Cabinet Agenda

Chelmsford City Council

14 July 2026 at 7pm

Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Chelmsford

Membership

Councillor S J Robinson (Chair and Leader)
Councillor J Lardge (Culture and Leisure and Deputy Leader)

and Councillors

Councillor C Davidson (Finance)
Councillor N Dudley (Health and Wellbeing)
Councillor K Franks (Fairer Chelmsford)
Councillor J Hawkins (Connected Chelmsford)
Councillor R Lee (Planning and Place-Shaping)
Councillor R Moore (Greener Chelmsford)

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

THE CABINET

14 July 2026

AGENDA

PART 1 – Items to be considered when the public are likely to be present

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

All Members 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.

3. Minutes and Decisions Called in

Minutes of meeting on 21 May 2026.

No items were called in.

4. Public Questions

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 Cabinet 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 at least 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.

5. Members' Questions

To receive any questions or statements from councillors not members of the Cabinet on matters for which the Cabinet is responsible.

6. Connected Chelmsford Item

6.1 Proposed Constitution Changes

7. Culture and Leisure Item

7.1 South Woodham Ferrers Leisure Centre Improvements

8. Finance Item

8.1 Treasury Management Outturn Report 2025-26

9. Planning and Place-Shaping Item

9.1 Adoption of the Revised Essex Coast Recreational disturbance and Avoidance Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)

10. 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 and which does not constitute a key decision.

11. Reports to Council

The officers will advise on those decisions of the Cabinet which must be the subject of recommendation to the Council.

PART 2 (Exempt Items)

To consider whether to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of the following matters, which contain exempt information within the category of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act indicated:

12. Greener Chelmsford Item

12.1 Proposed development of a new cemetery and crematorium

MINUTES OF

CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL CABINET

on 21 May 2026 at 7pm

Present:

Cabinet Members

Councillor S Robinson, Leader of the Council (Chair)
Councillor J Lardge, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure
Councillor C Davidson, Cabinet Member for Finance
Councillor N Dudley, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing
Councillor K Franks, Cabinet Member for a Fairer Chelmsford
Councillor R Lee, Cabinet Member for Planning and Place-Shaping
Councillor R Moore, Cabinet Member for a Greener Chelmsford

Cabinet Deputies

Councillor S Goldman, Deputy Cabinet Member for Cleaner Communities
Councillor T Sherlock, Deputy Cabinet Member for Economy and Sustainable Transport

Opposition Spokespersons

Councillors, G. Bonnett, S. Dobson, J. Jeapes, M. Steel, R. Whitehead and P. Wilson

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Hawkins, Raven, Sullivan and Thorpe-Apps.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members of the Cabinet were reminded to declare at the appropriate time any interests in any of the items of business on the meeting’s agenda.

None were raised.

3. Minutes and Decisions Called-in

The minutes of the meeting on 14 April 2025 were confirmed as a correct record. No decisions had been called in.

4. Public Questions

No public questions had been submitted for the meeting.

5. Members' Questions

No questions were asked at this point of the meeting.

6.1 Chelmsford Local Plan – Submission to Secretary of State for Independent Examination (Planning and Place-Shaping)

Declarations of interest:

None.

Summary:

The Cabinet were asked to consider the submission of the Chelmsford Local Plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination and to recommend it to Full Council.

Options:

1. To recommend the Local Plan and the relevant delegations to Full Council for approval.
2. To not recommend the Local Plan and the relevant delegations to Full Council for approval.

Preferred option and reasons:

The preferred option was to recommend the Local Plan and relevant delegations to Full Council for approval, to ensure that a Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination ahead of the relevant deadline.

Discussion:

The Cabinet Member highlighted the importance of having an up to date Local Plan, to prevent speculative and inadequate developments being proposed and that it allowed the Council to push for what was needed on developments, including housing targets and green initiatives. It was noted that all necessary bodies had been consulted with and that the Policy Board had recommended the plan to Cabinet for approval. The Cabinet Member acknowledged the hard work from officers, who had been working to different moving targets and deadlines throughout the process, but none the less had put forward a good plan that would stand up to scrutiny. In response to a question, it was confirmed that a specific call for sites had been made for Gypsy and Travelling Showperson sites, but that insufficient sites came forward to enable further allocations to be made in the Plan, and that was why windfall sites would be expected to make up the shortfall within the proposed plan period. It was also noted that it was still unknown how decisions on other sites, including the employment area at Junction 17 of the A12, might affect employment requirements as it would depend on the decision and its reasoning.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that;

1. Approval be sought to submit the Chelmsford Local Plan attached at Appendices 1 and 2 to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination in accordance with Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

2. Approval be sought to ask that the person appointed to carry out the Independent Examination recommends modifications to the Chelmsford Local Plan as part of the

Examination process, in accordance with Section 20(7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

3. Approval be sought for the Assistant Director – Planning and Place Shaping to be authorised, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member, to prepare all necessary documentation to support the submission of the Local Plan for Independent Examination.

4. Approval be sought for the Assistant Director – Planning and Place Shaping, relevant Council Officers and consultants to be authorised, to act on behalf of the Council at the Independent Examination in respect of the Chelmsford Local Plan including submitting written statements and making oral representations at the Hearing Sessions.

(7.01pm to 7.16pm)

6.2 Chelmsford Local Plan – Draft Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (Planning and Place-Shaping)

Declarations of interest:

None.

Summary:

The Cabinet considered a report which presented the Draft Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and were asked to approve it for adoption and to publish it before 30th June 2026. It was noted that further minor amendments had been made to align with updated evidence base documents and to correct typographical errors or provider greater clarity. It was also noted that to ensure guidance on the implementation of the new Local Plan in the form of a Planning Obligations SPD, adoption was required before 30th June 2026.

Options:

1. Approve the Draft Planning Obligations SPD for adoption and publication.
2. Approve the Draft Planning Obligations SPD with amendments for adoption and publication.
3. Not approve the Draft Planning Obligations SPD for adoption and publication.

Preferred option and reasons:

To approve the adoption of the Draft Planning Obligations SPD as set out in Appendix 3, to assist with the implementation of policies in the proposed new Local Plan and to meet the Government deadline of 30th June 2026.

RESOLVED that;

1. Cabinet approved the Planning Obligations SPD, as set out in Appendix 3, for publication before the 30 June 2026.

2. Authority be delegated to the Assistant Director – Planning and Place Shaping in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Place Making to make any necessary minor amendments to the Draft Planning Obligations SPD before adoption

(7.16pm to 7.18pm)

7. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

8. Reports to Council

Item 6.1 was subject of a recommendation to Full Council.

The meeting closed at 7.18pm

Chair

Chelmsford City Council Cabinet

14 July 2026

Proposed Changes to the Constitution

Report by:
Leader of the Council

Officer Contact:
Lorraine Browne, Legal & Democratic Services Manager and Monitoring Officer, 01245 606560, lorraine.browne@chelmsford.gov.uk

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Purpose

To consider proposed changes to the constitution as set out in Appendices 1-2, the detail of which are set out in the report.

Options

1. To recommend to Council that the changes be made
2. To not recommend to Council that the changes are made

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Cabinet recommends to Council that the proposed changes set out in Appendices 1-2 of the report are made to the constitution.

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1. Background

1.1. The Council's Constitution is reviewed regularly and at least annually to ensure that it remains complete, up to date and reflects current practice and legislation. Reviews are normally initiated by officers although can be requested by members. Any recommendations are submitted in the first instance to the Constitutional Working Group. Its recommendations are passed to the Governance Committee, the Cabinet and Full Council which takes the decision whether to approve the changes or not.

1.2. The proposed changes to the employee Code of Conduct can be found at appendix 1 (see paragraphs 7.1, 8.2, 8.3, 9.3, 9.5, 10 & 13.3) and have arisen due to officer register of interests and declarations now being made online in a similar way to city councillors. The proposed changes to the Mayoralty Rules can be found in Appendix 2 (see paragraphs 5.4.7.3, 5.4.7.4 & 5.4.10.2) have arisen from changes in day-to-day practice.

1.3. The proposals from the annual review of the constitution relating to the Mayoralty Rules have been considered by the Mayoral Working Group which supports the proposals. Both sets of proposed changes have also been considered by the Constitutional Working Group which supports proposals. Governance Committee considered the proposals on 24th June 2026 and also supports the proposals.

2. Conclusion

2.1. Cabinet is asked to consider whether to recommend the amendments to the Constitution set out in Appendices 1-2 before final decision by Full Council.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Employee Code of Conduct

Appendix 2 – Mayoralty Rules

Background papers:

None

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: These are set out in the report. Cabinet is a consultee in relation to any changes to the constitution.

Financial: None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: None

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees:

Constitution Working Group

Mayoral Working Group

Governance Committee

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

Constitution

Chelmsford City Council

Human Resources

Code of Conduct for Employees/Workers

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*references to employees also includes workers

Chelmsford City Council

Code of conduct for employees/workers

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~~**Appendix 1 Registration of Officer interests**~~

*references to employees also includes workers

1. Introduction

1.1. Application

This Code of Conduct applies to all Chelmsford City Council employees* and workers irrespective of the job that they do or the grade that they are on.

1.2 Principles of public life

The 7 principles of public life apply to anyone who works as a public office holder. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life

These principles underpin the Council's policies, procedures and processes set out in this Code of Conduct and elsewhere.

This includes people who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in:

- the civil service
- local government
- the police
- the courts and probation services
- non-departmental public bodies
- health, education, social and care services

The principles also apply to all those in other sectors that deliver public services.

They were first set out by Lord Nolan in 1995 and they are included in the Ministerial code.

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest and not in order to gain financial or other material benefit for yourself, family or friends.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

*references to employees also includes workers

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

1.3. Purpose behind the Code

Chelmsford City Council is a public authority funded in the main from revenue raised by local and central government taxation. As such, the public, and all other individuals and organisations who come into contact with the Council, are entitled to expect from the Council's employees the highest standard of service in terms of integrity, efficiency, impartiality and courtesy.

This Code sets out the standard of conduct that Chelmsford City Council employees should adhere to when carrying out their work and duties. In addition, its purpose is to maintain and improve standards and protect employees from misunderstanding or criticism.

Employees should always bear in mind that it is not enough to avoid actual impropriety or improper conduct. Employees should always endeavour to avoid any occasion for suspicion and any appearance of improper conduct or impropriety.

1.4. Status of the Code

This Code has been formally approved and adopted by the Council.

*references to employees also includes workers

The Council believes that the Code represents the standard against which the conduct of employees will be judged, both by the public and by their fellow employees. It is not an exhaustive listing of all standards expected of employees.

1.5. Non-Observance of the Code

Failure to adhere to the Code can bring the Council and indeed the whole local government service into disrepute. Such failure could also lead to a finding of maladministration on the part of the Council by the Local Government Ombudsman.

One of the purposes of the Code is to provide guidance to employees and seek to protect them from misunderstanding or criticism. It is therefore in each employee's own interest to adhere to the Code. Employees should be aware that breach of the Code will constitute misconduct (and in certain circumstances, gross misconduct), which may lead to disciplinary action being instituted against the employee in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Procedures.

Furthermore, employees need to be aware that conduct which is contrary to certain provisions of the Code (e.g. those dealing with unauthorised disclosure of confidential information) could, depending upon the precise circumstances of the case, also amount to an offence under the criminal law and thus result in prosecution of the employee concerned.

1.6. Interpretation

The Code is to be interpreted in spirit as well as by the letter. An employee who is in any doubt as to whether a provision in the Code is applicable to their situation should, in the first instance, refer the matter to their manager.

2. Values and Behaviours

The Council has adopted certain values – Accountability, Creativity, Learning and Encouraging, Collaborative and Trust - which are at the core of how staff and the organisation are expected to behave. These are key to delivering the Council's vision and are the qualities that we expect from all staff. All employees have a responsibility for ensuring that they are aware of the Behaviours which underpin these values and that they actively support and demonstrate these. Information is available on the intranet or through employee self-service.

3. Customer Service and Standards

3.1. General

Employees are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the public and local community and to abide by the customer care standards set by the Council. Employees who, during their employment, have contact with the public, whether face to face, over the telephone or by way of written

*references to employees also includes workers

correspondence should always ensure that they deal with the individual(s) in an efficient and courteous manner, irrespective of the circumstances.

3.2. Standards of Dress

Employees should dress in a manner appropriate to their role to ensure, so far as is reasonably possible, that no offence is caused to individual members of the public, including members of minority groups. Employees should not wear any badges, jewellery or insignia which might give offence, or which could be taken to indicate that the wearer is a supporter of a particular political party or pressure group. Tattoos should not be displayed which give offence or indicate that the employee is a supporter of a particular political group.

