Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda

16th November 2026 at 7pm

Marconi Room, Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1JE

Membership

Councillor J. Jeapes (Chair)
Councillor L. Mascot (Vice Chair)

and Councillors

D. Clark, S. Davis, D. Eley, E. Sampson, A. Sosin, J. Sosin, M. Steel, S. Sullivan, A. Thompson, R. Whitehead and P. Wilson

Local people are welcome to attend this meeting, where your elected Councillors take decisions affecting YOU and your City. There will also be an opportunity to ask your Councillors questions or make a statement. These have to be submitted in advance to committees@chelmsford.gov.uk. Further details are on the agenda page. If you would like to find out more, please email committees@chelmsford.gov.uk or phone the Democracy Team on Chelmsford (01245) 606480.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

16 November 2026

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

2. Chairs Announcements

3. Minutes

To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2026.

4. Decision and Action Sheet

To consider the decisions and actions from the previous minutes of the 14 September 2026 meeting.

5. Declaration of Interests

All Members are reminded that they must disclose any interests they know they have in items of business on the meeting's agenda and that they must do so at this point on the agenda or as soon as they become aware of the interest. If the interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest they are also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting.

6. Public Question Time

Any member of the public may ask a question or make a statement at this point in the meeting. Each person has two minutes and a maximum of 20 minutes is allotted to public questions/statements, which must be about matters for which the Committee is responsible.

The Chair may disallow a question if it is offensive, substantially the same as another question or requires disclosure of exempt or confidential information. If the question cannot be answered at the meeting a written response will be provided after the meeting.

Any member of the public who wishes to submit a question or statement to this meeting should email it to committees@chelmsford.gov.uk 24 hours before the start time of the meeting. All valid questions and statements will be published with the agenda on the website at least six hours before the start time and will be responded to at the meeting. Those who have submitted a valid question or statement will be entitled to put it in person at the meeting.

7. Decisions Called-In

To report on any Cabinet decisions called in and to decide how they should be progressed.

8. Cabinet Portfolio Update from the Cabinet member for a Fairer Chelmsford

9. Issues affecting the supply of Affordable Housing in Chelmsford - Inform and Debate

10. Planning Application Consultation Portal - Inform and Debate

11. Report on Decisions Taken Under Delegation to the Chief Executive

12. Work Programme

13. Urgent Business

To consider any other matter which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

MINUTES

of the

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

held on 14 September 2026 at 7pm

Present:

Councillor J. Jeapes (Chair)
Councillor L. Mascot (Vice-Chair)

Councillors,
Councillors, D. Clark, S. Davis, D. Eley, A. Sosin, J. Sosin, M. Steel, S. Sullivan. A. Thompson, and P. Wilson

Also in attendance:
Councillor C. Davidson, Cabinet Member for Finance
Councillor N. Dudley, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing
Councillor S. Simon, Deputy Cabinet Member for Cleaner Communities

1. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies were received from Councillors P. Davey and R. Whitehead.

2. Chairs Announcements

No announcements were made for this meeting.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meetings held on 29th June 2026 were agreed as a correct record.

4. Decisions and Action Sheet

The Committee considered and noted the decision and action sheet since the last meeting on 29 June 2026.

5. Declaration of Interests

All Members were reminded to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary interests or other registerable interests where appropriate in any items of business on the meeting's agenda. None were made.

6. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

7. Decisions Called-In

The Committee noted that no decisions taken by the Cabinet had been called-in.

8. Cabinet Portfolio Update from the Cabinet Member for Finance

The Committee received a presentation from Cabinet member for Finance.

Councillor Davidson informed the Committee that the Council's financial position for 2026/27 had been stronger than anticipated due to a more favourable Government funding than had been expected. As a result, the budget approved earlier in the year had included investment in service improvements such as additional dog bins and the Street Care Rangers service. Members were advised that further work had been undertaken during the year to identify additional service improvements and that these would be brought forward through supplementary estimates.

The Committee heard that proposed investments included additional Community Protection Officers, increased staffing to support the ongoing success of the theatre, improvements to council car parks, additional planning resources to help accelerate housing delivery and affordable housing developments, enhanced planning enforcement capacity, measures to reduce the use of temporary accommodation, increased work on housing standards and additional grant funding to support local businesses.

Councillor Davidson also updated Members on Local Government Reorganisation. He expressed disappointment regarding the Government's recent announcement concerning reorganisation proposals and stated that significant officer time and resources had been invested in preparing the Council's submission. Members were advised that a £6 million reserve had previously been established to meet costs associated with Local Government Reorganisation and that discussions were ongoing regarding costs already incurred and the implications of the Government's revised position.

Questions were raised regarding the financial impact of Local Government Reorganisation, future investment priorities and the use of the Local Government Reorganisation reserve. Members discussed the opportunity costs associated with officer time spent preparing for reorganisation and acknowledged the considerable additional workload undertaken by officers whilst continuing to deliver normal council services. The Committee thanked officers for their efforts during the process.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

(7.04pm to 7.23pm)

9. Fly-Tipping and Waste Enforcement – Inform and Debate

The Committee received a presentation from the Public Health and Protection Services Manager.

Members were advised that fly-tipping remained a significant issue nationally, with the majority of incidents involving household waste. The distinction between littering and fly-tipping was explained, together with the enforcement powers available to the Council under environmental legislation. The Committee heard that reports were primarily

received online and were reviewed by officers within the Community Protection Team, whilst Street Care staff were responsible for the removal of waste from Council land and adopted highways.

The Committee was informed that Community Protection Officers investigated reported incidents, gathering evidence from the waste itself, witness statements and any available CCTV footage. Where sufficient evidence existed, individuals could be invited to attend an interview under caution before enforcement options were considered. Members heard that enforcement outcomes could include fixed penalty notices, written warnings, simple cautions or prosecution proceedings.

Members noted that benchmarking information showed significant differences between local authorities in terms of enforcement activity. It was explained that some authorities used private contractors and issued substantially larger numbers of fixed penalty notices, although many of those notices were not paid and were not pursued through the courts. Officers advised that the Council's approach sought to balance enforcement with education and behaviour change.

The Committee heard that two additional Community Protection Officers would be recruited, increasing the Council's capacity to investigate fly-tipping and undertake educational campaigns. Members were also advised of ongoing discussions with Essex County Council and neighbouring authorities regarding a more coordinated Essex-wide approach to tackling fly-tipping.

Questions were raised regarding incidents occurring on private land, particularly within newer housing developments, and the responsibilities of management companies. Officers explained that the Council would work with landowners to encourage prompt removal of waste and identify opportunities for enforcement action where appropriate.

Members welcomed the introduction of warning signage and tape around fly-tipping incidents during investigations, noting that this demonstrated action was being taken and acted as a visible deterrent. Further discussion took place regarding household duty of care responsibilities, the importance of public awareness campaigns and the need to ensure residents used licensed waste carriers when arranging waste disposal.

