

Chelmsford Policy Board Agenda

5 July 2021 at 7pm

Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Chelmsford

Membership

Councillor I Fuller (Chair)

and Councillors

H Ayres, D Clark, W Daden, J Galley, N Gulliver, G B R Knight,
G H J Pooley, R J Poulter, A Sosin, N Walsh, R T Whitehead
and T N Willis

Local people may attend this meeting, where your elected Councillors take decisions affecting YOU and your City. There will also be an opportunity to ask your Councillors questions or make a statement. However, numbers must necessarily be restricted owing to distancing requirements and if you wish to attend you will need to obtain an admission pass beforehand.

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CHELMSFORD POLICY BOARD

5 JULY 2021

AGENDA

PART 1

Items to be considered when members of the public are likely to be present

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

All Members are reminded that they 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. Election of Vice Chair

4. Minutes

Minutes of meetings on 4 March and 15 March 2021

5. 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 15 minutes is allotted to public questions/statements, which must be about matters for which the Board 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.

Owing to social distancing requirements, it is necessary to limit the number of members of the public attending the meeting. If you wish to attend, whether as an observer or to ask a question or make a statement, please email committees@chelmsford.gov.uk in advance of the meeting. If space permits, you will be sent an admission pass which must be presented on arrival.

6. Private Rented Sector Offer Policy

7. Draft Housing Strategy

8. St Peter's School Site Masterplan

9. Policy Board Work Programme

10. Urgent Business

To consider any other matter which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be considered by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency and which does not constitute a key decision.

PART II (EXEMPT ITEMS)

NIL

MINUTES
of the
CHELMSFORD POLICY BOARD
held on 4 March 2021 at 7.00pm

Present:

Councillor I Fuller (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Councillors H Ayres, N Chambers, W Daden, J Galley, M Goldman, S Goldman,
G B R Knight, R Moore, G H J Pooley, R J Poulter, I Roberts, M Sismey, A Sosin,
and N Walsh

Also present:

Councillors D Clark, A Davidson, C Davidson, R Lee, M J Mackrory, C Shaw, J Sosin
and S Young

1. Attendance and Apologies for Absence

The attendance of those present was confirmed. Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor R T Whitehead, who had appointed Councillor M Sismey as his substitute.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 14 January 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

3. Declarations of Interest

All Members were reminded to disclose any interests in items of business on the meeting's agenda and that they should do so at this point on the agenda or as soon as they became aware of the interest. They were also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of the meeting, if they had not previously notified her about it.

4. Public Questions

Questions were put and statements made by Great Baddow Parish Council and the Great Baddow East Neighbourhood Association on the East Chelmsford Masterplan, details of which are recorded under minute number 5 below.

5. Strategic Growth Site Allocations 3b, 3c and 3d – Masterplan for East Chelmsford

The Policy Board considered a masterplan for Strategic Growth Site Allocations 3b, 3c and 3d – East Chelmsford, which was being brought forward by Redrow Homes. Site 3b had been allocated for employment use and Sites 3c and 3d for residential use. Strategic Growth Site 3a – Manor Farm, was being brought forward by Hopkins Homes who were preparing a separate masterplan for that site. Hopkins Homes and Redrow Homes were engaging with one another to ensure consistency across the masterplans and the City Council had considered both developers' masterplans as they had progressed to ensure compatibility between the proposals.

The Masterplan presented to the meeting provided for:

- Strategic Growth Site 3c – Around 100 new homes including 35% affordable housing
- Strategic Growth Site 3b – Around 5,000sqm (net) new Use Class B1 floorspace, or other appropriate B Use Classes, a stand-alone early years and childcare nursery and safeguarded land for the future expansion of the Sandon Park and Ride
- Strategic Growth Site 3d – Around 50 new homes including 35% affordable housing

Its core content included context and site analysis; the constraints and opportunities presented by the site; analysis of landscape, ecology, heritage and drainage; access, movement and connectivity; land use and green infrastructure through the creation of a network of green corridors and compensatory planting.

Questions and statements on the Masterplan had been submitted by Great Baddow Parish Council and the Great Baddow East Neighbourhood Association (GBENA). Their concerns centred primarily on the impact the development would have on an already congested road network; the lack of information on the provision of infrastructure and services to support the development; the potential of the development to exacerbate flooding in the area; and the lack of co-ordination of this development with that intended for Site 3a and the need to consider all of the sites in conjunction with one another.

Ward councillors for the area attended the meeting and many of their comments reflected the concerns expressed by the Parish Council and GBENA. They were of the opinion that a coherent and coordinated development would best be achieved by considering together the masterplans of both developers and it was regrettable that both had not been brought forward at the same time. They were not convinced that the concerns about the impact of the Redrow and Hopkins developments on the highway network were adequately addressed by the former's masterplan. In particular, the proposed cycle network lacked a direct, off-road link to the city centre; there was no provision for a footpath and cycle path in Molrams Lane to Baddow Hall school; there were no plans for a dedicated cycle route in Meadgate

Avenue; and some of the routes planned in the masterplan were dependent on that being produced by Hopkins.

Other doubts expressed by ward councillors and members of the Board included the impact of the development on already over-stretched infrastructure and facilities in Great Baddow, including schools and health services; the ability of current bus services to support the sites; the suitability of the proposed three-storey elements of the residential developments; the apparent use of part of the Park and Ride site to provide parking for the industrial units at Site 3b; and the design of the roundabout which provided the main access to the residential areas.

In response to the questions and comments, officers informed that Board that:

- Whilst it would be desirable to have one masterplan that covered all the development sites in East Chelmsford, the sites were in different ownerships and being brought forward by separate developers. They also had differing requirements, constraints and considerations. Nonetheless, efforts had made to ensure that Redrow and Hopkins took into account each other's masterplan, worked together to create a synergy between the two and brought them forward as close to the same time as possible. A joint masterplan would not guarantee the delivery of the East Chelmsford sites both individually or collectively. It would still be for the separate developers to determine whether their sites would be delivered but at present there is every indication that they will be. Hopkins Homes were keen to proceed with consultation on their masterplan and submit it for approval as soon as possible, there had been a series of meetings between them and Redrow, and a legal agreement between the two companies for the main roundabout serving both developments was imminent. Even if, for example, the Hopkins masterplan was not presented or approved, the Redrow plan would satisfy the Local Plan requirements for the development of that site.
- With regard to highway matters, the allocation of the Redrow sites had been supported by traffic modelling at the Local Plan stage which confirmed that the current and proposed highway network could accommodate traffic generated by the development. A full transport assessment would accompany the detailed planning application. The impact on the Army and Navy would be taken into account in plans for future improvements to the roundabout and plans for the Bradwell B development would need to include measures to mitigate the impact of construction traffic on all routes that might be affected by it. The main access to the residential areas would be via the new roundabout rather than Molrams Lane, with only a small number of properties being accessed via that Lane. Both developers were co-ordinating with Essex County Council on their traffic models and there would be an assessment as part of the detailed planning application of any off-site improvements that may need to be made to the highway network.
- The Redrow masterplan included a number of cycle routes that connected the site to the existing cycle network and would improve the present provision for cycling through less trafficked routes. This included an off-road route to the Park and Ride site and the national cycle network to the city centre. There would also be connections through the Hopkins Homes site and the routes proposed by both

developers were likely to be delivered at around the same time. Land ownership constraints prevented the creation of entirely off-road routes but Redrow was taking all steps possible to create safe and convenient routes.

- The Redrow development would not include the direct provision of infrastructure services for health and education but contributions for the expansion and enhancement of existing services would be secured through Section 106 contributions. Baddow Hall school, for example, had space for expansion.
- The strategic flood risk assessment for the site produced to support its inclusion in the Local Plan had shown that it was suitable for development and the measures proposed in the masterplan to prevent flooding and manage surface water drainage were acceptable. The parts of the site to be developed were in the areas of lowest risk and the planning application would include details of drainage and flood mitigation.
- Officers were mindful of concerns about the scale and density of the residential developments. However, the three-storey elements would act as strong gateway features at the main accesses to the developments which, in design terms, would be appropriate in the context of the infrastructure to be built in those areas.
- The need for a five-arm roundabout to provide access to the residential sites was dictated by the topography of the area.
- The car parking standards for the employment site would meet the City Council's requirements and would be provided on-site.
- The developer was looking at the improvements to bus services that would be needed to serve the site.

The Board concluded that although ideally the developments in East Chelmsford would be the subject of a single masterplan, or separate plans that were submitted at the same time, in order to alleviate any uncertainty about synergy between the development areas, the Cabinet should be recommended to approve the Redrow masterplan but be informed of the concerns expressed at the meeting. Officers were asked to press Redrow and Hopkins Homes for a joint statement confirming that they would work together to address those concerns.

RESOLVED that :

1. The Policy Board recommend to Cabinet that the masterplan for East Chelmsford attached at Appendix 1 to the report to the meeting be approved, but that it notes the concerns expressed at the meeting regarding the uncertainty of delivery of infrastructure, in particular interdependent cycling and walking connectivity, relating to the separate masterplan covering Site 3a (being delivered separately by Hopkins Homes).
2. The officers seek from Redrow Homes and Hopkins Homes before the Cabinet considers this masterplan a joint statement from them confirming that they are working collaboratively with each other to ensure key connections and synergy between the sites to ensure the successful delivery of the East Chelmsford allocation.
3. The Director of Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Policy Board and the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development, be

authorised to negotiate any final changes to the masterplan ahead of its consideration by the Cabinet.

(7.31pm to 9.20pm)

6. Solar Farm Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

A Supplementary Planning Document on the development of solar farms was submitted for the Board's approval prior to formal consultation. It provided guidance on preparing, submitting and assessing planning proposals for solar farm proposals and guidance on where solar farms may be most suitable. The SPD considered and applied the requirements of national planning policy and guidance, local planning policies and other relevant strategies and provided practical advice intended to be used by solar farm applicants, Council planners, local stakeholders, and communities in the consideration of solar farm proposals. Once adopted, the SPD would be a material consideration in the determination of solar farm development proposals in the Council's area.

A Green Sheet was circulated before the meeting proposing the deletion of the reference in paragraph 7.36 of the SPD to solar farms within 500m of each other and instead emphasising the need for developers to engage with the City Council on the cumulative impact of developments at the pre-application stage.

During the discussion of the report it was suggested that reference should be included in the SPD that the use of overhead powerlines should be avoided and that the operators of solar farms should show provision for the restoration of the sites at the end of their operation, perhaps by providing a financial bond which they would pay into during the life of the solar farm.

In response to other points raised, officers said that

- RAMS contributions could not be required for solar farm sites as such contributions related only to residential developments; however, the SPD required that solar farms near European Designated Sites include a habitat assessment.
- The inclusion in the SPD of an assumption that they would be welcomed in principle reflected the National Planning Policy Framework which said that they should not be resisted in principle unless there were robust planning reasons for doing so. Any proposal would be judged on its merits and against national and local planning considerations.
- Solar farm technology was evolving fast and therefore the types of modules the Council would expect to be provided were not specified.

RESOLVED that:

1. Subject to the amendment to paragraph 7.36 detailed in the Green Sheet and the addition of wording relating to the restoration of solar farm sites and avoiding overhead

lines, the draft Solar Farm Development Supplementary Planning Document be approved for public consultation.

2. Any subsequent changes to the draft Solar Farm Development Supplementary Planning Document and finalising of all consultation material is delegated to the Director for Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development.

(7.04pm to 7.31pm)

7. Chelmsford Policy Board Work Programme

The Board received the latest version of its Work Programme for 2020-21.

RESOLVED that the latest Work Programme of the Board be noted.

(9.19pm to 9.20pm)

8. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

Chair

MINUTES
of the
CHELMSFORD POLICY BOARD
held on 15 March 2021 at 7.00pm

Present:

Councillor I Fuller (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Councillors H Ayres, N Chambers, W Daden, J Galley, M Goldman, S Goldman,
R J Hyland, G B R Knight, R Moore, G H J Pooley, R J Poulter, A Sosin,
N Walsh and R T Whitehead

Also present:

Councillors A Davidson, C Davidson, R Lee and M J Mackrory

1. Attendance and Apologies for Absence

The attendance of those present was confirmed. Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor I C Roberts, who had appointed Councillor R J Hyland as his substitute.

2. Declarations of Interest

All Members were reminded to disclose any interests in items of business on the meeting's agenda and that they should do so at this point on the agenda or as soon as they became aware of the interest. They were also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of the meeting, if they had not previously notified her about it.

3. Minutes

This item was withdrawn.

4. Public Questions

No questions were put and or statements made by members of the public.

5. Chelmsford Garden Community Development Framework Document Update

The Board received an update on the progress of the Development Framework Document (masterplan) for Strategic Growth Site Policy 6 (SGS6) – North East Chelmsford (Chelmsford Garden Community) allocated in the Chelmsford Local Plan.

The report included a Vision for the development which would help shape its future growth and ensure it meets the Garden Community principles. The Vision had been prepared in partnership with the development Consortium and followed input from the project Delivery Board, Steering Group (including technical stakeholder workshop), City Council Members and the Community Liaison Group. A project plan had also been prepared which set out the anticipated key dates for the project up to Spring 2022. Information was also provided on the workstreams being developed by the City Council with Essex County Council and the Consortium to deliver the Garden Community and to inform the master-planning process and on the governance structure for the project.

The Board welcomed the progress being made and the Vision that had been developed. Members had a number of questions to which offices gave the following responses:

- One of the workstreams for the project was looking at the development's energy capacity and the need to take into account the likelihood that demand for electricity would increase during the period in which the project took place in response to the phasing out of gas and the introduction of new initiatives such as heat pumps
- Another workstream was looking at the opportunities for creating wild infrastructure
- The masterplan would address the need to ensure that there was connectivity around the boundary of the development as well as within it. A further workstream was focusing on transport and sustainable travel and would consider how the development was connected to other parts of Chelmsford
- The Section 106 and CIL agreements associated with the development would reflect any increase in the value of the land, which was benchmarked against other land values. The land value capture included infrastructure and facilities of social benefit, such as schools and community centres, and the requirement for these would be part of the masterplan process
- The Garden Community principles included the need to establish arrangements for the stewardship of the development which would give residents a stake in the creation of a good quality and sustainable place to live and work. Legal agreements covering the stewardship arrangements would help preserve the quality of the development in the longer term
- Whilst certain features of garden communities made them different to other developments, it was the Council's wish to apply some of the principles associated with them to other types of development where possible
- Government funding to support the creation of garden communities helped to meet the cost of obtaining the necessary specialist expertise and advice. The City and

County Councils and developer were all putting in resources to ensure that advice was obtained if they did not have the necessary expertise in-house

RESOLVED that the report to the meeting on the preparation of the Development Framework Document (masterplan) for the Chelmsford Garden Community, together with the comments of members and officers expressed at the meeting, be noted and the progress welcomed .

(7.04pm to 7.32pm)

6. National Planning Policy Framework and National Model Design Code Consultations

The report to the meeting set out a suggested response to the Government consultation on proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework(NPPF) and the introduction of a National Model Design Code. The report summarised the consultation on which views were sought and, at Appendix 1, provided a summary of the proposed consultation response on the NPPF. A Green Sheet of alterations to parts of the response was circulated at the meeting.

The discussion on the report centred around the requirement in the NPPF that all new streets be tree-lined. Whilst members welcomed this in principle, it was not clear what this would mean in practice. No detail was given as what constituted a tree, the types of trees that would be suitable for certain roads, their distance apart, who would be responsible for their maintenance or what would be provided for developments consisting primarily of apartments. In some circumstances a copse of trees may be preferable but may not be permissible and the requirement for trees would mean wider streets and less density of development, potentially affecting viability. The officers said that the response to the consultation could include the need for more clarity and precision on those and other points and that while the provision of street trees was welcomed in principle there should be some flexibility to allow for local circumstances.

Replying to other comments made by the Board, the officers said that the response could also propose that all developments should provide for a specific biodiversity net gain of at least 20% and the preservation of habitats; that the Council sought to retain natural features as part of new developments; that the design code would act as a tool for the creation of high quality developments and developers would be required to follow it; and that whilst the code covered water features and drainage, it did not specify whether one type of drainage solution was better than others.

RESOLVED that:

1. the consultation response to the proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and the introduction of a National Model Design Code set out in Appendix 1 to the report to the meeting, as amended by the Green Sheet, be approved; and

2. the Director of Sustainable Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development be authorised to finalise the response before submitting it to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government before the consultation period expires on 27 March 2021.

(7.32pm to 8.12pm)

7. Working Group Updates

The Chairs of several of the Board's Working Groups provided updated on the activities of those bodies.

Connectivity and Local Democracy Working Group

Community Governance Review

Following Council's approval to the terms of reference for the Community Governance Review in December, the first formal consultation stage was nearing completion. So far, 740 responses had been received, which for a CGR is a very good return. The next step in the Review was to consider those responses and to draft initial recommendations for consideration by the Governance Committee and Council in June and July.

Since the start of the Review, the Boundary Commission for England has announced that a Parliamentary Boundary Review will be carried out during 2021/22

Encouraging People to Stand for Election to Parish Councils and Improving Community Understanding of Local Democracy

The Working Group had looked at ideas for improving the ways in which residents could be informed about how local democracy works in Chelmsford and the ways in which people could engage and get involved with it. Besides including more information on the website, an animation was being produced to explain the different tiers of local government, and interviews had been filmed with representatives of each sector of local government. The possibility was also being explored of holding local democracy workshops for local groups and organisations.

Special Expenses

The Working Group had concluded that the current system of special expenses should be retained and a report setting out that recommendation would be brought to a future meeting of the Policy Board.

Anti-Racism Working Group

As a sub-group of the Working Group, the Anti-Racism Group was responsible for considering whether any form of discrimination existed in the Council and the community and whether all sections of the community had equal access the Council's services regardless of race and other protected characteristics.

Improving Movement Around Chelmsford (iMAC) Working Group

The iMAC Working Group had four main workstreams.

- Develop a Chelmsford Sustainable Transport and Parking Strategy
- Make proposals to improve infrastructure and or interventions to facilitate greater use of sustainable transport and Park & Ride
- Make proposals to improve the provision for safe cycling and walking in and around the City in line with the Local Plan and public transport travel
- Explore opportunities to improve place making and urban regeneration through the promoting of sustainable transport and ensure interrelationships with other Chelmsford Policy Board working groups.

The Working Group had identified the following strategy objectives:

- Increase short stay city centre parking to meet the needs of leisure and retail visitors and support the local economy
- Decrease long stay city centre parking to encourage commuters to use more sustainable options, for example Park & Ride
- Ensure that Park & Ride provision was aligned with the role and location of City Centre public parking
- Ensure parking provision encouraged sustainable travel, especially for journeys into the City Centre and for public transport nodes for onward journeys
- Ensure parking was well connected by cycling and walking for onward journeys
- Ensure the Council's public car parks were of high quality, safe and accessible for users through appropriate charging and management measures
- Optimise income generation from the Council's car parks
- Realise opportunities for redeveloping valuable land which could be used for other purposes (for example housing, retail and employment)
- Reduce traffic congestion and help to improve air quality.

The Chelmsford Sustainable Transport and Parking Strategy was being prepared in collaboration with officers at ECC and EH as the local highway and transport authority and was expected to be considered by the iMAC Working Group in early 2021.

Proposals related to Workstreams B, C and D would also be explored and tested as part of the emerging Chelmsford Sustainable Transport and Parking Strategy. Ideas to be considered over the short, medium, and long-term could include:

- Releasing a percentage of long-stay car parks for redevelopment/other uses
- Providing good cycle access opportunities from Park & Rides to City Centre for example, via the Park and Pedal scheme
- Increasing cycling/micromobility parking in the City Centre, for example the High Street and its environs, opportunities for sponsorship and delivery through other programmes such as the Chelmsford City Growth Package
- Updating the public car parking fee structure
- Promoting the city cycle network in a more simplified way, for example, colour coding of road surfaces
- Promoting Active and Sustainable Travel
- Converting Park & Ride Sites to Sustainable Transport Hubs with improved Park and Pedal opportunities
- Developing and opening a third Park & Ride Site

Progress had been made on all the workstreams and workstreams and the preparation of a Sustainable Transport and Parking Strategy. This work was being undertaken in collaboration with the County Council and would involve further input from local stakeholders before consideration of the Strategy by the Board in 2021.

[Housing Working Group](#)

Progress was reported on the following workstreams of the Working Group:

Analysis of housing need and prepare Housing Strategy proposal

The Working Group had used the housing need work undertaken through the previous Affordable Housing Group to agree in the Autumn of last year the scope, project plan and timetable for the preparation of a new Housing Strategy.

Following early engagement with Registered Providers (Housing Associations), the first draft of the Housing Strategy had been considered by the Working Group. Once the draft Strategy had been finalised, consultation would be carried out in May/June.

Consultation with appropriate partners and registered providers to deliver affordable and specialist housing requirements, including temporary accommodation

Officers and Members of the Working Group had been engaging with partners and Registered Providers. Progress had been made on increasing temporary accommodation through partnership working on a number of schemes and sites at varying stages of preparation.

Agreeing allocation of resources and opportunities for other sources of funding and joint working

A sum of £7m had been committed in 2020/21 for increasing temporary accommodation with a further £10.5m allocated to new social housing and homelessness and rough sleepers initiatives in the Council's 2021/22 budget. The Working Group had been working with other partners such as CHP and Moat to deliver priorities.

A total of £572,900 Government and Homes England funding had been secured through the Next Steps Accommodation Programme to provide 59 additional bedspaces for rough sleepers

Delivery of the Affordable and Social Housing Working Group's recommendations

- Purchase of 20 properties for temporary accommodation – The purchase of 16 properties had progressed - eight purchases had been completed and offers accepted on a further eight homes. Work continued to secure the final four units
- Prioritise for development the four smaller and more deliverable CCC owned sites - Expression of Interest for RP bids to CCC sites was being finalised. A planning application for x11 2 bed flats on CCC site at Railway Street would soon be submitted imminently. Twelve social rent houses were planned at Woodhall Road
- Promote Entry-Level Exception Sites for RP land-led schemes with Homes England in 2020 - Virtual RP had taken place last summer with Homes England and a joint pilot with South Cambridgeshire District Council. This had led to interest from landowners and developers on five sites
- Investigate purchase of land by CCC for additional affordable housing and entry-level exception sites – Work was on-going through an assessment of sites submitted by landowners as part of the Local Plan process.

Oversee implementation and delivery of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and Housing Strategy

Sixty-one rough sleepers had been accommodated since April 2020 and none of these were still housed in the first wave of emergency accommodation put in place since the pandemic. Twenty-nine of these had been helped to move on to other forms of accommodation.

The Working Group had considered a review and update of the approved Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy Action Plan. The proposed actions for 2021 were agreed by the Working Group which allowed a focused consultation with partners and further refinement of the Action Plan to allow the Plan to be finalised by the end of April 2021.

Explore how other local authorities are approaching their Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeper strategies, to allow us to adopt, adapt and improve our policies

Work as on-going with partners to ensure best practice. The Working Group had considered new policies on Housing Allocations which includes initiatives currently being promoted by partner local authorities.

RESOLVED that the reports on the activities of the Working Groups be noted.