3.3. Consumption of Alcohol and Drugs

Employees should not consume any alcohol before or during their working day, including during their lunch break, if it is likely to have an adverse effect on their work or if it would be inappropriate. For employees whose role requires them to drive or operate machinery, then alcohol should not be consumed prior to driving or operating machinery. With the exception of prescription drugs, or pharmacy over the counter drugs, employees should not take drugs during work times.

3.4 Comments, compliments and complaints

Employees who, during their employment, have contact with the public should familiarise themselves with the Council's comments, compliments and complaints policy and procedure and, where appropriate, bring the procedure to the attention of the public.

Employees should be prepared to disclose to any member of the public their name and position with the Council unless in any case they have genuine cause to believe that such disclosure might compromise their own personal safety.

3.5 Hours and attendance

Reliability in time keeping, attendance and in reporting sickness are all critical to the success of Council services. Poor attendance and bad timekeeping increase costs, reduce service outputs and may undermine the reputation of the Council. Employees should ensure that they:

- Comply with the timekeeping requirement of their job ensuring accuracy of record keeping at all times.
- Are in the workplace and working when they should be
- Ask their manager if there is a need to take time off, for example for a doctor's visit

*references to employees also includes workers

- Agree with their line manager in advance any leave or time off

3.6 Disciplinary standards

These disciplinary standards apply to all Chelmsford City Council employees irrespective of the job they do or the grade they are on.

They should be read in conjunction with the Council's Disciplinary Procedure and this Code of Conduct

Purpose behind the disciplinary standards

The Council accepts that most of its employees can be relied on to conduct themselves in an exemplary manner, irrespective of formal rules. However, in a large organisation such as the Council it is necessary for there to be standards which:

Identifies conduct which is unacceptable to the Council as an employer,

Indicates the likely consequences of such conduct; and

Provides a framework for managers and employees that helps ensure that the required high standards of job performance and conduct are met and maintained

4. Disclosure and use of confidential information

4.1. Information Security

All employees are responsible for keeping personal data, which they access or process, secure and up to date. Line managers have responsibility for the type of personal data they collect and how they use it. Managers are also required to ensure that staff are appropriately trained on how to process personal information in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2016

Individuals who have access to personal data are required:

- to access only data that they have authority to access and only for authorised purposes;
- not to disclose data except to individuals (whether inside or outside the organisation) who have appropriate authorisation;
- to keep data secure (for example by complying with rules on access to premises, computer access, including password protection, and secure file storage and destruction);
- not to remove personal data, or devices containing or that can be used to access personal data, from the organisation's premises without adopting appropriate security measures (such as encryption or password protection) to secure the data and the device;

*references to employees also includes workers

- not to store personal data on local drives or on personal devices that are used for work purposes; and
- to report data breaches of which they become aware to the Information Governance Team in line with the Council's Data Breach Policy and Procedure.

Failing to observe these requirements may amount to a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the Council's disciplinary procedure. Significant or deliberate breaches of this policy, such as accessing employee or customer data without authorisation or a legitimate reason to do so, may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

Employees should communicate with the Council's Monitoring Officer, or their own Service Manager to raise concerns regarding a breach of conduct or other issue of concern related to the delivery of the Council's responsibilities. In some cases, the appropriate disclosure route may be raised by using the Council's Whistleblowing procedure.

4.2 Disclosure of criminal convictions during employment

Employees who are convicted or cautioned for any offence during their employment (this includes outside of your working hours) with the Council are required to immediately notify their line manager in writing of the offence and the penalty.

This includes motoring offences which result in a court action and a driving restriction but not parking offences/fines where no penalty points are incurred. The effect of any conviction or caution will be considered with regard to the post occupied and the nature and severity of the offence and penalty. Any action that may be taken by the Council will be in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

4.3. Use of Information by Employees

Employees should never use confidential or sensitive information obtained by them during their employment for personal gain or benefit.

5. Equality, diversity and inclusion

All members of the local community, customers and our employees have a right to be treated with fairness and respect.

The Council is fully committed to the elimination of unlawful and unfair discrimination and values the differences that a diverse workforce brings to the organisation. The Council aims to create a work environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

The Council will not discriminate because of age, disability, gender reassignment,

*references to employees also includes workers

marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. It will not discriminate because of any other irrelevant factor and will build a culture that values meritocracy, openness, fairness and transparency.

All employees are responsible for the promotion and advancement of equality, diversity and inclusion. Behaviour, actions or words that transgress the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in line with the Council's bullying and harassment and disciplinary policies, and this Code of Conduct.

6. Political neutrality

6.1. When Carrying Out Work

Employees (whether or not their post is designated as politically restricted) should follow every lawful expressed policy of the Council and should not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with or influence their work.

6.2. Dealings with Elected Members

Employees should bear in mind that they serve the Council as a whole. They therefore serve all Elected Members and not just those of the controlling group and should ensure that the individual rights of all Elected Members are respected. It must be ensured that working relationships are kept on a professional basis.

6.3. Political Assistants

Political assistants appointed in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 are exempt from the standards set out in paragraphs 6.1 and 6.2

7. Acceptance of gifts & hospitality

7.1. General

Except in the very limited circumstances employees should not accept any fees, gifts or other benefits on their own behalf or on behalf of a third party, from any member of the public, pressure group or other outside party. All employees are expected to make themselves aware of the guidance on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality which is available on the intranet or from HR. This includes ensuring any gifts or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 are registered with the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of its receipt. Furthermore, that any significant gifts or hospitality that they have been offered but have refused to accept are also registered with the Monitoring Officer.

7.2. Accepting Hospitality

Employees should only accept offers of hospitality if these are occasions on

*references to employees also includes workers

which they are gathering, imparting or exchanging information or representing the Council. Offers to attend purely social or sporting functions should be accepted only when these are part of the life of the community or where the

*references to employees also includes workers

Council should be seen to be represented. Attendance at such functions should be authorised in accordance with the procedure set out in the protocol for gifts and hospitality.

Employees should be aware that it is a serious criminal offence for them **corruptly** to receive any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage **for doing, or not doing anything, or showing favour or disfavour to any person** in their official capacity. If an allegation is made then it is for the employee to demonstrate via an investigation process that any gift, loan, fee, reward received has not been corruptly obtained.

7.3. Giving of Hospitality

The giving of hospitality to visiting individuals, and during meetings with outside individuals/organisations which take place off Council premises, is acceptable provided that

(i) the visit/meeting relates to Council business; and

(ii) such hospitality is of a kind and proportionate to the circumstances.

In some cases, it may well be wrong not to offer hospitality. For example, the failure to offer a visitor basic refreshment (i.e. tea/coffee) would, in certain circumstances, be construed as discourteous, and possibly contrary to the Council's customer care ethos. Similarly, in the case of lengthy meetings the provision of a "working lunch" may well be appropriate. Hospitality should never be lavish or extravagant and should be proportionate to our role as public body. Employees should always have regard to how such hospitality might be perceived by members of the public - bearing in mind the Council is a public body funded in the main by local and central government taxation, and the need for impartiality in relations with contractors and potential contractors.

8. Personal interests - disclosure etc

8.1. The Underlying Principle

Employees should never use their positions with the Council to seek special favour or preferential treatment for themselves, or friends or relatives. Equally important, employees should not allow the impression to be created that they are, or may be, using their position to promote private or personal interests.

8.2. Disclosure Generally

Employees should disclose, via the online form available on the intranet ~~in writing,~~ and to their manager any personal interest (whether financial or non-financial in nature) which may affect, or be considered by others to affect, an employee's impartiality in any matter relevant to his/her duties. Employees should make themselves aware of the guidance on registering

*references to employees also includes workers

their interests. The manager should ensure that any ~~the~~ disclosures are ~~is~~ recorded in the register of interests via the online form available on the intranet~~maintained by Democratic Services~~.

Note: Non-financial interests could, for example, include involvement with an organisation receiving grant aid from the Council, or involvement with an organisation or pressure group which is seeking to influence or change the Council's policies.

8.3. Statutory Duty to Disclose any Financial Interest in Contract

Employees must be aware that by law (Section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972) they are required to disclose in writing to the Council any financial interest, whether direct or indirect, which they have in any contract which, to their knowledge, has been, or is proposed to be entered into by the Council. Failure to disclose such an interest is a serious criminal offence.

This information is collected via the online form available on the intranet. ~~Democratic Services maintains a register for the disclosure of financial (pecuniary) interests. This register is open to inspection by the public.~~

Employees who are not sure whether disclosure is required should initially refer the matter to their manager.

9. Relations with outside contractors and proposed contractors

9.1. Familiarity with Contract Rules etc.

Employees who make or advise on purchasing decisions or are otherwise involved in the ordering of goods or services on behalf of the Council must ensure that they are familiar with the Council's Contract Rules and Financial Regulations relating to contracts and orders.

9.2. Awarding of Contracts and Orders

Employees who make purchasing decisions, or who are otherwise involved in the ordering of good or services on behalf of the Council, must ensure that orders and contracts are awarded strictly in accordance with the Council's Contract Rules and that no special favour is shown, or preferential treatment given, to businesses run by partners, relatives, friends or former employees.

All employees should be familiar with the requirements of the Bribery Act and the Anti-Bribery and Corruption policy. The Council is committed to protecting the public purse and the services it provides from being abused.

We require that all staff, including those permanently employed, temporary agency staff and contractors:

- act honestly and with integrity always and safeguard the organisation's resources for which they are responsible

*references to employees also includes workers

- comply with the spirit, as well as the letter, of the laws and regulations of all jurisdictions in which the Council operates, in respect of the lawful and responsible conduct of activities.

The Council will not tolerate fraud and corruption in the administration of its responsibilities, whether from inside or outside the Authority.

The Council's expectation of propriety and accountability is that staff at all levels will lead by example in ensuring adherence to legal requirements, rules, procedures and practices.

The Council also expects that individuals and organisations with which it comes into contact will act towards the Authority with integrity.

9.3. Disclosure of Private Work Carried out by Contractors - The General Principle

Corporate Directors, Service Managers, and any other employees who are involved in purchasing decisions (including the selection of persons invited to tender, and the evaluation of tenders etc) and who have, or have had, a private business relationship (as defined below) with a person or company whom they know has or is seeking to have a contractual relationship with the Council (whether for the supply of goods, services or construction works) should disclose that fact via the online form available on the intranet. ~~in writing to Democratic Services~~.

~~Democratic Services shall record the disclosure in a register which is kept for thisat purpose and which is open to inspection by the public.~~

Commented [LB1]: There is no requirement to have a register or to make the information public. S117 requires that the officer discloses the information which is the key requirement.

Definition of Private Business Relationship

An employee shall be taken to have a private business relationship with a person or company if that person or company has been engaged to carry out work to the employee's home or that of his/her family or close friend(s); or to supply any goods or services to the employee or his/her family or close friend(s).

9.4. Exceptions

This part of the Code shall not, however, be taken as requiring an employee to disclose a private business relationship with:

(1) any public utility company or statutory undertakers (e.g. British Telecommunications Plc, Eastern Electricity, rail operators and other public transport companies) where work done, or goods/services supplied is a kind which is provided or made available to a large section of the general population.

*references to employees also includes workers

(2) any bank or similar financial institution where the services provided are of a kind commonly provided or made available to other customers of the bank/institution.

(3) any retail store or outlet (e.g. a supermarket or bookshop) where the private business relationship has arisen solely because the employee has purchased from the store/outlet (during its opening hours) goods or services which, at the time of purchase were on display or offer to the public at the same price and on the same terms.

9.5. Employees Who Supervise Contracts

Employees who supervise contractors should disclose via the online form on the intranet ~~in writing to Democratic Services~~ any private business relationship (as defined in 9.3 above) which they have, or have had, with any of the contractors which come within their supervision. The online form is used to maintain a ~~Democratic Services shall record the disclosure in a~~ register ~~which is kept for that purpose and which is open to inspection by the public.~~

~~10.~~ Outside commitments

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All employees should not engage in any outside work which means any paid or unpaid work including voluntary work which conflicts or may conflict with the Council's interests.

An employee who wishes to take up outside work, whether paid or unpaid, must obtain approval before accepting. A request for authorisation in relation to second employments or other commitments should be made using the online form which is available on the intranet. ~~A proforma for this purpose can be found in Appendix 1.~~

If an employee already has other employment or commitments when they join the Council, including volunteering, they must make this known to their manager who will bring the employees attention to the online form for authorisation to be sought and must ensure that they are fully able to undertake their contractual duties.

