

MINUTES
of the
CHELMSFORD POLICY BOARD
held on 19 March 2026 at 7pm

Present:

Councillor C. Adutwim (Chair)

Councillors H. Ayres, P. Clark, P. Davey, I. Fuller, J. Jeapes, S. Manley, B. Massey, M. O'Brien, S. Scott, A. Sosin, A. Thorpe-Apps and S. Young

Also in attendance:

Cllr J. Deakin

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Whitehead. Cllr Scott substituted for Cllr Whitehead.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that they must disclose any interests they knew they had 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 became aware of the interest. If the interest was a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest they were also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting. Any declarations are recorded in the relevant minute below.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 15th January 2026 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. Public Questions

No public questions had been submitted for the meeting.

5. Chelmsford Local Plan – Additional Sites (Regulation 19) Consultation Feedback

The Board were asked to consider a report which provided feedback on the main issues raised in the consultation responses to the Focused Consultation Additional Sites (Regulation 19) Document and the accompanying Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA).

The Board noted that consultation had only been on the additional sites, rather than the existing sites in the Pre-Submission Local Plan, and had ran for seven weeks, closing on 8 January 2026. It was shared that over ten thousand notifications had been sent as well as social media posts, site notices and exhibitions to promote the consultation. The Board was informed that the consultation process met all legislative requirements and the commitments

set out in the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement, with 1082 comments received from 780 respondents. The Board was informed that a good level of feedback had been received, with support for the plan outright from most Government agencies or national bodies, and qualified support subject to minor proposed amendments to some sites from others. It was noted that Parish Council's had mainly opposed the sites, with many suggesting changes including the deletion of site allocations, also that most public comments were objecting to one or more of the additional sites, although there was some limited support. The Board was informed that the IIA had received 47 responses from 41 respondents, and these had been analysed by consultants and were available in the report.

The Board were provided with an update on improvements to Junction 19 of the A12, with a scheme for the first phase of improvements now approved in principle by relevant stakeholders, and it was noted that National Highways and Essex Highways had not stated that the Local Plan growth would have a severe impact on the strategic highway network.

The Board were reminded of the next steps to submit the Local Plan for Independent Examination, which was scheduled for June 2026. Documents would continue to be prepared ahead of the Board's consideration of the plan submission in May, who would then be asked to recommend it to the Council's Cabinet and Full Council meetings for approval to submit.

In response to questions from the Board, officers noted that;

- As part of modelling, officers had looked at how the A12 would be affected by additional homes elsewhere too, via growth in other areas and the A12 as a whole via close working with National Highways, to ensure they were content with what was in the Local Plan and so there could be agreement on road capacities.
- There were two separate Regulation 19 consultations on sites and as a result, apart from the 3 sites that had been extended in the Additional Sites Document consultation, the original sites from the initial Regulation 19 document would be staying the same.
- Sites in any approved Local Plan, would be brought forward by developers as and when they felt it was suitable and as there was appetite in the housing market from potential buyers. This normally meant that a steady supply of housing would be delivered, rather than all in a short space of time.
- The Green Wedge remained an important part of planning matters in Chelmsford and continued to be a very powerful local landscape designation. It was noted that the National Planning Policy Framework did not set out specific requirements for 'valued landscapes', instead that it was considered on a case by case basis. It was also noted that policies already covered matters such as gaps between sites and that changes such as those would be a matter for a future Local Plan. A Member of the Board requested that a review of the green wedge be considered in the next review of the Local Plan and this was noted by Officers.

RESOLVED that;

1. That the Board noted the outcomes of the Focused Consultation Additional Sites (Regulation 19) consultation and approved the feedback reports at Appendices 1 and 2 for publication.
2. Authority be delegated to the Director of Sustainable Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for a Greener Chelmsford to (i) make any necessary minor amendments to the Focused Consultation Additional Sites (Regulation 19) Feedback Report Document and the Additional Sites Integrated Impact Assessment Feedback Report and (ii) prepare all necessary documentation to support the submission of the plan for Independent Examination.

(7.03pm to 7.33pm)

6. Work Programme

The Board considered a report updating them on their future work programme. The Board were informed that an item on an updated Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy would be considered at the meeting on 25th June 2026.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted.

(7.34pm to 7.35pm)

7. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7.35pm

Chair