



SOCG025

Chelmsford Local Plan
Statement of Common Ground
with Epping Forest District
Council

March 2026

Statement of Common Ground

Chelmsford City Council and Epping Forest District Council

1. Introduction

Chelmsford City Council (CCC) is reviewing the Chelmsford Local Plan adopted in 2020. This has reached submission stage (Regulation 22) following consultations on the:

- Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Local Plan (Pre-Submission Plan for short) in Spring 2025 and
- Focused Consultation (Regulation 19) Additional Sites Document (Additional Sites Document for short) in late 2025-early 2026.

This Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) has been prepared to assist the examination of the Local Plan which comprises the Pre-Submission Plan combined with the site allocations and consequential changes in the Additional Sites Document.

It establishes areas of agreement between Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) and CCC in relation to the Pre-Submission Plan and the Additional Sites Document.

This SOCG supersedes that produced in January 2025 (SOCG003).

A map of CCC's administrative area in context with its neighbouring districts and county councils is attached at Appendix A.

CCC has fully engaged with EFDC on the development of the Council's review of the adopted Local Plan from the outset. In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, EFDC has been formally consulted at each Regulation 18 and 19 stages of consultation together with their accompanying Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA).

2. Strategic matters

The strategic matters of interest to EFDC are:

- Delivering homes for all including Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation
- Jobs and economy including green employment and regeneration
- Retail, leisure, and cultural development
- Sustainable transport, highways and active travel
- Community infrastructure including education, health and community facilities.

Delivering homes

Strategic Priority 5 of the Pre-Submission Local Plan commits the Council to meeting local housing needs including independent living accommodation for older people (55+), supported housing for adults with learning or other disabilities, and the requirements identified through the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) for Travelling Showpeople plots and Gypsy and Traveller pitches.

The strategic housing requirements are set out in Strategic Policy S6 in the Pre-Submission Plan and Additional Sites Document. This meets the transitional arrangements for assessed housing need calculated using the Standard Method. This increases Chelmsford's housing need from around 950 net new dwellings per annum (dpa) to 1,437 dpa using the Standard Method in May 2025.

The Pre-Submission Plan was published for consultation under Regulation 19 on 4 February 2025. This includes a housing requirement figure of 1,210 dpa which equates to 83% of the latest local housing needs figure (1,210/1,437 x100). This exceeds the minimum 80% requirement in para. 234a of the 2024 NPPF enabling the Local Plan to proceed under the NPPF transitional arrangements. The Pre-Submission Plan also maintained a five-year housing land supply.

However, following the conclusion of the Pre-Submission Plan consultation several significant events have occurred. These include delays in strategic development housing sites coming forward and other housing sites predicted to be delivered later in the plan period which put into question whether CCC could demonstrate a 5 Year Housing Supply (5YHLS) on adoption of the review of the Chelmsford Local Plan. The adopted Chelmsford Local Plan also became more than five years old on 27 May 2025, so currently for decision making CCC must use the full Government standard method housing need number (not 80%), which means it is currently unable to demonstrate a 5YHLS.

In response to the significant events above, the Council published the Additional Sites Document. This identifies 11 additional housing site allocations for inclusion within the Pre-Submission Plan and 3 expanded housing sites adding 1,297 dwellings to the

five-year housing land supply on submission (Years 2 - 6), enabling a land supply of estimated 5.75 years to be demonstrated on submission. The additional sites also add 1,592 dwellings in total to the housing land supply.

The Trajectory is updated annually, and the Pre-Submission Local Plan uses the latest available Housing Site Schedule at that time (April 2024). Minor modifications will be proposed to the Trajectory to reflect the latest published Housing Site Schedule ahead of submission, including updating of numbers for sites which have planning permission or resolutions to grant planning permission (anticipated to be April 2026).

Overall, CCC is accommodating its housing needs within its boundaries resulting in no unmet need.

The GTAA identifies a need to provide 44 new permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, and 38 new permanent plots for Travelling Showpeople using Annex 1 of the December 2024 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites. Sites to accommodate a total of 30 permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, and 28 permanent plots for Travelling Showpeople, will be allocated across suitable large strategic development allocations, the detail of which are set out in relevant strategic site policies. The small shortfall will be met through appropriate windfall delivery in accordance with Policy DM3, which could be through windfall applications or regularisation of existing pitches/plots where appropriate within Chelmsford City Council's boundary.