The Council has an obligation to protect the welfare of its employees. When considering other work, all employees must comply with the Working Time Regulations which govern the total number of hours that can be safely worked as well as ensure that the required rest breaks under regulation can be taken

An employee undertaking secondary employment outside of the Council must complete a Working Hours declaration to ensure that the hours worked in total are permitted under legislation including required rest breaks.

An employee who works in more than one role for the Council will be required to comply with Working Time regulation in relation to hours work and to

*references to employees also includes workers

ensure that required rest breaks are taken.

*references to employees also includes workers

~~11.~~10. Separation of roles during tendering

~~11.1.~~10.1. Separation of Roles

Employees involved in the tendering process and dealing with contractors should be clear on the separation of client and contractor roles within the Council. Senior employees who have both client and contractor responsibilities must be aware of the need for accountability and openness.

~~11.2.~~10.2. Fairness and Impartiality

Employees in contractor or client units must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all customers, suppliers, other contractors and sub-contractors.

~~12.~~11. Use of resources and council property etc

~~12.1.~~11.1. Use of Resources

Employees must ensure that they use public funds and resources entrusted to them in a responsible manner. They should always ensure value for money to the local community.

~~12.2.~~11.2. Commitment to the environment

The Council declared a climate and ecological emergency in July 2019 and expects its employees to consider the environmental impact of their actions and behaviour and, in particular, to contribute to reducing waste and reducing carbon emissions where possible when at work

~~12.3.~~11.3. Use of Council Property Etc

Except for cars provided in accordance with the staff car-lease scheme employees should not use Council property, equipment (including computer/word processing hardware and specialist software) and materials for their own personal gain or private purposes with the exception of accessing the internet during non-working time lunch breaks in accordance with the Council's Acceptable Use policy.

~~12.4.~~11.4. Security, health and safety

Employees should be mindful of the constant need to ensure, so far as is practicable, the security and health and safety of their fellow employees, and the safeguarding of Council property and buildings. Each employee should endeavour to avoid acts or omissions on their own part which may be prejudicial to, or compromise, health, safety and security.

*references to employees also includes workers

~~13.~~12. Close Personal Relationships at Work

13.1 Recruitment

Employees involved in recruitment must ensure that appointments are made based on merit. To avoid any possible accusation of bias, an employee must not be involved in making an appointment if they are related to, or have a close personal relationship with an applicant, in accordance with the Employment Rules in the Authority's Constitution

13.2 Other Employment Matters

Employees must not be involved in decisions relating to disciplinary, grievance, promotion or payment related matters, which relate to someone with whom they have a close personal relationship

13.3 Relations with Other Employees

Mutual respect and professional conduct between colleagues are essential to good local government. Employees are required to act in a professional manner and not allow personal relationships to impact on their work and professionalism.

Employees are asked to complete a declaration through the online form available on the intrant ~~form~~ regarding Close Personal Relationships at work, following which a risk ~~n~~ assessment will be undertaken and approved by the relevant Service Manager (or where the risk assessment relates to a Service Manager a Director) to set out arrangements to protect both the employee and the Council.

The Council reserves the right to address any issues arising from close personal relationships at work that cause ongoing work issues and take appropriate action to resolve the issue.

14 Social media, communications and working with the media

14.1 Social media

Using Social media on behalf of the Council

When engaging with customers or organisations on behalf of the Council through Social Media, employees should always remember that they are representing the Council. Employees should represent the Council ethically and with honesty and integrity.

Personal social media use

*references to employees also includes workers

Employees should not post anything that could adversely affect the image of the Council or have the potential to do so. Employees must not breach

*references to employees also includes workers

confidentiality by divulging any personal or sensitive information through social media.

14.2 Communications and publication

Employees must not publicise material which is confidential or against the Council's or our employee's interests.

14.3 Working and contact with the media

Employees should not speak, write, give interviews or take phone calls for information unless the communications team and your manager have given you permission to do so or unless this is part of your role for the Council.

15. Safeguarding

The Council provides a wide range of services and facilities and will promote the welfare and protection of children and adults at risk within all services by:

- Respecting the rights, wishes, feelings and privacy of children and adults.
- Taking seriously and responding appropriately and promptly to all concerns, incidents and allegations.
- Requiring organisations that the Council contracts to provide the Council with services, to have appropriate safeguarding procedures and training in place and adopt the Safeguarding policy.
- Ensuring that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and adults at risk through the Council's Safer Recruitment Procedure.
- Not tolerating harassment of any Council employees, elected Members, contractors, agency staff, volunteers, suppliers, consultants or children/adults who raise concerns of abuse.
- Seeking to prevent abuse by promoting good practice, creating a safe and healthy environment and avoiding situations where abuse or allegations of abuse occur.

It is expected that all employees:

- Understand the different forms abuse as well as their roles and responsibilities under this Code of Conduct and the Safeguarding Policy.
- Know how to record and report safeguarding concerns, incidents or allegations.

16. Generally

If an employee has any doubt as to whether any action taken or contemplated on his/her part, or on the part of a third party, is likely to result or has resulted in a breach of this Code of Conduct then he/she should discuss the matter with his/her manager or Human Resources as soon as possible.

*references to employees also includes workers

Relevant information to support this Code of Conduct is available on the intranet or via your line manager including the following:

- Financial regulation
- Employment policies and procedures
- Health and Safety responsibilities
- Safeguarding
- Data and Information
- Council Constitution

*references to employees also includes workers

~~REGISTRATION OF OFFICER INTERESTS~~

~~Guidance on the registration of interests~~

~~Your name~~	
~~Your Directorate~~	
~~Your Service~~	
~~Your line manager's name~~	

~~I register the following interests pursuant to Section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Council's Employees Code of Conduct:~~

	~~**Interest**~~
~~1.~~	~~Your membership of or the fact that you are in a position of general management and control of a body that falls within one or more of the following descriptions:~~ ~~a. to which you have been appointed or nominated by the City Council~~ ~~b. exercising functions of a public nature~~ ~~c. directed towards charitable purposes~~ ~~*The descriptions identified are alternatives, therefore you need to register any interests that falls within any of the descriptions in (a), (b) or (c).*~~ ~~*Under **paragraph (a)** there are a number of bodies to which the Council makes officer appointments such as Bradwell Local Community Liaison Council and the Essex Society for Archaeology and History.*~~ ~~*The organisations that should be included in **paragraph (b)** include those that lobby government to make changes to policy or laws, for example, an active member of the National Trust or AA which may seek to influence public policy.*~~ ~~*Under **paragraph (c)** this includes not only registered charities but other organisations that raise funds for charities such as Freemasons.*~~
	~~**Details**~~

*references to employees also includes workers

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~~2.~~	~~Any body of which you are a member or to which you have been elected personally or professionally:~~ ~~(a) receiving grant aid from the Council; or~~ ~~(b) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union).~~
	~~**Details**~~
~~3.~~	~~Any pecuniary interest, direct or indirect, which you have in any contract, which has been or is proposed to be entered into by Chelmsford City Council~~ ~~*If you have entered into any form of contract with the Council for the supply of goods or services this should be entered here **but only if** there are still obligations to be fulfilled such as payments to be made or services to be provided. Examples are:*~~ ~~- *Use of Council commercial waste collection facilities by a body or company which you own.*~~ ~~- *Use of the Council's Building Control Team's services in relation to works at any property owned by a body/company in which you have an interest.*~~
	~~**Details**~~
~~4.~~	~~Any body of which you are a member.~~ ~~Any firm in which you are a partner.~~ ~~A company of which you or a close relative are a remunerated director.~~ ~~A company run by a relative, friend, partner, or former employee or yours which has or is tendering for a contractual relationship with Chelmsford City Council (whether for the supply or goods, services or construction work).~~
	~~**Details**~~

*references to employees also includes workers

~~5.~~	~~Any work or services provided to you in a private capacity (a private business relationship) by any business, partnership or sole trader which has tendered or is tendering for a contractual relationship with Chelmsford City Council (whether for the supply or goods, services or construction work).~~
	~~**Details**~~
~~6.~~	~~Any employment or business carried on by you in addition to your employment by Chelmsford City Council.~~
	~~**Details**~~
~~7.~~	~~Any organisation of which you are a member to which you have been elected or appointed professionally or personally which the Council could from time to time have any dealings with that are not covered in other categories above.~~
	~~**Details**~~

~~Your signature: ……………………………………………………………………………~~

~~Date: ……………………...~~

~~Your line manager's signature: ……………………………………………………~~

~~Date: ……………………….~~

~~Monitoring Officer's signature: …………………………………………………....~~

~~Date: …………………...~~

*references to employees also includes workers

~~Guidance Notes for Authorisation~~

~~Directors should consider the following:~~

- ~~Does the additional employment conflict with the Council's interests i.e. benefitting from position of being a Council employee e.g. tendering for business?~~
- ~~Does the additional employment conflict with the working time agreement e.g. the employee should not be working 7 days a week and must ensure that they can have the prescribed rest hours? Should the additional employment result in the employee working more than 48 hours a week, an opt out form should be completed.~~
- ~~Could the business interest be seen to be promoted by their position within the Council?~~
- ~~Does the contract preclude the member of staff from having additional employment or a secondary business interest?~~

*references to employees also includes workers

~~Version Number~~	~~Creation Date~~	~~Changes Made~~	~~Changes Made By:~~	~~Authorised/Checked?~~	~~Date of Changes~~
~~2.6~~	~~Jan 2011~~	~~Amended to Disability Confident Logo~~	~~HR Team~~	~~Y~~	~~05/12/2016~~
~~2.5~~	~~Jan 2011~~	~~Updated to reflect new HR structure~~	~~J Ferguson~~	~~Y~~	~~17/09/2015~~
~~2.4~~	~~Jan 2011~~	~~Corrected reference errors in 6.3~~	~~H Dungate~~	~~Y~~	~~30/09/2014~~
~~2.3~~	~~Jan 2011~~	~~Safeguarding Element added~~	~~A Price~~	~~Y~~	~~31/10/2012~~

*references to employees also includes workers

PART 5.4

MAYORAL PARTY RULES

Contents

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5.4.0 **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

5.4.0.1 These Rules establish the principles under which the Mayoral Party will carry out their duties and responsibilities. In particular the Party must observe Part 2, Article 5 of the Council's Constitution, the Council Procedure Rules in Part 4.1 of the Constitution and the Mayoral Party Protocol, which has the status of a Practice Note for the purposes of the Constitution.

5.4.0.2 The Mayor will be responsible for the interpretation of the Constitution as set out in Part 2, Article 16 thereof.

5.4.0.3 Administrative and organisation support will be provided to the Mayoralty by the Council and is referred to in these Rules as the Mayor's Office.

5.4.0.4 The role of the Mayoral Party, its responsibilities and guidance on the appropriateness of any duties to be undertaken will be dealt with at the Mayoral Working Group. The following will attend its meetings:

a) Mayor
b) Deputy Mayor
c) Leader of the Council
d) Opposition representative(s)
e) Chief Executive
f) Mayor's Office representatives
g) The Mayor and Deputy Mayor designate (to receive guidance for the forthcoming year)

5.4.0.5 In particular, the Mayoral Working Group will regularly consider issues arising in relation to:

a) The interpretation of and changes required to the Mayoral Party Rules and Mayoral Party Protocol
b) Mayoral Engagements
c) Civic Events
d) Honorary Freeman and Freedoms
e) Town Twinning

Role of the Mayoralty

5.4.0 6 The Mayor is the First Citizen of the City and will personally carry out the duties of the Mayoralty as far as is reasonably practical.

Role of the Deputy Mayor

5.4.0.7 The role of the Deputy Mayor is to deputise for the Mayor when the latter is not available to attend a function or if there is more than one invitation for the same date and time. The Deputy Mayor's role is not to act as Mayoral support.

5.4.0.8 When the Mayor is unavailable to attend a function and the Deputy Mayor is required to attend, then the Deputy Mayor will have use of the Civic Car and chauffeur. All other transportation arrangements should be organised through the Mayor's Office.

5.4.1 **NEUTRALITY**

5.4.1.1 The Mayoral Party represents the whole City during the term of office. The Mayor, and Deputy Mayor, will therefore during their year of office and whilst acting in this official capacity:

a) Maintain political neutrality
b) Chair Council meetings with absolute impartiality
c) Ensure that a fellow ward or adjoining ward Councillor is available to deal with certain aspects of Council business
d) As far as is reasonably practical, not attend party political functions in the role of the Mayor or Deputy Mayor.