(9.19pm to 9.20pm)

8. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

Chair



Chelmsford City Council Policy Board

5 July 2021

Private Rented Sector Offer Policy

Report by:

Strategic Housing Services Manager

Officer Contact:

Paul Gayler, Strategic Housing Services Manager, paul.gayler@chelmsford.gov.uk, 01245 606375

Purpose

To present for consideration a policy which would enable the Council to offer accommodation provided by private landlords as well as social landlords when appropriate and with the applicant's consent as an option for discharging the Council's statutory duty to those who are homeless and entitled to an offer of settled accommodation.

Recommendations:

The proposed Private Rented Sector Offer if agreed as a new policy be presented to the next meeting of the Council's Cabinet for approval.

1. Background or Introduction

- 1.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act introduced in 2018 created additional duties for local housing authorities to prevent and relieve homelessness before making a decision as to whether there may be a duty to secure settled accommodation (a tenancy that is expected to be available for more than 12 months) which is suitable for applicants and anyone else who can reasonably be expected to live with them.

- 1.2 Since then, the Council has been very successful in preventing homelessness, rising from 32% of cases in 2018/19 to 66% of cases in 2020/21. In the last year this was the outcome for the majority of applications with 254 cases of homelessness being prevented but a considerable number, 215 in the last year, cannot be prevented need to be provided with settled accommodation provided by a Registered Provider of social housing, and for many, interim temporary accommodation whilst waiting for an offer. The offer of social housing and its suitability is regulated under Parts 6 and 7 of the Housing Act respectively.
- 1.3 Since the introduction of the Localism Act (2011) local housing authorities have been able to also discharge this duty by using accommodation provided by private landlords but as the offer of this type of accommodation is not regulated by the Housing Act, councils need to have a policy in place instead.
- 1.4 The development of this policy has arisen from an exercise in 2020 looking at ways to reduce the cost and need of temporary accommodation and a draft of this policy was considered and supported by the Affordable Housing Working Group on 3rd March 2021.

2 Private Rented Sector Offer

- 2.1 There are guidelines for the drafting of a Private Rented Sector Offer Policy and the Council's existing Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy is very similar to these requirements. The needs of all of the household members should be taken into account, in particular the needs of those who may be especially vulnerable, children at important stages of their education and the need to access employment, care or specialist support.
- 2.2 The limited supply of affordable homes means that some applicants to the Housing Register, despite having reasonable preference due to being homeless, may still have to be accommodated in temporary accommodation for years whilst waiting for an offer of a suitable property. For some, this policy would enable the Council to work with them to create more choice and in some cases an offer of accommodation that would not otherwise be possible.
- 2.3 The policy would not be used to create offers of accommodation for those who do not want to have a tenancy with a private landlord but the success of the Council's Rent Deposit and Tenancy Access Schemes in preventing and relieving homelessness show how there is a potential to extend this to a wider group who may otherwise face an a period in temporary accommodation for an uncertain period of time. In most cases it is expected that the policy would be used to help applicants access accommodation within the district but, with their consent, it can also help people move to other areas where they may have ties or opportunities for employment but the Council is unable to nominate them into these areas.
- 2.4 Without a policy, it is not possible to evidence that decisions have been made consistently in an informed and impartial manner, hence the requirement to have a policy in order to adopt this option.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The policy if approved will give more options to the Council when looking at ways to meet the needs of those to whom it has a duty to accommodate and more choice to those whose needs cannot be met so easily from the existing social housing supply. It would only be an offer with no penalty or detriment to those who do not want to consider this.
- 3.2 By creating more choice and flexibility it will help reduce the need and the length of stay for some households in temporary accommodation, especially for those who may want to move outside of the district, or want or need a particular type of property such as one with a garden, or in an area where no social housing of that type exists.
- 3.3 A checklist has also been provided to evidence for each case that all relevant factors have been taken in to account and that the offer is therefore reasonable.

List of appendices:

Appendix One – Proposed Private Rented Sector Offer

Background papers:

None

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional:

The Council should not seek to discharge its duty by using privately rented accommodation without a policy being approved.

Financial:

Financial assistance could be provided through the Council's Rent Deposit or Tenancy Access schemes, the number of cases are not expected to be a significant additional demand on this budget and it would be a reduction in cost compared to the cost of temporary accommodation.

Potential impact on climate change and the environment:

None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030:

All homes considered would require an Energy Performance Certificate and in cases where energy use and cost are exceptionally high a property may be withdrawn for this reason and the cost incurred by the applicant.

Personnel:

There may be a slight re-distribution of work within the Housing Service but this is broadly similar to work already in place and could slightly reduce the number of cases that remain open pending a final offer of accommodation.

Risk Management:

The Council should not consider discharging its main duty by using privately rented accommodation without a policy in place. This is very similar to the existing policy used for placing people into temporary accommodation and will require checks on both the property and the landlord.

Equality and Diversity:

Increasing choice will help increase the Council's ability to meet specific needs including access to education for families with children, access to places of worship or community groups for those at risk of exclusion in other areas, and access to support from family or organisations including hospitals, day-care or other community based services that may be less accessible if relying only on social housing.

Health and Safety:

The PRSO checklist includes relevant Health and Safety requirements in accordance with the Housing Health and safety Rating System

Digital:

None

Other:

It is important that the aim of the policy is recognised as being to increase options and opportunities for those who may otherwise be disadvantaged by the limited choice and supply of social housing, helping provide the Council with more detailed evidence on local housing need to inform future strategies and plans for the development of a better supply of housing and not as a replacement for the existing social housing stock.

Consultees:

Housing Working Group – advised that report will be presented to Policy Board for Cabinet approval

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

Housing Allocations Policy 2019

Homelessness Strategy 2020

APPENDIX ONE

Proposed Private Rented Sector Policy

Chelmsford City Council Private Rented Sector Policy Offer

1. General

- 1.1 The Council aims to work with households to prevent homelessness whenever possible, in cases where this is not possible, we shall then work to take reasonable steps to relieve homelessness in accordance with the part VII, Housing Act 1996(as amended) and our Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy. In cases where these steps have not been successful the Council will then make a decision on any continuing duties which may be to secure settled accommodation. The offer of settled accommodation can include accommodation that is provided by private landlords in the Private Rented Sector (PRS). This policy ensures that any such offers made for this purpose will be suitable and appropriate to each case in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and Housing Act 1996 Part 7 as amended and the relevant Code of Guidance.

2. Application of the Policy

- 2.1 This policy accompanies and reflects the Council's Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy, recognising that whilst the Council would like to be able to discharge its duty by making an offer of settled accommodation within its own district this is not always possible, taking into account identified trends in the supply of affordable housing and levels of homelessness in the city, nor in some cases is it suitable to make an offer within this area.
- 2.2 Whereas access to housing association accommodation is mainly through the Council's Housing Register and limited to properties within the administrative area of the Council, privately rented accommodation is widely available, in greater supply with fewer restrictions on who can access it. During times when demand exceeds supply of suitable housing association properties, local housing authorities must make best use of all other sources to meet their legal duties to secure accommodation.
- 2.3 By ensuring offers of privately rented accommodation for this purpose are made in accordance with a policy the Council can ensure that such offers which are outside of existing nomination agreements with local housing associations are still fair, equitable and consistent.

For the purposes of this policy there are three geographical areas:

- a) In-City i.e. within the Chelmsford City Council area (as shown in Appendix 1)
- b) Close to home Essex-wide i.e. within the county of Essex area
- c) Any area: Defined as outside Essex.

In these instances, the Council will consider the availability of services such as schools and health services to ensure the welfare of any children is fully considered in line with S11 (2) Children's Act 2004.

- 2.4 When deciding which of these three areas may be suitable the Council will take into account based on information from the applicant's Personal Housing Plan:
- i. Longstanding agreement to provide care and support to another family member in the Chelmsford City Council area who is not part of the household. Carers will need to be in receipt of carers allowance and/or the person they care for must be in receipt of middle rate, or high rate, DLA care component or daily living component of PIP.
 - ii. Children subject to a Child Protection Plan in the Chelmsford City Council area which cannot be transferred to another Local Authority without causing detriment to the child.
 - iii. Children subject to an Educational Health and Care Plan in the Chelmsford City Council area which cannot be transferred to another LA without causing detriment to the child.
 - iv. Households with children who are enrolled in GCSE, AS or A level courses in Chelmsford City Council area, with such exams to be taken within the next 12 academic months. Wherever possible the Council will seek to place households within 45 minutes travelling distance of their school, or college, by public transport.
 - v. Cases where applicants are receiving treatment for a physical or mental health condition from a specialist hospital unit which cannot be provided to that resident outside of the city.
 - vi. The needs of applicants, where one or (more) is in permanent settled employment (for at least six months prior to the date of their homeless application) to reach their normal workplace from where the accommodation is secured.
 - vii. Other relevant issues for the applicant and their household including but not restricted to risk of harm from persons associated with their household.
- 2.5 The Council may seek and will take into account supporting information from other sources and agencies to inform its decisions but will not always be bound by recommendations where it is not reasonable to do so.
- 2.6 In cases where support is being provided by other agencies who operate beyond the city the Council will seek to make an offer that is within the geographical area covered by that organisation if not within the city itself, for example within mid-Essex.
- 2.7 In considering whether to make an offer outside of the city area, consideration will be given to the type of accommodation needed, the likelihood of such accommodation becoming available within the city and the availability and suitability of such accommodation elsewhere.
- 2.8 Where an offer is being considered outside of the city, it will be restricted to accommodation within Essex, unless:
- There are exceptional reasons for considering an offer outside of both the city and the county, or
 - The applicant has expressed a desire to move out of area and the offer is consistent with this.

3 Suitable Offer

- 3.1 Offers made under this policy must be in reasonable condition, let and managed by a person or organisation that is competent and responsible.
- 3.2 Before an offer is made the Council will carry out checks to ensure each property meets these standards using the checklist in Appendix Two of this policy.
- 3.3 Offers must be of adequate size for the applicant and their household which will be those people named and included in their application, taking into account any restrictions on mobility that may affect what is suitable.
- 3.4 The affordability will be based on the current and expected income of the applicant's household less reasonable living costs; the Council will take into account the individual and reasonable aspects of each household's expenditure but may also expect reasonable adjustments to be made prioritising the urgent need for accommodation, other priority debts and previous expenditure on non-essential items that could reasonably be expected to be reduced.
- 3.5 In cases where the cost of the accommodation identified by the Council is greater than the Council accepts is affordable the Council will enter into an agreement with the landlord to subsidise the market cost making the tenancy more affordable and suitable for the applicant. In such cases this will be reviewed at or before notice is given to review or renew the tenancy agreement, taking into account the current financial situation of the applicant.
- 3.6 An offer will only be considered to be suitable if the Council reasonably expects that it will be available for occupation for more than 12 months from the start of the tenancy.

4 Making an Offer

- 4.1 All applicants will be made aware when agreeing their Personal Housing Plan that the Council may make an offer of privately rented accommodation to discharge its duty in accordance with this policy.
- 4.2 Applicants will also be advised when notified of a decision to secure settled accommodation in accordance with Housing Act s.193 and 189(B) that this may be an offer made under this policy.
- 4.3 Where an offer is made under this policy applicants will also, at the same time that the offer is made, be advised about the possible consequences of refusing an offer and the process for seeking a review of the suitability of an offer. Applicants are able to accept the offer but still request a review of its suitability.
- 4.4 The Council will expect applicants to make their own arrangements for viewing accommodation offered, where this is not possible and where reasonable to do so the Council may provide photograph / video of properties and make an appointment with the applicant to deal with any enquiries and answer questions about the property. If the accommodation is offered under section 193 or 189(B) of the Housing Act Pt VII (as

amended), a refusal to view the accommodation or comply with the terms of the offer may be considered as a refusal of the offer of accommodation.

4.5 As part of their Personal Housing Plan applicants are expected to take responsibility helping the Council meet their housing needs, in cases where an offer is withdrawn by a landlord as a result of the applicant's behaviour when visiting a property, this will not in itself constitute the withdrawal of an offer as unsuitable under this policy.

Appendix 1: Map of district (from TA Placement Policy)

Appendix 2: PRSO Checklist

PRSO Checklist		
1. Property	Yes / No	Comments
Property has been inspected by approved managing agent who confirms checked and ready to let		
Property is in reasonable condition with no Cat 1 hazards		
Electrical equipment supplied meets Regulations 5 & 7 of Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994		
Fire safety – reasonable precautions taken by the landlord for the property and any furnishings		
Carbon monoxide – landlord has taken reasonable steps to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning		
Will not cause overcrowding		
Houses in Multiple Occupation – is it licensed where necessary?		

2. Landlord		
Not committed offences of fraud, dishonesty, violence, drugs or sexual offences		
Unlawfully discriminated against anyone		
Breached any law or regulation relating to housing including for the management of HMOs		
3. Applicant's requirements		
If outside of district – check with the other local authority.		
Risk of domestic abuse – check security		
Mobility – check suitability		
Affordability – check income, expenditure and savings		
Access to school, employment, other support and treatment		
Access to public transport		
Access to shops		
Access to support / treatment		
Risk of harm from associated persons		
Risks relating to re-offending		
Pets		
Other		
4. Availability		

Check likely availability of accommodation from housing association within district		
If considering offer outside of city consider likely availability of suitable PRS within city and housing association accommodation outside of city area, e.g. Homefinder		
Confirm with landlord property available, dates and costs		
Considered and checked all of above		
Choice of placement in district? Consult with applicant and select most suitable		
Choice only outside of district? Consult with applicant and select most suitable		
Notify receiving local authority		
Notify other agencies where appropriate		
Set date for review of TA / advise of right to review for discharge of duty.		
Complete process for sign up		



Chelmsford City Council Policy Board

5 July 2021

Consultation on Chelmsford Housing Strategy 2022-2027

Report by:

Director of Sustainable Communities

Officer Contacts:

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Purpose

To consider the consultation document which will inform the preparation of the Chelmsford Housing Strategy 2022-2027.

Recommendation

That the document set out at Appendix 1 of this report be approved for consultation and that any subsequent textual or presentation changes are delegated to the Director of Sustainable Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Until a decade ago, local authorities were required by the regional government office to produce a housing strategy which was also expected by the Audit Commission when reviewing and assessing each council's performance. Since this being ended, a number of councils have continued to update their previous strategies or, as is the case for this council, re-introduce a new one.

- 1.2 There is no longer a pre-set format or list of items that should be included as there used to be but we have broadly followed the structure of before, breaking the main headings down into the most common form of tenure and relating this to the identified housing need for Chelmsford. Officers consider that although not a statutory requirement, it is important for the Council to continue to articulate its strategy for housing through a document which has been subject to widespread consultation.
- 1.3 The Council's Housing Working Group have been assessing the issues in Chelmsford's housing market, in particular the supply of affordable housing, both new and relets from the existing stock. This process has also included engagement with Registered Providers (RPs) more commonly known as housing associations.
- 1.4 The consultation document set out at **Appendix 1** sets out the initial findings from the Council's Housing Working Group and the initial engagement with RPs to ensure the Council gain wider feedback from the community and other groups, organisations and charities involved in housing in Chelmsford.

2. Context

- 2.1 As a Local Housing Authority that has no general needs housing stock of its own, the Council's new Housing Strategy will serve a number of important functions:
 - i. Alignment with other strategies of the Council – in particular our Corporate Plan, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and our Local Plan. All these have links to housing but this is not their prime purpose so the Housing Strategy can take into account what each is seeking to achieve and ensure that there are adequate steps being taken to support each where there are housing implications.
 - ii. Review of housing need and supply – there is an overlap with the Council's Local Plan but this is largely driven by the demand rather than the need for homes, i.e. the extent to which those who are able to buy or rent a home in the city will generate demand which makes future developments financially viable. Changes to the housing market, national policies and local economic and demographic trends, even if minor, can over time result in a divergence between what has been planned for and what may now be needed.

- iii. Ability to meet the Council's legal duties – the Council has a number of statutory duties such as the enforcement of standards for condition of properties and in the case of private landlords the way that homes are managed. There is also a need to ensure that there is an adequate supply for those who are homeless and may otherwise need to be placed into temporary accommodation.
 - iv. Inform and influence partners – without landlords, housing associations, developers, investors and other partners understanding not just local housing need but what our priorities are there is a high risk that future supply will be determined by what is most expedient or financially viable, rather than what is most needed.
- 2.2 The supply of land and property is finite, despite the growing number of homes in Chelmsford, there are still some gaps which are growing and other needs that are at risk of being overlooked. Even if these needs are relatively minor, such the identified need for specialist housing, the impact that they can have on movement within the existing affordable housing stock and the sustainability of that stock, is significant.
- 2.3 The principle aim of a future housing strategy will be to achieve the best possible balance in supply to meet need as well as demand, beginning with improving the use and supply of existing housing stock and then, where opportunities arise, enabling the development of homes that would be most effective in achieving this.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 The consultation document attached at **Appendix 1** of this report sets out the key issues that have been identified to date and puts forward seven key priorities to help meet a vision for Chelmsford's Housing Market. This is followed by detailed actions for each one of these priorities accompanied by a series of consultation questions.
- 3.2 These types of consultation usually span 4-6 weeks and it is good practice to avoid holiday periods. Therefore, although it is proposed to start the consultation in mid-July, it will not close until mid-September to allow sufficient time outside of the summer holidays for the community and other stakeholders to make comments.
- 3.3 A draft Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been prepared and will be finalised to assess the final document to be published for consultation. It will also contain a Councillor Foreword and Glossary and final design and artwork. As the consultation is directly related to the Council's Local Plan, Officers will use the consultation contacts within the Local Plan database supplemented by the more specialist housing related contacts.

4 Next steps

- 4.1 The consultation feedback will be reported back to the Housing Working Group which will subsequently inform the final Housing Strategy and Action Plan. This process is scheduled for completion by the end of 2021 with the final Housing Strategy and Action Plan considered for approval at a future meeting of the Council's Cabinet.
- 4.2 As with the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy, it is proposed that progress of this strategy and its actions will be regularly reviewed by the Housing Working Group, with an annual review.

List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Chelmsford Housing Strategy Consultation July 2021

Background papers:

None

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional:

There is no legal requirement to produce a strategy but by having one, it will be easier to engage with partners to assist the Council in meeting other legal duties which depend on an adequate supply of homes.

Financial:

There will be financial implications which have yet to be detailed but these will be based on the principle that any investment will have a positive impact to the Council's overall financial commitments, for example reducing the need and cost of temporary accommodation or helping secure more funding from external sources.

Potential impact on climate change and the environment:

One of the proposed actions of the strategy will be to influence and encourage the development of homes that can reduce the use of energy in their production and use. Encouraging best possible use to be made of existing properties may also be more sustainable in some cases than redevelopment.

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030:

The strategy will encourage and support landlords and home-owners to take steps to reduce energy use especially in older, less efficient properties bearing in mind the

majority of homes will continue to be provided from the housing stock that is already in existence.

Personnel:

None

Risk Management:

The limited supply of affordable homes, especially those that are larger to meet the needs of those who are homeless or currently inadequately housed is a recognised corporate risk for the Council and cannot be managed without intervening and taking additional actions to improve supply.

Equality and Diversity:

Previous impact assessments from other housing strategies and policies, combined with guidance have identified some aspects that have led to specific actions within the proposed action plan to ensure the housing needs of those with protected characteristics are not excluded.

Health and Safety:

Most of the supply of homes will be from partners who will have responsibility as the landlord and occupier but the strategy will seek to support the role of the Council in encouraging homes to be adequately maintained and managed, with recourse to enforcement where breaches are not rectified to protect residents.

Digital:

None

Other:

None

Consultees:

CCC Housing Working Group

Registered Providers of Social Housing

Representatives of private landlords

Local housing and homelessness charities

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

Our Chelmsford Our Plan

Chelmsford City Council Local Plan

Chelmsford Health and Wellbeing Plan

Chelmsford City Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy

Chelmsford Housing Strategy Consultation

July 2021



Foreword

To be added

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Photo's pages 3, 4, 5, 9, 17 and right of centre front cover, City Park West, courtesy of Notting Hill Genesis
Photo page 11 courtesy of East light Community Homes
Photo's page 4 and 20 Beaulieu, courtesy of L&Q
Photo's centre front cover and contents page Barrack Lane and Cherry Garden Road, courtesy of CHP



Executive summary

Having a place that we can call 'home' is something that most may take for granted but for too many people this can be a cause for anxiety and distress. Ultimately, the lack of a home can lead to severe hardship and risks to health and welfare. Our fundamental aim is to ensure that everyone in Chelmsford has a place they can call home that meets their needs and those of their family.

To achieve this vision, the Council needs to address a number of challenges across the entire housing market. There is not a simple single solution to this. The Council is therefore considering a range of actions which, taken together, will help to address the current housing challenges. Understanding and responding to housing need and demand has always been complex; we appreciate the support of our partners and communities in developing our approach which is why we have begun to consult on ways we can achieve our vision. We have designed this document to encourage participation so our future strategy will not be something owned and delivered just by the City Council but by everyone who is able to make a contribution to our aims.

As the nation recovers from the Covid-19 pandemic, this consultation is more important than ever before, helping us understand through feedback from others the impact of changes which no one would have anticipated two years

ago. Some organisations may now be experiencing additional challenges or new opportunities, and we hope that this consultation gives everyone the chance to explain these, so we are realistic with our ambitions.

We are proposing the following areas as priorities for action:

1. Increasing the supply of affordable homes with a focus on larger units

The shortage of affordable housing is felt most by those who become homeless and must be housed in temporary accommodation. Currently the Council is at a critical stage of being at risk of being unable to meet its statutory duties to some of those in most urgent need, particularly families with children, so our priority must be to improve the supply of larger, affordable homes for rent.

- The lack of supply of affordable homes, and
- Achieving the right type of affordable housing

We therefore need to be very clear that just setting a target for more homes that are affordable is not sufficient. The right number but of the wrong type of affordable homes is a waste of resources and a lost opportunity and just compounds an existing backlog of need. Our Local Plan will be the main way we increase

overall housing supply but we want to understand and put into action ways of creating an additional supply of homes that are most needed.

2. Increasing the supply of affordable homes from the existing housing stock

In developing this consultation document, the Council recognises how the majority of supply to meet new needs should always come from the existing stock, creating a sustainable source for the future. This means that in addition to new build affordable homes for those falling into housing need, we have to secure a better and more predictable supply from the existing stock. Appendix 1 to this consultation shows how without first achieving a balanced supply, the contribution of additional new affordable homes meeting our priorities can be reduced or even almost eliminated.

3. Achieving a better balance of tenures

A better supply will only help if it is also affordable to those in need; the term 'affordable housing' has extended since the 1980s from social rent to a wider range of options including homes for sale on the open market at a discounted price. Our aim is clarify not just the number and size but also tenure needed to achieve a better balance.



There may be a need for intermediate affordable homes (homes that cost more than affordable homes for rent but less than their open-market equivalents) but there is an important distinction between those that meet local housing need and those that help stimulate demand. Where there are opportunities to influence the type of intermediate affordable homes, the Council would want to enable the development of those that have the greatest potential to address housing need as well as demand.

4. Support for landlords and tenants in the private rented sector

We cannot overlook the rise of the privately rented sector. This has replaced the affordable housing sector as the second most common type of tenure since the start of this century in Chelmsford and many other towns and cities in the south and east of England. It is usually unplanned, usually a conversion of tenure from home ownership, driven by market forces and housing demand, with significant levels of investment by individuals and regulated in a very different way to social housing.

