 9:</b>	Reinforcing Chelmsford’s regional role as ‘Capital of Essex’

8. The Strategic Priorities have been guided by national policy as set out in paragraph 156 of the NPPF (2012) and have been further shaped by three rounds of public consultation, stakeholder engagement and collaboration. The level of consultation and feedback received is set out in full in the Regulation 22 Consultation Statement (**SD009**). These changes included making the vision more precise, ensuring that the objectives have equal importance and that the context for Vision acknowledges the period beyond 2036.
9. The Local Plan Vision has been positively influenced through consultation feedback. This started through the Issues and Options Consultation Document (**EB115**) as set out in Appendix A of **SD009**. Page 77 of **SD009** sets out the feedback received in respect of the Vision consulted upon at the Issues and Options stage.
10. The Preferred Options Consultation Document (**EB116**) continued this process. The draft Vision was set out at p42, followed by Spatial Principles contained within Strategic Policy S1 which would ensure the Vision and Strategic Priorities for the area are delivered.

11. The Vision and Spatial Principles further evolved, between the Preferred Options (**EB116**) and the Pre-Submission Local Plan (**SD001**). Feedback from the Pre-Submission consultation are covered in full in the Regulation 22 Consultation Statement (**SD009**) at pages 496 to 501. The consultation process has resulted in general support for the Local Plan’s Vision and Spatial Principles.
12. In accordance with paragraph 155 and 156 of the NPPF (2012) this early and thorough consultation of the Local Plan has resulted in Strategic Priorities for the Local Plan area which have fed into a Vision. This reflects the collective view to deliver the sustainable development of the area. As set out above the Vision has been positively prepared and based on the Strategic Priorities for the area.
13. Alongside, the Local Plan process Chelmsford City Council’s Corporate Plan has been evolving. Although its review is still on-going the process has helped to shape the Local Plan Vision.
14. In summary, the Vision positively embraces future growth in Chelmsford’s administrative area and seeks to enable new and improved infrastructure to support the growth, while improving the quality of life and mitigating potential harm to the environment. In addition, it has been formulated and consulted upon in a positive and collaborative manner.
15. The relationship between the Strategic Priorities, the Vision and remainder of the Local Plan is set out within the diagram opposite.



**Are proposed changes AC12 and AC13 necessary for reasons of soundness?**

16. It is the Council’s position that the proposed changes AC12 and AC13 improve clarity and the consistency of the Local Plan’s Vision but are not necessary for reasons of soundness.
17. The proposed changes are set out within the Schedule of Additional Changes (**SD002**). A summary of the change and the assessment of whether it is necessary for reasons of soundness are set out in the table overleaf:

Proposed Change	Summary of proposed change (SD002)	Necessary for Soundness?
AC12	The proposed change adds the term 'cultural' into the second paragraph of the Vision.	Cultural facilities are referred to in Strategic Priority 9 - Reinforcing Chelmsford's regional role as 'Capital of Essex'. As such it is considered that a reference to cultural facilities should be contained within the Local Plan Vision. However, this does not go to the soundness of the Local Plan as this provision is already contained within the policies of the Local Plan and accessing excellent cultural facilities is one of the action bullet points following the Vision. The proposed change is needed for clarity and consistency.
AC13	The proposed change adds reference to the action bullet points to the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change, promote sustainable use of natural resources and include reference to the coast.	Climate change and water quality are covered by Strategic Priority 7 - Protecting and enhancing the Natural and Historic Environment, the Green Belt and valued landscapes. As such it is considered that a reference to these matters, including the protection of the coast should be contained within the Local Plan Vision. These changes do not go to the soundness of the Local Plan as such a provision is already contained within the policies of the Local Plan. The proposed change is needed for clarity and consistency.

18. The Pre-Submission Local Plan: Additional Changes Sustainability Appraisal Report: Addendum (**SD005**) Appendix B states that suggested changes AC12 and AC13 are not considered significant for the purposes of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA).
19. In summary, these suggested additional changes are not considered to be necessary for reasons of soundness but continue to support a positively prepared Local Plan which has taken into account representations received and provides greater clarity in the intentions of the policies contained later within the Local Plan.