5.4.2 **FORM OF ADDRESS**

5.4.2.1 The usual form of address for the Mayor is "Mr Mayor", if male, and "Madam Mayor", if female. The Deputy Mayor is addressed as "Deputy Mayor". All Officers of the Council are expected to address the Mayor formally.

5.4.2.2 There are also prescribed forms of address to be used when speaking to or addressing visiting dignitaries. The Mayor's Office will ensure that the appropriate form of words is identified before any such engagement takes place or correspondence entered into.

5.4.3 **ATTIRE AND USE OF THE MAYORAL REGALIA**

5.4.3.1 The type of attire required at any occasion will be determined by the type of function to be attended and as explained in the Mayoral Party Protocol Practice Note.

5.4.3.2 The Mayor and Deputy Mayor will wear the formal Regalia and Chains of Office on the following occasions:

a) All meetings of the Council.
b) The Civic Service.
c) Remembrance Sunday.
d) The Justice Service.
e) Visits of Royalty (unless otherwise requested).
f) Such other occasions as will be agreed by the Mayoral Working Party.

5.4.3.3 The Regalia of Office means the gown, jabot, gloves, hat and Ceremonial Chains of Office or the Mayoral/Day Chain. The Mayor's Office will advise the Mayoral Party on the appropriate form of dress for a particular event or occasion.

5.4.4 **<u>EVENTS</u>**

5.4.4.1 There are four main categories of event as set out below. The number of each and protocol to be used at each category differ and details are contained in the Mayoral Party Protocol Practice Note:

a) Annual Civic events;
b) Those promoted or organised by the Council, or the Mayor, or at which either act as hosts;
c) Those which the Mayor is expected to attend; and
d) Those which the Mayor may be invited to attend.

Annual Civic Events

5.4.4.2 The guest lists, selection of speakers and sequence of speeches at Civic events will be determined by the Mayor, in consultation with the Mayoral Working Group.

Events Promoted by the Council or the Mayor

5.4.4.4 The Mayor will normally be invited to officiate at all events or occasions of major civic significance, but is not required to be involved in all Council promoted events.

5.4.4.5 Where attendance of the Mayor, and/or other members of the Mayoral Party is required, the organiser of the event will arrange an adequate and timely briefing through the Mayor's Office.

Arrangements for inviting the Mayor to Events

5.4.4.6 Invitations for the Mayor to attend functions are for the Mayor and other members of the Mayoral Party only.

5.4.4.7 Formal invitations must be made through the Mayor's Office. If accepted, the invitation will be confirmed and an acceptance letter and engagement form will be sent to the inviting party for completion, which must be returned to the Mayor's Office.

5.4.4.8 This procedure shall apply equally to events organised by Council departments as well as those from external organisations or individuals.

5.4.4.9 Engagement lists showing forthcoming engagements will be prepared on a regular basis. They will include details of the events, the date and time of each engagement, and the organisation and venue for each event the Mayoral Party is attending. The lists will be distributed to:

a) The Mayor and the Deputy Mayor;
b) Council officers, the police, and local & national media sources as appropriate.

Visits Outside the City

5.4.4.10 It is customary for the Mayor's Office to seek the permission of the "host" authority for the Mayor (or a member of the Mayoral Party, as appropriate) to wear the chain or badge of office. Conversely, a Mayor or Chair of another authority attending a function in the City of Chelmsford will seek permission from the Mayor's Office to wear their chain or badge of office.

Precedence

5.4.4.11 When a Royal visit is to take place in the City's area, the following rules will be applied as to which dignitary takes precedence and the order of precedence.

a) On official Royal visits to the county the Chair of the County Council takes precedence before the Mayor and on such occasions the order of presentation by the Lord Lieutenant to the Royal visitor will normally be:
   i. Lord Lieutenant's partner
   ii. High Sheriff and partner
   iii. Chair of County Council and partner
   iv. County Chief Executive and partner
   v. Mayor and their partner
   vi. District (City) Chief Executive and partner
   vii. Member of Parliament and partner
   viii. Chief Constable and partner
   ix. the principal organiser of the event to which the visit is being made
   x. Other necessary presentations may be deputed to the organiser.

b) Where there is a Royal official visit to the City and the event or matter relates to the functions of the City Council the order of presentation by the Lord Lieutenant to the Royal visitor will normally be:
   i. Lord Lieutenant's partner
   ii. High Sheriff and partner
   iii. Mayor and their partner
   iv. District (City) Chief Executive and partner
   v. Chair of County Council and partner
   vi. County Chief Executive and partner
   vii. Member of Parliament and partner
   viii. Chief Constable and partner
   ix. the principal organiser of the event to which the visit is being made
   Other necessary presentations may be deputed to the organiser.

5.4.5 **<u>EXPENSES OF THE MAYORALTY, GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY</u>**

5.4.5.1 The Mayor and the Deputy Mayor shall each receive a personal allowance to meet expenses incurred by them and their partners because of their official duties. This will be approved as part of the Member's Allowance Scheme.

5.4.5.2 A specific budget will be set annually for the costs of managing and administering the Mayoral functions as part of the Council's normal budget approval procedure. It will be administered by the Mayor's Office.

5.4.5.3 If the Mayoral Party receive gifts during the term of office from organisers of events or from visitors to the Parlour these must either:

a) Be recorded in the Register of Civic Gifts (held by the Mayor's Office) and kept in the Mayor's Parlour; or

b) Declared as a gift in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Councillors as set out in Part 5.1 of the Constitution.

5.4.5.4 Any hospitality received by the Mayoral Party during their year of office must also be notified to the Mayor's Office and recorded in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Councillors as set out in Part 5.1 of the Constitution.

5.4.6 <u>USE OF THE CIVIC CAR</u>

5.4.6.1 Where appropriate the Council will provide a Civic Car or other transport for the Mayoral Party for official business. The Civic Car may be used for other purposes but only when authorised in advance by the Chief Executive.

5.4.6.2 The use of the Civic Car will normally be limited to transporting members of the Mayoral Party to and from engagements taking place other than at the Civic Centre. A specific exception applies where transport is required for the purpose of attending meetings of the Council.

5.4.7 <u>THE MAYOR'S CHARITY</u>

5.4.7.1 The role of Mayor is a civic office. Charitable work can be undertaken by the Mayoral Party but should be regarded as incidental to and not a major function of the Mayoralty.

5.4.7.2 A Mayor may choose to nominate a charity to receive Mayoral support during the year. The organisation of any charitable events or liaison with the charitable organisations chosen will not be organised by the Mayor's Office.

5.4.7.3 The Mayoral Party must inform the Mayor's Office of any engagements associated with the nominated charity to ensure that there is no conflict with civic events, which will take precedence.

5.4.7.3 Whilst it is not the role of the Council to be involved in the day to day administration of the Charities account, it is desirable that there be an overview of the financial position on the account during the Mayoral year by the Mayoral Working Group receiving twice-yearly reports on income and expenditure.

~~5.4.7.4 A separate bank account must be opened to be administered by the Mayor, Mayoress, other nominated councillor or person to ensure that any charitable monies received can be accounted for. Any expenses incurred on behalf of the Mayor's charity should be made from the Mayor's charity account. No Council officer will be involved with the administration of the Charity account. A summary of the financial position on the Charity account will be provided to the Mayoral Working Group twice a year.~~

5.4.8 **PATRONAGE AND OTHER SUPPORT**

5.4.8.1 The Mayor, by virtue of the office, may be a Patron, President or Member of a number of organisations during the year of office. The Mayor must not personally agree to invitations to act as patron as this may put the Council in a difficult situation.

Any request for such support of patronage should be made to the Mayor's Office and approval must be officially agreed through that office.

5.4.9 **SPIRITUAL SUPPORT**

5.4.9.1 The Mayor may appoint a suitable person to provide spiritual support for the Mayoral functions during the Mayor's term of office. The person appointed would normally be someone who is an official of a religious group, reflecting the Mayor's own religion.

5.4.9.2 The person appointed may act as a focal point for religious groups in the area, advise the Mayor on spiritual matters and assist the Mayor to understand and lead all sections of the community.

5.4.9.3 The person appointed will normally conduct prayers at the start of a meeting of the Council. It will not be seen as a sign of disrespect to the Mayor if members of the Council and any public attending the meeting do not wish to participate in the prayers and do not enter the room in which the meeting is being held until after they have finished.

5.4.10 **CORRESPONDENCE**

5.4.10.1 All correspondence addressed to the Mayor, but which relates to the business of the Council, will only be acknowledged by the Mayor's Office on behalf of the Mayor. It will then be passed for detailed reply or action to the relevant Director, Executive Member or Committee Chair as appropriate.

~~5.4.10.2~~ ~~Arrangements for the Mayor or Deputy Mayor to witness the affixing of the Council's seal to any document will be organised through the Mayor's office.~~

Chelmsford City Council Cabinet

14th July 2026

South Woodham Ferrers Leisure Centre Improvements

Report by:
Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure

Officer Contact:
Sarah Smith, Leisure Centres Manager

01245 615066, sarah.smith@chelmsford.gov.uk

Marc De'ath, Assistant Director for Culture, Leisure and Open Spaces

01245 606520, Marc.DE'ATH@chelmsford.gov.uk

Purpose
Initial design feasibility work has explored the potential to enhance fitness facilities at SWFLC. This report seeks to confirm the next steps for the proposed scheme.

Options
1. Continue proceeding with the proposed scheme up to tender stage
2. Cease the project
3. Put the project on hold

Preferred option and reasons
Continue proceeding with the proposed scheme up to tender stage to ensure greater cost certainty ahead of delivering the scheme and its associated financial, health and community benefits.

Recommendations

Seek approval to commit further feasibility funding of approx. £52,000 to proceed with the proposed scheme up to tender stage (RIBA 4) including tender analysis.

To consider the use of reserves to fund the project on the basis that it will be re-couped on receipt of the ringfenced CIL from South Woodham Ferrers. This project, which improves the sports centre and secondary school is an entirely appropriate use and meets the definition of infrastructure.

Should the scheme become unaffordable or unworkable from a community perspective it will be aborted with Cabinet informed accordingly.

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1. Background

1.1. South Woodham Ferrers Leisure Centre (SWFLC) is operated under a Joint-Use Agreement with the William de Ferrers School (WdFS). The Council holds a separate Lease for the Swimming Pool building to operate it at all times.

1.2. As with many local authorities there are significant budget pressures and the leisure team have been constantly reviewing the cost of operating them to secure efficiencies. Swimming pools in particular are incredibly costly to run and although a very well used pool it is only financially sustainable with a substantial subsidy. Most public swimming pools require a subsidy to operate but many are supported and cross subsidised with facilities that generate a surplus, such as extensive studio and gym facilities (as at the Riverside site).

1.3. The centre as a whole currently has a £342,000 budget deficit. A realistic way of achieving a financially sustainable leisure centre in the long term is to invest in fitness. Due to restricted opening hours and the physical capacity of the gym the ability to grow the membership base is extremely restricted within the current facility mix.

1.4. At SWFLC there is currently only access to a very small studio and a small gym. Despite efforts to improve the gym, it is still insufficient in size and a lack of daytime access is limiting any significant income generation. SWF has a growing population but the health & fitness offer has not significantly improved to respond to this increased demand. The fitness facilities have become dated and fallen behind the standards of the Council's other leisure facilities. The population of SWF are therefore missing out on access to quality public gym facilities and with this cannot access important services such as Active Health (Exercise referral scheme).

1.5. The Council's Indoor Sports Assessment, Strategy and Action Plan for Built Facilities, which forms part of the evidence base for the Local Plan identifies that an increase in size and community access to fitness facilities in South Woodham Ferrers is required, especially due to forthcoming local development and increased demand of space and accessible time for the community.

1.6. The Council's other leisure centres have all received valuable investment to modernise them and deliver first class facilities for the residents of Chelmsford and in each case there has been a demonstrable return on investment – both financially and in terms of increased community usage. Dovedale Leisure Centre has most recently undergone similar investment and was delivered on time and budget. SWFLC has fallen behind the standards and accessibility of the other centres.

1.7. In partnership with the School there is scope to repurpose one of the existing sports halls, to both improve the size, quality and daytime availability of the gym and studio offer at SWFLC for the local community and upgrade accommodation to better meet future curriculum/teaching/PE needs of the School.

1.8. In broad terms there is the opportunity to utilise the two-court gymnasium which sits adjacent to the leisure centre entrance and construct a mezzanine floor, with a gym and studio on the ground floor for community use at all times (which is not currently available) and multiuse space on the first floor, which would be used for academic purposes by the School during the day and community use and activities outside school hours as per the rest of the joint-use facilities.