The Council's Strategic Housing Service relies on this sector to meet 25% of the housing need of those who are at risk of homelessness. With a far greater number of private landlords than social landlords in Chelmsford, and a much more diverse range of properties, engaging and supporting both landlords and tenants in this

sector will require us to work in a different way from how we work with housing associations but we need to make sure that both sectors are working as best they can to meet the housing needs of Chelmsford.

5. Enable the right supply of specialist and supported accommodation

Some of the most vulnerable people in our city need more than just a property as a home – whether through ageing, disability or for other reasons, their home may need adaptations to help them retain their independence and, for some, others visiting or even working alongside them to provide support. In 2020, the Council worked with partners and commissioned voluntary sectors to provide an additional supply of more than 40 homes for those who were single and homeless, including those who had been sleeping rough. In 2021, all local housing authorities will be required to provide an adequate supply of 'safe accommodation' for those who are at risk of domestic abuse, and we have identified other vulnerable groups who also need a better supply of specialist housing which we want to enable through this strategy.

6. Reduce energy consumption

Our homes are one of the main sources of energy consumption. We have the opportunity to set standards for the construction of new homes,

but we must not overlook that most of the existing housing stock is far less efficient. So to create a greener and sustainable Chelmsford, we will also work with landlords, developers and homeowners to promote ways of reducing energy consumption, especially for those where this would help overcome the risks of fuel poverty and poor health.

7. Monitoring and Working with Partners

Housing is affected by, and can affect, such a large number of external factors that it is impossible to predict with any certainty what the ideal supply would be for an area as large as Chelmsford in the long term. Looking ahead, this strategy will not only be the launch of new initiatives but, with constant monitoring of trends and performance review, will also help us keep our finger on the pulse, spotting changes in need and supply, so we respond quickly.



We want to hear from you

Our Housing Strategy needs the engagement and support of our local communities and of local and national organisations. Sowe really do need to hear from you. This document has been published for consultation and we would like your feedback which will help us shape the final strategy.

After each section there are questions to help gain feedback and inform the final version of our Housing Strategy which will include an action plan.

We think that our Housing Strategy will need to be something that is not just reviewed regularly to monitor our progress, it also needs to create continuous communication amongst us all, helping each other recognise and respond to new opportunities, changing trends and better ways of working collaboratively. We hope that this will not just be a one-off contribution but the start of an ongoing conversation.

You can provide your feedback through the Council's Consultation Portal through the link below:

Alternatively email your comments to ADD EMAIL or send by post to:

Housing Strategy Consultation
Spatial Planning Services
Chelmsford City Council
Duke Street
Chelmsford
CM1 1JE

The consultation closes at 4.45pm on XXXXX.



1. Purpose and scope of consultation

1.1 The purpose of this consultation is to set out a vision for housing in Chelmsford and identify priorities and actions for consultation with partners, stakeholders and residents. This will help us understand the needs, challenges and opportunities over the next five years (2022-2027) and allow all partners in the process to align their focus.

1.2 Our aim is not to have a Housing Strategy just for the Council, we want to collaborate with everyone who could play a role in helping us meet our vision. Your response to this consultation is the first step to help us achieve that.

1.3 We have identified how the type of affordable homes needed is just as important as the number, and how important it is to not overlook the supply that comes from the existing housing stock. These two issues have been identified as key priorities for future action. We believe if we were able to tackle these two areas, the length of time people currently spend in temporary accommodation would be reduced.

1.4 Following consultation, we want to have a strategy that will enable additional numbers of larger affordable homes, which will in turn improve the overall supply from the existing stock to meet housing need, reducing the use and cost of temporary accommodation.

1.5 We will monitor through relevant targets and indicators. We will also build a database of indicators that will help us track our progress and monitor external factors that may tell us when it may be necessary to review some of our plans.



2. Our proposed vision

2.1 We have been assessing the housing challenges we face in Chelmsford and engaging with key stakeholders through our Housing Working Group. This has led to our proposed vision for our housing in Chelmsford.

Change the way the housing market in Chelmsford works to address the needs of all of its residents, so everyone can reasonably aspire to having a home that meets their needs and no one is left behind.



3. The Chelmsford housing and policy context

3.1 Every year, new affordable homes are built in Chelmsford because of policies in our Local Plan requiring developers to build a proportion of the homes in their development as affordable. For many local authorities including our own Council, this supply fails to keep pace with the growth of the local population and need.

3.2 The proportion of homes that are rented from private landlords has grown, meeting the needs of those who can afford to rent and are unable to access social housing, along with the demand from those who can't afford to buy a home in Chelmsford.

3.3 All new homes, whether for sale on the open market or to be rented as social housing, supplements the majority of supply which comes from the existing stock but in Chelmsford the supply of existing social housing from re-lets has declined and now accounts for only around 50% of the supply used to meet the most urgent cases of housing need.

3.4 We believe that one of the reasons for this is the lack of larger affordable homes, especially 3 and 4 bedroom properties, creating a backlog of families in smaller overcrowded social housing. In turn, this blocks movement and leads to a reduction in the overall supply to meet the needs of those who become homeless.

3.5 Enabling an additional supply of these larger affordable homes would remove this bottleneck, improve the churn from the existing stock and reduce the need for families to spend time in temporary accommodation.

3.6 We therefore want to hear your views on ways we can not only develop an additional supply of new 3 and 4 bedroom homes for social rent (the most affordable type of social housing) but also increase the supply from the existing social housing stock as well.

3.7 More detailed information about the tenure of homes in Chelmsford, how these have changed and the impact of having an imbalanced supply of social housing is provided in Appendix 1 to this consultation document.

3.8 We have to take in to account how the demand and supply of other tenures has an impact on the need for affordable housing in Chelmsford, so this document also outlines suggestions to help those with reasonable aspirations for owning their home and ways we can work with landlords and tenants of privately rented homes.

Our Chelmsford Our Plan

3.9 The Housing Strategy that we develop based upon this consultation will play an important part in supporting the wider aims of our corporate plan:

- Fairer and inclusive Chelmsford - Develop and implement a new strategic approach to improve the supply and accessibility of affordable homes
- A safer and greener place - Develop a new environment plan, promoting a sustainable approach to growth, development and everyday living and a low carbon future and ensure that residents feel safe and adequately protected
- Healthy, active and enjoyable lives - Promote activities and initiatives to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of Chelmsford residents
- Connected Chelmsford - Bringing people together, empowering local people and working in partnership to build community capacity, stronger communities and secure investment in the city.

3.10 The Council also has other strategies which will sit alongside our new Housing Strategy:

Chelmsford Local Plan

- Identifies the current and future need for homes in Chelmsford and policies that will help provide affordable homes and specialist housing



- Policy DM1 – developments of 10 or more homes should provide a mix of homes that reflect local need and demand, 5% of new affordable homes should be suitable for users of wheelchairs, and developments of 100 or more homes are expected to make a contribution towards the provision of specialist housing in addition to the need for affordable homes
- Policy DM2 – developments of 11 or more homes must provide or make a contribution to affordable homes of which 22% should be affordable homes for rent and 13% some other form of intermediate affordable homes, e.g. shared-ownership or discounted sale
- Supplementary Planning Documents providing more detailed information to help meet our policy requirements, including how new housing developments can contribute towards a greener and sustainable Chelmsford through layout, design and use of materials.

Chelmsford Health and Wellbeing Plan

- Improving poor housing, including fuel poverty, enabling people to age well and alleviate loneliness and isolation
- Addressing the need for support for those experiencing domestic abuse and other households in need of temporary accommodation

- Providing help and assistance to those who need adaptations to their home through the Disabled Facilities Grant programme.

Chelmsford City Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy

- Reducing the need and cost of temporary accommodation
- Enabling the development of specialist and supported accommodation for those at risk of homelessness
- Increasing the supply of accommodation for rough sleepers and those at risk of having to sleep rough in Chelmsford.

Chelmsford Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan

- Chelmsford City Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency in July 2019
- The declaration represents a commitment to take appropriate action to make the Council's activities net-zero carbon by 2030
- The action plan focuses on 15 areas of priority areas of work for the Council which includes integrating on-site renewable energy within new developments in particular the role the Council can have to help deliver low carbon affordable housing.

3.11 In developing an action plan for our Housing Strategy we will also take in to account our range of powers and duties including:

- Planning Acts – requires the Council to assess current and future housing requirements and create a Local Plan that will meet these needs and demands
- Building regulations – ensures that new and existing homes are safe and meet current standards including the reduction of carbon
- Housing Acts – gives the Council power and duties to regulate landlords, ensure there are suitable policies for the allocation of social housing that are effective in prioritising those in greatest need and develop a strategic response to homelessness
- Homelessness Reduction Act – expanding the duty of the Council and others to prevent and relieve homelessness across a wider group
- Localism Act – enables and encourages local authorities and communities to adopt more flexibility and innovation including making better use of buildings to meet local need.



4. Our priorities and proposed strategy

4.1 Our vision is that every household in Chelmsford has, or can reasonably aspire to having a safe, secure place, suitable to their needs as their home.

4.2 We are proposing seven priorities for our proposed Housing Strategy:

- 1) Increasing the supply of affordable homes with a focus on larger units
- 2) Increasing the supply of affordable homes from the existing housing stock
- 3) Achieving a better balance of tenures
- 4) Support for landlords and tenants of privately rented homes
- 5) Enable the right supply of specialist housing to meet local need
- 6) Reduce the energy consumption of homes
- 7) Monitoring our performance, local trends and working with partners

- Increase the overall supply of new affordable housing
- Increase the supply of larger new affordable homes
- Improve the level of 'churn' within the existing affordable housing stock
- Meet specialist housing need

4.4 By achieving the above, it will reduce the time people spend in temporary accommodation as this the most telling indicator of the lack of supply of suitable affordable homes.

4.5 The Council and our partners already have in place some plans and actions, , which a strategy will help co-ordinate and support, in addition to the new actions which we are considering and others that we hope will come forward as a result of this consultation.. We want the discussions which begin with the consultation of this strategy to continue beyond the completion of the final version, making this a living document.

4.6 We will review our progress with the strategy's action plan each year but will also monitor a number of other indicators beyond our own performance. This will help us demonstrate how effective our plans are in meeting our aims. This wider set of indicators will also help us identify changing trends, policies and

opportunities, so the strategy remains as relevant in five years' time as it is today.

4.7 The following sections set out the actions by housing tenure to achieve our priorities.

Affordable housing (Priorities 1, 2, 3, 6 & 7)

4.8 Delivering more of the right type of affordable housing are key priorities. This is because it can help the greatest number of vulnerable households and has the best potential for collaboration between partners to deliver outcomes to meet local need.

4.9 We can look ahead to project the supply of affordable homes will be gained through the planning system. We also know that there is a need to work with our partners not just to deliver this pipeline but to also create opportunities to supply additional affordable housing.

4.10 We propose to work with local housing associations (also known as registered providers) to do whatever we can to increase the churn and supply from the existing stock. Through our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2021-24 we are working hard to reduce need by preventing homelessness in the first place. However, we know we will also need to find ways to provide new, larger affordable homes to reduce the backlog of need.

4.1 The success of our strategy over the next five years would be assessed by our ability to respond to these priorities through the strategy's action plan and provide the following outcomes:



4.11 The Council has a duty to help those in housing need who are unable to buy or rent a home, especially to those at risk of homelessness. In some cases, we may be able to help people retain or access a privately rented property, with financial assistance if necessary. This is outlined in the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2020 – 2024.

4.12 In 2020, almost the same number of cases were prevented from becoming homeless as the overall number of general needs affordable homes that were available to let. As mentioned above though, it is not just a matter of having the right number of homes, they have to be the right type.

Social and affordable rent

4.13 The term affordable housing essentially means there is some form of subsidy. However, to meet our priorities we think our Housing Strategy needs to focus on affordable homes for rent as they meet more need.

4.14 Social rent homes are those where the rent charged is based on a national standard, depending on the size of the property, with weekly rents ranging from below £100 to approximately £160. In some cases, there may also be an additional service charge.

5.15 Affordable Rent homes have replaced social rent homes over the last decade. The

rents can be up to 80% of the local market rent for a similar property but the Council requires this to be within Local Housing Allowance levels, so there is no risk of homelessness should tenants lose their job and be reliant on benefits. Although Affordable Rents are slightly more than social rents, they do include service charges.

4.16 Often in smaller properties and apartments, the overall weekly cost can be similar if not slightly lower than social rent. This means that in some cases, where there is a mix of apartments and houses, the most affordable mix for the residents could be apartments at an Affordable Rent and houses at a Social Rent but we appreciate the complexity for other partners in providing this.

4.17 Welfare reform also has an impact on affordability, even for affordable homes; the introduction of the benefit cap for families means that Affordable Rent levels for larger homes, and in some cases for social rent, may not be fully covered by benefit payments. To reduce this risk, we will wherever possible encourage Registered Providers to provide larger homes as social rent.

Affordable housing supply

4.18 The majority of the supply of affordable homes comes from the existing stock, as tenants move on and homes become available to re-let to someone from the Council's Housing Register. To meet the growth in population, a proportion

(35%) of new homes on development sites of 11 units or more are also required to be affordable – 22% for rent and 13% some form of intermediate affordable housing e.g. shared ownership.

4.19 If the Council has a duty to accommodate but no suitable property is available then we may need to provide temporary accommodation, usually self-contained, until a suitable property becomes available. It is inevitable that a small number may always need to be placed initially in temporary accommodation while enquiries are made.



4.20 In mid-2017 there were more than 360 households in temporary accommodation waiting for an offer of a settled, affordable home. At the end of 2020/21 this number had reduced to 250 but this was mainly due to improvements in preventing homelessness and reducing the number needing to go into temporary accommodation. More information about how the Council responds to homelessness can be found in our Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2020-25.

4.21 Each year there are additional new affordable homes built as a result of our planning policies but this does not create a corresponding increase in the overall number of homes becoming available to let for several reasons:

- Not all types of affordable homes that the Council is required to develop are suitable for those in greatest need, e.g. shared-ownership and discounted sale;
- The supply of new homes is linked to the delivery and therefore demand for market homes and therefore the fluctuations of the housing market;
- There has been a decline in the number of existing affordable homes being re-let so supply is less than anticipated; and
- An increase in the supply of smaller affordable homes in the past to meet the need of the time has led to rising need for larger homes.

The consequences of these variables are shown in the following table, showing the planned delivery of new affordable homes, the number that were actually available to let and the number of households in temporary accommodation.

Size	Planned delivery 2019/20	New build available to let 2019/20	Total lettings	Households in temporary accommodation 2019/20
1 bed	91	45	121	45
2 bed	114	60	138	140
3 bed	60	18	52	65
4 bed	4	1	6	22

Source: Chelmsford City Council Strategic Housing Services KPI monitoring

4.22 The number of households in temporary accommodation is a helpful indicator as to how well planned and actual delivery of affordable homes is meeting the most urgent cases of housing need in Chelmsford. Both planned and actual delivery of one-bedroom homes meets the need of those in temporary accommodation, hence all households in this group can expect to be permanently accommodated within a year.

4.23 Our aim is to create a supply of larger homes that will reduce the time spent in temporary accommodation to less than a year. Providing an additional 8 four bedroom homes a year could meet the need of all those in

temporary accommodation within two or three years but continuing this would mean we then have a supply that also begins to meet the need of other families who are in need due to overcrowding. These larger units will release more existing homes, as families move from a 3- to a 4-bedroom home, so we then start to see an additional supply from the existing housing stock as well.

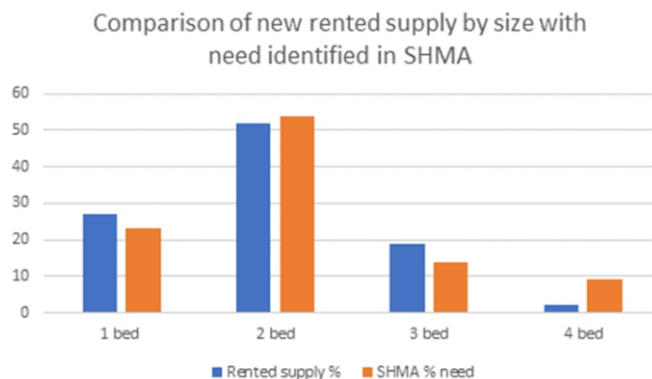
4.24 We think that a relatively small additional increase in the supply of larger homes is so important as it helps us deliver three important outcomes: a reduction in the number of families needing temporary accommodation, a reduction in the length of time spent in temporary accommodation, and eventually a reduction in the number of families in other types of inadequate housing (see the appendix for more information about this).

4.25 The Council's update to its Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) in 2015 accurately anticipated that the majority of one-bed need would eventually be met from existing supply. That stage has now been met but we shall continue to monitor the need as well as the supply of one-bedroom affordable homes as we are concerned about the possible level of 'hidden homelessness' in Chelmsford. These are people, usually single, who need a home and are staying with friends, 'sofa surfing'. As they are 'hidden' it is inevitably difficult to quantify the scale of need.

4.26 Responding to those who lose this accommodation, or present to the Council as homeless is something that is covered by the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2020 – 2024.

4.27 Others may be in less urgent need and could be helped through a combination of advice about their options and more analysis of the level of need and demand from this group.

4.28 The monitoring information collated by the Council's planning service shows that the supply of larger new affordable homes for rent during 2015 -2020 has been significantly below the requirement identified by the SHMA, which has contributed to the problems of churn within the existing social housing stock.



Source: Chelmsford City Council Strategic Housing Market Assessment

4.29 The supply of two-bedroom homes is comparable with the backlog of need but as this is so similar, it means that households will inevitably have to wait a year before moving from temporary accommodation in to settled housing. A slight increase is needed to reduce this and also address the need of those who are overcrowded in one-bedroom homes. Moving forward it is critical that the new greenfield sites in the Local Plan provide affordable homes for rent in the proportions set out in the SHMA, especially for the three and four bed dwellings.

4.30 Creating an additional supply of larger homes for rent must be a priority:

- ✓ To meet the backlog of households in temporary accommodation
- ✓ To meet the need of those in affordable homes who are overcrowded, and
- ✓ Improve the overall supply of homes as properties with overcrowded households become available for re-letting to others

4.31 An additional 10 3-bed homes and 8 4-bed homes a year over five years would clear the current backlog of need and help re-establish a better flow of supply from the existing stock more closely aligned to current needs. Accelerating this additional supply will reduce the risk of an improved supply being overtaken by increasing need.

4.32 We cannot risk relying on just one method to achieve this so we will aim to increase supply in a number of ways, ranging from identifying opportunities for development in addition to that in our Local Plan, to working with our partners to help improve the movement and thereby supply from the existing stock and have included these proposed actions below.

4.33 Enabling a more balanced supply will reduce the need for households to be housed in temporary accommodation but this reduction can only come at the pace of progress of improving the supply. The Council has managed to maintain a steady reduction in the use of temporary accommodation, reversing the national trend but we must bear in mind the risk of rising homelessness so we will continue to monitor both the need and the cost of temporary accommodation and opportunities to reduce the cost.



PROPOSED ACTIONS

Encourage RPs to provide larger affordable homes for social rent to reduce the impact of the benefit cap identifying the need for subsidy where necessary on existing developments

Identify opportunities for the development of additional larger, affordable family homes on sites owned by the Council, other public bodies and Registered Providers

Monitor and evaluate pilot scheme to help older residents down-size to homes that are more appropriate to their needs

Explore the possibility of joining sub-regional choice-based lettings scheme to give more choice to local residents and make best use of local housing stock

Work with local Registered Providers to identify opportunities for additional development of larger homes on existing estates

Work with Registered Providers to improve our understanding of the reasons for the lower level of re-lets in Chelmsford compared with neighbouring districts

Explore the potential for development as an exception to policy necessary to provide an

additional supply of larger affordable homes and the possibility of available sites

Work with Eastern Community Homes to implement a programme of work to support for communities to build housing that meets local need

Continue to monitor the need for temporary accommodation by bedroom size and opportunities to reduce the cost

Consider ways to identify and respond to the need of single people with options to respond to this need

Secure the percentage of three and four bedroom affordable homes for rent on new development in the percentage proportions set out in the SHMA.

Consultation questions

1. **Do you have any suggestions as to how the Council could provide more larger affordable homes?**
2. **If you are a housing association, how could you help improve the supply of the existing stock and how could the Council help you develop larger family homes?**
3. **Is there anything else you would like to add?**

Renting your home privately (Priorities 4, 6 & 7)

4.34 Most of the homes that are privately rented in Chelmsford were not built with that intention. This has been a growing sector from the start of this century and in some areas, such as London, new homes are built specifically for this purpose in response to demand and the rising cost of home ownership. Most are a conversion of tenure from owner-occupation, whether through buy-to-let, inheritance or other lifestyle changes.

4.35 The Council has duties regulatory powers to deal with complaints of poor management and disrepair, and the licensing of Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). The growth of this sector means it is increasingly relevant to meeting both housing demand and to a lesser extent housing need.

4.36 The rising cost of home ownership has led to a rising number of households renting instead of buying homes on the open market. Between 1997 and 2020 the proportion of households renting from private landlords nationally rose from around 10% to 30%. Usually this would be through the conversion of homes that were previously occupied by homeowners.

4.37 For many, privately renting a property provides households with a home that they can afford, for the short to medium term, with flexibility should their circumstances change but for some the lack of certainty about the longer term can be a cause of anxiety.

4.38 In recent years there have been additional regulations aimed at improving the quality of homes and management in this sector and we want to support both landlords and tenants in meeting these standards.

4.39 The growth in privately rented accommodation has become invaluable in helping the Council meet its duties to those in housing need, with around 100 households a year helped into private rent accommodation as a way to prevent homelessness, highlighting the growing strategic relevance of this sector.

4.40 Privately renting a home can provide choice for those unable to buy but average monthly rents in Chelmsford are not dissimilar to monthly mortgage repayments and some may find it difficult to meet these costs and save for a deposit for a property to buy, hence concerns about 'generation rent' becoming trapped in this tenure as house prices rise quicker than income.

4.41 Better promotion of intermediate affordable homes could help some make a move from renting to home ownership and provide a settled home.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Establish a private landlords' forum to give support and promote best practice

Provide guidance on renting your home to inform tenants and others of their rights and responsibilities

Determine the most effective way to identify the risks of poor condition and monitoring of housing stock

Identify opportunities for tackling fuel poverty and reducing energy consumption in privately rented sector.

Consultation questions

4. **If you are a private landlord or letting agent, what type of support would you like to see from the Council?**
5. **If you are a tenant renting from a private landlord, how would you suggest the Council could help you manage your tenancy?**
6. **Do you have any other ideas or suggestions as to how the Council could help support this sector to meet local housing need?**
7. **Is there anything else you would like to add?**

Specialist Housing (Priorities 5, 6 & 7)

4.42 Some of our most vulnerable residents have a need for specialist housing, homes designed to help them retain their independence if they have physical difficulties, homes that provide support to help them manage and adjust to significant changes to their lifestyle, or both.

4.43 Through the policies of our Local Plan a proportion of new homes will be developed to meet the needs of those with limited mobility, conventionally this has often been provided as one-bedroom ground-floor properties and whilst this is helpful for single people, it overlooks the need of households with disabled children or single people who need a live-in carer.