Questions were also raised regarding the evidential threshold required for enforcement action, the use of witness and CCTV evidence, and the impact of Essex County Council's booking system for household waste recycling centres. Officers advised that, whilst there was no clear evidence that the booking system had directly increased fly-tipping levels, practical experience suggested that restrictions at recycling centres could contribute to some incidents.

The Committee thanked officers for the report and welcomed the ongoing work being undertaken to address fly-tipping and littering across the district.

It was **RESOLVED** that presentation be noted.

(7.23pm to 7.49pm)

10. Updates from Outside Representative Bodies (2025/26)

The Committee received updates from Members appointed to outside bodies following Annual Council in May 2025.

Members noted that a number of reports had now been received. Concern was expressed that several outside bodies appeared not to have held meetings for a considerable period of time, despite attempts by appointed councillors to establish contact. It was suggested that enquiries be made to determine whether those organisations remained active and whether Council representation remained appropriate.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

(7.49pm to 7.51pm)

11. Chair and Vice-Chair Update

The Chair and Vice-Chair updated the Committee on discussions regarding the future development of the Overview and Scrutiny function.

Members were advised that consideration had been given to adopting a more focused approach to scrutiny. Rather than relying on lengthy portfolio presentations, the intention would be for Members to identify specific issues and themes in advance so that deeper questioning and examination could take place during meetings. This would allow the Committee to devote greater attention to areas of concern and scrutiny rather than receiving general updates.

The Committee also discussed the importance of Members suggesting future topics for review and contributing actively to the development of the work programme. Reference was made to partnership working and issues where responsibility was shared across a number of organisations. Potential topics identified included community safety, support for victims of domestic abuse, waterways, sewage discharges, water quality and infrastructure capacity.

Members broadly supported the proposed approach and were encouraged to submit suggestions for future scrutiny topics and areas of focus ahead of meetings.

(7.51pm to 7.59pm)

12. Work Programme

The Committee considered the updated work programme.

Members were advised that future portfolio updates would be more focused on specific topics identified by the Committee in advance. It was suggested that upcoming presentations from the Cabinet Members for Fair Chelmsford and Planning and Place Shaping should concentrate on areas of particular interest to Members rather than providing general portfolio updates.

The Committee also discussed the forthcoming presentation from the Police and agreed that particular emphasis should be placed on domestic abuse, community safety and the Council's role in supporting victims.

Members were encouraged to submit suggestions for future scrutiny topics and areas of focus directly to officers, the Chair and the Vice-Chair in advance of meetings.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

(8.00pm to 8.02pm)

13. Urgent Business

There were no matters of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 8.03pm

Chair

Chelmsford City Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee

16 November 2026

Issues affecting the supply of Affordable Housing in Chelmsford - Inform and Debate

Report by:
Director of Sustainable Communities

Officer Contact:
Paul Gayler – Strategic Housing Services Manager
01245 606375, paul.gayler@chelmsford.gov.uk

Jeremy Potter – Assistant Director – Planning and Place Shaping
01245 606821, jeremy.potter@chelmsford.gov.uk

Purpose
This report focuses on issues facing the supply of affordable housing in Chelmsford including how changing trends in supply are affecting the availability of the most needed size, type and tenure of affordable housing.

Recommendations
That the Committee notes the report

Summary of Key Points
- The delivery of new affordable homes in recent years has been offset by a continuous reduction in the supply (relets) from the existing stock creating a net reduction each year in the homes available to meet the Council's legal duties to those who are homeless
- This reflects a national trend but local factors such as market conditions have made these issues more acute in Chelmsford than other districts in Essex
- Even with improved performance reducing the levels of homelessness the continued reduction in supply of affordable homes presents increasing risks to the Council's legal and financial capacity to meet future housing need
- The increase in temporary accommodation is being driven by lack of affordable housing and not by an increase in homelessness

1. Introduction

1.1. This report examines the specific issues that are affecting the supply of affordable housing in Chelmsford.

1.2. There are many interrelated factors that affect how many homes are available to those in most need. This includes the type and size profile of the existing affordable housing stock, the specific demographic and socio-economic trends of an area, the loss of stock through the right to buy, market conditions, land availability, land values and access to grant for new build.

2. Context

2.1 Chelmsford is facing a significant and worsening housing crisis reflecting a wider national picture. The increase in need and the constant reduction in supply means the Council's reliance on temporary accommodation to meet its housing duties has risen significantly.

2.2 Affordable housing supply come from two main sources:

- Relets from the existing housing stock
- New build homes primarily through planning s106 agreements

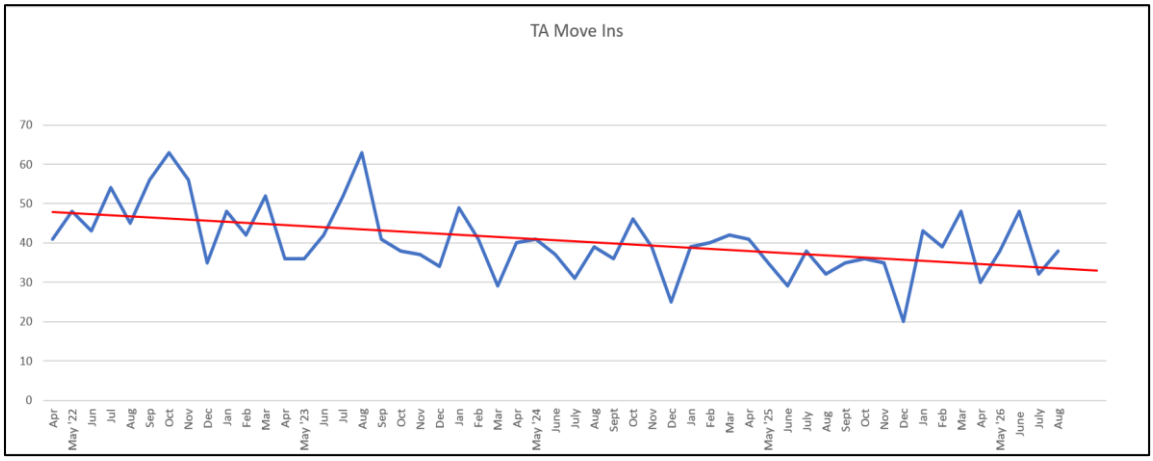
2.3 Conventionally the major source of rented affordable housing supply should come through relets from the existing housing stock, evidencing a balanced and sustainable supply of homes to meet local need. This is often referred to as 'churn'. At the start of this decade a high proportion of new affordable homes offset the extent to which this churn was reducing supply, in 2020/21 45% of general needs affordable lettings were new-build properties.

2.4 Over the past 10 years or so this chronic problem in Chelmsford with the 'churn' in the existing stock gradually decreasing by around 10% each year has been masked by a high proportion of new homes but as this proportion homes begins to reduce from above 40% to around 20% in the last two years the problem is now becoming acute. Even if levels of homelessness remain static this reduction will create a growing gap between need and supply.

