

INF003

Chelmsford City Council Housing Scenario Test – Early Years and Childcare December 2024

Background

Essex County Council's (ECC) Early Years and Childcare team has been working with Chelmsford City Council (CCC) to assist in the preparation of the Review of the Local Plan to ensure sufficient Early Years and Childcare (EYCC) places are provided, arising from new development, over the Plan period. This Scenario Test is based on CCC's Pre-Submission Local Plan and has been carried out in accordance with ECC's [Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions \(Revised 2024\)](#).

The scenario provided by Chelmsford City Council includes a total of 21,333 homes¹. In assessing the future demand for childcare places the capacity from sites with planning permission are removed as they have already been considered as part of the planning application process. Consequently, the scenario for testing includes 18,288 homes, of which some 15,131 are qualifying units, comprising of around 88% qualifying houses and 12% qualifying flats (largely within the Chelmsford Urban Area). The sites were matched to the relevant ward using ArcGIS. Phasing information was not used, as this test considers the full impact of growth by the end of the emerging Local Plan period of 2041. However, the full capacity of both Chelmsford Garden Community (6,250 homes) and East Chelmsford Garden Community (Hammonds Farm) (4,500 homes) have been tested to identify their full requirements. These are sites SGS6 and SGS16a respectively in the Pre-Submission Local Plan. Further assessment will be undertaken to support individual planning applications once the detailed housing mix has been determined by the developer.

ECC Responsibilities

Under the Childcare Act 2006, Essex County Council (ECC) must ensure that there is sufficient high quality and accessible early years and childcare places within the local area. Section 6 of the Act defines 'sufficient childcare' as sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in the area who require childcare in order to enable them to take up, or remain in, work or undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work. Unlike education, parents can choose to access childcare away from their home area, for example near to a place of work or training.

Some children are entitled to childcare places funded by Government, namely Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE). These entitlements are for 38 weeks per year or 570 hours stretched across up to 52 weeks.

- *Children aged 2 whose families receive certain benefits (including low-income families in receipt of in- work benefits), or those who meet additional non-economic criteria, are*

¹ Taken from the April 2024 Housing Site Schedule, but excluding student and older persons units, and any completions since that date to avoid double counting.

entitled to up to 15 hours per week. Nationally, about 40% of two-year-olds are entitled to this offer. In Essex in 2022, around 21% of two-year-olds are entitled to this offer.

- All children aged 3 & 4 are entitled to up to 15 hours per week until they start reception class in school.*
- Children aged 3 & 4 where both parents are working, or from lone parent families where that parent is working, are entitled to up to an additional 15 hours (30 hours) per week until they start reception class in school. This funding began in September 2017.*
- Children aged over 9 months - 3 years where both parents are working, or from lone parent families where that parent is working, are entitled to up 15 hours per week. This funding began to be rolled out in April 2024 and is due to expand further in September 2025.*

Early Years and Childcare provision includes full day care, pre-schools, child minders, school run early years provision (2- to 5-year-olds), and 'wrap around care' (Breakfast, After school and Holiday clubs). This multiplicity of provision, working in partnership with the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sectors, enables a wide range of childcare options to be made available.

Assessment

The scenario has been assessed using ECC's standard child yield factor as set out in the [ECC Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions \(Revised 2024\)](#).

| | Qualifying House | Qualifying Flat |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Child Yield Factor | 0.09 | 0.045 |

ECC publishes a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, which details where places are required across the county. These assessments give a snapshot of different providers in an area and the number of places that are filled. It should be noted that unfilled places at one type of provider cannot be taken as evidence that provision in an area is sufficient. The work patterns and incomes of parents are all different and so are their childcare needs.

All residential developments of 20 or more dwellings that have been allocated in the adopted Local Plan, or are proposed as new site allocations in the Review of the Local Plan, have been assessed to identify the demand for childcare places over the plan period. ECC does not seek a developer contribution to those sites of less than 20 dwellings unless their co-location with other sites necessitates a holistic look at their cumulative impact. The Early Years and Childcare Service only require developer contributions where there is a current or forecast lack of capacity in the immediate area of the proposed development.

ECC has given due consideration to the requirements set out on those Strategic Sites in the adopted Local Plan, which are carried forward to the Review of the Local Plan, which have gained planning permission, and those which are subject to the determination of submitted planning applications to which ECC has identified early years and childcare requirements.

When estimating the number of children that a new housing development will generate and that will require additional provision (child yield), account has been taken of the number of houses and flats that are suitable to accommodate children. For Early Years and Childcare

contribution purposes, houses are all dwellings with two or more floors (including chalet style bungalows with an attic room), and with sole access to private outdoor space. Maisonettes, single storey bungalows and trailers/caravans are treated as flats whilst one-bedroom units and dwellings such as student and elderly accommodation, are excluded from the calculation. It should be noted that 100% affordable housing sites will be expected to contribute using the same criteria.