<b>Q11</b>	<b>Have the strategic priorities within the Plan been positively prepared and are they suitably framed? Do they reflect the HMA strategic objectives? Are the proposed changes set out in AC5-AC11 necessary for soundness?</b>
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**Response to Q11** - This response is divided into three parts:

**Have the strategic priorities within the Plan been positively prepared and are they suitably framed?**

20. The Council consider that the Strategic Priorities are positively prepared and suitably framed. They closely align with the NPPF (2012) and have evolved to inform a Vision for the Local Plan which reflects the Council's corporate priorities and ambitions for development growth in Chelmsford. This in turn has informed the Spatial Principles.
21. The Strategic Priorities have been positively prepared as they set out the need to fully meet objectively assessed housing and job needs in a sustainable manner which maximises opportunities to secure new infrastructure, protect important natural and historic assets, maximise the role of place-making and reinforce the regional role of the city of Chelmsford. They have been the subject to wide ranging consultation and engagement.
22. Through the Duty to Co-operate, the Council has engaged with adjoining and other nearby local planning authorities (LPA). As identified in the statements of common ground with these LPAs (**SOCG03, 07, 08, 09, 10**) there are no unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities to be accommodated in Chelmsford's Local Plan.
23. The Strategic Priorities for the Local Plan area have evolved through three rounds of public consultation, stakeholder engagement and collaboration. The level of consultation and feedback received is set out in full in the Regulation 22 Consultation Statement (**SD009**).
24. The Strategic Priorities began life as the bullet points listed in paragraph 4.1 in the Issues and Options (**EB115**) and through the three rounds of consultation evolved into the current Strategic Priorities for the area.
25. The feedback from the Issues and Options Consultation Document (**EB115**) is set out in Appendix A of **SD009**. Page 77 of **SD009** sets out the feedback received in respect of the objectives of the Vision consulted upon at the Issues and Options stage. Overall, there was a strong level of support for the objectives set out in paragraph 4.1 of the Issues and Options Consultation Document.
26. As a result, these objectives were enhanced and expanded into the Strategic Priorities set out on pages 36 to 41 in the Preferred Options Consultation Document (**EB116**). The feedback on the Strategic Priorities from the Preferred Options is set out in full on pages 145 to 164 of the Regulation 22 Consultation Statement (**SD009**).

27. In general terms, there was a good level of support for the Strategic Priorities and most comments against the objectives were in respect of their application to specific sites. Strategic Priority 5 – Delivering new and improved strategic infrastructure, received the most comments of objection. These objections were widely in respect of implications of development on the highway network.
28. The Strategic Priorities further evolved between the Preferred Options (**EB116**) and the Pre-Submission Local Plan (**SD001**). Feedback on these are covered in full in the Regulation 22 Consultation Statement (**SD009**) on pages 489 to 496.
29. There are some suggested amendments to the text of the Strategic Priorities in the Council's Schedule of Additional Changes (**SD002**). These provide greater clarity to the Local Plan and are set out on page 2 to 4 of **SD002** (AC5 to AC11). These are covered in more detail below.
30. The formulation of the Local Plan's Strategic Priorities has been an iterative process which has been informed by public and stakeholder consultation. Consultation on what should form the Strategic Priorities for the Local Plan took place at the earliest stage of Local Plan consultation. This Issues and Options consultation covered a wide-ranging audience which included the public, stakeholders and neighbouring authorities. Two further rounds of consultation have taken place which have helped shape and inform the Strategic Priorities. Full details of the level and type of consultation are set out in the Regulation 22 Consultation Statement (**SD009**).
31. In accordance with paragraph 155 and 156 of the NPPF (2012) this early and thorough consultation of the Local Plan has resulted in Strategic Priorities for the Council's administrative area which aim to deliver the sustainable development of the area and are positively prepared. The Strategic Priorities have shaped the Vision and Spatial Principles and are a thread running through the subsequent policies in the Local Plan. The following table sets out how the policies and Strategic Priorities of the Local Plan link back to delivering the requirements of paragraph 156 of the NPPF (2012).

