Chelmsford Local Plan Review 2022 – 2041

Examination

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HEARING SESSION AGENDA

Wednesday 18 November 2026 9.30 am

MATTER 6 - Growth Area 3

Strategic Growth Site Policy Site 16a – East Chelmford Garden Community (Hammonds Farm)

Strategic Growth Site Policy Site 16b – Land adjacent to A12 Junction 18 Employment Area

Inspectors' openings and introductions

Site 16a

1.1 Was Site 16a selected through a robust and consistent assessment of reasonable alternatives?

In particular:

- Were reasonable alternatives, including Chatham Green and West/North-West Chelmsford, assessed on a comparable basis?
- How should the earlier assessment of Hammonds Farm as relatively poorly accessible site be reconciled with its subsequent selection, which assumes substantial new sustainable transport infrastructure?
- Does the evidence demonstrate that Site 16a is preferable to the reasonable alternatives considered?

1.2 Is there sufficient evidence at this stage to demonstrate that the proposed scale of development can be satisfactorily accommodated on Site 16a?

In particular:

- What weight can be placed on the emerging masterplan where it has not yet been approved?
- Can the site accommodate the housing, employment, education, green infrastructure, transport and other policy requirements without unacceptable conflicts?
- Are any elements of the policy dependent upon matters which remain unresolved through masterplanning?

1.3 Does the transport evidence demonstrate that development of Site 16a can take place without unacceptable effects on the strategic and local highway networks?

In particular:

- Are the assumptions and modelling relating to Junctions 18 and 19, the A12 and A414 sufficiently robust?
- What are the implications of the cancellation of the A12 widening scheme?
- What additional mitigation at Junctions 18 and/or 19 is required, and is it sufficiently defined and deliverable?
- Would unacceptable displacement of traffic onto routes through Danbury, Sandon, Little Baddow or other local roads occur?

1.4 Is the requirement to enable a 60% active and sustainable travel share on Site 16a realistic and sufficiently evidenced?

In particular:

- What measures are necessary to achieve it?
- Are the proposed A12 bridge, bus connections, active travel routes and links to Beaulieu Park Station capable of achieving the assumed modal shift?
- To what extent does the transport case for Site 16a depend upon achieving 60%?
- What would be the consequences for highway capacity and the allocation if that level were not achieved?

1.5 Does the evidence demonstrate that Site 16a is appropriate in flood-risk terms?

In particular:

- Has the sequential approach adequately considered reasonable alternatives?

- Can development and its essential infrastructure be made safe over its lifetime?
- Is the proposed River Chelmer crossing technically feasible without increasing flood risk elsewhere?
- Would any difficulty in delivering that crossing affect the wider access and transport strategy?

1.6 Can development of the scale proposed be accommodated without unacceptable harm to landscape character, heritage assets and biodiversity?

In particular:

- Is the proposed approach to landscape mitigation sufficient given the site's identified sensitivity?
- Are the proposed safeguards for the Chelmer Valley, listed buildings, Conservation Areas and other heritage assets effective?
- Are the proposed landscape corridors and buffers, particularly around Grace's Walk, justified?
- Can the biodiversity requirements be achieved alongside the proposed development capacity?

1.7 Is there sufficient certainty that the critical infrastructure required for Site 16a can be funded and delivered when needed?

In particular:

- Which infrastructure items are genuinely critical to the commencement and subsequent phases of development?
- Are their costs, funding sources and delivery mechanisms sufficiently established?
- Are any unresolved infrastructure requirements capable of materially affecting the timing or scale of development?

1.8 Is the housing trajectory for Site 16a realistic?

In particular:

- What must be completed before the first dwellings can be occupied?
- Is there sufficient evidence to support the anticipated build-out thereafter?
- What would be the implications for the Plan's housing strategy if delivery were materially delayed?

1.9 Are the requirements for two Gypsy and Traveller sites and a Travelling Showpeople site justified and deliverable as part of Site 16a?

In particular:

- should the policy provide flexibility for the Travelling Showpeople provision to be made off-site?

1.10 Would development result in unacceptable sterilisation of safeguarded mineral resources, and is this matter sufficiently resolved at allocation stage?

1.11 Taking the above matters together, is Site 16a justified, effective and deliverable?

1.12 Are main modifications necessary for Strategic Growth Site Policy 16a to be sound?

Site 16b

1.13 Is the proposed scale and location of employment development on Site 16b justified, having regard to the need for employment land and the reasonable alternatives?

1.14 Does the transport evidence demonstrate that Site 16b can be developed without unacceptable effects on the strategic and local highway networks, particularly A12 Junctions 18 and 19?

In particular:

- What mitigation is required, and is it sufficiently defined and deliverable?

1.15 Would Site 16b be sufficiently accessible by sustainable modes of transport, and are the necessary public transport, walking and cycling connections deliverable?

1.16 Can the proposed development be accommodated without unacceptable effects on landscape and heritage, biodiversity and green infrastructure, flood risk, pollution and necessary infrastructure?

1.17 Would development result in unacceptable sterilisation of safeguarded mineral resources, and is this matter sufficiently resolved at allocation stage?

1,18 Are the site-specific requirements and mitigation measures sufficiently clear, justified and deliverable, and are any main modifications necessary for Strategic Growth Site Policy 16b to be sound?