4.44 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) can be used to adapt existing properties to make them suitable for larger households but as highlighted above, the limited supply of larger affordable homes creates a barrier to housing options, especially if the existing home is not suitable to the adaptations that are needed.

4.45 We will therefore seek to achieve a mix of new homes designed to help those with physical disabilities and seek to identify ways of making best use of DFGs to meet the housing needs of those needing adaptations including those in homes not suited to the adaptations required, including those needing temporary accommodation.



4.46 Policy DM1 (C) (i) of the Local Plan requires developments of 100 or more homes to make a contribution to the need for specialist housing taking account of local housing needs. This is in addition to the requirement to contribute to need for affordable housing.

4.47 In order to ensure this is aimed at meeting housing need as opposed to demand that may be provided through other types of development aimed at those who can afford to meet their housing need, it is expected that the presumption will be that most of this specialist accommodation will also be provided at rental level below local housing allowance to ensure it is affordable.

4.48 The groups that have been identified in the Plan evidenced by Essex County Council are older people and people with a learning disability. Neither present as a significant need in terms of local housing need based on applications to our Housing Register nor as groups at risk of homelessness, so we will work with colleagues at Essex County Council to quantify and detail the housing requirements in addition to existing supply for both these groups in Chelmsford.

4.49 The other specialist requirement that has already been identified in our Local Plan is the need for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people and provision is already being planned to meet these needs.

4.50 By looking at the support needs of those who are in housing need, in particular those at risk of homelessness (including rough sleepers) and those in temporary accommodation we are able to identify other groups who require specialist accommodation.

Single Homeless / Rough Sleepers

4.51 In 2019 we calculated a need for an additional 30 to 40 units of accommodation with support to help eliminate the need for anyone to sleep rough in Chelmsford based on the incidence of newly arising cases being 50 to 70 per annum. In the summer of 2020, following the success of the 'Everyone In' programme we submitted a bid for funding from MHCLG which has helped us work with partners to deliver an even greater number of places by the end of 2021.

4.52 We will continue to monitor and review the need for specialist accommodation for this group but anticipate that the majority of unmet need will have been catered for in the lifetime of our new Housing Strategy, assuming an average stay of 12 months, and we want to maintain the momentum to meet the need for other groups on the same basis of the average stay being 12 months. The highest needs are:

Mental health

4.53 There are 53 cases a year of people who lose their accommodation in Chelmsford and have a need for support to help them manage a mental health condition. For approximately half of these cases, the support can be, or is already provided by services based in the community but we identified on average 26 a year who either have no support or are waiting for this to be provided and in the meantime have a need for specialist support to help them manage their current situation and plan for recovery as well as moving on to live independently. We have therefore set a requirement for 26 additional units.

Physical Health

4.54 There is an average of 21 cases a year of people who become homeless who have a physical disability. For most of these, the provision of suitable adaptations to their temporary and permanent home is the main requirement with other support being provided by other agencies such as social care. There is therefore a need to ensure the Council can meet the needs of those with physical disabilities who may have to be housed in temporary accommodation.

4.55 We shall also monitor the supply and demand of new homes provided by our planning policies for people who need homes that are

designed specifically to meet this need to make sure that we achieve a proportionate mix that reflects the need of the size of the property as well as the need for special design.

Domestic Abuse

4.56 Unfortunately, this has been one of the more common reasons for homelessness in Chelmsford for a number of years. Some, often with children, will need intensive support as well as safe accommodation to help them manage trauma, understand and manage risk, develop skills for living independently and safely in the future. There is a need for 14 two-bedroom units to meet the need for this group. The Domestic Abuse Bill will be enacted before the summer of 2021 and as part of this, the Council will be working with partners to assess the impact this will have on our housing duties and we will work with Essex County Council as the lead authority to identify the need for additional specialist accommodation.

Young People

4.57 Not only are young people, including those who have been in care, more vulnerable and at risk of exploitation, we also know that when housed they have a much greater risk of becoming homeless again, especially within the first year of starting a tenancy. For this reason we need to enable the development of accommodation with support for 20 young people

in Chelmsford to help them acquire skills to manage living alone before they have a home of their own.

Older People

4.58 Essex County Council has identified a need for additional specialist accommodation for older people who need support, distinct from the need for accommodation that provides clinical and personal care. In terms of homelessness or urgent housing need, there are very few (less than five a year) older people who have to be accommodated by the Council.



4.59 As local housing authority so we need to understand more about the distinction between those who need accommodation to access support, and those who need accommodation with support because they have a housing and

support need. With such a possible variety of options, including help to remain in your current home, we also want to work with others to understand not only the current and future need of housing for older people but the most suitable options as well.

4.60 With the exception of older people, this adds up to an annual need of between 70 to 80 units of specialist accommodation a year. On the basis that the average length of stay is between 12 to 24 months, a gross additional supply of around 90 units would create a sustainable supply based on current and anticipated future need.

4.61 Converting the requirement in Policy DM1 (C) (i) into a commuted sum in lieu of on-site specialist residential accommodation provision on new development would enable flexibility to meet the range of housing need identified above to be delivered by Registered Providers, housing charities and others; flexibility in the location of the specialist residential accommodation to meet the different needs; as well as the ability to align revenue funds to match this capital contribution towards the identified housing needs.

4.62 In order to ensure future provision is effective in meeting identified need, we will need to make sure that our Housing Service has nomination rights for new developments. We also require, to meet these needs, that the accommodation is affordable for those who are

unable to work, often due to the need for support, and rents should therefore be set at or below Local Housing Allowance levels. We recognise that this will limit the income and present a challenge in meeting the additional cost of providing support so we will work in the meantime with providers of specialist housing to identify ways of making future developments financially viable and sustainable.

4.63 We will also continue to monitor the need for specialist accommodation for these three groups to support our Planning Service in

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Prepare a Planning Advice Note which summarises the identified local housing need for specialist residential accommodation and identifies a flexible way in which the variety of specialist needs identified in this Strategy could be delivered using Policy DM1 (C) (i)

Prepare a Planning Advice Note setting out the need for different size new build wheelchair accessible affordable accommodation for rent on an annual basis.

Ensure new build homes designed for people with physical disabilities meet the need of all household types based upon information from the Housing Register

Explore the possibility for working with partners to make best use of DFGs to meet the need for housing as well as adaptations for those with physical disabilities including for those who may need to use temporary accommodation.

Work with ECC to quantify and understand the future housing requirements for older people and people with a learning disability.

Identify ways to develop an understanding of the housing needs of an ageing population and the most effective way to plan for this

Identify opportunities to combine resources to meet shared objectives in this and Essex County Council's Housing Strategy for the development and commissioning of specialist housing including options for commissioning and funding the cost of support

Continue to monitor both the need and provision of specialist housing, identifying opportunities for capital and revenue funding to support providers of this accommodation.

Consultation questions

8. **If you are a landlord, what could the Council do to improve the ability to use Disabled Facilities Grants to make homes more accessible?**
9. **Do you think it would be helpful if the Council worked with others to develop a more strategic approach to meeting the housing needs of older people?**
10. **If you are a landlord or provider of specialist accommodation what are the issues the Council should be aware of regarding the development of specialist accommodation?**
11. **Are there any other groups that should be considered? If so, what evidence should the Council look at to understand this need?**
12. **If you are a local community group, would you be interested in the possibility of helping to develop affordable homes to meet local need, e.g. within a local area or for a particular group?**
13. **Is there anything else you would like to add?**

Owning your own home (Priorities 4, 6 & 7)

4.64 We support home ownership through the allocation of sites in the Local Plan which predominately reflect the demand for homes, the majority of which will be sold on the open market.

4.65 Home ownership is the most common tenure. However, over the last 20 years this has been gradually reducing, especially amongst younger households who are unable to afford rising prices and there has been a corresponding increase in the number of homes being made available for renting by private landlords.

4.66 During this period, the ratio of affordability of the value of a home compared to local earnings rose from around 4% in 1997 to above 11% in 2019. This means that if we compare the average household wage for residents of Chelmsford with the average cost of a home, potential home buyers with no existing equity would now need to borrow 11 times their annual income. In 1997 it was four times their annual income. This is a very broad indicator but as it is one that is applied nationally it is helpful highlighting areas such as Chelmsford where buying a home is more costly in relation to local wages.

4.67 Inevitably more people are now finding it harder to afford to buy a home of their own and in 2021 the government is introducing the First Home scheme, providing homes for sale at a discounted price as part of the provision of affordable homes on new housing developments.

4.68 This could make new homes that currently require an annual income of around £50,000 affordable to those with an income of £35,000 (assuming original value of £250,000, 25-year mortgage with 5% deposit and 5% interest)



4.69 The details of the First Homes programme are still being finalised, including proposals for the role of local authorities in approving applications and setting priorities for eligibility but once clarified, this could help meet some demand from local residents who are unable to buy a home of their own in Chelmsford.

4.70 A small proportion of new homes could still be provided as shared-ownership, part-buy and part rent, which requires an even smaller mortgage and deposit but this is offset by still needing to pay a rent based on the value of the unsold equity. This may still be something that helps meet local demand and helps Registered Providers of affordable homes improve the financial viability of new developments.

4.71 Most property owners either live in their property or rent it to others, a small number will have homes that are empty whilst undergoing repairs, renovation or pending sale or transfer. An even smaller number may become empty for longer periods, possibly even falling into disrepair as a result.

4.72 The Council will continue to monitor empty homes, encouraging owners to bring them back in to use and taking enforcement action including the option of compulsory purchase.

4.73 In response to the growing interest in opportunities for people to build or have more input in the design and layout of their own home,

we will use the policies in our Local Plan to ensure a proportion of plots on larger developments can be used for this purpose. We shall monitor with interest to see what the level and type of demand is from individuals and local community groups to see if there may be opportunities in the future to provide more help and support, and to see how it may be helping to meet local housing need as well as demand.

4.74 We will also examine how other options such as First Homes, shared-ownership and other schemes such as rent-to-buy could help some tenants who are renting in Chelmsford move on to owning a home of their own, releasing rented homes to meet future demand

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Clarify the implications for the Council's Housing and Planning Services of the policy for First Homes, the resource implications for allocation and possible link to local priorities

Consult with RPs and others (Homes England) on impact of First Homes, retaining option for shared-ownership and how this may affect future viability of affordable housing provision.

Consultation questions

- 14. Do you think the Council should be using its resources (land and money) to help people become home-owners as a priority if it means it is less able to meet its duties to those who are homeless?**
- 15. If the Council is able to nominate people to schemes such as First Homes, who should be prioritised, for example key workers, those moving on from social housing, those wanting to move in to Chelmsford to access employment? Any other groups?**
- 16. Do you think the Council should do more to explain and promote 'intermediate' affordable homes such as shared-ownership and rent-to-buy?**
- 17. How would you like to see the Council tackle empty homes – what ideas or suggestions do you have for how they could be used to meet local need and demand? What information would you like to know about empty homes?**
- 18. Is there anything else you would like to add?**

Monitoring and working with partners (Priorities 1 - 7)

4.75 As a stock-transfer authority we value the contribution that Registered Providers, housing charities and other organisations can make to helping us meet our housing needs. We also need to be aware and understand the challenges they face and work in collaboration to help them so they can help us.

4.76 Over the last year, some have had to review their plans for developing affordable homes; we also know that the high cost of housing in Chelmsford means that not only is there a greater need for affordable homes than in some other parts of the county but the cost of land and development is also higher so we need to work in partnership to understand how we can overcome these particular challenges as part of the consultation process for this strategy.

4.77 Many Registered Providers have experience and expertise in developing support for local communities as well as homes, helping improve the quality of life for their residents and others in the community. Examples include community hubs, home improvement agencies, floating support, initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour and support for local community groups.

4.78 This support for local communities is something we welcome and would support local Registered Providers who can provide this as additional value to the homes they provide.

4.79 We must not overlook the fact that the majority of supply will always come from the existing stock but we cannot take for granted that all existing homes will always remain fit for purpose. As difficult as it may be to accept that some homes are no longer financially viable to retain, working with Registered Providers to improve the condition of the existing stock where feasible and consider alternative options where necessary could help create new opportunities for developing homes of a better standard that are better suited to current needs.

4.80 Government agencies such as Homes England and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have also played an invaluable role in the past, helping contribute both funding and expertise to help us enable the development of homes and we want to continue to build rapport and understanding to help us generate a supply of homes in addition to those delivered through the Local Plan.

4.81 With support from Homes England and MHCLG last year, we have been able to help smaller housing providers double the number of homes with support for single homeless and

rough sleepers, meeting the shortfall we identified in 2019. This has helped us identify new ways we can work with smaller housing associations and voluntary groups who have expertise in providing specialist support to acquire properties on a smaller scale to meet some of the need for specialist housing mentioned above and we want to continue to see if possible to maintain this as an additional source of supply.

4.82 The response to the national Everyone In scheme launched at the start of the pandemic in 2020 has triggered both a recognition of the need for affordable and specialist housing and the wide range of organisations willing to help make a contribution to tackling homelessness and local housing need. We want to maintain this momentum of collaboration and innovation and will use this strategy as a way of encouraging engagement with other public bodies, faith groups, charities and investors to help us meet the housing need of local residents.

4.83 This includes local community groups who may already have identified a need that complements our own identified requirements for housing. The Council has contracted support from the Eastern Community Hub, launched in March 2021 from a collective of rural community councils, which offers tools and support for groups interested in community-led housing.

4.84 Where it is not viable or feasible to provide affordable homes or specialist accommodation on smaller developments, the Council may consider a financial contribution which can be used to support the acquisition or development of homes through these other means elsewhere in the district.

4.85 Where it is not feasible or preferable to provide affordable homes on smaller developments and where more practicable to provide specialist accommodation off site on larger developments, the Council may consider a financial contribution which can be used to support the acquisition or development of homes through these other means elsewhere in the district.

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Establish routine monitoring meetings with local RPs to improve understanding of local need, opportunities for new developments, issues relating to stock condition and opportunities to bring additional benefits to local communities

Identify with RPs properties that require additional investment or redevelopment to help both organisations plan for improvements or redevelopment, ensuring that this fits with local housing requirements

Develop regular contact with Homes England and MHCLG to identify opportunities for investment in new homes for Chelmsford

Work with smaller housing providers to help them understand and develop homes to meet identified need in Chelmsford

Establish an annual briefing for all partners interested in meeting housing need in Chelmsford, including progress with implementing this strategy, beginning with the launch of this strategy in 2021

Implement a programme of work to support for Community Led Housing opportunities to be realised.

Monitor expected and received receipts to fund a capital programme to provide an additional supply of affordable family homes and specialist housing in accordance with identified need

Monitor proposed developments that provide affordable homes to ensure they comply with the requirements of the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment or when there is an identified change to local housing need or priorities, the proposed provision is amended to reflect this.

Consultation Questions:

1. **Are there any other partners the Council should be working with?**
2. **Any other comments or suggestions?**



5. Monitoring and Review

5.1 Progress with the delivery of the strategy's action plan will be reviewed continuously by the Council's Affordable Housing Working Group including an annual review.

5.2 Sitting behind this will be a range of information that will help provide information and context as to the relevance of our actions and the impact that they have in achieving the outcomes we expect. These include:

- The supply by size and tenure of new affordable homes as new build and re-lets
- The number permissions for developments of affordable and specialist homes including those that are in addition to existing sites allocated in the local plan
- Funding made available for investment in housing in the district from the Council's own resources and external sources
- The number of Registered Providers and others with resourced plans for development of affordable and specialist homes to meet identified local need
- The number and proportion of cases referred to the Housing Ombudsman involving local Registered Providers
- The number of existing social homes refurbished to meet improved energy standards

- The number of long-term empty homes including the number identified for enforcement
- The number of adaptations provided by the Council's Disability Facilities Grant programme
- The number of households in temporary accommodation by household size
- The need for specialist accommodation based on the support requirements of those in temporary accommodation
- The number of households inadequately housed due to overcrowding by size of home required
- The number of households helped by the Council to access privately rented accommodation
- Current median and lower third cost of privately renting a home in Chelmsford by bedroom size
- The current median and lower third cost by bedroom size of homes for sale on the open market in Chelmsford

5.3 By monitoring this data, we will be able to see both how our performance is addressing local housing need and how local trends may be changing to prompt any need to reconsider our plans and priorities

PROPOSED ACTIONS

Agree targets, key indicators and key performance indicators that will show how effective the strategy is meeting housing need and demand

Agree with partners how progress is to be reported

Progress of the aims of the strategy and action plan to be routinely reported to elected members through the Council's Housing Working Group including an annual report

Consultation Questions:

1. **Are there any other indicators you think the Council should consider?**
2. **How do you think the Council should keep you informed of the progress of delivering this strategy**



Glossary

To be added

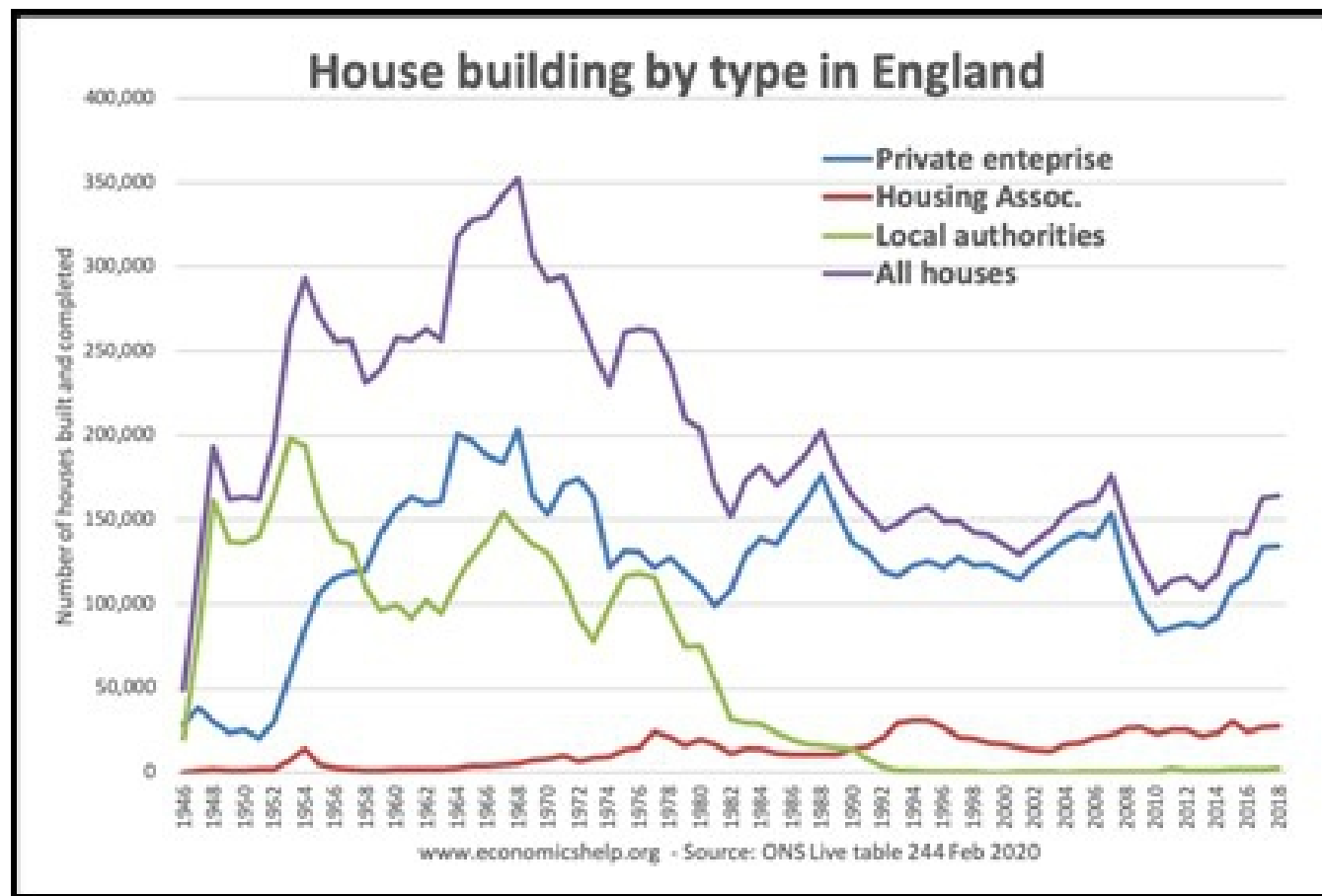
Appendix 1 - Evidence Base

There are approximately 80,000 homes in the district of Chelmsford, of which 11,000 are affordable provided by Registered Providers (housing associations) and we estimate a slightly higher number to be rented by private landlords. The largest tenure type remains private ownership, although this has reduced in percentage terms in recent years. On average 1,000 new homes are built every year in Chelmsford.

The Council does not own any Council housing, other than properties used for temporary accommodation, as it transferred its housing stock to CHP nearly 20 years ago, who are therefore the largest social landlord in Chelmsford. Since the 1980s until recently, very few affordable homes have been developed by Councils and most have been delivered by housing associations as requirements of planning permissions. The Council, however, still retains responsibility for administering the housing register and managing homelessness. This is done in partnership with the Registered Providers that operate in the City area.

Table 1 shows how since the 1980s housing associations have replaced local authorities nationally as the main source of new affordable homes.

Table 1



Despite a growing number of new homes in Chelmsford, of all tenures, affordability has affected a growing number of people as the cost of buying or renting a home has risen, often at a rate faster than most people's income, reducing the number who can afford to buy on the open market, who then rent instead. For some on lower incomes, they have found that they can no longer afford to rent from a private landlord and so for them the only option is 'affordable' accommodation.

This shift in tenure is shown in the Table 2 below, showing how over the last 30 to 40 years the proportion of social or affordable homes has almost halved and the proportion of private rent has nearly doubled. Levels of home ownership have remained stable but a growing proportion of owner-occupiers no longer have a mortgage showing the ageing profile of home-ownership.

Table 2 - Proportion of Tenure in England 1961-2011

Year	Owner Occupation%	Social Housing%	Private Rent%
1961	43	23	34
1971	51	29	20
1981	57	32	11
1991	68	23	9
2001	70	19	10
2011	66	17	17

Source: English House Condition Survey

www.gov.uk/government/publications/50-years-of-the-english-housing-survey

From 2009 and 2019 the number of homes in our district increased from 70,950 to 77,063. The proportion of affordable homes in Chelmsford increased from 9% to 13% but there remains a significant shortfall as the solution to meeting the housing needs of the city is more nuanced than just an additional number:

Between 2018 and 2021 there were an additional 333 new affordable homes built in Chelmsford that were let to people from the Council's Housing Register. Over this period though, the overall number of lettings per year, which includes re-lets from the existing stock, only increased from 316 in 2018/19 to 335 by the end of 2020/21.

To improve the overall supply to meet Chelmsford's priority housing needs we need to re-balance the supply of new affordable homes and use this as a catalyst to improve the greater supply from the existing stock.

As predicted by the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), there is now an adequate supply of affordable one-bedroom properties. This has been supplemented by an increase throughout 2020 in the number of specialist bedspaces for single homeless people including rough sleepers.