3. Supply from Existing Affordable Housing Stock

3.1 Levels of homelessness in Chelmsford have been relatively consistent over the last 10 years, around 300 cases p.a. are accepted as 'main duty', and the number of households moving into temporary accommodation has been reducing over the last few years. Figure 1 shows the numbers of households being moved into temporary accommodation. Over this same period the number of households in temporary accommodation has risen from 314 to 610, this shows that the reason for the increase in households in temporary accommodation is the lack of supply of affordable housing to move people into and therefore a growing backlog of families in temporary accommodation.

Figure 1 – Number of Household Moved into Temporary Accommodation 2022-26



3.2 Table 1 below provides a comparison between other Essex districts illustrating how Chelmsford's level of statutory homelessness is proportionately lower than others compared to the number in temporary accommodation. This indicates how it is primarily an issue of low supply as opposed to high need that is the cause of TA need for our Council.

Table 1 – Selected Essex Districts Main Duty and nos. of Households in TA

District	Accepted as main duty	Households in TA
Chelmsford	75	589
Colchester	126	517
Epping Forest	96	138
Harlow	30	384
Southend	120	429
Tendring	69	156

Source: *MHCLG Homelessness live tables Jan-March 2026*

3.2 It is not easy to access the supply (lettings) of affordable homes for every district but those in North Essex publish an annual report – see Table 2 below. Note that this only shows the lettings of general needs social or affordable rent and not any other form of intermediate homes which rarely, if ever, assist in meeting local authorities' statutory duties.

Table 2: Chelmsford & Gateway to Homechoice lettings 2025/26

District	Existing	New build	Total
Chelmsford	160	57	217
Braintree	576	155	731
Colchester	536	82	618
Maldon	119	108	227

Source: *CCC Monthly KPI / Gateway to Homechoice annual report*

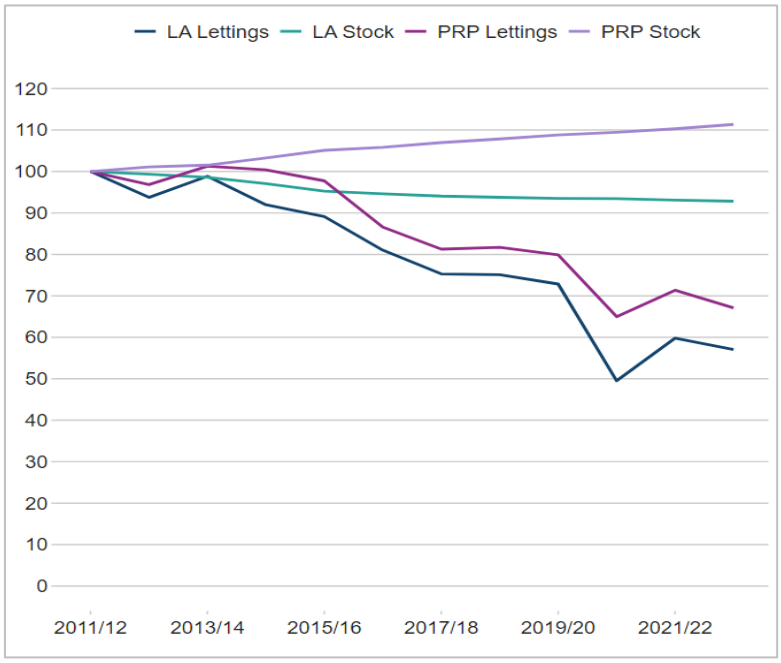
3.3 Evidently not only is there a significant shortfall in Chelmsford between the assessed need and supply, even discounting for new build, which is often intermittent, but the supply from existing stock is also only a third of neighbouring authorities.

3.4 Housing needs studies and other assessments have consistently indicated that Chelmsford needs an annual affordable supply (lettings) of between 500 – 600 homes, this is not too dissimilar to the actual supply of Braintree and Colchester.

3.5 Supply is essential in meeting housing need and should be seen as lettings per annum and not just the number of newly developed or existing of homes most of which will not be available to allocate for years to come.

3.6 This has to be seen in context of reducing supply nationally over the last two decades, where not only has local authority stock reduced due to age and Right to Buy, marginally offset a growing number of Private Registered Providers (PRP) or housing association homes, actual supply in terms of lettings has reduced in both sectors. Diagram 1 below shows the trend in England over a 10-year period.

Diagram 1 – Lettings by Type of Stock



https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/social-housing-lettings-in-england-april-2022-to-march-2023/social-housing-lettings-in-england-tenancies-april-2022-to-march-2023

3.7 In some ways this is an unintended consequence of trying to maximise the number of homes supplied through new development including intermediate affordable homes rather than adhere to a strategic mix of sizes of social and affordable rent that complements and sustains supply from the existing stock. Increasing density by reducing the size of homes will provide more and often be financially more viable but can distort and disrupt the overall supply in the longer term

3.8 Higher density proposals with smaller units have been more commonplace on brownfield sites which have developed over the past 15 years in Chelmsford and

elsewhere but without a more balanced supply of larger homes (even if fewer in number) more households eventually become overcrowded with fewer options to resolve their longer-term housing need.

3.9 Changes in building safety requirements, energy efficiency standards and existing land use values are now leading to these sites also becoming increasingly unviable.

3.10 The right to buy has impacted larger family homes especially in areas of higher market values such as Chelmsford where the value of the discount was so great, adding to an imbalance of smaller homes within the existing stock which has then been further extended by attempts to build the maximum number rather than the optimum mix. This may help meet the required number of new affordable homes but ignores the recommended composition of house types that are most needed.

3.11 In the short term these new homes will meet an immediate need and possibly some of the backlog but in the longer term they then add to the problem of reducing supply as families grow and need a larger home.

3.12 In Chelmsford two thirds of households (1,485) are in housing need and have current applications to our Housing Register because of overcrowding Conventionally housing need assessments will see these cases as not creating a net housing requirement on the basis that when (if) they do move the home they leave will offset the one needed to resolve their problem. It overlooks however the obvious fact that they will all need a home larger than the ones being released, highlighting how a lower supply of the right size homes can increase supply from the existing stock whilst a larger amount of the 'wrong' size can actually add to the problem.

3.13 Chelmsford does not have fewer affordable homes than our neighbouring districts. Table 3 shows that Chelmsford has very similar overall numbers than Braintree, which is also a stock transfer authority, but Braintree generates three times the supply from its existing stock. This indicates a more balanced supply which can meet the need of existing households such as those who become overcrowded, freeing up smaller homes for those who may be homeless.

3.14 Achieving a balanced supply of affordable homes, i.e. right size and right tenure, whether on site or through use of commuted sums maintains a healthy churn of existing stock even when supply of new build reduces in some years.

4. Supply from New Build

4.1. Supply from new build is secured through s106 legal agreements. Although the Council has control on granting planning permission, it does not control when the homes are built. This often means that new build supply can be intermittent.

4.2. As can be seen in Table 4 below, supply from new build (which includes shared ownership) is not smooth as it dependent on starts on sites and prevailing market conditions.