<b>Requirement of paragraph 156 to deliver:</b>	<b>Identified by Strategic Priority:</b>	<b>Delivered through Policy:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The homes and jobs needed in the area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Priority 1</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Policies S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, S11, S12, S13, S14, S15</li> <li>All Site Policies</li> <li>Policies CO1, CO2, CO3, CO4, CO5, CO8, NE3, NE4, MP1, MP2, MP3, MP4</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Priority 2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Policies S1, S8, S9, S11, S12, S15</li> <li>All Site Policies</li> <li>Policies HO1, HO2, HO3, CO8, MP4, MP6</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Priority 3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Policies S1, S8, S9, S10, S12</li> <li>All Site Policies</li> <li>Policies EMP1, EMP2, CO8</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Priority 4</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Policies S1, S9</li> <li>All Site Policies</li> <li>Policy EMP2</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Priority 9</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Policies S1, S2, S9, S14</li> <li>All Site Policies</li> <li>Policies EMP2</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Priority 6</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Policies S1, S6, S7, S9, S11, S12</li> <li>All Site Policies</li> <li>Policies CF1, CF2, CF3, MP7</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Priority 5</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Policies S1, S3, S9, S11, S12</li> <li>All Site Policies</li> <li>Policies NE3, NE4</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Priority 8</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Policies S1, S9, S14</li> <li>All Site Policies</li> <li>Policies HO1, HO2, EMP2, CO1, CO2, CO3, CO4, CO5, CO6, CO7, CO8, HE1, HE2, HE3, NE1, NE2, NE3, NE4, CF1, CF2, CF3, MP1, MP2, MP3, MP4, MP5, MP6, PA1</li> </ul>

Requirement of paragraph 156 to deliver:	Identified by Strategic Priority:	Delivered through Policy:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Priority 7</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Policies S1, S5, S6, S9, S13</li> <li>All Site Policies</li> <li>Policies CO1, CO2, CO3, CO4, CO5, CO6, CO7, CO8, HE1, HE2, HE3, NE1, NE2, NE3, NE4, PA7</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Priority 8</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Policies S1, S9, S14</li> <li>All Site Policies</li> <li>Policies HO1, HO2, EMP2, CO1, CO2, CO3, CO4, CO5, CO6, CO7, CO8, HE1, HE2, HE3, NE1, NE2, NE3, NE4, CF1, CF2, CF3, MP1, MP2, MP3, MP4, MP5, MP6, PA1</li> </ul>

32. In summary, the Strategic Priorities positively and demonstrably embrace future growth in Chelmsford’s administrative area and have shaped the Vision, Spatial Principles and Strategic Policies of the Local Plan. In addition, they have been formulated and consulted upon in a positive and collaborative manner which provides a plan prepared on a strategy which meets objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including an assessment of any unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities.

**Do they reflect the HMA strategic objectives?**

33. The Strategic Priorities set out in the Local Plan reflect the key strategic objectives of the HMA area (Braintree, Chelmsford, Colchester and Tendring districts) which are set out in full in paragraph 2.14 of the Pre-Submission Local Plan (**SD001**). All HMA partners signed a Memorandum of Agreement setting out a commitment for joint strategic planning see Appendix B of this Hearing Statement. The Statement of Common Ground with HMA Authorities (**SOCG03**) sets out in the areas of agreement at paragraph 1.5 that ‘Although, the Council and the HMA partners have not prepared a joint local plan, the strategic elements of both plans are aligned and complement one another’. Set out below is how each of these HMA objectives are reflected within the Strategic Priorities of the Chelmsford Local Plan:

Providing new and improved infrastructure

34. This HMA Objective is reflected in the Local Plan Strategic Priorities 5 and 6 which seek to deliver new and improved strategic and local infrastructure.