However, this is not the case with larger affordable homes and the more limited supply of these is affecting the Council's ability to meet its statutory duties to those who become homeless and those who are inadequately housed as shown in the following Table 3 below.

Table 3: Housing need and supply in Chelmsford

Size	No. in Temp. Accommodation April 2020	Overcrowded/ not homeless	Annual lettings of affordable housing	Need met in 12 months
1 bed	64	0	130	66 (100%)
2 bed	127	91	145	73 (66%)
3 bed	56	86	56	86 (40%)
4 bed	20	15	6	29 (17%)

Source: Strategic Housing Services Monitoring 2020 – note does not include age-restricted and intermediate affordable homes

We believe that this imbalance is restricting the supply, or 'churn', from the existing stock of affordable homes in Chelmsford which may be why, despite having comparable levels of affordable homes with other districts in Essex, the number of homes becoming available as re-lets is lower. Enabling an additional supply of homes that help unlock this logjam would create a larger, overall supply.

Table 4: Annual social housing churn as percentage of social housing stock (includes new build and sheltered accommodation)

Local Authority	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Braintree	5.6	5.2	5.6	6.5	6.2
Chelmsford	3.3	4.6	3.8	3.3	3.5
Colchester	6.3	4.4	5.4	5.9	5.9
Maldon	6.4	3.9	3.9	2.2	5.0
Babergh	6.4	6.4	5.7	5.3	6.6
Ipswich	7.8	6.0	5.4	5.1	5.0
Mid Suffolk	7.7	7.5	7.0	8.7	8.6

Increasing the supply of 3- and 4-bedroom affordable homes, even by a modest amount of 10 additional 3-bed homes and 8 additional 4-bed homes each year for five years, could eliminate the need for any families to stay for anything more than a short time in temporary accommodation and the go on to also meet the needs of those who are in housing need for other reasons, e.g. due to overcrowding.

Table 5 shows how once the need of those in temporary accommodation is met, meeting the needs of those who need to move on within social housing helps improve the supply from the existing stock by enabling an additional supply of 90 homes of the right type.

Table 5: Cumulative effect of additional 10 3-bed and 8 4-bed p.a. for 5 years

4 - bed	Households in TA	Households in Band 3 and 4
Year 1	10	29
Year 2	2	29
Year 3	0	23
Year 4	0	15
Year 5	0	7
Total new build = 40 Additional supply = 22 Total supply = 62		

3 - bed	Larger homes becoming available	Households in TA	Households in Band 3 & 4
Year 1		49	100
Year 2		39	100
Year 3	6	23	100
Year 4	14	0	99
Year 5	22	0	77
Total new build = 50 Additional supply = 23 Total supply = 73			



2 - bed	Larger homes becoming available	Households in TA	Households in Band 3 & 4
Year 1		119	107
Year 2		103	91
Year 3		87	75
Year 4	1	70	5
Year 5	22	32	(23)
Additional supply = 23			

By providing an additional 90 homes of the right type, the overall supply created including by those able to move within the existing stock is 158 with no one in the lower bands of 2 and 3 needing to wait more than a year for a 2-bedroom home. Obviously this assumes that all other variables remain constant but even if needs increase, this must be the most cost-effective way to provide an additional 68 affordable homes.

The market response to meeting the demand from those who can no longer afford to buy and therefore rent on the open market has meant a change in tenure, mainly within existing privately owned homes, as properties that a decade or so would have been sold to owner occupiers are increasingly likely to be rented. This has helped to meet some of the need for affordable homes; in 2018/19 the Council helped 40 households access privately rented accommodation relieving the pressure on the demand for affordable homes in Chelmsford, by the end of 2020/21 this had increased to 108 helped by an increase in the level of Local Housing Allowance that can be paid to assist with the cost of the rent.

The gap between Local Housing Allowance and average private rent costs in Chelmsford means that this is not always suitable for those households who are not working, or at risk of becoming unemployed. The cap to welfare payments of £20,000 also means this option would not be affordable for example to a single parent with three or more children who is not in work. Table 5 shows the gap by the size of property between Local Housing Allowance and average rent levels.

Table 5: Local Market Rents compared with Local Housing Allowance

Monthly Rent	July - September 2021			
	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
Average rent	£805	£1,150	£1,300	£1,750
LHA Rate	£650	£795	£985	£1,295
Shortfall	£155	£355	£315	£455



Chelmsford City Council Policy Board

5 July 2021

Strategic Growth Site Policy 1b – former St Peter's College, Fox Crescent – Masterplan submission

Report by:

Director of Sustainable Communities

Officer Contact:

Matthew Perry, Senior Planning Officer

Purpose

This report is seeking the Policy Board's recommendation to Cabinet to approve the Masterplan for the former St Peter's College Site Allocation.

Recommendations

1. The Policy Board recommend to Cabinet that the Masterplan attached at Appendix 1, with any changes arising from the recommendations, be approved.
 2. That the Policy Board delegate the Director of Sustainable Communities in consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development, to negotiate the further considerations outlined in this report and any other subsequent changes to the Masterplan ahead of the consideration by Cabinet.
-

1. Background

- 1.1. The masterplan presented with this report relates to Strategic Growth Site Policy 1b – former St Peters College, Fox Crescent which is brought forward by Essex County Council. The formal determination of masterplans consists of two

stages: recommendations by Chelmsford Policy Board and then approval by Cabinet.

1.2. Strategic Policy S7 sets out the Spatial Strategy (i.e. the scale and distribution) for new development over the period of the Local Plan. In allocating sites for strategic growth, this policy confirms that Strategic Growth Sites will be delivered in accordance with masterplans to be approved by the Council. This is to ensure we are creating attractive places to live and to ensure the successful integration of new communities with existing.

1.3. Masterplans are intended to demonstrate how the site will satisfy the requirements of the respective site policies. Masterplans are a tool to help achieve a vision and key development objectives. They consider sites at a broad level and set a framework for the future planning applications to follow (usually Outline and Full applications). The Council's Masterplan Procedure Note, updated in October 2019, sets out what masterplans should contain. The core content of masterplans should cover:

- A vision for the new place
- Site and context analysis e.g. surrounding landscape, heritage, contamination, flood risk, important views, etc
- Movement structure e.g. walking, cycling, public transport, vehicle circulation
- Infrastructure strategy
- Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) strategy
- A framework for landscape, spaces and public realm
- Land use and developable areas
- Building heights
- Layout Principles
- Delivery and phasing

Following the update to the Masterplan Procedure Note in October 2019, the Council also requires consideration of (i) supporting Livewell initiatives across the development and (ii) incorporating sustainable construction methods, energy efficiency and other sustainable development initiatives set out in the Council's Making Places Supplementary Planning Document.

1.4. Each of the masterplans will take a bespoke approach to the site it relates to. The larger of the allocated sites will differ from the smaller sites, the more complex or more constrained sites may differ from less complex and constrained sites, for example. Most masterplans will cover additional content or will look at certain matters in more detail than others, as appropriate, but all will consider similar core content.

1.5. The masterplan does not secure detailed site planning.

1.6. Developer obligations will be secured by way of a s.106 Agreement as part of the outline or full planning application.

2. The journey to this stage

- 2.1 In 2017, Chelmsford City Council, produced a Planning Brief for the site identifying a change of land use on the former college site, as it was surplus to educational needs within the area. This Planning Brief formed the basis for masterplanning parameters from the outset.
- 2.2 Throughout the period of masterplan production there are recurrent discussions between officers and the developer. These generate numerous iterations of the masterplan; each of those refining the masterplan in light of the issues which have been the subject of discussion. The submitted Masterplan document has itself undergone one revision since its publication in order to mainly address concerns with the road layout within the larger residential parcels.

Public Consultation

- 2.3 Public consultation was undertaken on behalf of the developer in June/July 2020, which consisted of a leaflet drop to residents and business properties surrounding the site (approximately 7,500) and a consultation website for residents to view the proposals online.

Member Presentation

- 2.4 Prior to the Chelmsford Policy Board meeting, all Members were invited to a developer presentation, on 11 March 2021, setting out the content of the draft masterplan and had the opportunity to ask questions about content.

3. Overview of Masterplan Content

Site and context analysis

- 3.1. The Strategic Growth Policy includes requirement for the following:
 - Around 185 new homes of a mixed size and type including affordable housing
 - Two special needs schools
 - Open space for recreational activities
 - Equipped play provision
 - New or relocated community facilities to meet evidenced need
 - Integration of flexible workspace facilities
- 3.2. Essex County Council are the landowner for the allocated site. The masterplan is being brought forward by their housing subsidiary arm, known as Essex Housing.

- 3.3. Essex County Council's vision is to '*deliver a development the combines good practice in urban design ... creating a high quality new neighbourhood.*' It sets out key principles under five broad headings – (i) integration and rejuvenation, (ii) movement, (iii) distinctiveness and character, (iv) safety and security, (v) environment, landscape and open space.
- 3.4. The masterplan provides a site and context analysis, which supplements analysis work undertaken by the Council prior to the masterplan process. It represents a suitable starting point for a masterplan.

Layout Principles

- 3.5. The Growth Site Policy sets out that the site 'is allocated for residential, specialist education uses, and community uses.' The site therefore has to assimilate a mix of uses within an irregular shaped parcel of land.
- 3.6. Education use is designated within a southern segment of land, a location envisaged within the City Council's design brief (2017), but one that has been dictated by the operational requirements of the two special schools, in terms of building layouts, site security and establishing access prior to commencement of residential development. The land positioned between the schools and allotments will be utilised for a drainage basin and open space, as shown in the masterplan.
- 3.7. Development parcels are split either side of the vehicular access but the road is curtailed from extending west by punctuating into the residential parcels relatively quickly, which enables green space to dominate through a central spine which curves northwards. This green corridor enables a soft edge to the existing allotments and provides a landscape focus for the layout. It also provides the basis for the pedestrian and cycle routes in north and westerly directions.
- 3.8. The proposed location of the community facility, within a parcel immediately adjacent Fox Crescent, will enable a mixed-use development in this location (if combined with residential), but also offers flexibility should the facility be required to be larger than currently envisaged.
- 3.9. The Independent Living/extra care designation within the centre of the site must be designed sensitively. The Council will seek a high-quality development in such a prominent location.
- 3.10. Part of the existing school building is shown to be retained (2 storey entrance building). The building has already been part demolished, including the wings and clock tower, under a demolition consent. Whilst not listed, the buildings have some heritage value and are considered as a non-designated heritage asset. The building offers some scope for re-use and also to provide a reference point to the front of the site. Therefore, the retention of at least part of the building is justified in planning terms and to address part of the site policy to 'adapt existing buildings'.

- 3.11. The Masterplan includes two different proposals to deal with the loss of on-street parking to Fox Crescent (see pg 42). Parking will be lost due to the need to keep clear the new entrance and also allow vehicles to move freely along this stretch of the road. Option A includes three banks of parking bays set perpendicular to the road. Option B includes two parking courts set within the site frontage. This is a key element of the masterplan. Both options require further work; Option A creates a substantial diversion for pedestrians and Option B would place parking spaces directly in front of the retained school building. From a highway safety perspective Option B is preferred. The current Masterplan presents these options as an initial study, as the purpose was to show that they could work in principle. The number of parking spaces proposed requires further investigation. Given the impact on existing residents and other factors yet confirmed (such as the extent of any required Traffic Regulation Order) the 12 spaces should not yet be presented as a final figure at this point.
- 3.12. The masterplan successfully shows the integration of around 185 new homes to this locality, with the addition of two new special schools.
- 3.13. There is sufficient open space to facilitate local recreation. These spaces are all located in accessible areas of the site for the benefit of new and existing residents. The relationship between development and public open spaces is such that safety and security are factored in from the outset through natural surveillance from the new homes.

Infrastructure requirements

- 3.14. The site infrastructure requirements are listed within the site policy.
- 3.15. Land is shown to be designated for two new special schools. The reality of that provision is that the Department for Education have submitted separate planning applications in advance of an approved masterplan, owing to the acute need for such facilities. The Masterplan shows their location and design – the planning applications were considered in the context of this masterplan, and recently approved (application ref's 21/00395/FUL & 21/00396/FUL).
- 3.16. The Highway Authority continue to provide advice on and enhancements to the local and strategic road network. Details will be secured through planning conditions and legal agreement, as necessary.
- 3.17. The illustrative masterplan shows provision for a new play area.
- 3.18. Financial contributions to early years, primary and secondary education can be secured through legal agreement at planning application stage, as required by the Local Education Authority. The legal agreement will also secure contributions to sport, leisure and recreation facilities.
- 3.19. Contributions will be secured towards mitigation measures identified in the Essex Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) at planning application stage.

- 3.20. The masterplan demonstrates a commitment to conform with the site infrastructure requirements.

Movement and access

- 3.21. Main vehicular access to the site will be from Fox Crescent. This access will also serve the two new special schools. Dual access has been explored with Highways, but a single point of access is the preference.
- 3.22. Pedestrian and cycle connections are provided to link Fox Crescent to Hobart Close to the north and Highfield Road to the west. Such routes will greatly increase permeability within the urban area through what is currently an enclosed site which restricts access east / west to the city centre and Melbourne, and vice versa. Those newly proposed routes will benefit from a landscaped setting set amongst the new development. An amendment within the revision document also ties the foot/cycle route to Highfield Road with the school access road.
- 3.23. ECC Highways have made requests for further amendments with respect to the highway network and pedestrian and cycle connections, namely – (i) footway link into Canberra Close, (ii) pedestrian route to north east into Fox Crescent to be cycle route also, (iii) widening of existing footway on Fox Crescent along the site frontage. These matters require further investigation and exploration with the applicant before being incorporated into the masterplan.

Building heights and density

- 3.24. Building heights are shown to be predominantly 2 storeys, with the likelihood of 3 storeys around the community facilities zone, increasing potentially up to 4 storeys in the centre of the site in buildings which will front the linear park.
- 3.25. The proposed building heights in principle are acceptable – 2 storeys respecting the existing residential properties to the north and east, with the scope for greater scale within the site in areas which front open space.
- 3.26. Density isn't specified within the document but will likely increase within the central area as scale increases. This is an appropriate design response and the density overall is dictated by the indicative dwelling figure within the site policy (around 185). The inclusion of around 60 Independent Living/extra care (IL) units (above and beyond the 185 dwellings) would increase the density beyond that envisaged in the site allocation; this will require further scrutiny once the number of units are finalised.

Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) Strategy

- 3.27. Drainage approach has used existing topography to promote a natural SUDS solution, through the inclusion of swale routes and a large attenuation basin in the western corner. Given the topography and position of the basins within an area of open amenity space, next to the school site, it is considered an appropriate design solution at this stage (subject to further detailing).

Delivery and phasing

- 3.28. Phasing is shown to be in five parts with the addition of the Independent Living accommodation (IL). Given the recent approval of the schools' applications – phase 1 (schools site) is realistic. Phases 2, 3 and 4 (as residential parcels moving from east to west) seem logical. The phasing of the IL is at present unknown – this will form a key gateway feature in the centre of the site and its phasing could influence the quality of the linear park. This matter will need to be considered further at planning application stage (in terms of the appropriateness of tying phasing together potentially).
- 3.29. Phase 5 is shown to include the community facility. The applicant is correct to state that the timing of delivery will depend on the eventual form of the community use and the timing of funding to fully deliver the preferred solution. However, the Council need to be mindful of securing the ability for the community facility to be developed as early as possible. This matter will need to be considered further at planning application stage (in terms of the mechanism for securing the site for the intended community use).

Livewell

- 3.30. The Livewell campaign is designed to engage communities, families and individuals with the aim of providing information about all that is on offer in Essex to improve health and wellbeing. Essex Housing are committed to consider the Livewell initiative within their development, albeit not confirmed that accreditation will be sought. The masterplan needs to dedicate a section to discuss measures to reflect the aspirations of Livewell, even if accreditation is not being sought.

Sustainable development initiatives

- 3.31. The application will be required to adhere to the Local Plan policies for sustainability. The masterplan does not include details of options for alternative means to power properties, however the absence of such facilities in this masterplan does not rule out the inclusion of community systems or other sustainable living/sustainable power generation measures on this site to meet the Council's objective of reaching a net carbon zero position by 2030.

4. Public Consultation – main issues

- 4.1. The public consultation resulted in 14 representations, and responses received from a range of consultees.

Representations are summarised as follows:

- Site context – properties in St Fabians Drive incorrectly described as flats; absence of layout or scale for school site; concerns over surface water drainage.

- Impact on neighbours – 4 storey development impact on St Fabians Drive, including loss of light; request for adequate fencing between school site and St Fabians Drive; question location of schools and could have been closer to allotments; loss of privacy to properties in Langton Avenue; security fencing to school to be imprisoning; loss of privacy from occupants of school sites.
- Wildlife – presence of wildlife, provision of food for birds, concern over proximity of path/cycleway to badger sett
- Highways – concern over one vehicular access point and its width due to on street parking; concern over access from further afield; concern over width of allotment access to serve cycles and pedestrians; bus stop locations shown inaccurately; increase in traffic and congestion

Consultee responses are summarised as follows:

- *ECC Suds* – no formal requirement to consult with the local lead flood authority (LLFA) at this stage; recommended developer contacts the LLFA to engage in pre-application discussions
- *Essex and Suffolk Water* – no objections - no apparatus located within the proposed development; water regulations information sheet provided for the attention of the developers.
- *Sport England* – site has not been used as a playing field for at least the last five years therefore Sport England would not be a statutory consultee on a future planning application; development will be required to provide or make contributions to new or enhanced sport, leisure and recreation facilities through securing a commuted sum in order to mitigate the loss of the former school playing fields on this site; recommends 'Active Design' principles to be incorporated and encourages the use of the Active Design checklist in the preparation of a planning application
- *Natural England* – masterplan should include relevant Essex RAMS policy to ensure that future planning applications give due consideration to this strategic solution; standing advice applies in relation to protected species and ancient woodland and veteran trees.
- *Essex Badger Group* - full planning applications should be accompanied by a Phase 2 Habitat Survey and a badger protection plan; if any full planning application intends to connect to existing sewerage systems close to a badger sett, this needs to be considered closely and be accompanied by full proposals for ensuring the badgers are protected at all times.
- *ECC Highways* – single point of access from Fox Crescent acceptable (to serve both the residential development and the new schools); layout to be amended to enable continuous routes rather than a series of parallel cul-de-sacs within the residential parcels; option B preferred for additional parking for Fox Crescent; traffic regulation orders likely to be required to restrict resident parking on street; footway/cycle connection required from schools site to Highfield Road link; existing footway on Fox Crescent to be widened to a minimum of 2m along the whole length of the site frontage; visibility splays at the junctions need to be in accordance with Manual for Streets; internal roads

should be 20mph; any trees should be outside the proposed adopted highway.

- *RSPB* – object to masterplan; developers lack of engagement with the RSPB; natural features should be retained, such hedgerow that runs east from allotments, pond at north should be linked with planting scheme; clocktower and entrance building should be retained; lighting should be designed to avoid unnecessary disturbance to wildlife; bird boxes and bat roosts should be designed into new buildings and garden boundaries; long term maintenance of the site for wildlife needs to be secured through the S106; lack of reference to Making Places SPD; development should incorporate the vision of “Homes for both people and wildlife”; SUDS features should be an opportunity to improve the biodiversity of the site
- *ECC Historic Environment Branch* - site is within an area where a large number of archaeological artefacts have been found; potential for archaeological remains across the whole of development area and as an assessment has already been carried out (in 2017); need for non-intrusive archaeological investigation in order to define the developments impact, possibly supplemented by appropriate archaeological intrusive field evaluation; presence of significant archaeological deposits may impact the masterplan.

4.2. Officers are content that the matters raised by the consultation would not prejudice the delivery of the scheme outlined within the masterplan.

5. Further considerations

5.1. In summary the main concerns, suggested points for discussion for Policy Board and potential amendments are set out below:

- Further exploration of highways works suggested by ECC Highways (as outlined above in paragraph 3.23), with solutions to be integrated into revised masterplan;
- Exploration of preferred option to address displacement of on-street parking along Fox Crescent (see masterplan page 42 – options A & B; options discussed in paragraph 3.11 above), with preferred solution included in revised masterplan;
- Request for Masterplan to include section dedicated to Livewell and sustainable construction methods (including reference to Making Places SPD).

6. Conclusion

6.1. The masterplan demonstrates how the requirements of the Local Plan can be delivered on this site. The document is sufficiently ambitious to achieve a high-quality development which is well related to its context. The masterplan layout and other content provides a sound framework to guide successful placemaking and will support the planning application process in an appropriate way.

- 6.2. This report highlights that some changes are expected to the masterplan document in order to align it with the Council's aspirations for this site.
- 6.3. The masterplan is presented to Chelmsford Policy Board with recommendations that it be referred to Cabinet for approval subject to the inclusion of any further necessary changes.

List of appendices:

1. Masterplan document – dated June 2021
-

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional:
None

Financial:
None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment:
New housing delivery can have a negative impact on climate and environmental change issues. Planning Policies, Building Regulations and Environmental Legislation ensure that new housing meets increasingly higher sustainability and environmental standards which will help mitigate this impact.

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030:
The Local Plan and Making Places SPD will provide guidance to assist in reducing carbon emissions through development. This development will follow the published guidance.

Personnel:
None

Risk Management:
None

Equality and Diversity:
None. An Equalities and Diversity Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the Local Plan.