Where demand is of such a scale, a new facility will be sought, either co-located with a new primary school or as a stand-alone facility along with the land. For a standard 56 place day nursery, around 0.13 ha of land is required to be provided by the developer. The process for agreeing a suitable piece of land is explained in 'Section 4' of the Developers' Guide. Department for Education (DfE) Guidance 'Securing Developer Contributions for Education' (Aug 2023) states that all new primary schools should be co-located with new nursery provision where there is capacity to do so. In addition, the Education and Skills Funding Agency currently looks to establish two form entry primary schools (420 places), to ensure financial viability. ECC supports this approach and, thereby, when considering new primary school sites an area of 2.1 hectares will usually be sought as a minimum. This is in line with DfE guidance set out in [Building Bulletin 103](#) and this land size provides space for commensurate Early Years and Childcare provision.

Any new early years and childcare facility could be built by ECC, a developer or one or more early years and childcare providers. However, it is important that any provider is agreed by ECC to ensure the required type and standard of provision is delivered in the locality. ECC has a robust process in place to allow early years and childcare providers to apply for capital funding and/or lease opportunities to create new early years and childcare places to meet the increased demand generated by developments.

Scenario test results

| | Total | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Growth Area | Capacity | Qualifying | Qualifying | EYCC |
| (by Ward/Parish) | Homes | Houses | Flats | Places |
| | | | | |
| Moulsham and Central | 1911 | 40 | 1087 | 53 |
| Patching Hall | 75 | 0 | 66 | 3 |
| Marconi | 551 | 10 | 337 | 16 |
| St. Andrews | 197 | 0 | 171 | 8 |
| Waterhouse Farm | 310 | 68 | 154 | 13 |
| | | | | |
| <i>Chelmsford Urban Area</i> | 3044 | 118 | 1815 | 93 |
| | | | | |
| Writtle | 905 | 797 | 0 | 72 |
| Great Baddow East | 360 | 303 | 2 | 27 |
| Little Baddow, Danbury and Sandon | 174 | 140 | 27 | 14 |

| | | | | |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Growth Area 1 - Central and Urban Chelmsford</i> | <i>4483</i> | <i>1358</i> | <i>1844</i> | <i>206</i> |
| | | | | |
| Chelmsford Garden Community | 6250* | 5500 | 0 | 495 |
| Boreham and The Leighs | 1100 | 748 | 0 | 67 |
| Broomfield and The Walthams | 532 | 469 | 0 | 43 |
| <i>Growth Area 2 - North Chelmsford</i> | <i>7882</i> | <i>6717</i> | <i>0</i> | <i>605</i> |
| | | | | |
| East Chelmsford Garden Community (Hammonds Farm) | 4500** | 3960 | 0 | 356 |
| South Woodham-Elmwood and Woodville Ward | 1220 | 1074 | 0 | 97 |
| Bicknacre and East and West Hanningfield Ward | 103 | 62 | 28 | 6 |
| Danbury | 100 | 88 | 0 | 8 |
| <i>Growth Area 3 - South and East Chelmsford</i> | <i>5923</i> | <i>5184</i> | <i>28</i> | <i>467</i> |
| | | | | |
| <i>Growth Area 1,2 and 3</i> | <i>18288</i> | <i>13259</i> | <i>1872</i> | <i>1278</i> |

* *Chelmsford Garden Community has been tested with its full allocation, including that to be delivered beyond the plan period of 2041.*

** *East Chelmsford Garden Community (Hammonds Farm) has been tested with its full allocation, including that to be delivered beyond the plan period of 2041.*

The Qualifying houses and flats generate the demand for around 1, 280 additional early years and childcare places. This assessment identifies the site locations where new early years and childcare nurseries will be required, either as part of a new secondary school, co-located with a primary school or as stand-alone nurseries. The demand is generally generated by the Strategic Site allocations themselves, but in some circumstances a new nursery will serve the demand generated by proposed cumulative demand in the locality.

Growth Area 1 - Central and Urban Chelmsford

ECC consider that there will be sufficient capacity to accommodate the demand generated by the identified growth in the Chelmsford Urban Area, namely around 93 places. This is largely because two new nurseries have opened in 2024, and an additional nursery later in 2024 by private providers, along with the allocated site at Lockside (Policy SGS 1a – Site CW1c).

The remainder of the growth amounting to some 113 places will be accommodated through requirements identified in the adopted Local Plan and approved masterplans on sites carried over in this Plan, namely at West Chelmsford (Policy SGS 2 - as part of a co-located new primary school) and at East Chelmsford (Policy SGS 3b), adjacent to the Sandon Park and Ride, as a 56 place stand-alone facility.

