

CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

held on 2 June 2026 at 7pm

PRESENT:

The Mayor, L Foster
The Deputy Mayor, J Frascaona

Councillors C Adutwim, J Armstrong, H Ayres, G Bonnett, D Clark, H Clark, P Clark, P Davey, A Davidson, C Davidson, S Davis, J Deakin, N Dudley, D Eley, K Franks, J Frascaona, L Foster, I Fuller, S Goldman, S Hall, J Hawkins, R Hyland, J Lardge, R Lee, S Manley, L Mascot, B. Massey, R Moore, V Pappa, J. Potter, S Rajesh, S Robinson, S Scott, T Sherlock, J Sosin, A Sosin, M Steel, S Sullivan, A Thompson, N Walsh, R Whitehead, P Wilson, and S Young.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Canning, Chambers, Dobson, Knight, Jeapes, Raven, Sampson, Sismey, Taylor, Thorpe-Apps and Tron.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded to declare at the appropriate time, any interests in the business on the meeting's agenda. None were made.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the three meetings held on 13 May 2026 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. Public Questions

In accordance with Council Rules 10.1 to 10.6 questions could only relate to Item 5 on the agenda. [Four had been submitted which can be viewed via this link](#), responses were given during item 5. The first question queried a lack of reference to equestrians, bridleways, public rights of way and other multi user routes in the Local Plan and asked for an explanation as to why these had been omitted from the evidence base and what assessment had been made of the Plan's impact on equestrian safety and rural connectivity. The second question asked about the impact of the change of political control at Essex County Council on the Local Plan. The third and fourth questions raised concerns about Site 20 at Rettendon Place, regarding the amount of housing proposed, the impact on the green area and wildlife habitats and the impacts on the local community and relevant infrastructure.

5. Chelmsford Local Plan – Submission to Secretary of State for independent examination

The Council considered a report which had been recommended to them via the Chelmsford Policy Board and Cabinet, which sought their approval to submit the Chelmsford Local Plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination and to approve the relevant delegations for the submission and examination processes.

In response to the first public question, the Council were informed that the Local Plan did include direct references to active and sustainable travel as well as specific references to bridleways, Public Rights of Way and multi user routes and crossings. The Council heard that Strategic Policy S10 made provision to secure infrastructure in the Local Plan, including policies to secure improvements to new or existing bridleways where appropriate. The Council were also informed of new bridleway routes, for example in Zone 2 of the Chelmsford Garden Community and that this clearly demonstrated there were mechanisms within the Local Plan which would deliver bridleway improvements to the Chelmsford area. It was also noted that at Masterplanning and planning application stages, full details of any improvements to infrastructure would be required. In response to the second public question, the Council heard that the submission of the Local Plan was not impacted by the change of administration at Essex County Council and that the decision rested solely with Chelmsford City Council. The Council heard that partnership working had taken place with Essex County Council, who had been fully consulted throughout the preparation of the Local Plan, including the agreement of a statement of common ground. In response to the third and fourth questions regarding Site 20 in Rettendon, the Council were informed that the site was for 350 new homes, not 700 and that the site allocation policy required the necessary infrastructure to be delivered as part of the development, including highway and education improvements. The Council heard that new sites had to be put forward to meet the increased housing target from the Government and that they had to be built within five years, hence why specific sites had been chosen that met that timeframe. The Council also heard that the wider development management policies would improve the environment at all development sites, with higher than required biodiversity net gain requirements, along with suitable wildlife and habitat surveys. The Council heard that for Site 20, this would include retaining and strengthening wherever possible the landscaping, trees and hedgerows within the site. The Council also noted that all submitted comments to the consultations, would be passed on to the appointed Inspector to be examined.