Table 3: New Build Affordable Housing Completions in Chelmsford

2016/ 17	2017/ 18	2018/ 19	2019/ 20	2020/ 21	2021/ 22	2022/ 23	2023/ 24	2024/ 25	2025/ 26
226	198	287	189	264	130 116*	219 143*	164 50*	195 98*	72 46*

*Number of general needs affordable rented units let

4.3. The most commonly cited barrier to affordable housing delivery is scheme viability. In recent years developers and Registered Providers have faced construction cost inflation, higher borrowing costs, labour shortages, material supply issues, increased regulatory requirements, building safety costs, and national housing policies that have reduced existing stock.

4.4. These pressures often result in developers seeking reductions in s106 affordable housing contributions on viability grounds. Schemes solely for affordable housing on brownfield sites can require significant subsidies even if the land is transferred to the developer at no cost.

4.5. This is not only a problem for private developers as many affordable providers cite viability gaps despite attracting grant from Homes England and obtaining the land at no or little cost.

4.6. Many councils wish to build directly but are constrained by a shortage of suitable sites, high land values and landowners holding on to land, competition from the private sector, complex land assembly requirements, and difficulties in using compulsory purchase powers effectively.

4.7. Build-out rates are driven by market absorption, with major developers building at rates linked to local demand and often seeking to avoid releasing housing faster than the market can absorb because this may affect sales values. This creates a tension between councils seeking rapid delivery and developers optimising commercial returns, with development slowing when it is most needed.

4.8. Affordable housing delivery is often dependent on Registered Provider interest, Affordable Homes Programme funding, viability assumptions and the availability of grant. Where Registered Providers reduce acquisitions because of financial pressures, overall build-out rates can be affected, since affordable housing often forms a substantial component of large developments.

5. Reasons for Differences in Chelmsford

5.1 There is no single reason, more a combination of local market forces, local and national policies. We know Chelmsford is one of the more expensive areas for house prices in Essex, becoming a sweet spot for those moving closer to London from elsewhere and also for those within London moving out.

5.2 The value of homes inevitably influences the cost of renting as well as buying a home and we have seen the Private Rented Sector (PRS) treble in size over the last 30 years, replacing social housing as the second most common tenure. The lower quartiles of PRS has often accompanied social housing as an option for those who cannot afford to buy but for some time now, the cost of open market rents not only mean it is inaccessible for those on lower incomes, it has also become one of the main causes of homelessness as rents exceed local housing allowance levels. Loss of employment quickly leads to loss of home.

5.3 The value of land, or from a development view the perceived future value, also becomes a barrier to the development of affordable housing; whereas a developer may reasonably assume the value of homes built in the future will be greater than those being sold today, the rent control of affordable housing means there will be a growing deficit in the future rather than an uplift.

5.4 This does not apply to intermediate affordable housing which follows market trends, whether as discounted sale, intermediate rent or shared ownership. Over 40% of our affordable housing supply comprises some form of intermediate affordable tenure which as a subsidised market option helps meet housing demand but makes no contribution to the local housing need the Council is bound by statute to address.

5.5 This then protects benchmark land values, residualizing the development of homes that are needed to meet local need, i.e. those whose housing need cannot be met through the supply from the open market and so the gap grows ever wider.

5.6 Alongside this, PRPs are obliged to consider investing in new affordable housing and almost all aspire to this but the replacement of capital subsidy in place of a model that requires PRPs to borrow against the future rental income of new affordable homes caps their future financial capacity, especially when there is a duty to maintain and improve an ageing stock.

5.7 Ricardo's law of diminishing returns then applies to some high value areas, inevitably leading us to the moment when developers cannot find a RP able to buy from them the affordable homes they are committed to develop under a s106 agreement, so the local population increases without the homes some of them will need.

6. Work to Address the Lack of Supply and the Impact

6.1 An innovative approach has been taken to addressing financial viability on strategic growth sites by reducing the cost to the developer of the S106 by reinvesting the CIL generated by the development to fund infrastructure requirements in the S106, this reduces the financial deficit of the development enabling more affordable housing to be provided.

6.2 Where financial viability results in a reduction of affordable housing, negotiations with developers have focused on maintaining the 22% affordable rent units over and above intermediate housing such as shared ownership.

6.3 A strategy outlining the approach the Council is taking to reduce the cost of temporary accommodation is currently being developed this will have two strands to it; improving homelessness prevention, and increasing supply of temporary accommodation/supported housing.

7. Conclusion

7.1 The lack of affordable housing is causing an acute housing crisis nationally and this is having a significant impact in Chelmsford with the lack of churn in the existing affordable housing stock and high housing costs in the private rented sector exacerbating the impact locally.

7.2 The reduction in the supply of existing affordable housing and the reduction in new affordable housing being built is the driver for the increase in temporary accommodation rather than an increase in households becoming homeless.

7.3 New supply is being affected by macro economics which is affecting financial viability of new developments including those where councils are looking to build directly or in partnership with developers.

7.4 Whilst the Council is exploring all options to increase the supply of affordable housing the influence, and therefore, the effect it can have is very limited and ultimately the answer rests with national policy makers.

List of appendices:

None

Background papers:

None

Corporate Implications

Corporate Implication	Response
Legal/Constitutional	The Council has statutory duties to meet the housing need of many households who become homeless and those who are living in homes that are unsuitable for their needs and therefore an adequate supply of affordable housing by type and tenure is critical.
Financial	Where there is an inadequate supply alternative (temporary) accommodation must be provided, often at a cost that is determined by open market rents with an additional premium.
Potential impact on climate change and the environment	None
Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030	None
Personnel	The rising need for temporary accommodation becomes a strategic issue requiring additional staff to meet the Council's legal duties to those in housing need beyond the conventional approach of allocating social housing to those in greatest need.
Risk Management	A continuing gap between the need and supply of general needs affordable rented homes has been highlighted in the Council's Risk Register for legal, social and financial reasons.
Equality and Diversity	With almost all homeless households requiring temporary accommodation there is a greater risk that some properties will not be suitable for those with protected characteristics, e.g. physical disabilities, age, etc.

Health and Safety	None
Digital	None
Other	None

Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as the report relates to an Inform & Debate session and does not propose a change in policy or procedure.

Consultees:

None

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

None

Chelmsford City Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee

16th November 2026

Planning Application Consultation Portal - Inform and Debate

Report by:
Jeremy Potter – Assistant Director - Planning and Place Shaping

Louise Goodwin – Director – Connected Chelmsford

Officer Contact:
Kirsty Dougal – Planning Services Manager (Development Management)

Kirsty.dougal@chelmsford.gov.uk

Michael Sage – Digital Services Manager

Michael.sage@chelmsford.gov.uk

Purpose
To provide an overview of the Council's planning-related digital systems used to publish and manage planning application information and consultations, the performance and reliability issues experienced by users, actions taken to mitigate these issues, and the options available for future system improvements

Recommendations
1. That the Committee note the content of the report.