1.9. Having assessed options this would appear to the only viable solution at SWFLC, given the restrictions on space, due to the need for any new community facilities to be accessible from the main leisure centre reception without presenting issues within the school site.

1.10 The currently Joint-Use Agreement Term is until 2043. This would be extended for a minimum of 25 years if the proposal should proceed.

2. Benefits and Financial Return

2.1 Investment would result in the following benefits:

i. Reduced net control budget and increased financial sustainability of the centre as a whole.
ii. New daytime access to gym and studio for the local community.
iii. A positive health impact for the local community and students.
iv. Responding to the facility needs of the growing local community and students.
v. Increased attendances, memberships and income.
vi. Additional multipurpose space for the community and will benefit the school for learning, exams and physical exercise
vii. Increased number of customers attracting new and key customer groups such as the elderly, pre-school children or people with disabilities.

2.2 A business case has been developed. This will be refined when the designs are finalised but indicates a significantly increased number of monthly memberships for the centre, meaning the centre would be capable of approaching a break-even point in the future, helping to ensure a financially sustainable future.

3. Costs and budget

3.1 £30,000 has been previously approved from the feasibility provision. £19,000 has been spent on feasibility to date with an additional £18,500 committed to reach RIBA stage 3

3.2 A further £40,000 in fees is required to reach RIBA stage 4 (tender stage) plus an additional £4,000 contingency due to this figure being refined after the stage 3 construction cost estimate and for any additional surveys that may be identified and required. An additional £52,000 is therefore required to reach RIBA stage 4.

3.3 Estimated maximum total project cost £2m

3.4 No capital financial contribution from the school – but sole use of space for community use during daytime would be provided under a revised joint-use agreement

3.5 Scope to the use reserves to fund the project on the basis that these will then be re-couped on receipt of the ringfenced CIL from South Woodham Ferrers development. The project which improves the sports centre and secondary school is an entirely appropriate use and meets the definition of infrastructure.

4. Progress

4.1 Feasibility and design work is currently within RIBA stage 3, which will provide a finalised design and cost plan.

4.2 Taking the scheme to RIBA stage 4 would enable the scheme to be taken to tender to achieve greater cost certainty. Exact timings for procurement and planning permission will be coordinated.

4.3 Developing the design in stages ensures it is workable for both school and the community and will achieve the business plan objectives, whilst providing opportunity to abort the project should it become unviable.

4.4 A target start date for works is June 2027, with completion estimated for early 2028.

4.5 A list of Principles and Assumptions has been drafted for initial agreement between the Council and WdFS and their trustees to initially progress the scheme. These are under discussion and have yet to be formally agreed.

4.6 The school have requested any legal fees directly related to the scheme are borne by the Council. These can be estimated but not exactly specified.

4.7 Some core samples of the proposed location have been taken and results are awaited to confirm that ground conditions can viably support the proposed scheme. Initial finding ahead of the full report indicate the substructure is suitable for the proposed project.

4.8 To deliver greater cost certainty formal approval for the scheme would be sought after tender stage (RIBA 4)

4.9 The above highlights both good progress and that some design challenges and further negotiation with the School is required. It is therefore recognised that if the scheme becomes unaffordable or unworkable from a community perspective it will be aborted with Cabinet informed accordingly.

5. Conclusion

5.1. The current scheme provides a one-off opportunity to develop the existing centre and achieve a financially sustainable business model for the centre.

5.2 Good progress has been made developing a scheme to deliver significant financial, health and community benefits for the growing population in South Woodham Ferrers.

5.3 Some challenges remain to fully deliver the benefits for the school and community but the staged approach to the project allows for decisions to progress based on an informed basis.

5.4 The Council has a track record of delivering similar successful projects and realising the financial and community benefits.

List of appendices:

None

Background papers:

The early, business case is available upon request.

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: This decision is an executive matter which falls to Cabinet for approval. Legal advice and support will be obtained in relation to any procurement process as part of the Council's due diligence. Joint-Use Agreement with the School to be updated to reflect new facility

As a result of local government reorganisation, new governance arrangements are anticipated through the making of a structural change order which may require additional approval for any transaction involving the disposal of land or assets and/or contracts above a certain threshold. It is anticipated that the timing and level of this contract may be caught by the additional approval process and the position can only be confirmed at a later stage.

Financial: The project is likely to reduce net cost and improve financial sustainability of the centre as a whole. An additional £52,000 of one off funding is needed to produce a final business case.

Potential impact on climate change and the environment:

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: All new mechanical and electrical in the facility will meet latest regulations

Personnel: Additional staffing will be required in the new gym and for classes

Risk Management: A risk register has been created in line with the Council's project management procedures

Equality and Diversity: The gym and studio will be accessible to the whole community

(For new or revised policies or procedures has an equalities impact assessment been carried out? If not, explain why)

Health and Safety: CDM roles to be appointed externally

Digital: New fitness equipment and AV to be linked to Council IT system at fit out stage

Other: None

Consultees:

Building Services

Financial Services

Economic Development

Legal

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

Our Chelmsford, Our Plan

Indoor Sports Assessment and Strategy (LDF Evidence Base)

Chelmsford City Council

Cabinet

14th July 2026

Treasury Management Outturn Report 2025/26

Report by:

FINANCIAL SERVICES MANAGER (Section 151 officer)

Officer Contact:

Phil Reeves, Financial Services Manager, phil.reeves@chelmsford.gov.uk, 01245 606562

Purpose

Under statute and the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management ("the Code"), Members are required to receive a report on the Treasury Management activities that took place in 2025/26.

Recommendations

That the Treasury Management Outturn Report 2025/26 be recommended to Full Council.

1. Introduction

1.1. The CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management sets out the requirements for Council oversight of treasury management operations. As part of the Code, the Council is required to receive an annual report on the performance of the treasury management function, highlighting the effects of decisions taken and any instances of non-compliance with the Code and the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

2. Background

2.1. The Council can expect to hold cash for investment, arising from its revenue and capital balances and the collection of local taxes. This cash can be invested to generate a return that helps support services or used for internal borrowing to fund the capital programme. The Council also needs to borrow externally to fund its capital programme and ensure sufficient liquidity for day-to-day activities. The management of this cash and borrowing is known as Treasury Management.

2.2. Treasury Management is defined by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) as:

"The management of the local authority's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks"

2.3. This report fulfils the Authority's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to both the CIPFA Code and the MHCLG Guidance.

2.4. The Council's investment priorities as required by Government regulations are in order of priority:

(a) The security of Capital
(b) The liquidity of its investments; and
(c) Yield

MHCLG and CIPFA both advise that absolute certainty over security of capital and liquidity does not need to be achieved before seeking yield from investments. Instead, an appropriate balance between all three objectives should be sought, with that balance determined by the Council through its Treasury Management Strategy.

2.5. The operation of Treasury Management is not without risk, and the Council could suffer losses if one of its counterparties had financial difficulties.

2.6. The Council formally reviews its investment holdings in the following ways:

- Treasury Management Strategy report in February
- Treasury Outturn report in July
- A half-year update in November
- The Treasury Management Sub-Committee monitors treasury activity during the financial year.

The review of the year's activities is set out in the following appendices:

Appendix A – External Environment Update

Appendix B – Borrowing and Investment Activity compared to the Approved 2025/26 Strategy

3. Summary of Review

3.1. During the financial year, there were no breaches of the Treasury Management Strategy.

3.2. The economic environment for the financial year saw a gradual reduction in rates but was marked with new uncertainties due to the conflict in Iran.

3.3. The year-end cash and borrowing position were as follows:

- Cash and investments held by the Council was higher than expected, some £18.6m compared to projections of £11.3m made for the 2026/27 budget (forecast was produced in December 2025).
- External borrowing was £14m at year end, in the form of one-year loans from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). The forecast external debt position was £20m, resulting in an underspend on estimated borrowing of £6m. This favourable variance arose broadly from slippage in capital expenditure and higher receipts and income. Borrowing remained within approved parameters.

3.4. Revenue impact of cash and investment

- Interest earned on investments for the year was £1.20m, which was £0.27m above budget, mainly due to higher-than-average cash balances caused by capital slippage and higher receipts and revenue income.
- The overall return on investments for 2025/26 was 4.3% compared to 4.94% in the previous year. The budget had assumed 4.05%. During the year, the Bank of England base rate decreased from 4.5% to 3.75%.

3.5. The Council at the beginning of 2025/26 held three pooled funds. Ongoing underperformance of one fund, the CCLA cautious world fund led to the decision by s151 officer to dispose of the fund.

3.6. The Council's remaining two pooled funds held at the end of 2025/26, generated total income returns of £335k, equating to a return of 5.35%. After allowing for the CCLA Cautious Fund, the average income return on the funds was 0.43% higher than cash, generating an additional £35k of interest. The value of the funds increased by £309k during the year, but prior to conflict in the Middle East the improvement was £568k. Across the remaining two funds at the end of 2025/26, there was an unrealised loss of £332k.

3.7. At the time of publication of this report, the yield (income) from the funds is broadly in line with the Council's short-term cost of borrowing. This reflects the elevated cost of borrowing in 2026/27. Borrowing interest rates were expected to fall during 2026/27, which would have improved both the capital value and the relative benefit of the funds. The position on the funds remains under review, and disposal may become the best option, but geopolitical uncertainty makes the long-term outlook difficult to determine.

3.8. Since the inception of the fund portfolio, it has delivered an additional £1,075k compared with what the Council would have received from cash investments.

3.9. Revenue impact of borrowing:

- External loan interest costs were £428k, a favourable variance of £761k against the budget of £1,189k. This lower cost was due to lower levels of borrowing than was estimated in the budget for 2025/26.
- The estimated borrowing interest rate was 4.50%, while the average rate actually borrowed at was 5.35%.

4. Conclusion

4.1. It should be noted that the Council's Treasury Management activities operated within approved parameters.

4.2. The Treasury Management and Investment Sub-Committee will continue to monitor investment and borrowing activity.

List of appendices:

Appendix A – Economic Environment Update

Appendix B – Borrowing and Actual Investment Activity compared to the Approved 2025/26 Strategy

Background papers:

None

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: As detailed in the report.

Financial: As detailed in report.

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: Any fund managers will be required to consider ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) factors in their investment process. All the fund managers would be expected to have signed up to the UN Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI). PRI argues that active participation in ESG and exercising shareholder rights on this basis can help to improve the performance of companies which may otherwise not address such concerns and so being an engaged corporate stakeholder is a more effective way to bring about change in corporate behaviour on ethical issues.

Further requirements from those identified above are not practical given the limited ability to directly influence any immediate change in the financial markets.

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None.

Personnel: None

Risk Management: All treasury management activity requires a careful consideration of risk and reward.

Equality and Diversity: None

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees: None

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26

Appendix A – External Environment Update

Introduction

The Council's investment performance and borrowing costs are affected by a range of external economic factors, particularly interest rate expectations and the wider economic outlook.

Economic factors impacting treasury management activity during 2025/26

During 2025/26, the external environment remained uncertain. The lack of progress in ending the Russian invasion of Ukraine, together with the potentially negative implications for global growth arising from US tariff policies, meant that expectations for further Bank Rate reductions during the remainder of 2026 became more limited than had been assumed at the beginning of the year.

At the start of the financial year, Bank Rate was 4.5%, before declining to 3.75% by December 2025. By late February 2026, markets were widely expecting a further rate cut in March, particularly after a close 5–4 vote at the February meeting left Bank Rate unchanged.

However, sentiment changed sharply at the end of February 2026. The outbreak of conflict in the Middle East created uncertainty over the supply of crude oil and wider energy prices. Increased concerns about rising inflation led markets to reassess the likelihood of near-term Bank Rate reductions.

This change in expectations fed quickly through into borrowing markets. Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) one-year rates were 4.46% on 27 February. PWLB one-year rates reached a high of 5.4% during March, reflecting significant volatility in gilt markets and making borrowing more expensive than had originally been expected towards the end of 2025/26. Local authority one-month rates rose above 6% before the middle of March and above 7% in the final week of March. PWLB one-year rates have remained above 5% since that point.

At its March 2026 meeting, the Bank of England left Bank Rate unchanged at 3.75% by a vote of 9-0. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) stated that it "stands ready to act as necessary" and was "alert to the increased risk of domestic inflationary pressures through second-round effects in wage and price-setting". This reinforced the view that, while growth remained weak, inflation risks could limit the scope for further reductions in interest rates over the near term.

Other factors

Local authority-to-local authority lending remained tight. This has limited the availability of funds particularly at year end when borrowing is most needed.

Long Term PWLB rates remain unattractive and generally loans beyond 10 years are 6% plus.

