



SOCG 011
Chelmsford Local Plan
Statement of Common Ground
with Rochford District Council
February 2026

Statement of Common Ground

Chelmsford City Council and Rochford District Council

1. Introduction

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

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

This Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) has been prepared to assist the examination of the Local Plan which comprises the Pre-Submission Plan combined with the site allocations and consequential changes in the Additional Sites Document. There are no areas of uncommon ground.

It establishes areas of agreement between Rochford District Council (RDC) and CCC in relation to RDC's representations on the Pre-Submission Plan.

The consultation responses alongside collected evidence and national planning policy and guidance have been used to develop the Local Plan.

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

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

2. Strategic matters

The strategic matters of interest to RDC are:

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

Delivering homes

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

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

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

However, following the conclusion of the Pre-Submission Plan consultation several significant events have occurred. These include delays in strategic development housing sites coming forward and other housing sites predicted to be delivered later in the plan period which put into question whether CCC could demonstrate a 5 Year Housing Supply (5YHLS) on adoption of the review of the Chelmsford Local Plan. The adopted Chelmsford Local Plan also became more than five years old on 27 May 2025, so currently for

decision making CCC must use the full Government standard method housing need number (not 80%), which means it is currently unable to demonstrate a 5YHLS.

In response to the significant events above, the Council published the Additional Sites Document. This identifies 11 additional housing site allocations for inclusion within the Pre-Submission Plan and 3 expanded housing sites adding 1,297 dwellings to the five-year housing land supply on submission (Years 2 - 6), enabling a land supply of estimated 5.75 years to be demonstrated on submission. The additional sites also add 1,592 dwellings in total to the housing land supply.

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

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

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

Jobs and economy

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

The 2024 Employment Land Review (ELR) partial update reviewed the most up-to-date assumptions and data regarding future economic growth prospects for Chelmsford between 2022 and 2041. As a result, the Local Plan exceeds the recommended

minimum space requirements over the period to 2041. The Council will monitor employment development growth alongside housing delivery through subsequent reviews of the Local Plan to ensure that new employment space broadly matches the future growth of the resident workforce in Chelmsford.

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

Retail, leisure, and cultural development

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

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

Sustainable transport

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

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

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

Community infrastructure

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

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

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

Areas of Common Ground

RDC has been fully engaged and consulted at each stage of the Council's review of the adopted Local Plan. RDC made comments at the Pre-Submission Stage but no comments to the Additional Sites Document. However, during the process of preparing this SOCG in February 2026, RDC notes that the additional site proposed for allocation "Land to the East & North of Rettendon Place" comprises a significant development of 350 new homes adjacent to a significant transport corridor. RDC has no specific concerns over the soundness of the policy but would like to reiterate that the impacts of the proposed growth on shared infrastructure, on the A130, A132 and Rettendon Turnpike/Hawk Hill Roundabouts, but also beyond into the Rochford District, requires due consideration to be given to impacts of this additional site on the highway network. CCC note these comments and reiterate that the Local Plan transport modelling has considered cross boundary impacts. CCC will continue to engage with RDC on any cross-boundary shared infrastructure impacts as part of the Masterplan and Planning Application stages.

Local Plan

Consultation Document	Rep Number	Local Plan Reference	Summary of representation	Agreed resolution and any proposed modifications
Pre-Submission Plan	PSQ25-6194	Introduction	Duty to Co-operate requirements have been met. CCC should continue to positively and constructively engage on strategic cross-boundary issues particularly in	Noted. The consultation exceeded requirements set out in legislation and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. Effective and on-going joint working has and will continue to be undertaken

Consultation Document	Rep Number	Local Plan Reference	Summary of representation	Agreed resolution and any proposed modifications
			the context of infrastructure. RDC considers the plan sound and legally compliant.	where necessary. No modifications required to the plan.
Pre-Submission Plan	PSQ25-6194	Policy S6/Para. 6.1	<p>RDC is broadly supportive of this policy and CCC's commitment to meeting its identified housing and employment needs through-out the plan period.</p> <p>Support approach to meeting identified needs for additional Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation. Continued close and effective working on Gypsy and Traveller accommodation across Essex, through the Essex Planning Officers Association and other strategic planning groups is needed.</p>	Noted. Effective and on-going joint working has and will continue to be undertaken where necessary. No modifications required to the plan.
Pre-Submission Plan	PSQ25-6193	Policy S7	RDC supports the spatial strategy. CCC needs to consider the wider impacts of the planning growth on neighbouring authority areas, including Brentwood and Rochford Council. CCC should satisfy the Planning Inspectorate that it has considered all reasonable options, including the Green Belt.	Noted. The Council has considered the suitability of alternative development strategies and sites to accommodate development as part of the plan preparation process; and can meet its development requirements without needing to undertake a Green Belt review. This approach accords with the evidence base. No modifications required to the plan.

Consultation Document	Rep Number	Local Plan Reference	Summary of representation	Agreed resolution and any proposed modifications
Pre-Submission Plan	PSQ25-6196	Policy S16	<p>RDC is broadly supportive of the policy and the wider sustainable travel strategy. CCC need to ensure the impacts of growth on sustainable transport networks are carefully considered and mitigated. Successful delivery will require a joined-up and strategic approach.</p> <p>Improvements to active travel within Chelmsford City boundaries are considered beyond the Chelmsford's Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), which focuses largely on the urban area of Chelmsford but active travel has a place for both intra- and inter-borough journeys. CCC should align with ECC's County-wide LCWIP and emerging proposals in neighbouring districts and pursue opportunities for joint working.</p>	<p>Noted. Maximising opportunities for new and improved active and sustainable travel is a key requirement of many site allocation policies. This will include consideration of relevant strategic proposals in the Chelmsford LCWIP, Essex LCWIP, and any adjoining council LCWIPs at site masterplanning/ planning application stage. No modifications required to the plan.</p>
Pre-Submission Plan	PSQ25-6195	Strategic Growth Site 16b	<p>RDC has no specific concerns over the soundness of this policy. The delivery of this site must not place an undue burden on cross-boundary infrastructure and must be adequately supported by local infrastructure improvements,</p>	<p>Noted. The Local Plan transport modelling takes into account cross boundary impacts. This site now has planning permission, granted through an appeal, where the Inspector noted that the proposal, the mitigation and the modelling which supports it properly takes into account future growth in network demand and</p>

Consultation Document	Rep Number	Local Plan Reference	Summary of representation	Agreed resolution and any proposed modifications
			including enhanced North-South public transport and active travel infrastructure due to the additional pressure on the highway network created by this quantum of employment space.	usage, the adjacent Hammonds Farm (SGS16a) development proposals and other relevant future planned growth. No modifications required to the plan.

Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

IIA Document	Rep Number	IIA Reference	Summary of representation	Agreed resolution and any proposed modifications
Pre-submission	PSIIA-47	N/A	RDC acknowledges the IIA and makes no further comments	Noted. No modifications required to the Plan.

Areas without agreement

There are no areas of uncommon ground.

3. Governance and on-going cooperation

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

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

4. Signatories

Signed on behalf of Chelmsford City Council	Signed on behalf of Rochford District Council
<i>Jeremy Potter</i>	<i>Jonathan Quilter</i>
Jeremy Potter Spatial Planning Services Manager	Jonathan Quilter Corporate Manager – Strategic Planning
Date: 27/02/2026	Date: 27/02/2026

Appendix A – Map of Chelmsford City Council’s administrative area in context with its neighbouring districts and county councils.

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





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