Summary of Key Points
- The system used to view planning application plans and documents, provided through Workflow 360 (Civica) as part of Public Access, continues to experience significant performance and usability issues, affecting residents, consultees, Members and officers seeking to access planning application information.

- The ongoing issues generate a high volume of complaints, create additional work for Planning and Digital Services staff, reduce public confidence in the service and present a risk to the Council's ability to provide timely and reliable access to planning information.

- This report has been prepared to inform Members of the extent of the issues, the work undertaken to address them, the options available to the Council and the risks associated with maintaining the current arrangements.

- Whilst Officers continue to work to improve system performance, there is no certainty that the fundamental limitations of the current system can be resolved without replacement of the system.

- Local Government Reorganisation is a consideration for any future system procurement, however, it does not remove the need to address the immediate service, operational and customer experience risks arising from the current system.

- It is concluded that the Council should continue work to identify a replacement solution for the management and accessibility of planning documents, whilst taking account of future Local Government Reorganisation requirements and opportunities for collaboration with other authorities.

1. Introduction

1.1. This report relates specifically to the software systems used by the Planning Service to publish and manage planning application information and consultations.

1.2. It should be noted that several different systems are often referred to as "the planning consultation portal" and these are often confused with one another. These are:

- **Public Access** - the Council's online system used to view planning applications, plans, documents and consultation responses, as well as make comments on planning applications.

- **The Planning Portal** - a national service used by applicants to submit planning applications as well as obtain general planning advice.

- **Local Plan consultation software** - systems used to consult on planning policy documents and Local Plan preparation.

1.3. This report focuses on the Council's Public Access and associated planning management systems.

2. Public Access

2.1. The planning system operates on the principles of transparency, public participation and democratic accountability. The Council is required by legislation[1] to publicise planning applications and provide opportunities for interested parties to make representations before applications are determined.

2.2. The Council fulfils these requirements through its online Public Access system, which enables members of the public, statutory consultees, applicants, agents, Parish (and Town) Councils and Members to:

- View planning applications and supporting documents.
- Track the progress of applications.
- Access consultation responses and officer reports, where available.
- Submit comments or representations on applications during the consultation period.

2.3. Public representations are an important part of the decision-making process. The Council must consider material planning considerations raised through consultation responses when determining planning applications, however, planning decisions must be made in accordance with the adopted Development Plan (Local Plan) alongside national planning policy unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

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[1] *Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 ("the DMPO")*

The number of comments received either in support of or opposition to a proposal is not, in itself, determinative.

2.4. Publishing planning applications online also supports a wider commitment to openness and accessibility by allowing planning information to be accessed at any time without the need to attend Council offices.

2.5. The Public Access system software used is provided by third parties and used, to differing extents, by many local planning authorities across the country. There are two providers of the Council's Public Access system and two separate software systems used which, together, provide the full Public Access service. Members of the public do not notice the distinction between the two software systems. These are:

- Idox – application search, information, application timeline, commenting, email notifications.
- Workflow 360 (Civica) – view and download plans and documents.

3. Workflow 360 (Civica)

3.1. Workflow 360 (Civica) is currently used for workflow and document storage and has been in use for nearly 2 decades. The version currently used is deployed on-premise with physical servers and back-ups.

3.2. Planning, Revenues & Benefits, Strategic Housing, Local Land Charges, Customer Services and Environmental Services are the only areas that use data storage and workflow within Workflow 360. Customer Services use of Civica is largely centred on sending information to other departments. It is estimated that Planning own ~40% of the data stored.

3.3. Over the last several years there has been a desire to move away from Workflow 360/Civica and use a specialist Planning solution. To date, this has not been a viable option due to the significant cost of data extraction.

4. Current Performance and Reliability

4.1. Over the past few years there have been numerous technical issues with the Public Access software. This has generated many complaints from Members, the public, Parish and Town Councils, statutory consultees, developers and officers within the Planning Service. Complaints can generally be categorised as follows:

- **'Downtime' across the software** – Occasionally Public Access is 'down' and not accessible. This is infrequent. When it occurs, it is usually back up-and-running on the same day. This issue was largely resolved by an update to Public Access in July 2026.
- **Inability to 'download all' documents** – Whilst there is a link to 'download all' it is a known issue that this functionality does not work. This has been raised with the supplier of the software (Workflow 360/Civica) but there is no fix or resolution.

- **Slowness to view or download individual documents** – This issue is the main source of complaints. This issue relates to the Workflow 360 (W360) element of Public Access. The Planning Service scan or import all documents submitted with a planning application so that they can be viewed. Due to the nature of planning application documents, these are often A1 or A0 plans or complex documents. W360 saves these files as .TIFF files which can be extremely large (~100s of MB (megabyte)). In turn, these images are stored within a SQL (Structured Query Language) database. When an image is requested, the application must retrieve it from the database, convert to a displayable format and then render it on screen. For a large image, this can be a resource-intensive process, especially if multiple people are requesting multiple documents at the same time. The application is 32-bit which limits its memory usage to 4GB, meaning that providing the server with additional storage capacity would not resolve the issue.
- **Time limit on comment submission** – This is a known limitation. As such, there is advice on the Council's website which states: *"If you have a detailed comment, you may want to write it in another program, such as Microsoft Word, then paste it into Public Access. This is because sessions on Public Access time out after 30 minutes."*
- **Time delay to display comments** – This is not an error with Public Access. As explained on the Council's website, officers make all comments we receive publicly available. There is a manual process behind this in which all comments are reviewed, checked for sensitive information, and redacted, if necessary, in line with our GDPR responsibilities. We aim to publish comments we receive online around two or three days after we receive them, but it can take longer if we receive a large number of comments on an application. This is also compounded by residents then submitting multiple comments on an application as they cannot see their comments online. Our website does already make it clear that comments take some time to display. Any delays in displaying public comments on the website does not affect the fairness of the consultation process. Residents do not need to view others comments before deciding whether to comment on an application themselves or before they reach a view about how they personally feel they would be impacted by a proposal. The Council do not need residents to 'build upon points raised by others' as the purpose of the consultation period is to understand how each person feels they may be affected (or not).
- **Error 403 'blocked'** – This is an infrequent issue whereby some users cannot access the Public Access platform. This is because the Council's firewall blocks the user as it perceives that their IP address could be a threat. Where this occurs and users make us aware of the issue, we ask for the date and time of the error, as well as their IP address which then allows Digital Services to attempt to manually unblock their address.

4.2. Plans, drawings and supporting documents often contain detailed information necessary to understand a development proposal. If documents cannot be viewed or downloaded, members of the public may find it difficult to:

- Understand what development is proposed.
- Assess the potential impact on their property or local area.
- Submit informed representations within the consultation period.

4.3. This can lead to concerns that residents have been unable to participate fully in the planning process.

4.4. When documents cannot be accessed online, residents frequently contact the Council for assistance. This results in:

- Increased telephone enquiries.
- Additional email correspondence.
- Requests for documents to be supplied by alternative means.
- Increased officer time spent providing support and responding to complaints.