Appendix B – Borrowing and Investment Activity compared to the Approved Strategy for 2025/26

External borrowing

1. The Council has the freedom to borrow in the following circumstances:

- Short-term borrowing to manage liquidity
- Long-term borrowing only to fund capital expenditure if no other capital resources exist e.g. the Council has spent its capital receipts or expects to do so imminently.

2. The Council borrowed £14m externally towards the end of 2025/26 to ensure sufficient year-end liquidity to meet operational needs. The external borrowing outstanding at year end is shown below.

Counter Party	Start	Maturity	Amount	Interest Rate
Public Works Loan Board	25-Feb-26	25-Feb-27	4,000,000	4.29%
Public Works Loan Board	03-Mar-26	03-Mar-27	3,000,000	4.27%
Public Works Loan Board	18-Mar-26	18-Mar-27	7,000,000	4.63%
			14,000,000	

Officers concluded that borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) was a better option than borrowing from other local authorities, due to limited market availability and the high year-end rates.

The Council's financing (borrowing) costs which are charged to the revenue budget, are made up of interest and principal repayment (minimum revenue provision (MRP)).

- Interest costs for 2025/26 were £428k against a budget of £1,189k, giving a favourable variance of £761k because borrowing was both later and lower than budgeted.
- MRP costs were £165k higher than budget, mainly because more vehicles were financed than originally planned.

Overall, this meant in 2025/26 the Council's overall financing cost comprising both MRP and interest was £596k favourable (underspent) against budget.

In December 2025, an updated forecast for external borrowing was prepared for the 2026/27 budget. This forecast identified a borrowing requirement of £20m at 31 March 2026. In practice, borrowing was £6m lower than expected, mainly due to:

- the delayed repayment of £2m from the PLACE scheme. The PLACE scheme was a joint project involving several local authorities in Essex and Hertfordshire to improve housing, funded by Government grant. Chelmsford acted as the lead authority, holding the funds, and it was agreed that the scheme would be disbanded during 2025/26.
- higher receipts and income, including £2m from Saxton 4x4; and

- more vehicles being leased than budgeted (£1.8m), which meant the lease company refunded the Council for the cost of purchases.

Government accounting rules treat finance leases as a form of borrowing, so the Council must report them as such in its accounts and treasury management reporting. At 31 March 2026, the Council had outstanding right-of-use lease liabilities of £6,233k, of which £2,477k related to vehicles and equipment and the remaining £3,755k related mainly to private sector leasing (PSL) for temporary accommodation. PSL leases were not previously included in financing costs before 2024/25, but this changed with the introduction of IFRS 16, which removed the distinction between finance and operating leases.

3. Borrowing Prudent Indicators

Liability Benchmark:-
The Liability Benchmark is a prudential indicator that the Council is required to publish. It helps show whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or a long-term investor and therefore supports long-term financial planning. It represents the cumulative level of external borrowing needed to fund the capital programme while maintaining the minimum level of treasury investments required for day-to-day cash flow management.

Ref.	Liability Benchmark	31/03/26 Actual (£m)	31/03/27 Forecast (£m)	31/03/28 Forecast (£m)	31/03/29 Forecast (£m)
1	Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) (total of external borrowing and internal borrowing)	46	75	82	86
2	Less: Balance sheet resources Internal borrowing, temporary surplus cash used instead of external loans	44	32	32	38
3	Subtotal of 1 and 2 :Net loans requirement (Positive figures are external borrowing requirement)	2	43	51	48
4	Plus: Cash balance to ensure we have liquidity allowance, which we hold as short term investments for treasury management purposes.	5	10	10	10
5	Total of 3 and 4; Liability benchmark + are external; borrowing requirements. (Positive is an external borrowing requirement)	7	53	60	58
			<- Forecast externally borrowed ->		

The table above shows how the Liability Benchmark is calculated.
Ref./Row 1 shows the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), which is the total of external and internal borrowing needed to fund the capital programme. At 31 March 2026, the capital programme required £46m of borrowing.

Ref./Row 2 shows the balance sheet resources available to support internal borrowing instead of external debt. Most of these resources comprise revenue reserves and capital grants.

Ref./Row 3 shows the net loans requirement. A positive figure indicates that external borrowing is forecast. A further allowance is then added to ensure that the Council holds a minimum level of liquid cash, as shown in Row 4.

Ref./Row 5 shows that the forecast year-end external borrowing requirement for 2025/26 was £7m. Actual external borrowing was £14m, meaning the Council was £7m over-borrowed at year end. This was because some payments were made later than expected and cash receipts were higher than expected at year end. The latest projections show external borrowing requirements of £53m at the end of 2026/27 and £60m at the end of 2027/28, after allowing for a minimum liquidity requirement of £10m.

Maturity Structure of borrowing

The Council had £14m of external loan borrowing with the PWLB with durations of a year (100% of loans for less than 2 years). This loan maturity profile is within the limits set in the 2026/27 Strategy that are shown below

Maturity structure of fixed interest rate borrowing 2026/27		
	Lower	**Upper**
Under 12 months	0%	100%
12 months to 2 years	0%	100%
2 years to 5 years	0%	100%
5 years to 10 years	0%	50%
10 years to 25 years	0%	50%
25 years to 50 years	0%	50%
Maturity structure of variable interest rate borrowing 2026/27		
	Lower	**Upper**
Under 12 months	0%	100%
12 months to 2 years	0%	100%
2 years to 5 years	0%	100%
5 years to 10 years	0%	50%
10 years to 25 years	0%	50%
25 years to 50 years	0%	50%

Other borrowing indicators

There has been no need to revise external borrowing limits, given the continued borrowing position being below that which was forecast. Those limits are identified below:

	2025/26 limit	2026/27 limit	2027/28 limit	2028/29 limit
Authorised limit – total external debt	£50m	£85m	£90m	£90m
Operational boundary – total external debt	£28m	£68m	£72m	£72m

The table below shows the updated affordability indicator for the provisional outturn of 2025/26. A comparison that approved at Full Council in February shows the impact is similar (marginally lower) across the projection.

	2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Provision Outturn	2026/27 Forecast	2027/28 Forecast	2028/29 Forecast
Total Financing Costs (excludes income generated by capital schemes)	**£2.407m**	**£2.860m**	**£4.343m**	**£5.509m**	**£6.569m**
Affordability Indicator					
Net Revenue Stream	£29.186m	£30.947m	£31.566m	£32,197m	£32,841m
Updated Ratio of financing costs to Net Revenue Stream	**8.25%**	**9.24%**	**13.76%**	**17.11%**	**20.00%**
Previously identified at Council Feb 2026; Ratio of financing costs to Net Revenue Stream	**8.25%**	**9.51%**	**13.92%**	**18.27%**	**20.98%**

Investments

5. Officers with appropriate knowledge and training invest the Council's cash balances. MUFG Corporate Markets were used as advisers on treasury management to help inform the decision-making process.

6. The Council's cash is invested in the following priority order, in accordance with statutory guidance:

    i) Security – protecting the capital sum invested from loss

    ii) Liquidity – ensuring the funds invested are available for expenditure when needed

    iii) Yield – subject to achieving proper security and liquidity, to pursue a yield on investments to support service provision

Both the regulations and CIPFA advise that absolute certainty of security and liquidity does not need to be achieved before seeking yield from investments. Instead, the Council should strike an appropriate balance between all three objectives, as set out in its Treasury Strategy.

7. The Council forecasts its cash flow to manage in-house investments and liquidity. This enables officers to divide in-house funds into two categories:

- Shorter-term, lower-yielding investments – these are placed for relatively short periods, normally 3 to 6 months, so that investment maturities align with peaks and troughs in the Council's liquidity needs. This is particularly important in the final two months of the year, when council tax income falls significantly because most residents pay in 10 monthly instalments.
- Longer-term, higher-yielding investments – these involve investing 'core cash', also referred to as 'balance sheet resources', which the Council does not need for operational purposes in the short to medium term. Core cash includes balances such as revenue reserves. These funds can be invested for a year or more with appropriate counterparties to generate higher returns without creating liquidity pressures.

8. The Council's investment portfolio decreased from £22.8m at 31 March 2025 to £18.6m at 31 March 2026. This reflects the longer-term trend of lower cash balances available for investment as the Council uses cash to fund capital expenditure.

Indicators to demonstrate Compliance with the Approved Treasury Management Strategy

9. A summary of the approved Treasury Management Strategy and the actual outcomes is set out below:

a.	**To ensure that there are no breaches of the approved counterparty limits or durations**	No breach occurred.
b.	**To maintain a target balance of £5m of short notice funds to manage liquidity**	The Council maintained cash balances within the target range for funds available at up to 35 days' notice.
c.	**To maintain long term investments within set limit of £10m and Investment funds of £12m**	Long-term investment holdings remained within the approved limits.

Total bail-in risk exposure (direct and pooled) was at 89% for 2025/26 and this had reduced compared to the previous year which was 100%. This shown below.

Exposure	**2024/25**	**2025/26**
Bail In Risk -Direct investment (NatWest holding)	1%	2%
Bail In Risk – Pooled Fund Managers and Money Market Funds	99%	87%
Exempt from Bail In (Local authority investment)	0%	11%
Total	**100%**	**100%**

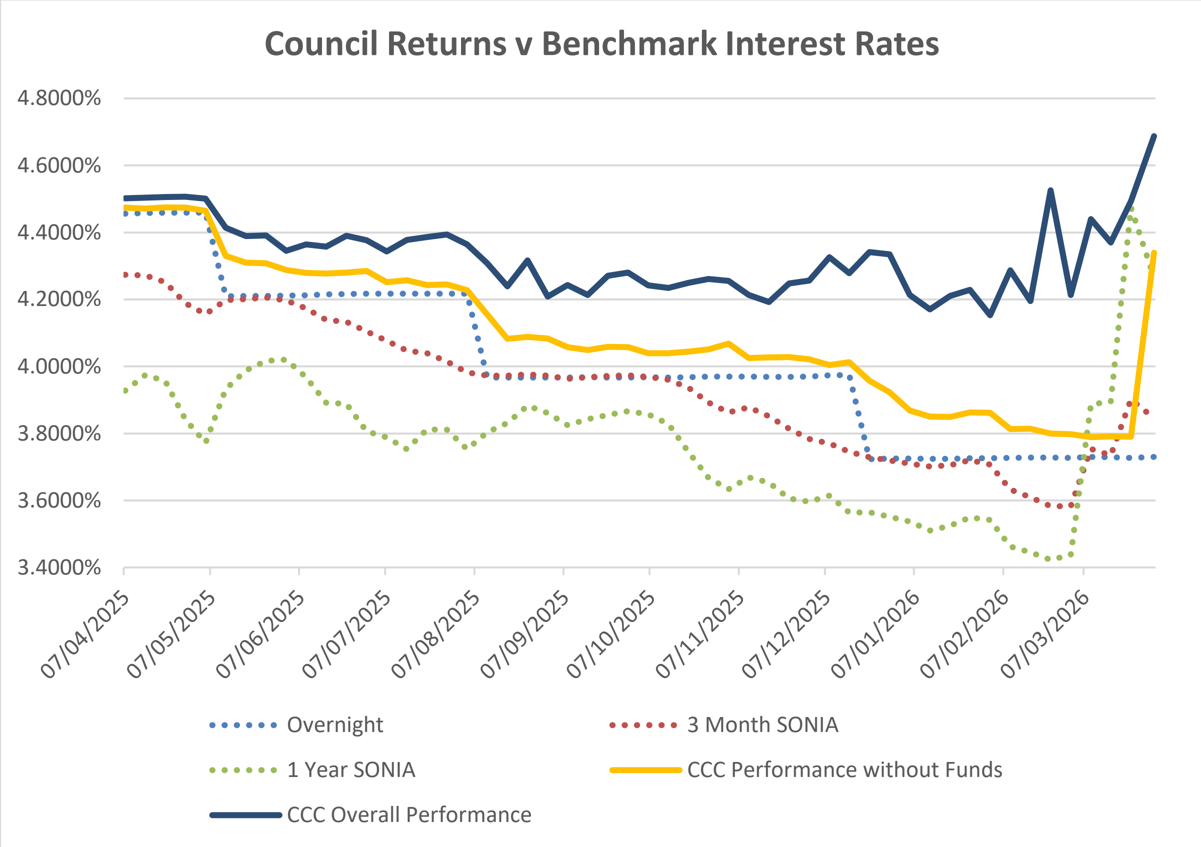
<u>Counter Party</u>

Money Market Funds & Long-Term Funds	Credit Rating (Fitch)	Sum Invested (31/03/2026)	Limits 2025/26
Black Rock Money Market Fund	AAAmmf	£600	£6,000,000
Insight Money Market Fund	AAAmmf	£3,008,730	£6,000,000
Federated Money Market Fund	AAAmmf	£5,986,000	£6,000,000
Deutsche Money Market Fund	AAAmmf	£370	£6,000,000
Invesco Money Market Fund	AAAmmf	£724,040	£6,000,000
BNP Paribas Money Market Fund	AAAmmf	£540	£6,000,000
Aegon Multi Asset Fund	N/A	£3,570,450	Total of £12,000,000
Ninety-One Multi Asset Fund	N/A	£2,997,840	
CCLA Multi Asset Fund	N/A	£0	
Banks & Building Societies			
Natwest	A+	£339,580	£3,000,000
Local Authorities			
Surrey County Council		£2,000,000	£10,000,000
Total Investments		**£18,628,150**	

<u>Return on investments</u>

10. UK interest rates began the year at 4.5% and ended it at 3.75%. The budget assumed an average return of 4.05%.

The table below compares SONIA (the Sterling Overnight Index Average) with the returns generated by the City Council. The figures shown are daily data not cumulative average.