The Council heard from the Cabinet Member, who highlighted the importance of a strong Local Plan being in place, to be a solid and sound foundation for decision making on planning applications. They stated that this was an important stage in the process and if approved by Council, the inspector would then consider it and make any modifications before a final vote at Full Council to formally adopt the Local Plan, making it a material planning consideration, to assist with defending against inappropriate development. The Council heard that if the Local Plan didn't progress to the examination stage, it would mean the new NPPF system for plan-making being applied instead, leading to increased costs, a wholly untested system and higher housing numbers. Alternatively, the Council could choose to support the motion and the positive work from planning officers who had a track record of delivering Local Plans that stood up to scrutiny and delivered award winning developments. It was noted that a quality Local Plan, would allow the correct levels of infrastructure to be pushed for, local targets for affordable housing needs to be met and green initiatives to help address climate change. The Cabinet Member also highlighted the significant CIL contributions that development would bring, providing funding to parish tier Council's, and the 35% affordable housing requirement at any site of more than ten homes, to help tackle the housing crisis in Chelmsford. The Council also heard that the plan had been considered at various member briefings and public meetings, in addition to an extensive consultation

process and that despite moving targets and the cancellation of the A12 DCO, a positive plan was now before members to submit to the inspector. It was noted that approval would extend the current Local Plan by five years, until 2041 and assist in meeting the five year housing land supply, alongside offering enhanced protections to the environment.

The Council also heard from Councillors speaking against the submission of the Local Plan, with concerns raised regarding, build out rates by developers affecting the delivery of housing targets, Site 20 at Rettendon Place being unsuitable for 350 homes due to a lack of infrastructure and issues being passed to the planning inspector instead of being dealt with, homes at Hammonds Farm being proposed that would have significant impacts on the surrounding area, especially traffic levels on the A12 and concerns that building either side of the A12, would prevent it from being the bypass that the City needs. Concerns were also raised about unreasonable government housing targets, a failure to develop City Centre brownfield sites instead concentrating on building in rural areas, and what mitigations could be put in place to ensure build out rates were met by developers.

The Council also heard from other Cabinet members who spoke in support of submitting the Local Plan, with points raised including thanking the officers involved for their continued hard work, the greater emphasis on environmental matters throughout, increased affordable housing, higher job targets and employment areas and significant CIL revenue. The Council also heard that the plan set out a robust framework for housing in the area, prioritising a sense of wellbeing and long term resilience and that many of the brownfield sites in the City Centre are allocated in the Local Plan. It was noted that the plan was evidence based and the Chelmsford Policy Board were thanked for their contributions to assist with the plan reaching this stage.

In response to the concerns raised the Cabinet Member stated that, build out rates were a concern but largely out of the control of the Council and the Local Plan was an important safeguard to ensure houses were only delivered in the correct areas, that the inspector would consider all of the evidence for Site 20 in Rettendon that had been submitted, all major applications would come before the Planning Committee to be considered in detail and that there were mechanisms in place to ensure appropriate infrastructure would also be delivered. It was also noted that there were previous bypasses in Chelmsford, before the A12, such as New London Road and Princes Road and that development had taken place both inside and outside of those bypasses and would continue to take place. The importance of having a Local Plan against not having one was also highlighted, with examples of the lack of infrastructure in areas that did not have a Local Plan.

A recorded vote was requested by more than ten members. On being put to the vote, the motion proposed in the report to the meeting were approved, with the voting being as follows:

For the motion: Cllrs Aduwim, Ayres, D Clark, H Clark, Davey, A Davidson, C Davidson, Deakin, Dudley, Eley, Franks, Fuller, Goldman, Hall, Hawkins, Lardge, Lee, Manley, Mascot, Moore, Rajesh, Robinson, Sherlock, A Sosin, J Sosin, Thompson, Walsh and Young

Against the motion: Cllrs Armstrong, Bonnett, P Clark, Davis, Hyland, Massey, Pappa, Potter, Scott, Shah, Steel, Sullivan, Whitehead and Wilson

Abstained: Cllrs Foster and Frasca

RESOLVED that;

1. the Chelmsford Local Plan attached at Appendices 1 and 2 be submitted to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination in accordance with Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).
2. the person appointed to carry out the Independent Examination recommends modifications to the Chelmsford Local Plan as part of the Examination process, in accordance with Section 20(7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).
3. the Assistant Director – Planning and Place Shaping be authorised, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member, to prepare all necessary documentation to support the submission of the Local Plan for independent examination.
4. the Assistant Director – Planning and Place Shaping, relevant Council Officers and consultants be authorised, to act on behalf of the Council at the Independent Examination in respect of the Chelmsford Local Plan including submitting written statements and making oral representations at the Hearing Sessions.

The meeting closed at 8:08pm

Mayor