4.5. This places additional pressure on Planning and Customer Services officers.

4.6. The planning system relies on openness and transparency. Difficulties accessing application documents can undermine public confidence in the planning process, particularly where residents perceive that information is unavailable or difficult to obtain.

4.7. Although planning applications remain validly advertised through statutory publicity arrangements, system issues can affect the ease with which information is accessed.

4.8. Public Access is used not only by residents but also by:

- Town and Parish Councils.
- Statutory consultees.
- Members.
- Applicants and agents.
- Prospective purchasers and solicitors (through Local Land Charges).
- Community groups.

4.9. Where plans cannot be viewed efficiently, consultees often require additional time to review proposals and seek information directly from officers.

4.10. The limitations of the current Public Access system are also a significant source of frustration for Planning Service officers and make it difficult for them to work efficiently. The internal Document Management System used by the Planning Service uses the same W360 (Civica) software as the Public Access document viewer, so officers frequently face delays when opening drawings and documents. Files may fail to display even after a delay, requiring officers to close and restart the software. This hinders effective working in a busy, already resource-constrained service. Officers also spend considerable time helping the public, Members and consultees access drawings and documents.

5. Actions to Date

5.1. To date, Officers have taken several steps with a view to resolving the issues or improve the service available. These have included:

- Public Access upgrades where they have been available from the third-party software developers.
- Rasing and escalating issues with Civica.
- Guidance for Officers on how to make plans and documents available in alternative formats.
- Double entry of planning application plans and documents so that they appear through Public Access as well as being available on SharePoint.
- Links to application documents in SharePoint published on Public Access.
- Emailed SharePoint links where requested.
- Proactive emailing of SharePoint links to statutory consultees (such as the Local Highway Authority and Lead Local Flood Authority).
- New documents and drawings to be imported as PDFs. This may make retrieval by Public Access quicker. As a recent action, we are yet to see whether this has a meaningful impact.
- Internal monitoring and escalation of recurring issues.
- Collaboration with Maldon District Council to ascertain how their systems operate.

6. Impact of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

6.1. The Government's recent decision to pause LGR and withdraw the Essex proposal introduces uncertainty regarding the future structure of local government and the long-term ICT requirements of planning services. Any future unitary authority may seek to rationalise systems across a wider geographic area and adopt common software platforms to support service integration and efficiency.

6.2. At present, there is no confirmed outcome, implementation date or agreed approach to planning system harmonisation. As a result, it is not possible to determine whether any replacement Public Access or document management system procured by the Council would ultimately be retained, replaced or integrated into a wider solution as part of a future unitary authority.

6.3. That said, the current issues experienced with Workflow 360 (Civica) and the associated impact on residents, consultees, Members and officers are ongoing and significant. Delaying investment solely because of potential future LGR arrangements would mean that the Council would continue to operate with a system that generates complaints, requires resource-intensive workarounds and presents operational risks.

6.4. Even if LGR leads to the adoption of a different planning system in the future, it is likely that the substantial costs associated with data migration from Workflow 360 would still need to be incurred. Procuring an improved system now may therefore provide service benefits in the intervening period whilst also facilitating a future migration from a more modern and supportable platform.

6.5. Officers are maintaining dialogue with neighbouring Essex authorities and will seek opportunities to collaborate on future procurement and system design where appropriate. Any procurement exercise would take account of emerging LGR proposals to ensure that specifications, contracts and implementation arrangements retain sufficient flexibility to accommodate future organisational change. Whilst LGR

is an important consideration, it does not remove the need to address the current service risks and limitations.

7. Work Currently Underway

7.1. Officers have continued to work with Civica to investigate and resolve the recurring issues affecting the Workflow 360 Public Access system. This has included the logging and escalation of issues and ongoing monitoring of system performance.

7.2. A significant amount of officer time is currently being devoted to responding to user complaints, troubleshooting access issues and implementing workarounds to ensure residents, consultees and other stakeholders can continue to view planning application information.

7.3. Officers are undertaking a review of alternative solutions available in the market, including engagement with other local authorities to understand their experiences of different planning software providers and document management systems, as well as a scheduled meeting with Open Digital Planning (supported by MHCLG) for advice.

7.4. Initial discussions have also taken place regarding the requirements for a future replacement system, including functionality, integration with back-office planning systems, document storage arrangements, accessibility requirements and opportunities to improve the customer experience.

7.5. Officers are assessing the financial, technical and operational implications of replacing the current system, including procurement options, implementation timescales and data migration requirements.

7.6. Officers are also monitoring developments relating to Local Government Reorganisation and maintaining dialogue with neighbouring authorities to ensure that any future system decisions remain compatible with emerging opportunities for collaboration and service alignment.

7.7. Whilst this work has improved understanding of the options available and dependencies, no immediate technical solution has been identified that would address the fundamental limitations of the current system without either significant investment or replacement of the existing platform.

8. Future Options and Dependencies

Option A - Defer Procurement Until LGR Arrangements Are Confirmed

8.1. This option would put on hold the procurement of any replacement software until LGR arrangements are confirmed. Whilst this would be beneficial in terms of aligning a system with other authorities this would delay a new system being implemented for, potentially, a significant period of time. During this time it would be anticipated that the issues currently experienced would be ongoing. There would also be an ongoing reliance on current ‘workarounds’ which are not the most efficient way of working.

Option B - Procure a Replacement System at the Earliest Opportunity

8.2. This option would address the current service issues in the shortest timeframe. Whilst a new system would take some time (~18 months) to procure and implement, in the long term this would secure an improved user experience for residents, consultees, Members and Officers. This option would also allow for a new system to be procured which fits the needs of Chelmsford City Council as a single authority.

8.3. This option would require significant financial investment. Data from the Workflow 360 (Civica) would need to be migrated to a new system. This aspect of the project in itself comes with a considerable financial cost. This drawback, however, would also apply to Option 1 as it is a fair assumption, given the issues highlighted, that merging authorities would not wish to use Workflow 360 (Civica).

8.4. This option also carries a disadvantage in that any future reconfiguration through LGR could mean that a future unitary authority may wish to use an alternative system. Should Option B be the preferred option, Officer's would ensure collaboration, so far as possible, with other neighbouring authorities.

Option C - Continue with Existing Systems and Incremental Improvements

8.5. Whilst this option has a low immediate cost, it would not resolve the issues that have been highlighted. Continuing with this option would give rise to further complaints, Local Government Ombudsman intervention, and potentially challenges to decisions made through the Judicial Review process. This risk is considered to be both realistic and severe. The workarounds implemented would mitigate some of this risk, but do not eliminate it. This option would not resolve the underlying limitations of the system and would likely require further maintenance in the future.

8.6. Any future decisions will be influenced by a number of factors, including:

- Budget availability.
- Staff and project resource capacity.
- Procurement requirements and timescales.
- Software supplier roadmaps.
- Digital infrastructure requirements.
- Outcomes and timescales associated with Local Government Reorganisation.
- Competing corporate priorities and transformation programmes.