The Council earned a total of £1,199k in investment income during the 2025/26 financial year, which was £274k additional income over the £925k budget. This was mainly due to higher-than-average cash balances caused by capital slippage and higher receipts and revenue income but also partly due to interest rates being slightly higher than budgeted. The year end spike was due to a short duration investment with another local authority at 7%.

10.1 Investment Funds

	Market investments (excluding Multi Asset Funds)	**Multi Asset Funds Income (Based on April 2025 Valuation)**	**All Investments Income Yield**
	Year ending 31/03/2026		
Average yield	4.09%	4.52%	4.30%

The yields shown above have been calculated using opening balances.

The City Council held investments in three Multi-Asset Funds during the financial year. The CCLA Cautious Fund was sold in phases during the year, resulting in a realised loss of £306k. The fund had been generating a lower return than the other two funds and there was little sign of improvement.

In addition, the yield on the fund was below the interest rate the Council was paying on its borrowing. The Section 151 Officer therefore concluded that it was in the Council’s best interests to realise the loss.

Income returns for the two remaining funds are shown below, together with each fund's closing capital value, initial investment value, and unrealised gain or loss.

Fund	Initial Investment Value £	1/04/2025 Investment Value £	31/03/2026 Investment Value £	Unrealised +Gain/(Loss) (since inception) £	Income Return (Based on 1st April 2025 Valuation)
Aegon DIF	3,600,000	3,295,096	3,570,445	(29,555)	5.79%
Ninety One DIF	3,300,000	2,963,896	2,997,836	(302,164)	4.85%
Total/Average	6,900,000	6,258,991	6,568,281	(331,719)	5.35%

Total income from all funds during 2025/26 was £388,504, including dividends received from the CCLA Cautious Fund before it was sold during the year. Income from the two remaining funds was £335k.

The unrealised loss on the two remaining funds had recovered £309K during 2025/26. Fund valuations have been affected by conditions in the global economy and by the conflict in the Middle East. Compared with their initial investment value, the two funds showed a combined unrealised loss of £332k at year end. Only a few days earlier, before the conflict escalated, the unrealised loss had reduced to £73k.

These investments are intended to be held over the medium to long term, so their capital values will fluctuate over time. Since the initial investments were made, the capital performance of the Aegon and Ninety One funds has been adversely affected by geopolitical events. The Section 151 Officer is monitoring the position closely and is considering whether over the medium term the funds offer enough added value to justify holding them. The main concern is whether the yield on these investments falls below the Council's borrowing costs for a prolonged period. If that happens, the Council should consider disposing of some or all of the funds in 2026/27, instead of taking on additional external borrowing. A caveat is that gains in capital value could offset the interest differences. Any decision will depend on the outlook for interest rates, fund values and the Council's borrowing requirement. The funds are not considered to be inherently underperforming, but continued geopolitical uncertainty has weakened returns. In a more stable environment, there remains potential for capital values to recover, although that position is now complicated by higher borrowing costs.

Overall, since inception, the fund portfolio has generated an additional £1,075k of returns above what would been obtained from cash, of which £405k is unrealised.

Conclusion

The Council operated within its Treasury Management Framework throughout the year. This enabled it to protect its financial assets while achieving a good level of return relative to prevailing market interest rates.

Chelmsford City Council

Cabinet

14 July 2026

Adoption of the Revised Essex Coast Recreational disturbance and Avoidance Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)

Report by:

Cabinet Member for Planning and Place-Shaping

Officer Contacts:

Claire Stuckey, Strategic Planning Manager (Planning Policy),
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Purpose

The purpose of this report is to consider the revised Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) 2026 and associated tariff and to recommend its adoption by the Council's Cabinet. It also seeks approval to revoke the existing RAMS Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which no longer aligns with the revised RAMS and to replace it with a Technical Advice Note (TAN).

Options

1. Adopt the revised Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance Mitigation Strategy (RAMS 2026) and the associated tariff, and to revoke the existing RAMS Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and replace it with a Technical Advice Note (TAN).
2. Not adopt the revised Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance Mitigation Strategy (RAMS 2026) and the associated tariff, and to revoke the existing RAMS Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and replace it with a Technical Advice Note (TAN).

Preferred option and reasons

The preferred option is the first option, as it will ensure the council continues to meet its legal duties under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) by providing a robust, evidence-led and legally compliant framework to mitigate the impacts of residential development on internationally protected habitats. The updated tariff will ensure that the full cost of mitigation is fairly and proportionately secured for the lifetime of the development. Revoking the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and replacing it with a Technical Advice Note will provide up-to-date guidance on the revised RAMS implementation and reflect legislative changes which remove the ability to prepare new SPDs.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet adopts the revised Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) 2026 and associated tariff as set out in Appendix 1.

2. That Cabinet approves the implementation of a revised Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) 2026 tariff of £476 per net additional dwelling (or equivalent qualifying development and index linked), to take effect from 1 August 2026.

3. That Cabinet revokes the adopted Essex Coast RAMS Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), noting that its content is no longer fully aligned with the revised Strategy, evidence base and tariff.

4. That Cabinet agrees to replace the Essex Coast RAMS Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) with an Essex Coast RAMS Technical Advice Note (TAN) and that the Assistant Director – Planning and Place Shaping be authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Place Shaping, to finalise and publish the TAN for use alongside the revised Essex Coast RAMS Strategy 2026.

1. Background

1.1. The Essex coastline stretches for around 350 miles, one of the longest of any county in England. The coastline of Essex begins in the Thames Estuary in the south and extends northwards to the port of Harwich and the estuary of the river Stour. The Essex coastline is of exceptional nature conservation importance, it is home to both breeding and non-breeding coastal birds and features a variety of habitats and environments from sandy beaches, shingle spits and shell banks to mud-flat, saltmarsh, offshore islands, and clay cliffs.

1.2. The majority of the Essex coastline is covered by internationally important nature conservation sites that support significant bird populations through a range of designations including a Special Area of Conservation[1] (SAC), Special Protection Areas[2] (SPAs) and Ramsar[3] sites which are afforded the highest level of protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017[4] (as amended).

1.3. There are ten protected habitat sites along the Essex coast including the Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA and Ramsar at South Woodham Ferrers. These sites are shown on page 10, Map 1 of the revised RAMS 2026 in Appendix 1.

[1] SACs are protected areas which support high-quality habitats and species.
[2] SPAs are protected areas which support rare, vulnerable and migratory birds.
[3] Ramsar sites are areas of wetland of international importance which are designated under the Convention of Wetlands under the Ramsar Convention 1971.
[4] Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended (commonly known as the 'Habitats Regulations')

1.4. As more homes are built in Essex, more people will live and work near the coast, leading to an increase in coastal visitors and demand for recreation such as walking, dog walking, cycling and water-based activities. This brings important social and economic benefits, including improved wellbeing and access to nature. However, higher visitor numbers can place pressure on sensitive coastal habitats, through increased recreational activities causing disturbance to birds and damage to areas such as saltmarsh and mudflats.

1.5. Recreational disturbance arising from residential development within the defined Zone of Influence (ZoI) has been identified as a key impact pathway on the designated habitat sites, particularly affecting qualifying bird species through disturbance, habitat degradation and increased visitor pressure.

1.6. Under the Habitats Regulations, Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), are Competent Authorities, who have a legal duty to ensure that new development does not adversely affect the integrity of protected sites which includes recreational pressure from occupiers of residential development. Where a risk of identified; effective mitigation must be secured before development can be permitted.

1.7. The RAMS is a partnership and co-ordinated approach between twelve Essex LPAs[5] which aims to mitigate the in-combination recreational impacts of new residential development on protected coastal habitats and bird populations. It ensures that planned housing growth across Essex can take place in a lawful and sustainable way, while safeguarding sensitive species and habitats protected by international nature conservation designations over the longer-term. By addressing risks up front, the strategy provides a proactive, cross-boundary solution that ensures cumulative impacts of growth across a wide area are considered. The strategy ensures necessary resources and costs are identified and provides clarity for developers when bringing forward sites for development within the evidenced Zone of Influence (ZoI).

1.8. The strategic RAMS approach enables developers to contribute towards a coordinated mitigation package delivered across a wide area, rather than being required to provide bespoke mitigation on a site-by-site basis for individual planning applications. This approach is widely used nationally and has been repeatedly demonstrated to be effective, efficient and legally robust through the planning process. Developers can also choose to provide their own bespoke mitigation rather than pay the RAMS tariff, however this is extremely resource intensive. RAMS provides a clear and efficient mechanism for complying with the Habitats Regulations, for both developers and LPAs. The Essex Coast RAMS is one of eleven strategic solutions nationally, of which seven are related to coastal habitats.

1.9. The RAMS was originally adopted by the twelve Essex LPAs in 2019/20. Chelmsford City Council operates as the project Accountable Body and Lead Institution responsible for managing the project finances and employing the project staff including the Coastal Rangers. The commitment to implement the RAMS is set out in the adopted and emerging Chelmsford Local Plans.

1.10. Bird Aware Essex is the delivery mechanism for the Essex Coast RAMS. It is the public-facing service that delivers many of the on-the-ground mitigation measures and

[5] Basildon Borough Council, Braintree District Council, Brentwood Borough Council, Castle Point Borough Council, Chelmsford City Council, Colchester City Council, Maldon District Council, Rochford District Council, Southend-on-Sea City Council, Tendring District Council, Thurrock Borough Council, Uttlesford District Council

plays a key role in ensuring that RAMS is effective, visible and evidence-led. As Accountable Body, Chelmsford City Council employs and hosts the Bird Aware Essex Coastal Rangers and delivery staff through a Partnership Agreement with the participating LPAs.

1.11. RAMS funding through developer contributions has already enabled the delivery of a number of tangible mitigation measures which directly benefit the Essex coastline including around South Woodham Ferrers. These include:

- Regular patrols and visitor engagement across the Essex coast by the project's team of Coastal Rangers
- Project-wide communication and engagement initiatives, including the installation of interpretation boards, signage, leaflet boxes and fencing at Marsh Farm Country Park, South Woodham Ferrers and contributions to 'Love your Chelmsford'
- Educational materials which promote responsible coastal visits including a Coastal Code
- Direct engagement with 7,600 school children including through the Food and Farming event and school events held at ARU Writtle
- Ongoing monitoring of both recreational activity and ecological conditions across the Essex coast, including South Woodham Ferrer's Habitats Sites.

2. The Essex Coast RAMS Review

2.1. In December 2023, Natural England, the Government's advisor for the natural environment in England wrote to the Essex Coast RAMS Partnership, formally advising of the need to undertake a review and update of the Essex Coast RAMS, specifically to address:

- Significant increases in projected housing growth across Essex (almost double original assumptions)
- Insufficient long-term costing of the original Strategy (or in-perpetuity funding)
- Under-provision of Coastal Rangers and equipment to manage 500km of coastline, and
- Omission of certain delivery elements in the original mitigation package (e.g. Coastal Ranger vehicles).

2.2. In line with established best practice, strategic mitigation solutions should also be reviewed approximately every five years.

2.3. Under the Habitat Regulations[6] mitigation measures must be secured and effective for as long as the plan or project has the potential to affect the protected site. In practice, this requires mitigation to be provided for the lifetime of the development. The original RAMS package was costed only to the end of the Local Plan period (2038) and not for the duration of the impact which was identified by Natural England as a fundamental omission. A review was required to ensure that mitigation measures are fully funded and secured in perpetuity. In addition, the original visitor surveys undertaken between 2011 and 2013 had become dated and required updating.