Providing sufficient new homes

35. This HMA Objective is reflected in the Local Plan Strategic Priority 2 which seeks to meet the needs for new homes.

Fostering economic growth

36. This HMA Objective is reflected in the Local Plan Strategic Priorities 3 and 4 which seek to foster growth and investment, provide new jobs, and protect and enhance retail, leisure and commercial development.

Addressing education and healthcare needs

37. This HMA Objective is reflected in the Local Plan Strategic Priority 8 which seeks to create well designed and attractive places, and promote healthy communities, and Strategic Priority 5 and 6 which seek to deliver new and improved strategic and local infrastructure, which includes education and healthcare facilities and services.

Ensuring high-quality outcomes

38. This HMA Objective is reflected in the Local Plan Strategic Priority 8 which seeks to create well designed and attractive places and promote healthy communities.
39. The Strategic Priorities of the Local Plan are fully aligned with those of the other HMA partner authorities. Although Strategic Priority 9 refers solely to Chelmsford’s sub-regional role, this aligns and supports wider HMA objectives, especially with Braintree. The other HMA Authorities are supportive of this approach.

**Are the proposed changes set out in AC5-AC11 necessary for soundness?**

40. The Council consider the changes AC5 to AC11 improve clarity and the effectiveness of the Local Plan but are not necessary for reasons of soundness. The reasons for this are set out in the table below:

<b>Proposed Change</b>	<b>Summary of proposed change (SD002)</b>	<b>Necessary for Soundness?</b>
AC5	This amended wording to para. 3.14 of the Local Plan is to clarify the position on space capacity regarding highway and sustainable transport networks.	This rewording is in response to comments raised by Essex County Council (ECC) (PS9764) and is solely to improve clarity and is not necessary for soundness.
AC6	This additional wording para. 3.23 of the Local Plan is to clarify the extent of the work which has been done by ECC in respect of traffic modelling.	This minor rewording is in response to comments raised by ECC (PS976) and the changes are to improve clarity and is not necessary for soundness.
AC7	This additional wording para. 3.27 of the Local Plan has been added to include reference to	This rewording is in response to comments raised by Historic England (PS1739). The changes are

Proposed Change	Summary of proposed change (SD002)	Necessary for Soundness?
	Registered Parks and Gardens and Conservation Areas.	to improve clarity and is not necessary for soundness. This additional wording has been agreed with Historic England by way of a Statement of Common Ground <b>(SOCG01)</b> .
AC8	This additional wording para. 3.28 of the Local Plan has been added to strengthen the wording to include reference to ensuring a net gain for biodiversity and green infrastructure is achieved.	This rewording is in response to comments raised by Natural England (PS1739). Although this extends the requirements of this Strategic Priority, the requirement to secure a net gain for biodiversity was always included within the Pre-Submission Local Plan Policies Strategic Policy S6 and Policy NE1 <b>(SD001)</b> so overall is not an additional requirement within the Local Plan. Therefore, this additional wording adds clarity and consistency to the Local Plan and is not necessary for soundness. This additional wording has been agreed with Natural England by way of a Statement of Common Ground <b>(SOCG02)</b> .
AC9	This additional paragraph para. 3.29 of the Local Plan has been added to strengthen the need to protect, enhance and create wildlife corridors to maintain ecological connectivity due to the loss of greenfield land, and to maximise the use of suitable brownfield sites achieved.	This additional wording has been suggested by Natural England (PS2076). Although this extends the requirements of this Strategic Priority, the requirement to maximise the use of suitable previously developed land was always included within the Pre-Submission Local Plan Spatial Principles (Strategic Policy S1) <b>(SD001)</b> so overall is not an additional requirement within the Local Plan. Therefore, this additional wording adds clarity and consistency to the Local Plan and is not necessary for soundness. This additional paragraph has been