9. Conclusion

9.1. Given the issues highlighted, the risk associated with the ongoing system, the resources needed to continue to respond to complaints and implement workarounds as well as the opportunity to collaborate with neighbouring authorities regardless of LGR arrangements, it is the view of the Planning Service and Digital Services that Option B (Procure a Replacement System at the Earliest Opportunity) is the most effective, sustainable and lowest-risk option for the Council. This would require significant investment at a time when overall budgetary pressures facing the Council are significant with competing priorities. However, from a technical and operational perspective, Option B represents the best long-term solution for the Council, providing the greatest assurance of service resilience and efficiency.

List of appendices:

None.

Background papers:

None.

Corporate Implications

Corporate Implication	Response
Legal/Constitutional	No action could risk a challenge through Judicial Review or escalation to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.
Financial	Any replacement system is likely to have a significant cost associated with it.
Potential impact on climate change and the environment	None.
Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030	None.
Personnel	None.
Risk Management	None.
Equality and Diversity	None.
Health and Safety	None.
Digital	See report. The report proposes a new digital solution for planning application documents.
Other	None.

Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as the report relates to an Inform & Debate session and does not propose a change in policy or procedure.

Consultees:

Digital Services

Planning Services

Management Team

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Statement of Community Involvement

Chelmsford City Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee

16 November 2026

Report on Decisions Taken Under Delegation to the Chief Executive

Report by:
Director of Connected Chelmsford

Officer Contact:
Freddey Banks-Ayres, Democratic and Electoral Services (Scrutiny) Officer, email: Freddey.banks-ayres@chelmsford.gov.uk, tel: 01245 606621

Purpose
To report on the decisions taken under delegation to the Chief Executive for the period 31 May 2026 to 5th November 2026.

Recommendations

That the Committee note the report.

Summary of Key Points

Five decisions were taken under delegation to the Chief Executive during the period 31 May 2026 to 5th November 2026. The summary of the decisions are attached as appendix 1 to this report.

1. Background

1.1 The Constitution of the Council includes, at Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions), details of matters on which the officers of the Council are authorised to take decisions. These are known as delegations to officers and among them is the following, which is delegated to the Chief Executive:

"Deal with any matter on grounds of urgency, following consultation with the Leader of the Council or the Chair and Vice Chair of the appropriate Committee in respect of non-executive matters.

1.2 The decisions taken by the Chief Executive under this delegation are recorded and notified to the public and members of the Council by publication on the Council's website. On 8 February 2010, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that a list of those decisions should also be brought to the Committee for information in June and November each year.

2. Conclusion

2.1. Members are asked to note the content of the report.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Decisions taken under delegation to the Chief Executive for the period 31 May 2026 to 5th November 2026.

Corporate Implications

Corporate Implication	Response
Legal/Constitutional	The Committee are required to be notified of urgent decisions.
Financial	None
Potential impact on climate change and the environment	None
Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030	None
Personnel	None
Risk Management	None
Equality and Diversity	None
Health and Safety	None
Digital	None
Other	None

Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required as this is a standing report does not propose a change in policy or procedure.

Consultees:

Director of Connected Chelmsford

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

None.

DECISION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATION TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Subject:

Disposal of 109 Waterhouse Lane, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 2RY

Date of Decision:

3rd June 2026

Decision Number:

3/2026

Background:

The Council acquired 109 Waterhouse Lane in 2017, since then, the asset has generated a consistent income stream, with a current rental income of £225,232 +VAT per annum. At the time of purchase, interest rates were low, enabling the Council to secure relatively strong investment return compared to other asset classes. Since then, the market has changed significantly, and it is not anticipated that borrowing conditions or yields will return to those levels in the short to medium term.

The Council agreed a reversionary lease with the tenant in October 2020 extending the lease to a term of 25 years, expiring on 30th September 2045. The long length of the unexpired term provides a secure and long-term income stream, which helps to support the agreed sale price. The existing lease also puts the Council in a strong position when negotiating, as there is no immediate re-letting or vacancy risk associated with the property.

At present, the property is operated as a petrol filling station. There is increasing uncertainty surrounding the long-term viability of such assets due to the transition across the globe towards electric vehicles and alternative fuels. This represents a potential future risk to both income security and capital value, which supports the rationale for disposal.

Analysis of comparable investment transactions from across the UK has been used to inform this sale. The comparables obtained demonstrated yield levels broadly consistent with 109 Waterhouse Lane, with evidence typically falling within the 5% to 6.5% range. Notably, the sale of Rayne Road Service Station, Braintree, which transacted at a net initial yield of approximately 6.5%, provides strong regional specific evidence. This indicates that the yield achieved for 109 Waterhouse Lane is strong given market conditions, reflecting a pricing level consistent with the comparable evidence obtained.

Urgency powers are sought due to the time-sensitive nature of the proposed disposal. A sale has been agreed with the current tenant, Rontec Properties Limited, for the acquisition of the freehold interest. The purchaser is in a unique position as the occupational tenant, and there is a risk that delay could result in withdrawal from the transaction. Based on available market comparables and the income of the property, Officers are satisfied that the agreed price represents best consideration reasonably obtainable. The disposal will also enable the Council to release capital tied up in the asset, allowing reinvestment to support wider corporate and financial objectives.

Supporting Information:

The Leader of the Council was consulted before making this decision and had no objection to it.

DECISION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATION TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Subject:

Disposal of Land at the Odeon Cinema, The Meadows, Chelmsford CM2 6FD

Date of Decision:

15th June 2026

Decision Number:

4/2026

Background:

The ownership of the Odeon Cinema site is held within a complex, multi-layered lease structure. Chelmsford City Council holds the freehold interest in the land and in 1992 granted a 150-year headlease over The Meadows estate (expiring in 2142), the headlease is now assigned to Dominus (in administration). Beneath this sits an intermediate underlease interest held by LMP Green Park Cinemas Ltd, with the property itself occupied by Odeon Cinemas under a commercial occupational lease.

Whilst the Odeon currently pay an annual rent, this income does not accrue to the Council due to the intervening leasehold interests. As a result, the Council's freehold interest is reversionary in nature, and the Council will receive no income from this property during the term of the lease. Without proceeding with a disposal, the Council would be unlikely to achieve any financial benefit from this part of the landholding until the expiry of the headlease in 2142. The proposed disposal therefore presents a rare opportunity to unlock value from an otherwise long-dated and non-income-producing asset.

This matter was approved by Cabinet in July 2019, however the transaction stalled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Urgency powers are sought due to the time-sensitive nature of the proposed transaction to align with the tenants financing arrangements. Should the prospective purchaser, LMP Green Park Cinemas Ltd, withdraw from the deal, it is considered unlikely that the Council would be able to secure a disposal of this interest to an alternative party in the short term. Chelmsford City Council has been approached by LMP Green Park Cinemas Ltd with a proposal to acquire the freehold interest, and terms have been agreed in conjunction with the leaseholder..