Jobs and economy

Strategic Policy S6 as set out in the Additional Sites Document makes provision for 173,146sqm of net additional employment floorspace to help accommodate economic growth and employment requirements up to 2041. This is informed by forecasts in the Employment Land Review (ELR) 2023 and partial update carried out in 2024 via a Focused Update. This new supply is in addition to extant planning permissions. Ahead of submission, any necessary minor modifications will be proposed to floorspace numbers for sites which have planning permission or resolutions to grant planning permission (anticipated to be April 2026).

The 2024 Employment Land Review (ELR) partial update reviewed the most up-to-date assumptions and data regarding future economic growth prospects for Chelmsford between 2022 and 2041. As a result, the Local Plan exceeds the recommended minimum space requirements over the period to 2041. The Council will monitor employment development growth alongside housing delivery through subsequent reviews of the Local Plan to ensure that new employment space broadly matches the future growth of the resident workforce in Chelmsford.

The use of 'around' employment floorspace figures in specific site allocation policies also allows for an appropriate degree of flexibility in provision and for a higher or lower density development to be brought forward in conformity with other policies in the Plan as a whole. Hence, the Council considers that through the Local Plan and its future reviews, it will accommodate its employment needs within its boundaries resulting in no unmet need.

Retail, leisure, and cultural development

Strategic Priority 9 of the Pre-Submission Local Plan commits the Council to supporting new and enhanced retail, leisure and commercial development through protecting existing assets and supporting appropriate growth in these sectors.

The strategic requirements are set out in Strategic Policy S12. This includes directing main town centre development to the relevant town or neighbourhood centre for a wide range of uses including retail, leisure, entertainment, arts, culture and tourism. Outside of specified designated centres, retail and leisure proposals above 500sqm gross floorspace will be required to undertake an impact assessment in line with the requirements of the NPPF.

Sustainable transport

Strategic Priority 2 of the Pre-Submission Local Plan commits the Council to bring about a significant change in how people make their journeys towards more active and sustainable travel choices, and support the provision of strategic and local transport infrastructure.

The strategic requirements are set out in Strategic Policy S16. This includes prioritising and maximising opportunities for active and sustainable transport and movement, such as through walking and cycling networks and increasing public transport infrastructure. Specific transport and highways projects are set out in Strategic Policy S9, and include the new Beaulieu Park Rail Station, Chelmsford North East Bypass, expanded Park and Ride, and capacity improvements to the A132 in the south of the City Council's area.

Site specific requirements are also set out in site allocation policies where relevant.

Community infrastructure

Strategic Priority 8 of the Pre-Submission Local Plan commits the Council to ensure that necessary new or upgraded strategic and local infrastructure and facilities are provided alongside the development of new residential communities.

The strategic requirements are set out in Strategic Policy S9. These include facilities for education, police, ambulance and fire and rescue, primary healthcare, recycling facilities and appropriate drainage, as well as community facilities such as halls and places of worship, open space, and sports and leisure provision.

Site specific requirements are also set out in site allocation policies where relevant.

Areas of Common Ground

EFDC have been fully engaged and consulted at each stage of the Council's review of the adopted Local Plan. EFDC made comments at the Issues & Options and Preferred Options Stages but have made no comments to either the Pre-Submission Plan or Additional Sites Document.

Areas without agreement

There are no areas of disagreement or unresolved strategic matters.

3. Governance and on-going cooperation

CCC will continue to work collaboratively with EFDC to address strategic matters that, in addition to those above, arise through the examination process. This will occur on an ongoing basis through emails and/or meetings and the SOCG will be kept up to date accordingly.

It is agreed that CCC is working collaboratively with EFDC to ensure that cross-boundary strategic issues are properly considered and where appropriate reflected in the review of the Local Plan and effective and on-going joint working has and will continue to be undertaken.

4. Signatories

<p>Chelmsford City Council Jeremy Potter Spatial Planning Services Manager</p> <p>Signature:</p> <p><i>Jeremy Potter</i></p> <p>Date: 11 March 2026</p>	<p>Epping Forest District Council Graham Courtney Planning Service Manager</p> <p>Signature:</p> <p><i>G. Courtney</i></p> <p>Date: 11 March 2026</p>
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Appendix A – Map of Chelmsford City Council’s administrative area in context with its neighbouring districts and county councils.

Chelmsford City Council is adjoined by seven local planning authorities. Essex County Council is the local Highways and Transportation Authority and Education Authority. It is also responsible for the Minerals and Waste Local Plans with Southend-on-Sea Unitary Authority.





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