Health and Safety:
None

Digital:
None

Other:
None

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

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

Local Plan 2013-2036

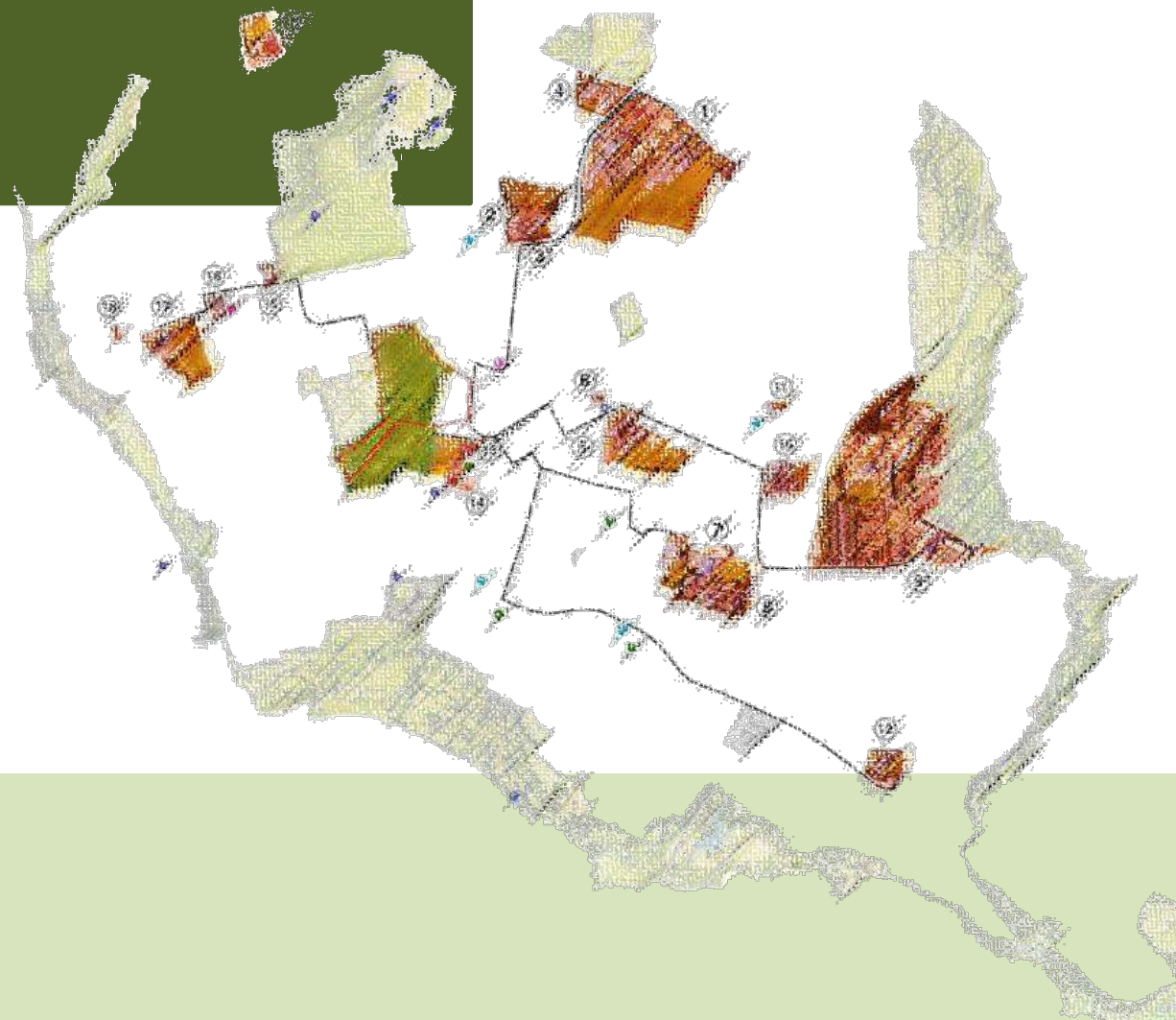
Our Chelmsford, Our Plan, January 2020

Chelmsford Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan

Former **ST PETER'S COLLEGE**

MASTERPLAN DOCUMENT

Chelmsford,
Essex



Stage 3 Submission Report

June 2021

Former **ST PETER'S COLLEGE** MASTERPLAN DOCUMENT

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Site Context
3. Site Analysis
4. Masterplan Proposals

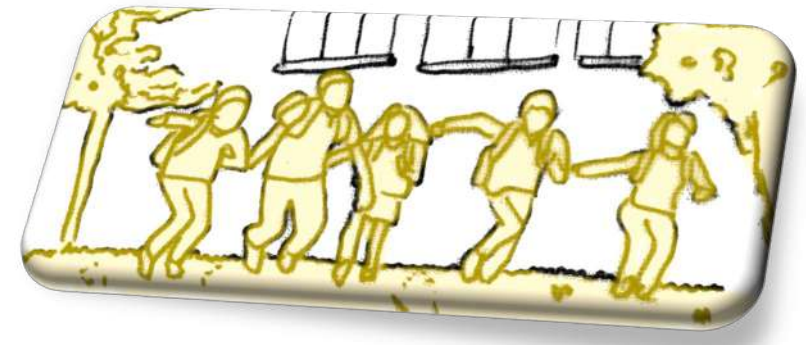
This document sets out proposals for the former site of St Peters College, Chelmsford, which is proposed for allocation for redevelopment in the new Chelmsford Local Plan.

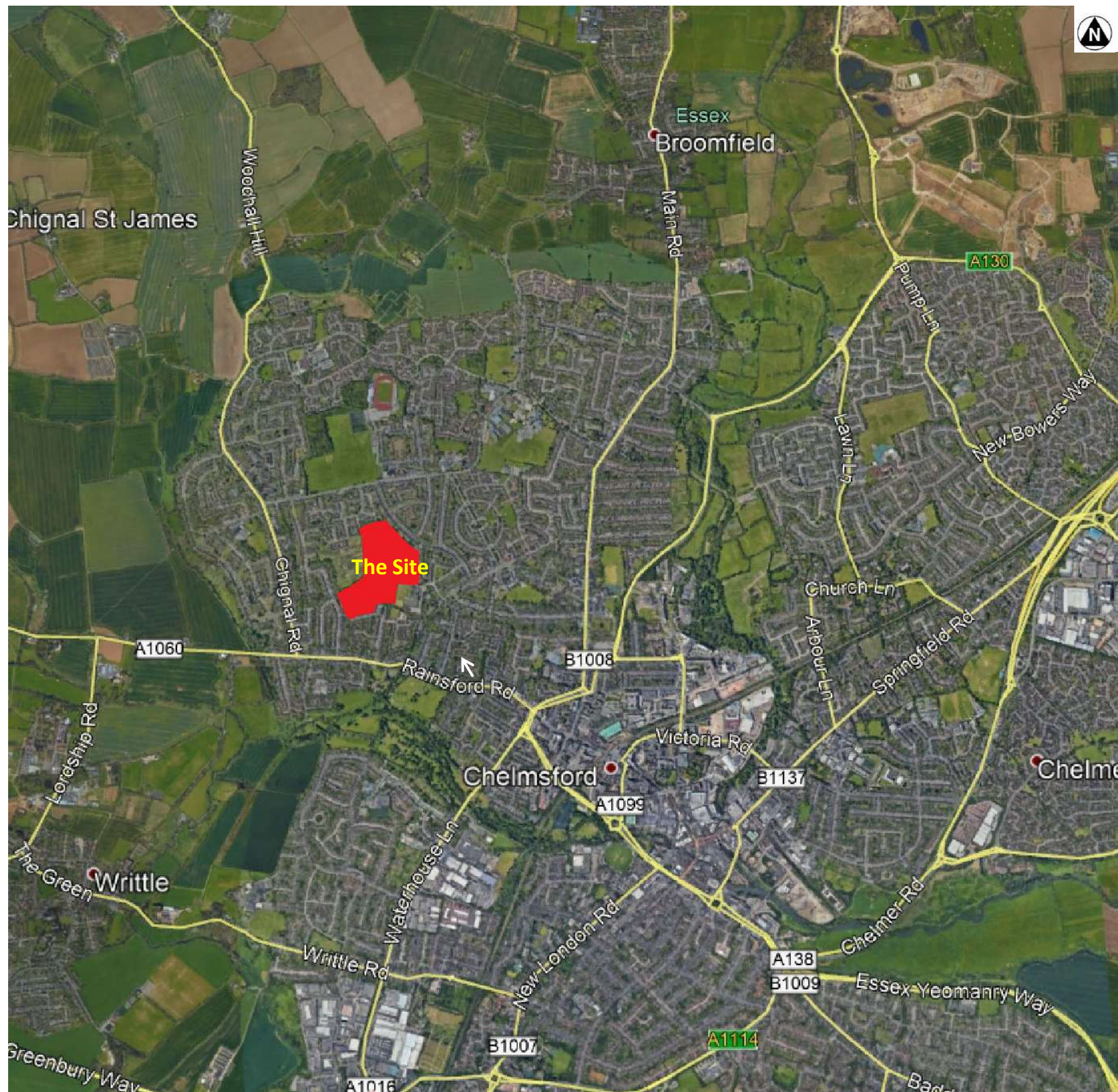
Former **ST PETER'S COLLEGE** MASTERPLAN DOCUMENT

1. The Masterplan Process

- Background
- Masterplan process
- Vision

This section summarises the masterplan process and identifies the key aims and objectives for the site.





This document is submitted as part of the masterplan process for the development of the former St Peters College Site in the Melbourne Area of Chelmsford, Essex.

The site in Fox Crescent has been identified for development as a Strategic Growth Site in the adopted Chelmsford Local Plan.

Chelmsford City Council, produced a Planning Brief for the site in 2017, identifying a change of land use on the former college site as it is surplus to educational needs within the area. The Council has subsequently allocated the site for redevelopment in its Local Plan, with the development to include

- Around 185 new homes of a mixed size and type including affordable housing
- Two special needs schools
- Open space for recreational activities
- Equipped play provision
- New or relocated community facilities to meet evidenced need
- Integration of flexible workspace facilities

The purpose of this document is to create a masterplan framework based on site analysis, constraints and opportunities, a movement and connectivity strategy, landscape strategy, developable areas and potential land use in advance of the submission of a planning applications(s) for the redevelopment of the site.

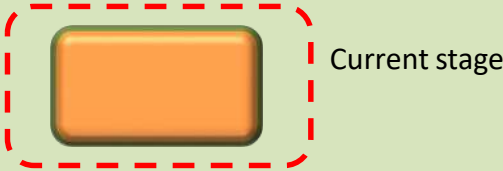
It has been prepared jointly by Saunders Boston Architects, Phase 2 Planning, Richard Jackson Limited (transport & drainage consultants), Matt Lee (landscape consultants) and Essex Housing, the development arm of Essex County Council.



Policy S9 of the new emerging Chelmsford Local Plan requires the development of strategic sites in Chelmsford to be undertaken in accordance with a Masterplan that has been prepared for the site. St Peter’s College is one of the strategic sites listed as requiring a Masterplan. Chelmsford City Council has adopted a procedure for the preparation of Masterplans, and the key steps are shown in the diagram to the left.

The task of preparing the Masterplan document falls to the site landowner/promoter (in this case Essex County Council), but the Masterplan process is a collaborative one, with Chelmsford City Council, other stakeholders, and the first public consultation having contributed to this draft, and with further changes if required following the current consultation.

The planning policy context that underlies the proposals contained within this Masterplan is set by Policy S1d from the new Local Plan. The site is also the subject of a Planning Brief that was approved by the Council in 2017. The purpose of the Masterplan is to expand upon the policy context set by the Local Plan (and to further develop the concepts set out in the Brief).



GUIDING VISION

The guiding vision for the development can be summarised as follows:

Deliver a development the combines good practice in urban design ... creating a high quality new neighbourhood .

The following general principles set-out aspirations that the proposed scheme responds to and achieves.



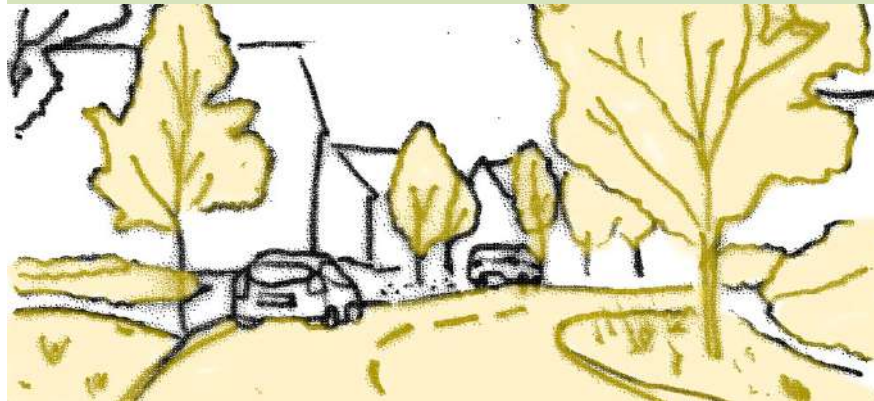
DISTINCTIVENESS AND CHARACTER

- Create places that have their own distinguishable identity in order to foster a sense of ownership among the residents.
- Design places to have a heart or a focus.
- Aid orientation and way finding by integrating landscape and built features



INTEGRATION AND REJUNENATION

- Rejuvenate the site to create a place that becomes a valued and integrated part of the area.
- Respond to the best aspects of the surrounding areas and propose a masterplan that preserves, enhances and embellishes these positive elements.
- Encourage future and existing users and residents to take ownership of the new development and enable them to live in and use it successfully.
- Respond sensitively to the site's existing edge conditions.
- Introduce new community facilities to complement the wider area provision



SAFETY AND SECURITY

- Ensure spaces are clearly perceived to be either public or private and carefully consider the relationship between them.
- Design well lit and usable spaces that can be used at all times of the day.
- Orientate buildings to encourage natural surveillance and overlooking of streets and spaces



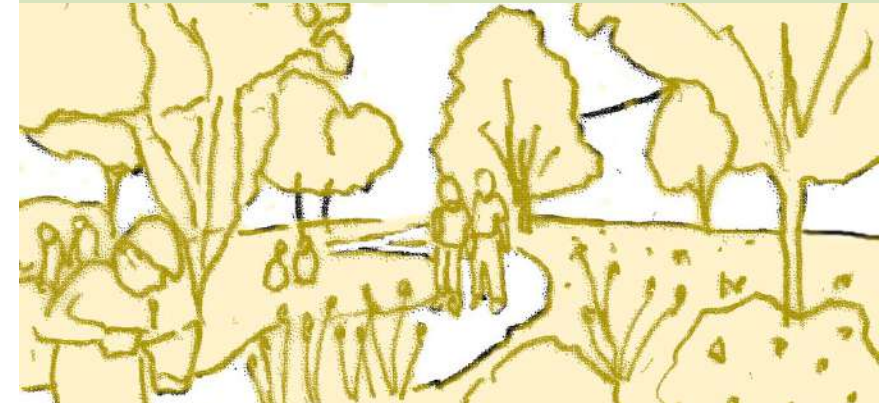
MOVEMENT

- Establish a clear and legible structure for movement around the site, including cycle links and pedestrian- only routes.
- Base the movement structure on a clearly defined hierarchy of streets.
- In addition to the movement functions of streets, consider their social roles. In other words, design streets as places.
- Ensure that all road users are accommodated safely and comfortably
- Civilise the car through the use of appropriate vehicular calming systems.
- Encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking



THE ENVIRONMENT, LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE

- Protect and enhance local wildlife habitats and biodiversity
- Creation of new habitats
- Consider the merit of retaining any existing trees or hedgerows
- Provision of open amenity and social space complementing the provision within the surrounding area

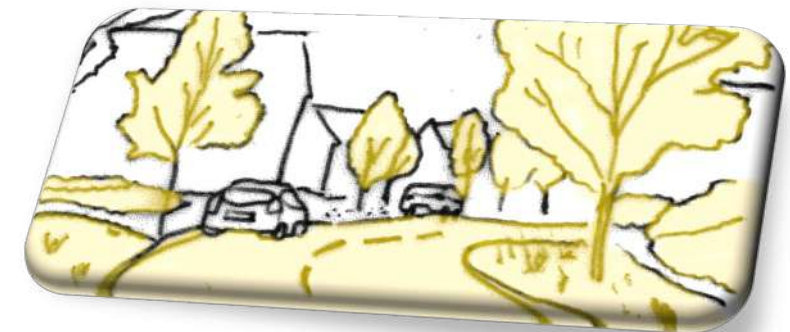


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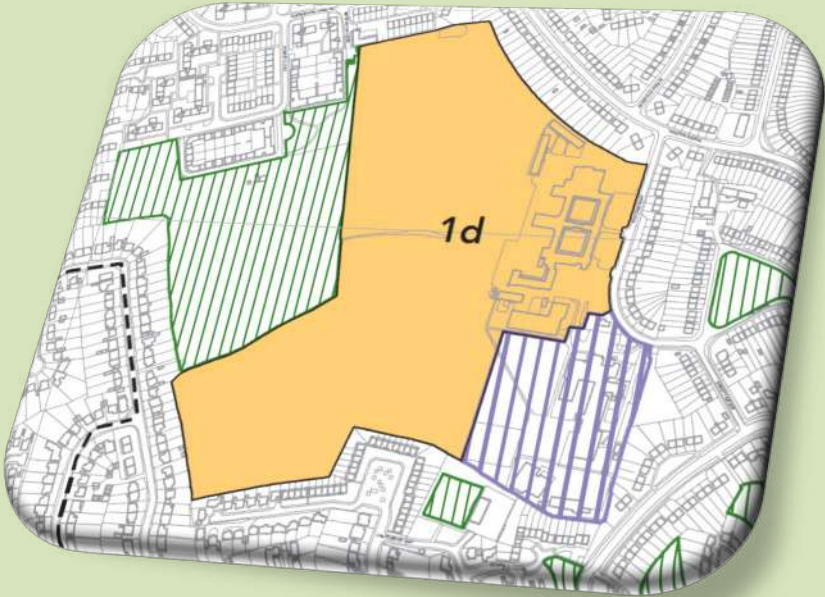
2. Site Context

- **Planning Policy Context**
- **Site Location**
- **Historic Context**
- **Local Build Character**
- **Community Facilities**
- **Recreation Provision**
- **Pedestrian Router to Green Space**
- **Summary**

This section outlines the strategic and local context of the site, including its relationship with the existing town and wider townscape setting, including assessment of wider transport links, landscape use, character and facilities within the surrounding area.



Planning Policy Context



Within the new Local Plan, the site is allocated for redevelopment and referred to as Strategic Growth Site 1d.

The policy states that the site should be developed for around 185 new homes and two new special schools.

In terms of the educational element, this Masterplan makes provision for the two new schools. It is envisaged that both of these will be provided in the southern section of the site adjacent to the existing Thriftwood College and land to the rear of dwellings in St. Fabians Drive. This location aligns with the approved Planning Brief. The new schools will be provided by the Education funding Agency. They are advised that the existing buildings are not suitable for this use and new buildings and facilities will be provided. The proposed location is therefore logical both because it is largely free of existing structures and therefore can be developed early and independently of the rest of the site, and because in land use and design terms it enables the educational uses to be grouped together on the south side of the site.

In terms of the residential use, the Masterplan sets out proposals for the redevelopment of the remainder of the site for both residential properties and an element of residential care in the form of ‘assisted living’ units. The Local Plan policy requires the site to meet the Council’s standards for open space provision, and for play space. The initial assessment of open space provision in the local area suggests a shortfall of open space across all typologies except allotments, and accordingly therefore this Masterplan has been prepared on the basis that the redevelopment will provide appropriate on site open space and play space to meet relevant local standards, other than additional allotments.

The Local Plan policy also requires the redevelopment of the site to provide, or make financial contributions to, new or enhanced sport, leisure and recreation facilities, having particular regard to the loss of existing open space. In part, through the provision of the new schools, the redevelopment of the site will retain an element of the existing playing fields. However, clearly it would not be possible to retain the remainder of the site as open space and develop for residential purposes, and therefore the scale/details of an appropriate financial contributions towards off-site open space works will be addressed through the planning application process in due course, in the normal way, and controlled through an appropriate legal agreement.

The Local Plan policy also requires the provision of new or relocated community facilities and integration of flexible workspace, both of which are matters also considered in the adopted Planning Brief for the site. The Planning Brief specifically seeks a site of 300 sq m for community use.

Consultation with the North Chelmsford Trust has occurred and the Trust has produced a “Statement of Need” which envisages a new community building comprising community space, workspace and office accommodation for voluntary and charitable organisations with opportunity for flats on the upper floors. As discussed further in Section 4 of this document, the masterplan identifies an area of land suitable for community use within the site.

Site Location



The Site is made up of a large plot of land associated with St Peter’s College, originally Rainsford Senior School (also referred to as Rainsford Secondary Modern). It is located to the western edge of the 1930’s Boarded Barns estate, the design of which closely followed the garden suburb of the Becontree Estate in east London with wide avenues and a central circus. The area has a distinctive street pattern, key junction spaces that are wide-open, and green spaces in North Avenue. To the north of the residential area is one of Chelmsford’s largest open spaces, Melbourne Park and its sporting establishments and to the south Admirals Park which meets the River Can. Kings Road and Melbourne Avenue shopping parades provide the public face of the area.

The St Peter’s site is within St Andrews Ward, to the East is the Marconi Ward. The St Andrews Ward is predominantly a mix of detached and semi-detached housing , with a reasonably high proportion of owner occupied (64%) housing. The Marconi Ward is characterised by apartments and terraced houses, with a lower proportion of owner occupied (46%) but a much higher proportion of private rented (25.4%). Both wards have similar amounts of social rented (25-26%), deemed to be high for Chelmsford.

The site lies at the geographic centre of north west Chelmsford, approximately five minutes walk to Melbourne Avenue local shops and services and close to primary schools. It is a 20 minute walk to the both the train station and city centre. Despite its central location and when considering its former use as a secondary school the site is relatively ‘hidden away’ with surrounded by back gardens with limited points of access.

The 2017 Planning Brief noted the potential to retain a limited number of buildings on the site for re-use but assumed the remainder of the previously existing buildings would be demolished. Initial investigations by ECC suggested that the clocktower would be difficult to retain and convert to any practical use, and therefore after the consultation exercise in 2020, which did not suggest a high level of community preference for building retention, the decision was made to demolish all of the existing buildings with the exception of the main entrance building, where options for re-use will continue to be explored. Prior to demolition, a full photographic record of the clocktower was undertaken, for posterity.

The site has been identified by Chelmsford City Council for mixed use development comprising residential and educational use in the City Council's emerging Local Plan.

Site Location



Former playing Fields

Former school buildings

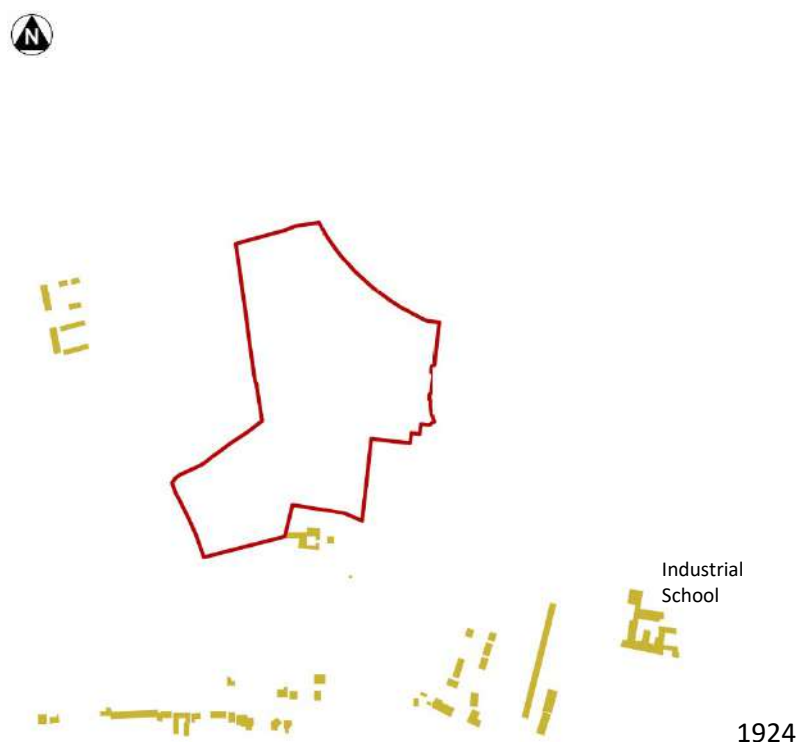
Element of former school retained

Melbourne Park allotments

Thriftwood College

St Johns Ambulance

Historic Context



- Early 1920's the Site is open farmland. The area is quite rural, with some residential development starting to develop to the south. To the south-east of the Site there is an Industrial School
- 1939 is the first to show a school on the site. The footprint is recognisable and has changed little with development built to form two central, separated courtyards and two L-shaped wings extending from both corners of the main building on the western side. The College is located on the western edge of the 1930 Boarded Barns Estate, the design of which closely followed the garden suburb of the Becontree Estate in East London with wide avenues and a central circus.
- 1955 shows the site almost isolated due to further surrounding development. A number of pre-fabricated ancillary structures are now shown to the north and south of the main school building.
- By 1989 the Quadrangle residential development to the north east of the site, a combination of two and three storey houses and flats as been established. To the South a combination of 3 story flats (following the line of the site boundary) and detached family housing.