Independent valuation advice prepared by Fenn Wright LLP supports the agreed price.. This advice has been informed by an analysis of comparable rental and investment transactions within the leisure sector.

Freehold leisure investment transactions considered as part of the valuation demonstrate yields typically in the region of 7.7% to 8.2%, with pricing heavily influenced by the strength of the tenant covenant, lease length, and certainty of income. Longer, secure income streams result in stronger values, whereas shorter or more uncertain income examples result in higher yields and lower capital values.

The valuation also highlights long leasehold transactions, where significantly higher yields (more than 16–26%) have been observed. These reflect the impact of diminishing lease terms and uncertainty over future income beyond lease expiry. This is particularly relevant in the case of the Odeon, where the occupational lease expires in 2041 (with a potential extension to 2051), after which there is uncertainty regarding future use, tenant demand, and rental levels.

The comparable evidence also demonstrates wider market caution toward large-format leisure assets, particularly cinemas, due to structural shifts in consumer behaviour, such as the growth of streaming services. This is reflected in the valuation by applying conservative assumptions to future rental performance and redevelopment potential.

It is therefore considered that the agreed sale price represents best consideration reasonably obtainable in the current market. It is recommended that authority is granted to dispose of the Council's freehold interest and authorise officers to progress with the immediate sale at the agreed consideration.

Supporting Information:

The Leader of the Council was consulted before making this decision and had no objection to it.

DECISION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATION TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Subject:

Support for Businesses Affected by the Highlands Farm Fire

Date of Decision:

31st July 2026

Decision Number:

5/2026

Background:

Following the fire and explosion at Highlands Farm, Chelmsford City Council is the lead authority for the response phase. This will give rise to costs, some of which may be recovered from insurers, while the remainder will not be recoverable.

The Council also needs to consider the 40+ businesses and associated jobs affected by the fire. Without urgent action, there is a risk that some may be lost permanently.

It is expected that up to £300,000 could be spent on grants for businesses that would be likely to close without Council support. The impact on employment and the wider community means this is the most appropriate way to support the local economy in the circumstances.

A sum of £350,000 was requested to support businesses and meet the Council's statutory costs. This amount may be revised as the position develops.

Further reports or approvals will be brought forward if required.

Supporting Information:

The Leader of the Council was consulted before making this decision and had no objection to it.

DECISION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATION TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Subject:

Regularisation of Planning Committee Decision – Land South of Maldon Road Danbury 24/01786/OUT

Date of Decision:

12th August 2026

Decision Number:

6/2026

Background:

The above planning application was considered by Planning Committee on 4 November 2025. The application sought approval for the erection of up to 72 dwellings with associated infrastructure and open space. Access being sought. Appearance, layout, landscaping and scale reserved.

The Committee resolved that the application be approved, subject to the completion of a S106 agreement together with compliance with the conditions detailed in the report and green sheet, the details of those items and any variations that may be considered necessary and appropriate to be delegated to the Director of Sustainable Communities (including any officer within the Directorate holding an appropriate onward delegation from him) in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Planning Committee.

However, the Vice Chair was not present at the meeting, and no substitute Vice Chair was appointed by the Committee. Following the resolution to grant permission in November 2025, as part of the negotiation of the S106 legal agreement, several necessary and appropriate variations to the proposals have now been agreed. These matters are not considered material which would affect the decision, rather updates and matters of clarification/improvements.

As such the S106 legal agreement is now agreed by all parties, been circulated for engrossments and is now ready to sign. However, based on the original recommendation, Planning Committee would need to consider the application again. The earliest date being September 2026, as the original recommendation required consultation with Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee. This would cause further delay to the process of issuing the planning permission.

The Chair of Planning Committee has been consulted by the Assistant Director of Planning and Place Making on the variations to the planning application and has not raised objection to the variations.

Due to urgency to sign the S106 legal agreement, the Chief Executive was requested to agree a modification to the Planning Committee's agreed delegation to read …'in consultation with the Chair and / or Vice Chair of the Planning Committee.'

Supporting Information:

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Planning Committee were consulted before making this decision and had no objection to it.

DECISION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATION TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Subject:

Cadent Final Account – Gas Pressure Reduction System

Date of Decision:

7th October 2026

Decision Number:

7/2026

Background:

Description of exempt information

Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) Public interest statement: It is not in the public interest to release details of this decision at present, on the grounds that the decision contains information that is commercially sensitive and to place the information in the public realm will be detrimental to the negotiations to be undertaken by the Council.

CCC are in contract with Cadent to relocate the Gas Pressure Reduction System (GPRS) at Chelmer Waterside to enable the development of the site for residential housing. For the construction elements of the works Cadent commissioned Morrisons Energy Services (MES). The approved budget for the GPRS was £14.57m.

The construction elements of the works were severely delayed due to flooding events due to bad weather. MES submitted compensation event claims to Cadent, during the course of the contract Cadent approved an additional £4.28m, largely as a result of the compensation event claims bringing the budget for the works to £19.1m. As the works are now due to complete a further claim was made.

Evidence of the review and justification of an additional cost of £1.2m was provided to CCC on 28th September 2026.Due to underspends on other infrastructure at Chelmer Waterside and £1.5m of land remediation not being carried out, the overall budget with the additional £1.2m will be £0.9m under the £43m capital budget approved for infrastructure works at Chelmer Waterside.

The Chief Executive agreed to spend up to an additional £1.2m as a full and final settlement for the Gas Pressure Reduction System (GPRS), to assist with enabling works to the Chelmer Waterside site.

Supporting Information:

The Mayor was consulted before making this decision and had no objection to it.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Work Programme

Subject	Author
Standing Items	
Updates from representatives on Outside Bodies	Freddey Banks-Ayres Democratic Services Officer
16 November 2026	
Performance Review Items	
Cabinet Portfolio Update	Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford
Issues affecting the supply of Affordable Housing in Chelmsford - Inform and Debate	Paul Gayler Strategic Housing Services Manager Jeremy Potter Assistant Director – Planning and Place Shaping
Planning Application Consultation Portal - Inform and Debate	Kirsty Dougal Planning Services Manager (Development Management) Michael Sage Digital Services Manager
Standing Items	
Report on Decisions Taken Under Delegation to the Chief Executive	Freddey Banks-Ayres Democratic Services Officer

8 February 2027	
Performance Review Items	
Cabinet Portfolio Update	Cabinet Member for a Greener Chelmsford Cabinet Member for Planning and Place Shaping
Annual Presentation by Safer Chelmsford Partnership and Essex Police	Spencer Clarke Public Protection Manager Chief Inspector, Essex Police
Standing Items	
Report on Decisions Taken Under Delegation to the Chief Executive	Freddey Banks-Ayres Democratic Services Officer
15 March 2027	
Performance Review Items	
Cabinet Portfolio Updates	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure
Standing Items	
Updates from representatives on Outside Bodies	Freddey Banks-Ayres Democratic Services Officer