2.4. The RAMS review began in Summer 2024, and progress has also been regularly reported and agreed by the Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA) Chief Officers

6. Regulation 63 (Appropriate Assessment) and Regulation 64 (Derogations)

Forum, which operates as the RAMS Project Board or main governing body. Independent ecological consultants, Footprint Ecology were appointed in October 2024 to undertake repeat visitor surveys across the coast, provide an up-to-date evidence base, review the effectiveness of the current mitigation package, and produce an updated Strategy that ensures the long-term costs of the mitigation are properly accounted for.

2.5. Natural England has endorsed the approach taken for the review and the final RAMS documentation. The final revised RAMS was also endorsed by EPOA Chief Officers on Thursday 30 April 2026.

3. Key differences between the current and revised Essex Coast RAMS

3.1. The revised RAMS represents a significant revision to the original approach, while maintaining the same underlying principles. The key changes are summarised below:

- An updated mitigation package, considering increased housing growth and in-perpetuity mitigation for the lifetime of development
- An updated tariff fee, and
- Amended development types eligible to pay the tariff.

Updated mitigation package

3.2. The National Planning Policy Framework published in December 2024 changed the standard methodology for calculating an area's housing need. This has led to a significant increase in the numbers of new homes to be built across Essex and in the project Zone of Influence (ZoI) since the adoption of the current RAMS in 2019/20.

3.3. Projections indicate approximately 148,309[7] new dwellings within the ZoI over the next 20 years, an increase of around 72,907 dwellings in the original RAMS. With an estimated 609,786 existing dwellings in the ZoI in 2025, this represents a 24% increase in the housing stock within the ZoI. This growth will result in a commensurate increase in recreational visits to designated coastal sites, requiring an enhanced mitigation response.

3.4. Updated visitor surveys undertaken by Footprint Ecology in winter and summer 2025 to support the RAMS review demonstrate that the Essex coast was busier in 2025 than indicated in the earlier surveys to inform the original RAMS. The Visitor Survey Report (attached at Appendix 2) concludes that an enhanced recreation mitigation package is necessary to ensure continued compliance with the Habitats Regulations.

3.5. The updated mitigation package builds on and expands interventions in the original RAMS to reflect the additional workload associated with providing mitigation for more planned housing growth, changes in recreational patterns and visitor behaviour and the requirement to deliver mitigation effectively in perpetuity or for the duration of the impact. It was developed through workshops and engagement with key stakeholders and subsequently refined in discussion with partner LPAs and Natural England. The outcome is a robust and proportionate mitigation package capable of ensuring that the

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[7] It should be noted that this is a predicted figure agreed by LPAs in 2025 in order to agree a baseline for the RAMS review. Future reviews of the RAMS will consider changes to proposed predicted housing growth.

recreational pressure arising from new development, in-combination, will not lead to adverse effects on the integrity of protected sites.

3.6. The enhanced mitigation package is summarised in Table 3 of the revised RAMS (attached at Appendix 1) and includes:

- An expanded and more specialised ranger service including 9.5 full-time equivalent Coastal Rangers (currently five) and three new specialist roles with budgets including an Education and Community Engagement Lead and Dog Project Officer
- A stronger focus on tackling dog disturbance risks including coast-wide dog projects and targeted engagement with commercial dog walkers
- Increased visitor engagement and education
- Increased seasonal coverage for beach nesting birds and winter roost protection
- Opportunities for new site-specific and more local mitigation projects, and
- Enhanced monitoring and data collection, with monitoring embedded as a core delivery function.

Updated tariff fee

3.7. The RAMS tariff is a financial contribution paid by a developer for every net new dwelling or qualifying unit to fund the strategic mitigation package. The original mitigation package was not costed in perpetuity i.e. it did not consider the lifetime of the development, calculated as 80-years. This omission was a primary reason why the existing RAMS tariff remains significantly lower than tariffs for comparable strategic schemes elsewhere in the country, despite the scale and sensitivity of the Essex coastline.

3.8. Natural England identified this as a key issue that needed to be addressed as part of the review. Had the original mitigation package in the current RAMS been costed in-perpetuity from the outset, the baseline tariff would have been £489.18 per dwelling, rising with inflation to approximately £660.06 at 2025 values. As the current RAMS does not include an in-perpetuity cost, the current 2026 tariff stands at £175.55. This is significantly lower than tariffs from comparable strategic mitigation solutions elsewhere in the country which typically range from £300 to over £1000, with an average cost of £500.

3.9. The updated RAMS mitigation package has been costed at £72,594,500 (was originally £8,916,448), reflecting delivery in perpetuity and the expansion and strengthening of the mitigation package. The tariff is calculated by dividing the total cost of mitigation by the total number of dwellings planned within the ZoI. As such, the revised RAMS tariff will be charged at £476 per new dwelling or qualifying unit (rounded to the nearest pound and indexed-linked annually). This revised tariff remains within the national average of £500 and can therefore be regarded as fair and proportionate. A summary of the tariff calculation is set out in Appendix 4.

3.10. As noted in paragraph 1.18, developers can provide their own mitigation requirements through a bespoke scheme if they choose, but the vast majority are likely to pay towards the RAMS instead as this is easier and more cost effective. The RAMS approach is also used across the country and provides clarity and certainty for developers and LPAs as it has been proven to be robust through the planning process.

Amended development types to pay the tariff

3.11. Whilst new residential development represents the main source of recreational pressure, other land uses can also create significant impacts on designated habitat sites, particularly those including overnight accommodation, high visitor turnover or public recreational use. The revised RAMS may therefore also apply to other forms of development to ensure that recreational impacts are fully addressed such as residential or overnight accommodation. Further detail on eligible development types will be provided the RAMS Technical Advice Note (TAN).

3.12. Given the increase in the tariff level, a transitional period for implementing the revised tariff has been agreed with Natural England (Appendix 3):

- For planning applications submitted between 1 April and 31 July 2026, the tariff applicable is the current tariff of £175.55
- Where planning applications are still awaiting final determination on 31 July 2026, the tariff applicable is the rate in force at the time of submission of the planning application to the LPA
- Where permission is granted at appeal and RAMS has not been paid, the tariff applicable is the rate in force on the date of the appeal being allowed
- For planning applications submitted on or after 1 August 2026, the new RAMS tariff applies.

4. Revoking the RAMS SPD with replacing with a RAMS Technical Advice Note

4.1. The current adopted RAMS SPD provides more guidance to developers and Planners on how the RAMS is implemented and provides a consistent mechanism to guide decision-making within partner LPAs. The current SPD does not reflect the updated mitigation strategy, evidence base or revised tariff, so is now out of date. It is therefore recommended that the current RAMS SPD is formally revoked.

4.2. As part of the Government's plan-making reforms[8], the ability to create and adopt new SPDs has been removed. Therefore, the SPD will be replaced with a Technical Advice Note (TAN) providing up-to-date guidance on the revised RAMS implementation. This approach is supported by Natural England and EPOA.

4.3. The TAN will not introduce new policy, so it is recommended that the Assistant Director – Planning and Place Shaping be authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Place Shaping, to finalise and publish the TAN later this summer.

5. Governance and Longevity

5.1. The strategy will operate indefinitely on a rolling basis, with this version running to around 2031. The strategy has, however, been written in the context of local plans and the likely levels of growth to around 2045. The strategy will be reviewed and updated approximately every 5 years, providing the opportunity to check the housing numbers,

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[8] The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026

delivery, costs and mitigation priorities. The reviews will inform the business plans that underpin the work of the partnership and their staff.

5.2. The existing RAMS partnership governance arrangements for decision making which include a RAMS Steering group and EPOA will continue following the review. The Essex Coastal Forum which comprises Officers and Members from partner LPAs, will also continue to receive reports on the project activities and implementation and provide democratic oversight. There will be also an opportunity to restructure the governance arrangements going forwards for example to ensure that it is resilient to Local Government Reform, Devolution and future planning system change.

6. Conclusions

6.1. There is a legal requirement for LPAs to comply with the Habitat Regulations and to implement the RAMS in the Council's adopted and emerging Chelmsford Local Plans. RAMS is a clear and effective mechanism for compliance through planning applications. It has a proven record of delivering mitigation measures since its adoption in 2019/20 through Bird Aware Essex, contributing to the protection of designated habitat sites along the Essex coast. Chelmsford benefits from the mitigation (Coastal Ranger patrols, communication and engagement activities etc.) that takes place along the coastline including around South Woodham Ferrers.

6.2. The revised Essex Coast RAMS provides a robust, evidence-led and legally compliant framework to mitigate the impacts of residential development on internationally protected habitats. The updated tariff ensures that the full cost of mitigation is fairly and proportionately secured for the lifetime of the development.

6.3. Adoption of the updated RAMS 2026 is essential to enable the continued lawful determination of planning applications and to ensure the protection of the Essex coast's internationally important habitats. Implementation will be supported by a TAN due to be published later in the Summer.

List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance Mitigation Strategy 2026
Appendix 2 – Essex Visitor Survey Report
Appendix 3 – Natural England Letter to LPAs 16 April 2026
Appendix 4 – RAMS Tariff Calculation Table

Background Papers:

Adopted Chelmsford Local Plan May 2020
Chelmsford Local Plan Review - Pre Submission (Regulation 19) Document 2025
National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024
Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) and Supplementary Planning Document available at https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/essex-coast-rams/
Home - Bird Aware Essex
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023
The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026

Corporate Implications:

Legal/Constitutional:
This is an executive function which falls to Cabinet to determine. The Council has a duty under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as amended, to ensure that development does not adversely affect the integrity of designated European sites. Residential development within the ZoI gives rise to recreational disturbance impacts. Without appropriate mitigation, these impacts could result in adverse effects on site integrity. The Essex Coast RAMS provides the mechanism by which these impacts are mitigated. Without the Essex Coast RAMS, the Council would be unable to conclude no adverse effect on integrity and would therefore be unable to lawfully grant planning permission for relevant residential development.

Financial:
The Essex Coast RAMS tariff ensures that the full cost of mitigation is funded through developer contributions. This approach ensures that the financial burden does not fall on the Council, that recreational mitigation is delivered in line with development and that long-term funding is secured.

CCC's contribution toward the cost of the Essex Coast RAMS and Technical Advice Note (TAN) is covered by existing budget provision. CCC costs for operating as the RAMS Accountable Body and Lead Institution are recouped e.g. through annual Delivery Officer HR line management costs and annual financial management costs.

Potential Impact on Climate Change and the Environment:
The Essex Coast RAMS project ensures that the integrity of habitats sites along the Essex coast can be effectively preserved. This enables the Council to more effectively protect, enhance and conserve habitats and species through the planning process.

Contribution toward Achieving a Net Zero Carbon Position by 2030:
There are no contributions arising directly from this report.

Personnel:
CCC has a S106 Monitoring Officer in post who is responsible for administrating the RAMS tariff payments. CCC staff are already in place for operating as the project Accountable Body and Lead Institution and these costs are recouped.

Risk Management:
The Essex Coast RAMS is needed to deliver the adopted and emerging new Chelmsford Local Plans. The RAMS and Technical Advice Note (TAN) will reduce the risk of legal challenges by ensuring that all applications that pay the tariff comply with the Habitats Regulations. Failure to adopt the updated RAMS could lead to delays in determining planning applications and possible delays to development.

Equality and Diversity:
An Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the revised RAMS. The revised Essex Coast RAMS and increased tariff present low risk of negative equality impacts, all of which are appropriately mitigated. The strategy supports statutory compliance, environmental protection and long-term public benefit, while meeting the Equality Act 2010 duties.

Health and Safety:
There are no Health & Safety issues arising directly from this report.

Digital:

There are no digital issues arising directly from this report.

Other:
The Review of the Local Plan will seek to contribute to priorities in the Council's Our Chelmsford, Our Plan 2023: A Fairer and More Inclusive Place, A Greener and Safer Place, and A More Connected Place.

Consultees:

CCC – Development Management

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

The report takes account of the following policies and strategies of the City Council:

Adopted Local Plan 2013-2036
Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy 2018-2038
Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan (2020)

Our Chelmsford, Our Plan

The above report relates to the following priorities in the Corporate Plan:

Promoting sustainable and environmentally responsible growth to stimulate a vibrant, balanced economy, a fairer society and provide more homes of all types.

Creating a distinctive sense of place, making the area more attractive, promoting its green credentials, ensuring that people and communities are safe.

Bringing people together and working in partnership to encourage healthy, active lives, building stronger, more resilient communities so that people feel proud to live, work and study in the area.