Proposed Change	Summary of proposed change (SD002)	Necessary for Soundness?
		agreed with Natural England by way of a Statement of Common Ground ( <b>SOCG02</b> ).
AC10	This additional wording para. 3.33 of the Local Plan has been added to include reference to ensuring a net gain for biodiversity and green infrastructure being built into the designs and masterplans of new development.	This additional wording has been suggested by Natural England through representation PS2077. Although this extends the requirements of this Strategic Priority the requirement to secure a net gain for biodiversity was always included within the Pre-Submission Local Plan Policies (Strategic Policy S6 and Policy NE1) ( <b>SD001</b> ). This additional wording simply clarifies the position in respect of this being designed into new development so overall is not an additional requirement within the Local Plan the changes are to improve clarity and is not necessary for soundness. This additional paragraph has been agreed with Natural England by way of a Statement of Common Ground ( <b>SOCG02</b> ).
AC11	This additional wording para. 3.14 of the Local Plan 3.37 sets out the latest position in respect of a Cultural Development Trust which has been established to strengthen Chelmsford’s cultural identity.	The additional wording only clarifies the latest position with regard to the formation of the Cultural Development Trust. As such the additional wording is solely for clarity and is not necessary for soundness.

41. All of the proposed changes set out above have been subject to sustainability appraisal. The Sustainability Appraisal Addendum -Appendix B (**SD005**) states that the suggested changes do not have implications for the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) as it is simply additional text for clarification and consistency as such is not considered significant for the purposes of the SA.

<b>Question 12</b>	<b>Does Strategic Policy S1 accord with paragraph 154 of the Framework which states that local plans should only include policies that provide a clear indication of how a decision maker should react to a development proposal, identifying what will or will not be permitted and where?</b> <b>How will the spatial principles ‘underpin spatial planning decisions’ (paragraph 4.3 of the Plan)?</b> <b>Are they justified and consistent with national policy?</b>
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### **Response to Q12**

42. The Spatial Principles set out within Strategic Policy S1 outline and guide how the Strategic Priorities and Vision for the Local Plan will be achieved. They are justified and consistent with national policy and accord with paragraph 154 and 156 of the NPPF (2012).
43. By following these principles, decision-makers can ensure that growth will be directed to the most sustainable locations. Each of the principles is framed in the positive and are not simple statements of fact or aspirations without direction. They each give a clear strategic policy direction, which have been driven by the Strategic Priorities, to assist a decision maker as well as shaping the Spatial Strategy of the Local Plan. Accordingly, they provide a clear indication as to how a decision maker should react to a proposal depending on how it assesses against these principles and thus indicating, together with other relevant policies of the development plan, what will or will not be permitted and where.
44. These principles alongside Strategic Policy S2 – Securing Sustainable Development will be the starting point for all decisions on development proposals to be considered against. It is the Council’s experience that these principles when enshrined into policy provide clarity on strategic matters which is helpful for decision-makers. They are the principles of the strategy to achieve sustainable development.
45. Paragraph 156 of the NPPF (2012) requires local planning authorities to set out the strategic priorities for the area. The Spatial Principles set out in Strategic Policy S1 expand upon and set out how the Strategic Priorities of the Local Plan will be achieved and underpin the principles which flow through the subsequent policies within the Local Plan. The Spatial Principles provide the policy starting point within the Local Plan for all decision making on development proposals. On this basis the Policy is considered to be justified and consistent with national policy, namely paragraphs 154 and 156 of the NPPF (2012).
46. In summary, the Spatial Principles set out in Strategic Policy S1 are justified and consistent with national policy and the policy accords with paragraph 154 of the NPPF (2012) as it provides a clear indication of development that will or will not be permitted, and where it will be permitted.