Growth Area 2 - North Chelmsford

ECC consider that the 605 places generated in this Growth Area will be accommodated through the Strategic Growth Sites carried over from the adopted Local Plan which have been

subject to approved masterplans, granted planning permission or presently awaiting the determination of planning applications. North Broomfield (Policy SGS 8) has been granted planning permission and will provide a 56 place stand-alone nursery. Great Leighs (Policy SGS 7a) will provide for a new co-located 56 place nursery alongside the new primary school and will satisfy the demand from additional sites around Great Leighs. Chelmsford Garden Community (Policy SGS 6) will generate the need for 495 places and will provide 8 early years and childcare nurseries, one at the all-through secondary school, three co-located with new primary schools and four 56 place stand-alone nurseries. A more detailed assessment has been undertaken regarding the dwelling mix and demographic population, as part of the outline planning applications, which has informed the requirements for this policy, rather than the overall assumptions of this assessment.

Growth Area 3 - South and East Chelmsford

ECC consider that the 467 places generated in this Growth Area will be accommodated through the Strategic Growth Site at North of South Woodham Ferrers (SGS 10) carried over from the adopted Local Plan, with an approved masterplan and resolution to grant planning permission subject to a S106 Agreement, and the new East Chelmsford Garden Community (Hammonds Farm) (Policy SGS 16a).

Land North of South Woodham Ferrers development will generate significant demand for places, but this is forecast to be balanced by falling numbers in the base population. Should a new school be required, land has been allocated and will include a co-located 56 place nursery plus an additional 56 place stand-alone nursery. If the new primary school no longer becomes necessary the site will still be required to provide two 56 place stand-alone nurseries.

The new East Chelmsford Garden Community (SGS16a) will generate some 356 places, which will be accommodated on land as part of the new secondary school, two co-located with new primary schools and three 56 place stand-alone nurseries. These will be required to be identified as part of future masterplanning of the site.

Early Years and Childcare Land Allocations

| Growth Area | Location/Site | Education Land* and EYCC requirement |
|---------------|---|---|
| Growth Area 1 | Chelmsford Urban Area Lockside, Navigation Road (Policy SGS 1a – Site CW1c) | 0.13 ha for a 56 place stand-alone early years and childcare nursery |
| | West Chelmsford (Policy SGS 2) | 2.1ha for primary and a co-located 56 place early years and childcare nursery located |
| | East Chelmsford (Policy SGS 3b) | 0.13 ha for a 56 place stand-alone early years and childcare nursery |
| Growth Area 2 | Great Leighs - Moulsham Hall (Policy SGS 7a) | 2.1ha for primary and a co-located 56 place early years and childcare nursery |

| | | |
|---------------|---|---|
| | Chelmsford Garden Community (Policy SGS 6) | 1 x 56 place early years and childcare as part of the all through secondary school 3 X 2.1ha for primary and a co-located 56 place early years and childcare nursery 4 x 0.13 ha for a 56 place stand-alone early years and childcare nursery |
| | North Broomfield (Policy SGS 8) | 0.13 ha for a 56 place stand-alone early years and childcare nursery |
| Growth Area 3 | East Chelmsford Garden Community - Hammonds Farm (SGS Policy 16a) | 1 x 56 place early years and childcare as part of the secondary school 2 X 2.1ha for primary and a co-located 56 place early years and childcare nursery 3 x 0.13 ha for a 56 place stand-alone early years and childcare nursery |
| | Land North of South Woodham Ferrers (Policy SGS 10) | 2.1ha for potential primary and a co-located 56 place early years and childcare nursery and a 56 place stand-alone nursery OR 2 new 56 place stand-alone nurseries each on 0.13 ha |

* Where relevant, Education requirements are included as EYCC should be co-located with these. The calculation for education requirements can be found in the Chelmsford City Council Housing Scenario Test – Primary and Secondary Education (ECC December 2024).

Key Points

- The impact of the development set out in the scenario, on early years and childcare provision, can be mitigated through the allocation of the land for early years and childcare, either co-located with primary and secondary school use (set out above), a stand-alone nursery and planning obligations (set out the ECC [Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions \(Revised 2024\)](#)).
- Further assessment will be undertaken to support individual planning applications once the detailed housing mix has been determined by the developer.
- ECC will need to closely monitor capacity given the implications arising from the new access to childcare, as its full implications are not yet fully known. Any update to the ECC [Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions \(Revised 2024\)](#) will seek to review the child yields presently incorporated in order to ensure land is allocated and developer contributions secured to accommodate an additional demand.

Prepared by Essex County Council on behalf of Chelmsford City Council
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