Local Build Character



Analysis shows that there is a variety of residential typology/densities within the immediate site area.

In developing the masterplan the aim is to provide a mix of densities and accommodation types that reflect the local character to create a sustainable and well balanced community.



Present day

Local Build Character 1



The design of this area closely followed the garden suburb of the Becontree Estate in east London .

Key features:

- Distinctive street pattern, key junction spaces that are wide-open. All corners are rounded for improved traffic visibility.
- Trees, shrubs , lawns and green public spaces merging into a park like environment
- Well distributed open space.
- Housing is not congested – urban grain well ordered with rhythm and symmetry
- North Avenue – the planting of trees and use of grass to define the road.
- Gardens to form defensible space to front of properties, adds to the green environment.
- Roads designed for planned level of use
- Predominantly terraced and semi detached with a small proportion of apartments both 2 and 3 storey
- Predominantly on plot parking, to front of property. Parking courts to apartments
- Predominantly render with elements of brick



Local Build Character 2



Growth of area stems from 1930 through to 1980's. Early development exhibits regular street patterns (refer to historical maps), development in mid 70 through to late 80 is more random infill.

Key features:

- Limited public open amenity space
- Roads designed for planned level of use, predominantly long / linear
- This area contains a mixture of housing types, (Detached, Semi detached, Terraced, Flats . Detached housing accounts for more than 60% of the dwellings.
- 3 storey flat to southern boundary of site
- Predominantly on plot parking, to front of property. Parking courts to apartments
- Mixture of brick , render, timber effect cladding and vertical tiling.
- Well proportioned long rear gardens



Local Build Character 3



Growth of area stems from 1950 through to 1980's.
Key features:

- Area has the visual impression of being more 'open' in comparison with that of areas 1 and 2. This is due to the fact that the buildings do not reinforce the line of the roads. In this respect it has the impression of being less formal.
- Terrace housing fronting principal roads, in comparison to the flats which tend to occupy less defined 'areas' of land.
- This area consists predominantly of flats and terraced housing.
- Areas of green amenity space surrounding the flats.
- Flats configured in linear blocks, arranged in a 'T' shape or to form a quadrangle with amenity and parking located centrally.
- High proportion of cars parked on street.
- Mixture of brick , render and timber effect cladding.



Local Community Uses



Community Provision

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| 1. St. John Payne Catholic School | 8. King Edward VI Grammar School | 15. Roman Catholic Church of the Blessed Sacrament |
| 2. Parkwood Academy | 9. Anglia Ruskin University Campus | 16. St Andrews Parish Church |
| 3. Tanglewood Nursery School | 10. Chelmsford County High School for Girls | 17. Lawford Mead Primary & Nursery School |
| 4. Columbus School and College | 11. Seymour House Day Nursery School | 18. Chelmsford Community Church |
| 5. Kings Road Primary School | 12. Chelmsford Cathedral | 19. Newland Spring Primary School |
| 6. Oasis Church | 13. Carealot Pre-school and Thriftwood College | |
| 7. Maltese Road Primary School | 14. St. John's Ambulance Chelmsford | |



2. Parkwood Academy



5. Kings Road Primary School



6. Lawford Mead Primary & Nursery School



13. Carealot Pre-school and Thriftwood College
14. St. Johns Ambulance Chelmsford

Local Community Uses



- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Indicative Site Boundary | Universities | Sport / Leisure Centers |
| 0.4km Cordon | Post Office | Pharmacy |
| 1.0km Cordon | Medical Centres / Hospitals | Community Center |
| 2.0km Cordon | Food Superstore | Nearest Bus Stop |
| Train Station | Nurseries | Bus Station |
| Primary Schools | Local Shop | Shopping Area |
| Secondary Schools | Library | |

The site is well located to the north west of the city centre. There are a number of facilities with in easy walking distance which include primary schools, a convenience store, pharmacy, medical centre and post office. With 1km there are further facilities including large food stores, secondary schools and tertiary education, the rail station and city centre. Slightly further away lies Broomfield Hospital a major health centre for the wider Essex area. The site location is therefore extremely sustainable.

The diagram to the left shows some of the main facilities that lie close to the site.

Recreational Provision



1. Melbourne Park neighbourhood play area

2. Andrews Park Adizone (Outdoor gym)

3. Andrews Park neighbourhood play area

4. Brownings Avenue neighbourhood play area

5. Melbourne allotment site

6. Litchfield close local play area
7. Riddiford Drive local play area

8. Tower Gardens park

9. Admirals Park neighbourhood play area

10. Admirals Park outdoor gym

11. Chelmer Valley Local Nature Reserve

12. Central Park

13. Green Corridor

— Site Boundary
- - - 500m radius'



2. Andrews Park Adizone (Outdoor gym)



3. Andrews Park neighbourhood play area



9. Admirals Park neighbourhood play area



4. Brownings Avenue neighbourhood play area



7. Riddiford Drive local play area

Pedestrian Routes to Green Space



1. Melbourne Park neighbourhood play area

2. Andrews Park Adizone (Outdoor gym)

3. Andrews Park neighbourhood play area

4. Brownings Avenue neighbourhood play area

5. Melbourne allotment site

6. Litchfield close local play area
7. Riddiford Drive local play area

8. Tower Gardens park

9. Admirals Park neighbourhood play area

10. Admirals Park outdoor gym

11. Chelmer Valley Local Nature Reserve

12. Central Park

13. Green Corridor

Site Boundary

Pedestrian Routes



11. Chelmer Valley Local Nature Reserve



12. Central Park



12. Central Park (aerial)



13. Green Corridor (aerial)

Summary



- The Site is located within an established residential area to the west of the City Centre;
- Surrounding uses are predominantly residential properties to the south, west, and north, but to the south-east, the site adjoins Thriftwood College and the local head quarters of the St. John Ambulance Charity, which comprise substantial non-residential buildings within relatively large land parcels;
- The surrounding residential properties are primarily two storey or three storey;
- The site lies at the juxtaposition of three different character areas, with the formality of the 1930s area around the Avenue to the north-east, the mixture of semi-detached and terraced 1950s housing to the south-west, and the linear form and larger scale blocks of the 1970/80s housing to the north;
- The site lies in a highly sustainable location and provides options for walking, cycling and use of public transport to access local open space, facilities, and the City Centre;
- Permeability to enable residents of the new development to access the site from different directions by walking and cycling is therefore likely to be important, as would establishing routes by which existing residents can cross the site to similarly gain access to local facilities



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3. Site Analysis

- Description
- Views
- Topography, Flood Risk & Surface Water Drainage
- Ecology and Arboriculture
- Access and Movement
- Analysis Diagram

This section sets out an analysis of the key physical and environmental features of the site itself.



Description



The site comprises of the former St Peter's School located to the north west of Chelmsford City Centre, Essex.

The site comprises extensive former playing fields with a smaller area containing the former school buildings and associated hardstanding adjacent to the east. The former playing field within the site is bounded to the north, south and west by a hedgerow beyond which is residential housing (North and South) and Melbourne Park Allotments (East). The former buildings in the east of the site are bounded to the east by Fox

Crescent beyond which is residential housing. The former buildings are bounded to the south by a grassed area, football pitch and several buildings occupied by Kids Inspire and Thriftwood Special Needs School.

The frontage to Fox Crescent provides the only interface to the public domain.

Scattered trees are present at the boundary of the former playing field and around the pond in the north of site.

A section of hedgerow approximately 100m in length is located in the centre of the playing field running east to west and joining the western boundary of the site. A dry ditch runs alongside the hedgerow.

The pond present in the north of the site is heavily shaded by surrounding trees and covered in duckweed.

Most of the site holds little ecological value but the boundary hedgerows are classified as habitats of Importance.

Views



Description



View 3



View 4

Melbourne Park

3 storey flats

Pedestrian access to rear gardens

Previous pedestrian link (currently blocked off)

Tree of notable value

Existing natural pond

Open amenity space Hobart Cl.

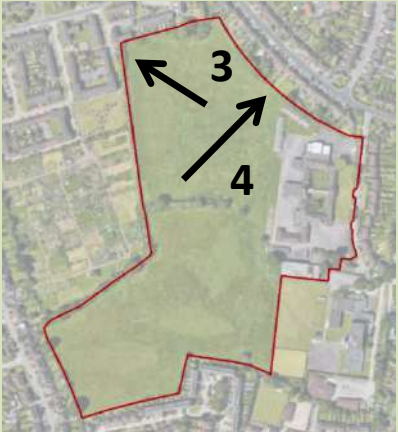
Melbourne Park

Langton Avenue

Rear gardens backing onto site, boundary consists of fencing / overgrown vegetation that requires to be cut back

Tree of notable value

Existing natural pond



Description



Tree of notable value

Tree of notable value

Set back of building and lines of symmetry

Fox Crescent



Fox Crescent

Vehicle entry to site

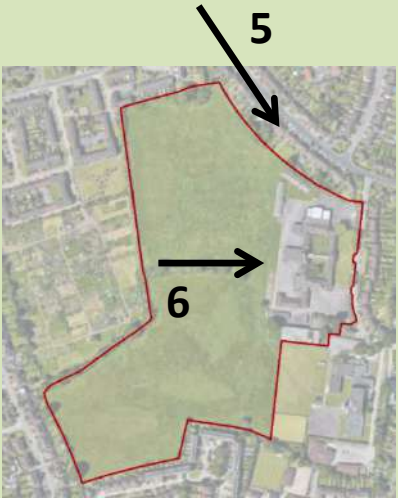
Thriftwood College

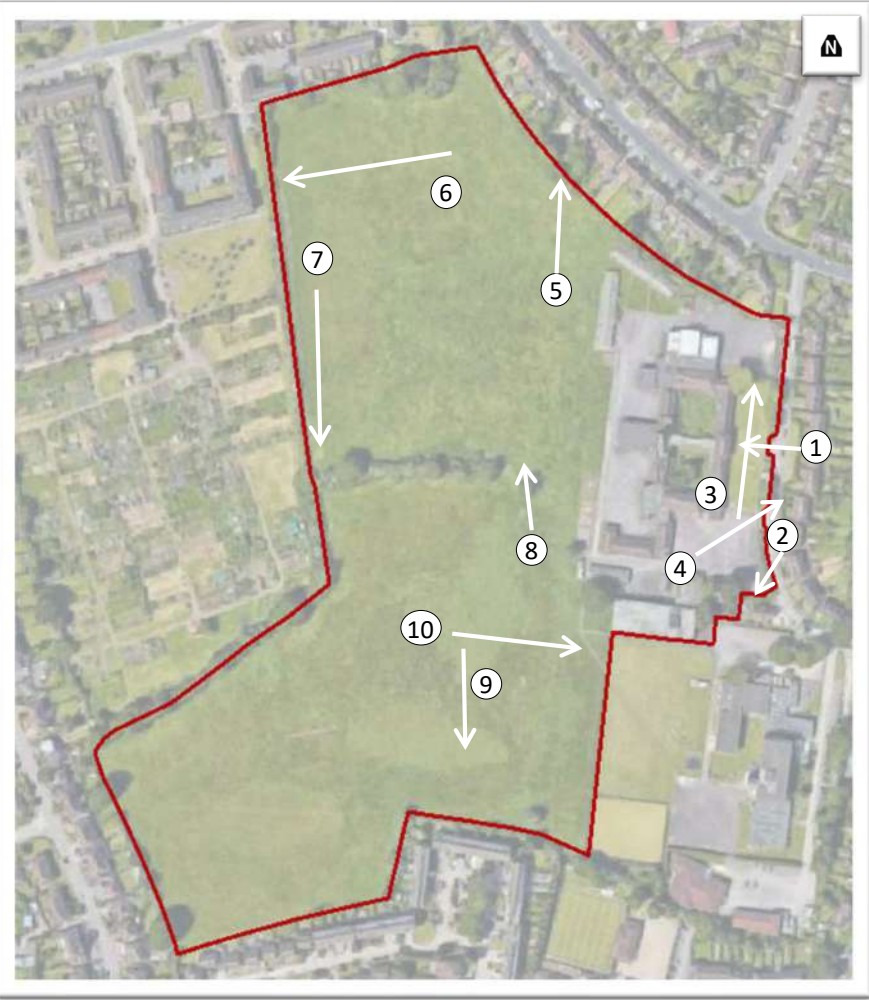
Tree of notable value

Clock tower

Tree of notable value

Former college buildings





1 View looking towards central façade of former College Building



2 View looking towards school house on boundary of site and Thriftwood College



3 View looking north to open ground fronting Fox Crescent



4 View looking towards Fox Crescent



5 Rear Garden Boundary Condition (housing to Langton Avenue)



6 View looking west to flats on Hobart Close



7 View looking south along boundary condition to Melbourne Park Allotments



8 Tree of notable value, located in the centre of the site

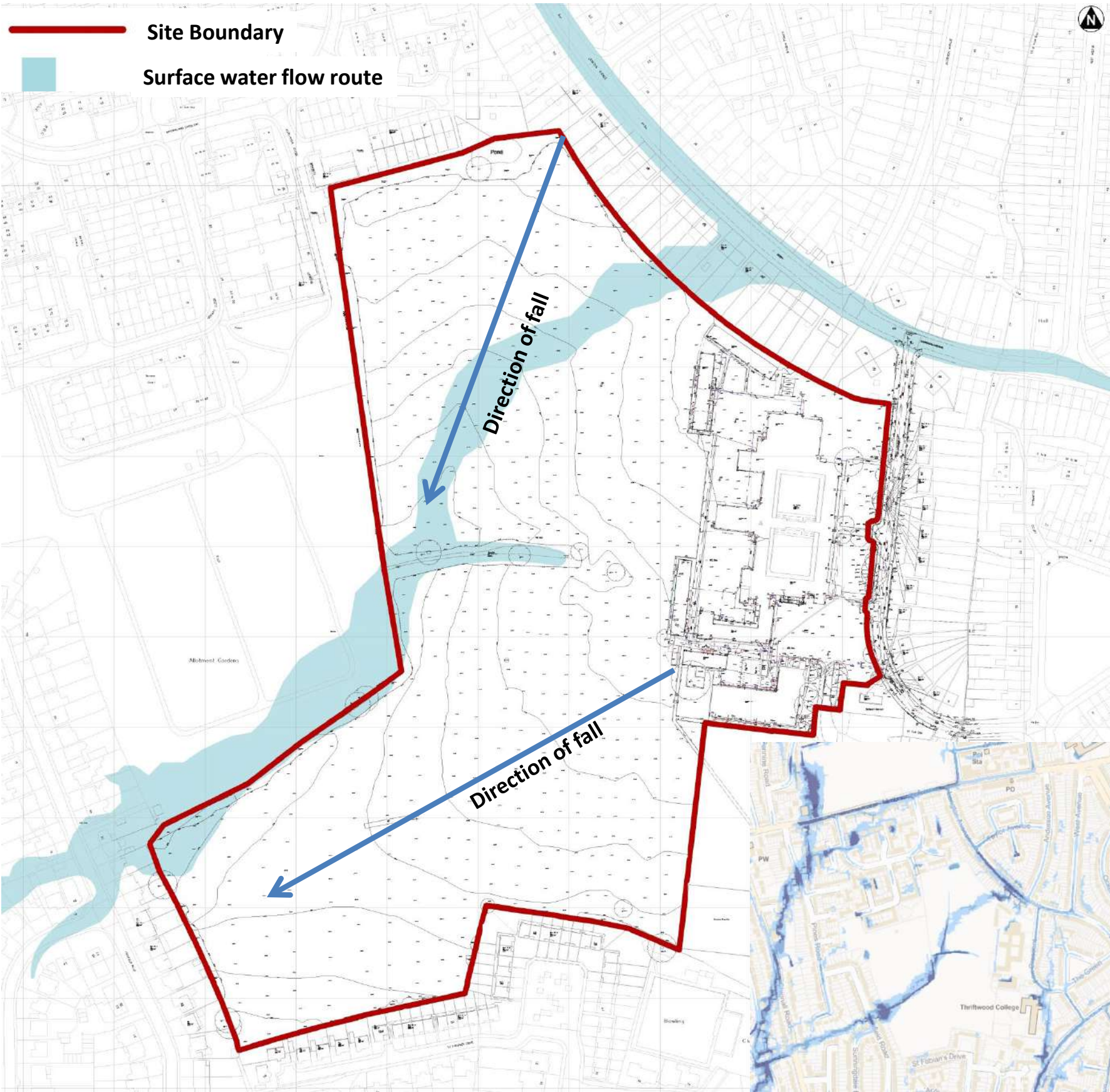


9 View South to boundary and 3 story flats on St Fabian's Drive



10 View looking East towards Thriftwood College

Topography, Flood Risk & Surface Water Drainage



The site falls gently from North East to South West as shown in the diagram. The level difference across the site averages out at 2.5m. With regard to the levels, the only noticeable feature is a shallow ditch (see below) where the college buildings currently sit. The site is flat.

The St Peters College site is not at risk of tidal or fluvial flooding; the nearest potential fluvial flooding source is a tributary of the River Can which flows some 600m to the west of the site. The ground conditions are not suited to groundwater flooding, and the site is not shown to be at risk of flooding from reservoirs by the Gov.uk flood mapping.

In the centre of the site, there is a ghost ditch system which marks the historic field boundaries which existed prior to the development of this part of Chelmsford in the 1930s. This ditch system is understood to have flowed to the west via a culvert under Highfield Road in the past. Recent physical investigation of the western part of this ditch system has revealed that this culvert is no longer in existence. This site and the wider area is no longer served by the historic drainage system. The Gov.uk flood mapping and Essex County Council Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) mapping show that the site has limited pockets of surface water flood risk associated with the 'ghost' ditches, (dry feature that does not convey water), in the High Risk event (1 in 30 year). The extent of this risk is slightly greater in the medium risk event (1 in 100 year), but the site is generally not at risk of surface water flooding.

In the low risk event (1 in 1000 year), the detailed mapping extract shows a shallow flood path from Langton Avenue through the site and onward to Highfield Road. Discussions with the LLFA have taken place regarding this flow path. Their requirements are that the flow path must not be obstructed by any proposed development, but that this low level of flood risk is not a barrier to the redevelopment of the St Peters College site.



A preliminary ecological assessment (PEA) and suite of Phase 2 ecological surveys have been undertaken on site. The PEA found the majority of habitats on site (amenity grassland and hard-standing) were of low ecological value. The Phase 2 ecological surveys included a badger survey and bat surveys on buildings and trees. Badgers were found to be present adjacent to site and summer bat roosts were found within some of the buildings on site.

Local wildlife sites (LWS) within 2km of the site were reviewed during the preliminary ecological assessment. Six Local Wildlife Sites were found including College Wood, Writtle Bridge Meadows, Newland's Spring, Daffy Wood, Chelmer Valley Riverside and Marconi Ponds Nature Reserve (the closest of which is 0.4km from site). These comprise habitats including ancient woodland, floodplain meadows, riverine habitat and ponds. The sites all have public access and most are noted for their importance of giving local people the opportunity to access green spaces. Given the distances involved no direct impacts on these sites are predicted. There is potential for indirect impacts to occur through increased recreational pressure. However, this is mitigated by the distances of these LWS from the site and due to the size of the LWS they are unlikely to be chosen as a destination. In addition the proposals will provide public open space on site reducing the number of visitors to the surrounding non-statutory designated site and any associated potential increase in disturbance levels.

The Melbourne Park Allotments adjacent to the west of site have potential to provide valuable sheltering and foraging habitats for species such as reptiles, badgers and bats. Green open space is being targeted along the site's boundary with the allotment to extend available habitats to those species. The hedgerow running through site and boundary habitats are also largely being retained or will be enhanced alongside the creation of linear parks to ensure permeability for wildlife through the site as part of the development.

The scheme can be designed to reduce and avoid impacts upon badgers with alternative roosting locations for bats provided in retained trees. Any demolition of buildings with bat roosts would be done under a Natural England mitigation license.



Local Facilities

There are a number of facilities within easy walking distance which include primary schools, a convenience store, pharmacy, medical centre and post office. Within 1km there are further facilities including large food stores, secondary schools and tertiary education, the rail station and city centre. Slightly further away lies Broomfield Hospital a major health centre for the wider Essex area. All of the city centre and its facilities and transport links are within easy cycling distance. Although there are limited dedicated cycle facilities close to the site the road network is relatively quiet and is suitable for cycling. The site location is therefore extremely sustainable.

Access to Public Transport

Access to bus stops is very good with the nearest stops on Langton Avenue, being less than 400m from the site, just to the north. Services at this stop give access to Broomfield Hospital, the rail station and City Centre. To the south on Roxwell Road a number of bus service can be boarded offering further connections to the City and other local centres such as Dunmow, Writtle and Harlow.

The rail station in Chelmsford is on the main London Liverpool Street to Norwich line. Regular services to London, Stratford, Witham, Colchester and Braintree are available which offer excellent connectivity to the wider region.

Site Access

Access to the site itself for pedestrians will be available from Fox Crescent and Highfield Road via new footway connections to the existing highway provision. Pedestrian/Cycle links through the site will open new routes to improve local walking and cycling times to facilities from within and around the site.