## APPENDIX A

<b>EVIDENCE BASE LIST FOR MATTER 2</b>	
SD001	Pre-Submission Local Plan and Policies Map
SD002	Pre-Submission Local Plan Schedule of Additional Changes
SD005	Pre-Submission Local Plan: Additional Changes Sustainability Appraisal Report: Addendum
SD009	Regulation 22 Consultation Statement
EB115	Issues and Options Consultation Document
EB116	Preferred Options Consultation Document
SOCG01	Statement of Common Ground: Historic England
SOCG02	Statement of Common Ground: Natural England
SOCG03	Statement of Common Ground: HMA Authorities
SOCG07	Statement of Common Ground: West Essex Authorities
SOCG08	Statement of Common Ground: Maldon District Council
SOCG09	Statement of Common Ground: Brentwood Borough Council
SOCG10	Statement of Common Ground: South Essex Authorities

## Appendix B

### **A Memorandum of Co-operation: Collaborative Working on Strategic Growth Priorities in North and Central Essex**

#### **Introduction**

Essex is a large county made up of some 12 city and district authorities together with the county council and two unitary authorities. Despite its size the authorities have a strong track record of working collaboratively on growth issues through regional and structure plans; and, more recently, as part of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.

In Essex as elsewhere, economic and demographic growth pressures cut across administrative boundaries, reflecting functional and spatial geographies. Settlement patterns, migration flows, commuting and strategic infrastructure needs all have significant influences within and between local authority areas.

The Localism Act 2011 places a Duty to Co-operate on local planning authorities and county councils<sup>1</sup>, requiring them to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis in the preparation of plans where this involves strategic matters. The National Planning Policy Framework encourages authorities to prepare joint, non-statutory documents, particularly where this provides evidence of having effectively cooperated to plan for issues with cross-boundary impacts<sup>2</sup>.

This Memorandum of Co-operation (MOC) seeks to meet this purpose and to go further in setting out a range of common challenges and opportunities across the area and how these will be addressed.

#### **Parties to the Memorandum**

This Memorandum is agreed by the following Local Authorities:

- Braintree District Council
- Chelmsford City Council
- Colchester Borough Council
- Essex County Council
- Tendring District Council

This group of neighbouring authorities historically have made a significant contribution to Essex's growth. They have agreed to come together because of their shared desire to continue to promote sustainable growth; and the particular need to articulate the strategic priorities within the wider

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<sup>1</sup> Localism Act 2011, section 110.

<sup>2</sup> National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 181.

area and how these will be addressed. Central to this is the effective delivery of planned strategic growth, particularly housing and employment development, with the necessary supporting infrastructure. The authorities will continue to engage with the South East Local Enterprise Partnership in developing their growth priorities.

### Objectives

Against this background, the main aims of this MOC are to:

- provide a high level statement of intent under the Duty to Co-operate to collaborate on strategic issues;
- to identify the key strategic issues that will have a bearing across the wider geographic area;
- to articulate the process for and outcomes from this collaboration, principally through the statutory planning process; and
- to ensure appropriate integration and alignment of strategic investment priorities in support of sustainable growth, and to use this to make the case collectively for the necessary funding.

### Strategic Issues

Future population growth will be driven largely by net migration rather than natural change. This will require an appropriate response from the local authorities to ensure that sufficient houses, employment premises and supporting social and other infrastructure are provided. The ageing profile of residents also requires a proactive response to provide the right type of housing and supporting facilities.

Past under-investment in transport infrastructure and increased demand for road and rail use has placed significant strain on the network. Future planned growth provides the opportunity to address these infrastructure needs as well as to ensure that sustainable travel modes are promoted, although there will be significant challenges in funding what is required.

Against this background, the key strategic issues the authorities need to address collaboratively are:

- **Transport Infrastructure and Connectivity** – Focused on addressing capacity constraints on the A12, A120, A130 and A414; together with upgrades to the Great Eastern Main Line rail line and services; and provision of upgraded broadband infrastructure and services.
  - **Providing Sufficient New Homes** - To meet the needs of a growing and ageing population; through ensuring the availability of developable land in appropriate locations and that the market delivers a suitable mix of housing types.
  - **Providing for Employment** - To strengthen and diversify local economies to provide more jobs; and to achieve a better balance between the location of jobs and housing, which will reduce the need to travel and promote sustainable growth.
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- **Addressing Education and Healthcare Needs** - A range of good quality educational opportunities will need to be addressed as part of a sustainable growth strategy, including practical vocational training and apprenticeships linked to local job opportunities. The authorities will need to work with the NHS and local health partnerships to ensure adequate provision of healthcare facilities to support new and growing communities.
- **Ensuring High Quality Outcomes** – Strategic collaboration provides the opportunity for greater ambition in planning and delivering high quality sustainable new communities; particularly, for example, through new garden communities. More generally, new development must be functional and viable, but also reflect high standards of urban and architectural design. Major new developments will be planned carefully with the use of masterplans and design codes where appropriate.

### **Collaborative approach and outcomes**

With the removal of the statutory requirement to produce a strategic plan, Local Plans are the main vehicle for delivering an area's growth requirements and how these will be accommodated. However, as these are necessarily limited in their geographic scope, individual local authorities cannot fully reflect strategic influences and issues within them.

The authorities' agreed response to this is to produce a common strategic section for the current reviews of each of their Local Plans. This 'Part 1' of their Plans will provide the evidence to support their strategic approach to the key issues outlined above, and a spatial strategy and policies responding to these issues in a proactive manner. The separate 'Part 2' for each plan will then address local issues and policies within each authorities' area.

### **Governance**

The work required to deliver the necessary outcomes from this strategic collaboration will be overseen by a Joint Member Group with representation from each of the participating authorities. This will be supported by an Officer Group which will report to the Joint Member Group. Terms of Reference for these Groups will be developed and agreed. Other sub-regional groupings and partners will be engaged as necessary as work progresses.

### **Timing**

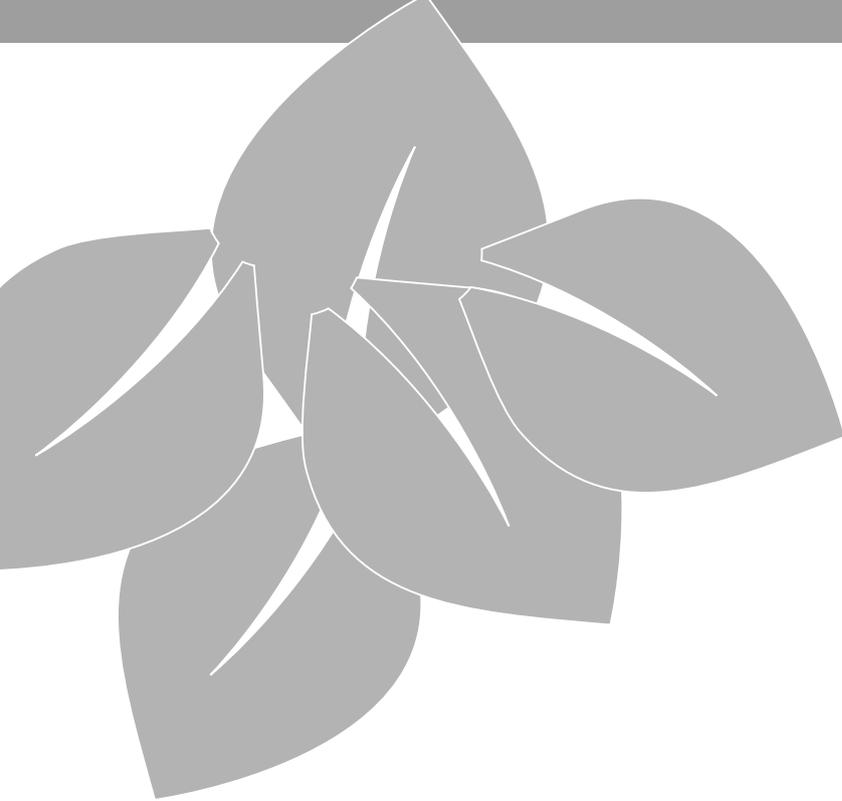
This Memorandum has immediate effect and will remain in place until adoption of the last of the authorities' local plans, unless this version is reviewed and replaced before this.

**June 2016**

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<b>Role</b>	<b>Authority</b>
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