Vehicular access will be gained from Fox Crescent. constructed to Essex County Council standards. Additional parking will be provided for the residents of Fox Crescent at the front of the site facing Fox crescent

A full traffic assessment will be undertaken and for part of any future planning application

Analysis Diagram

Mix of 2/3 storey residential

Sensitive residential boundary, potential over looking and exposed rear gardens

2 storey residential

Potential to form link to neighbouring open space

Surface water flow route

Sensitive ecological boundary

Key development line fronting Fox Crescent

2 storey residential

Point of access

Sun path – opportunity for open space to be southern facing

3 storey school

Area designed for New Special Schools

3 storey residential

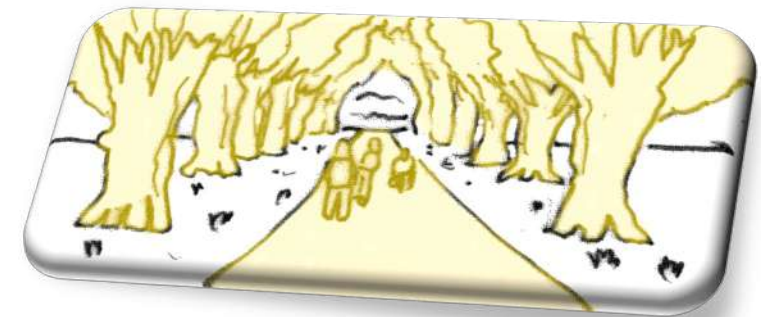


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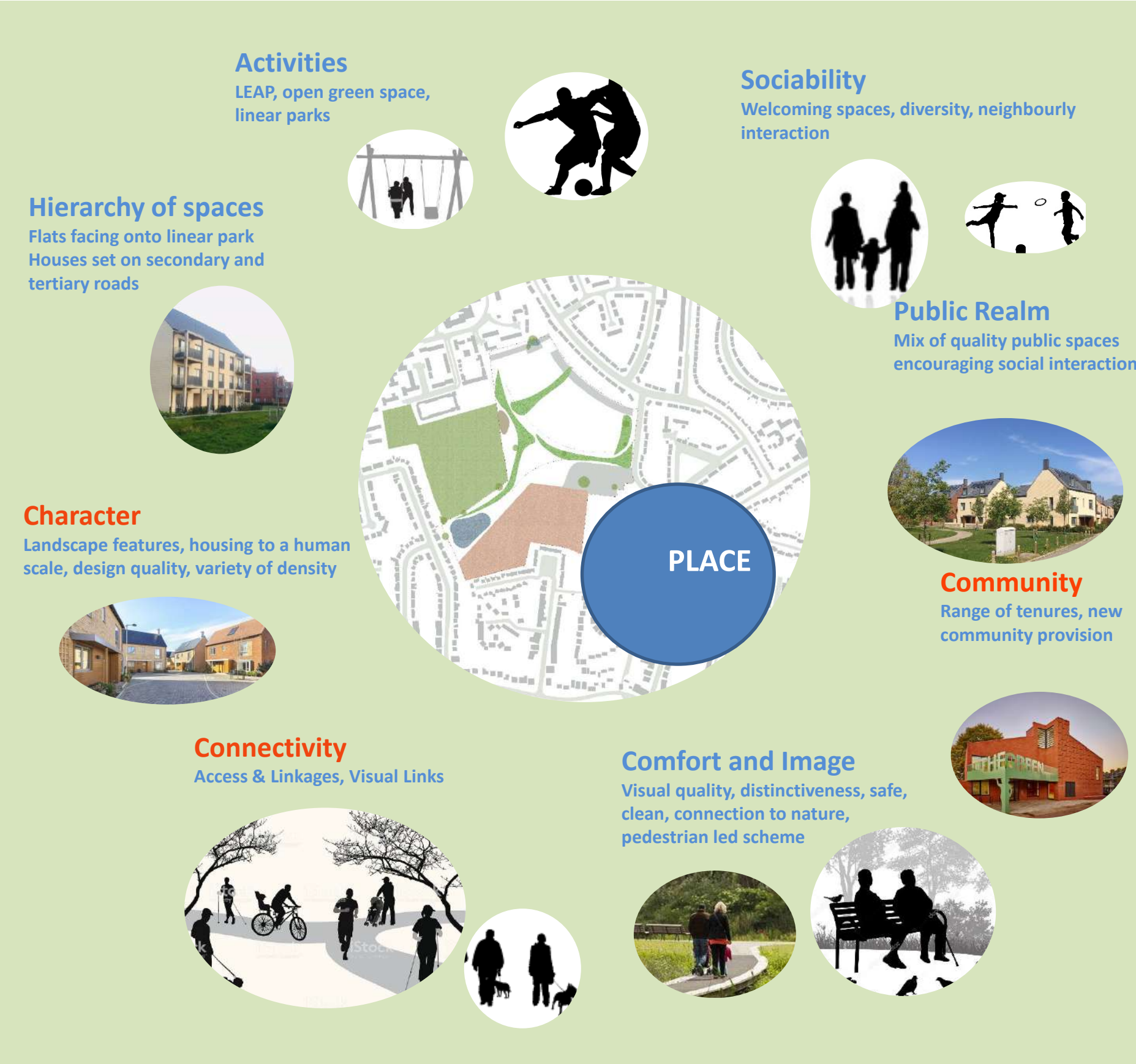
4. Masterplan Proposals

- Place Making
- Planning Brief (2017)
- Concept
- Landscape Strategy
- Landscape Features, Linear Parks and Green Corridors
- Sustainable Urban Drainage System Concept
- Masterplan
- Built Form Strategy
- Additional parking to Fox Crescent
- Phasing and Delivery

This section outlines the key influences that have come together from our analysis to create the proposed masterplan



Place Making



It is envisaged that the re development of the former St Peters College Site will embody a strong sense of place and community. The developing masterplan respects the character of the area the history, topography, connectivity and natural landscape aiming to regenerate the site. The masterplan will follow the following place making principles:

- Community**
- Providing a range of housing tenures to suit a range of users from families to the retired.
 - Social infrastructure in the form of new schools, community facilities, open green spaces and playgrounds.
 - Public spaces promote social interaction and a healthy lifestyle.
 - Mix of formal and informal green spaces and clear linkages between them.
- Connectivity**
- Provide good connections to public transport links.
 - Provide safe green corridors for pedestrian links and cycle routes.
 - Walking routes should be suitable to provide ease of mobility for all members of the community.
- Character**
- Strong landscape features.
 - Design quality promoted throughout the development.
 - Provide a variety of density and massing relating to the site context, the building typology and open spaces and routes provided.
 - Providing buildings that are creative but simple designs, with robust durable materials.
 - Landscape design is as important as the buildings provided, need to be well integrated
 - Strong relationship between building and street / green open space.



A Planning Brief was prepared in 2017 by Chelmsford City Council to provide land use and site layout advice. This masterplan document seeks to build on the proposals contained in the Brief in response to the detailed site and context analysis presented in the previous sections.

The image (left) is taken from the Brief and provides an indicative block layout to show how new development could be laid out within the site. Some of the key planning principles of the Brief can be summarised as follows:

- Inclusion of school/s on the southern part of the site with school buildings to face outwards, creating an edge to the street
- Vehicle access from Fox Crescent
- Landscape and planting to be a ruling element, with tree lined streets a characteristic feature
- Inclusion of direct and safe pedestrian and cycle routes to enhance the permeability of the site
- Provision of recreational open space within the site, without seeking to retain the existing playing fields
- Explore the potential for the reuse of existing buildings
- Careful consideration given to site layout and built form with buildings organised within perimeter blocks and buildings limited to two storeys in the main but with three or potentially four when supported by strong design justification
- Sufficient, easily accessible car parking provided in accordance with the Council's latest standards
- Careful design of public realm with street spaces to be designed for the pedestrian first
- Requirement for sustainable drainage on-site
- Consider a pedestrian and cycle link into the site from the west, subject to investigation of wildlife habitats and existing hedgerow and trees

Concept



Green Connection – Linear parks and green corridors connect pedestrian desire lines and cycling routes through the site with the existing trees anchoring the green areas creating the principle design concept for the scheme.

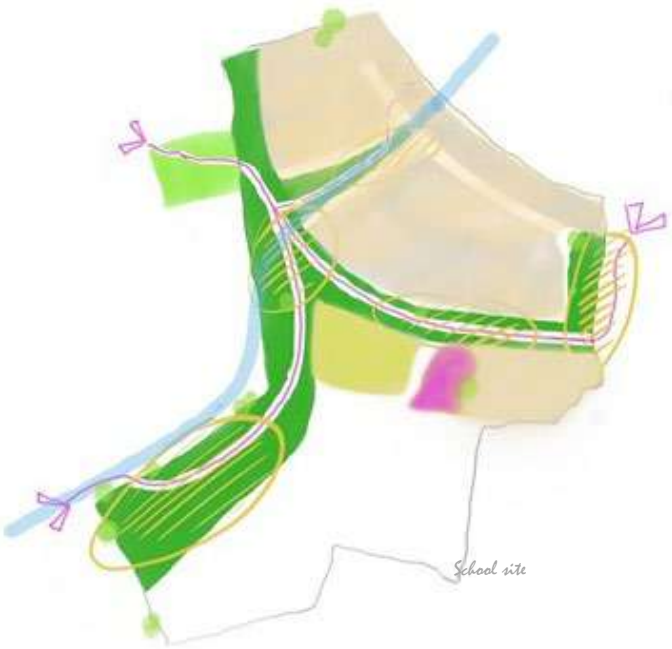
Pedestrian and cycling routes taking precedence and driving the overall design strategy creating a landscaped development



Built Form – Proposed built areas formed around green fingers creating a landscape driven scheme with built form facing onto greens areas and tree lined streets creating a sustainable green community



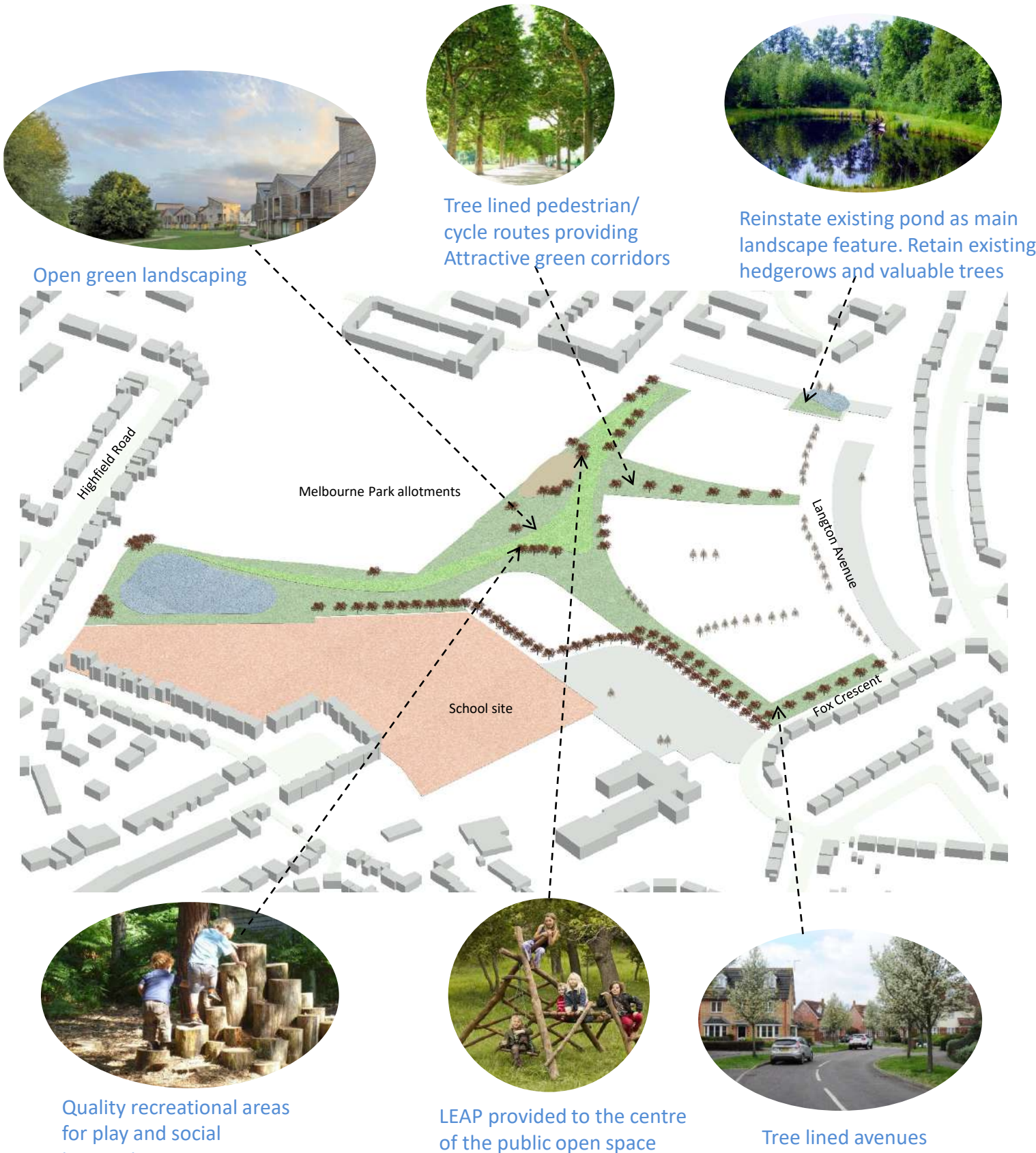
Hierarchy of Space– Linear parks and green corridors link the development to the wider community creating areas for informal play leisurely walks through the site balancing built form and green landscape. A hierarchy of spaces to experience through the development



Landscape Development – Built areas formed around green fingers creates scenic routes and attractive views and vistas through the site generating a sense of place and new community linking to the wider areas of Chelmsford.

Land Use – Built form and land use informed by the existing urban grain with a combination of low density linear housing , courtyard housing and higher density apartment blocks alongside the larger scale extra care and community buildings facing onto the linear park.

Landscape Strategy



The landscape strategy addresses the landscape, arboricultural and ecological constraints and opportunities afforded by the Site. These elements have been taken into account in order to formulate a robust and holistic landscape strategy for the Site.

The overall vision for the Site’s proposed new landscape and public realm is to create a distinctive, high quality place, which is informed by best practice design guidance. Central to these proposals is to create a pedestrian friendly environment with a strong sense of place.

The Site will benefit from the landscape and visual amenity afforded by the partial existing peripheral framework of mature hedgerows and a number of fine mature specimen trees within and on the periphery of the Site. These mature elements of the existing landscape framework will be seen as picture views from the ends of many of the new streets and spaces that are being created. This will help to contribute towards creating a strong sense of place through the positive utilisation of the existing visual amenity afforded by the mature elements of the Sites existing landscape framework.





Creating a framework of interconnecting multifunctional landscape spaces:

The concept for the Site’s overall green infrastructure framework and layout is to provide a generous network of interconnecting multifunctional landscape spaces. It is intended to create an inclusive public realm within the proposed new residential area that promotes feelings of safety and security. The public realm will be designed to address the needs of the whole community including the disabled and the elderly.

In this design context, some of the areas of open space will most likely be spaces for passive (rather than active) use, to provide a green setting for the adjacent houses, providing a pleasant outlook for residents as well as helping with legibility for people as they move through the Site. Green spaces will also provide opportunities for the planting of trees of significant long-term stature and as well as other types of urban greening including hedge planting and the seeding of wildflower grassland.

The peripheral boundary linear spaces can provide attractive movement corridors for cyclists, walkers, dog walkers and joggers alike, as well as in places providing an appropriate setting for the adjacent established boundary vegetation and trees and their inherent existing ecology. The proposed central community space (please refer to the CGI below) will provide have an active recreational role. The resulting landscape framework (as well as performing a number of important landscape amenity and ecological functions) will satisfactorily integrate all the other design elements (and their respective technical requirements) into the overall design of the residential scheme. contributing to create a variety of distinct and memorable landscape spaces. A variety of new amenity spaces and green corridors will together provide positive and meaningful green infrastructure for new residents as well as the existing community.

Proposed Street Tree Planting/Avenues:

Chelmsford City Council’s Planning Brief says *“As the Site is a challenge to integrate with its surroundings, strong street spaces with tree planting will help orientate people within the area. Landscape and planting need to be a ruling element, tree lines streets will be a characteristic feature of the new neighbourhood”*.

Proposed Street Tree Planting/Avenues:

Analysis of the surrounding streets has shown that in places, there is a clearly defined landscape typology. This comprises of some streets with verges (of varying widths) and a wide variety of avenue trees. Front gardens are typically set back behind formal evergreen hedgerows. In places the verges open out into local incidental greens and the wider landscape framework includes generous parks and recreation grounds.

Our analysis of the surrounding landscape/streetscape typology has helped to formulate the proposed landscape strategy for street tree planting within the Site as follows;

1). Entrance Avenue:

The main entrance (s) (from Fox Crescent) with cycle path linkages (as suggested by Figure 5 of CCC’s Planning Brief for the Site) will feature verges and tree planting. A minimum verge width of 2.5m to 3.5m will be adhered to (to enable trees to be planted greater than 5m from adjacent residential frontages).

2). Primary street/Feeder Road Avenues:

These will feature a 2.5m to 3.0m wide verge on one side of the road with a single line of street trees.

3). Streetwise Trees:

Street tree planting will feature streetwise varieties of generally (but not exclusively) indigenous tree species. Parkland scale trees will only be planted in key areas of open space where there is room for them to reach maturity in an appropriate landscape setting.

4). Required Green Areas:

Para 7.6 (page 19) of CCC’s Planning Brief for the Site shows ‘Required Green Areas’ (see Figure 5):



The total Site area (excluding educational land uses which will have their own open space framework) is 8.4 hectares. The proposed new neighbourhood will have a generous landscape framework of around 3 hectares of strategic, public open space which comprises over 35% of the total residential Site area.

5. Hobart Close Green

The Planning Brief suggests that the Hobart Close Green is extended into the Site. However, the hedgerow is of some ecological value and therefore rather than substantial removal, the proposals will provide for clear linkages between the Hobart Close Green and the new open space within the site through the retained hedgerow.

6). The Pond Green:

It is proposed to open this area up retaining the mature oak tree but coppicing the adjacent group of willows to let more light to the pond and to enable the pond to be made it a little bigger. In essence a new ‘pond green’ is to be created. This strategy could provide an area of value for ecology and visual amenity. The large (possibly veteran) Oak tree on the Site boundary side of the pond (which is an important landscape element which is currently hidden away) will instead become an important focal landscape feature within the new residential landscape that is being created. Primarily a space for ecology, the edge of the pond Green will provide space for passive recreation but will also help aid legibility at this potential minor gateway space into the development.

7). Footpath Link from Pond Green to the North:

The possibility of a new pedestrian link from the ‘pond green’ area within the Site to the adjacent off-site triangular green is to be investigated. The adjacent triangular green is publicly accessible and lit with a streetlight on the Site boundary. Removing the close boarded fence on the Site boundary between these two spaces (and replacing it with bow-top railings for safety reasons) could also open up clear views of the adjacent Oak tree from the triangular green which could be a considerable local environmental improvement. This potential new footpath link could also enable a good walkable link from the Site via highway footpaths in Canberra Close and Queensland Crescent to The Melbourne Park NEAP Play area and sports pitches which are located only a relatively short walking distance to the north.

8). Front Gardens & Formal Hedgerows:

Generally, front gardens will be designed to be 2m deep. At the Main Site Entrance longer front gardens would be ideal so as to allow new hedge planting to reflect the existing (locally characteristic) hedged front gardens of the residential property’s opposite at Fox Crescent. New formal hedgerows will need to be designed to allow adequate forward visibility for cars emerging from private driveways. The existing gates and railings along the eastern Site boundary are currently a distinctive feature of the street scene. The potential for refurbishment of some of the existing gates/ gate posts could be investigated with a view to their re-use on the Sites eastern boundary, perhaps as part of the detailed design for the proposed zone for strategic landscape and parking provision for existing residents.

Ornamental planting to front gardens will provide a defensible edge to the built form. Defined planting palettes, responding to the orientation of groups of houses within the development will create a consistent high-quality planting design across the development.

Front gardens will play an important role in the overall landscape strategy for the new development. Ornamental planting to the front gardens of the new homes will be in the cottage garden style, comprising of a mix of flowering evergreen shrubs and evergreen herbaceous plants, designed to provide a pleasing contrast of colours and textures and prolonged seasonal interest throughout the year, with some architectural accents to help define front doors. A high percentage of these garden plants will be selected to be bee and butterfly friendly ensuring that front gardens contribute to biodiversity gain as well as the general visual amenity of the scheme.

Low flowering informal evergreen hedgerows will be planted in some parts of the development in order to define garden frontages and reinforce sense of place. Detailed planting proposals along with plant schedules and will come forward once the layout design has been approved.

9). LAP/LEAP Children’s Play Area & Community Space:

The LAP/LEAP Children’s Play Area & Community Space will be the primary focal community space within this new neighbourhood. The proposal for this new community space will be to create a community park with seating, picnic benches and features that will encourage its use for people of all ages (including sculpture that can also be used for toddler play). The children’s play area will have a minimum activity area of 500sq/m but will extend out into the much larger community park area which is located at the main intersection of the proposed new footpath/cycleways through the Site.

Illustrative CGI showing the proposed LAP/LEAP Children’s Play Area & Community Space & its location within the Sites green infrastructure framework. (Note the houses shown are to give an impression of the intended layout and scale of this important greenspace but are not intended to reflect proposed architectural design at this stage in the master planning process).

10. LINEAR GREEN ROUTE

The linear Green park running through the centre of the scheme, linking Fox Crescent, Highfield Road and Hobart Close. A hierarchy of spaces knitting the development together.

11). Retention of Existing Significant Amenity Trees:

Arboricultural advice has indicated the desirability of retaining a number of existing trees within areas of open space, and the proposed layout generally provides for appropriate tree retention accordingly

12). Retention & Management of Existing Hedgerows:

The existing site boundary hedgerows will be retained, gapped up where necessary and managed. It is not proposed to retain the existing remnant hedge within the centre of the Site (other than the important trees within it as noted above) as it is a rather poor feature and would represent a considerable constraint to achieving a good residential layout on the Site.



13). New SuDS Features:

The scheme will bring forward a substantial detention basin at the south-western end of the Site. This requirement will provide opportunities to create landscape features of high visual amenity value at detailed design stage as well as to improve the Sites biodiversity potential. Linear swales will also be incorporated into the sites landscape framework and these will weave their way through linear swathes of grassland mosaic habitat to optimise opportunities for landscape amenity and biodiversity.

The new SuDS basin will provide a memorable landscape feature helping with legibility and place making. The basin will be designed as a low-key naturalistic landscape area, primarily to help meet the SuDS strategy for the Site, but also to promote biodiversity and to provide opportunities for amenity and recreation.

Chapter 5 of The CIRIA SuDS Manual (2015 - Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs) provides a good definition of amenity in this regard:

Amenity may be defined as “a useful or pleasant facility or service”, which includes the tangible (something that can be measured in terms of use), and the less tangible (something that can be experienced as pleasure or aesthetic appreciation). This definition is particularly relevant for describing the multi-functional opportunities associated with SuDS design, and it provides a link to the concept of place making, now commonly used in describing the quality of space in urban design”.

“Amenity also covers liveability, which is associated with factors that improve the quality of life for inhabitants. Liveability encompasses the well-being of a community and of individuals and comprises the many characteristics that make a location a place where people want to live...”

The proposed SuDS detention basin could provide a haven for ecology as well as providing positive visual amenity for people moving through the Site. Detention basins can also provide opportunities for active natural play and exploration for children during the summer months. The SuDS basin on this Site is a detention basin. It will only be wet during and immediately after storms. The project design teams drainage

engineer has confirmed that after even the most severe storm has passed, the attenuation basins will have drained again within 2 days (assuming no further storms of course) so these areas will be usable for long periods during dry spells of weather.

SuDS Basins can provide rich habitats for ecology as well as enhancing visual amenity and providing opportunities for exploration and passive recreation.

Hard Landscape:

The key objective is to create a high quality, accessible and legible, interconnecting public realm. The streetscape will feature a simple palette of hard landscape surfacing materials. The principal access roads with pedestrian pavements on either side and the shared surface roads will be surfaced in macadam. The shared drives at the edges of the

development will be surfaced in ‘Burnt Ochre’ coloured block paving, to emphasises the pedestrian priority of these spaces.

The hard landscaping will be designed such that it will complement the surrounding buildings, with the use of kerbs and soft landscaping helping to define zones to assist pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles navigating through the public realm.

Nature Conservation Management Plan:

At detailed design stage, a Nature Conservation Management Plan is to be prepared that will set out the long-term objectives for this landscape and to ensure that it can be managed sustainably and to a high standard into the long term.



Sustainable Urban Drainage System Concept



Surface Water

The ground conditions at the site are not suited to infiltration drainage methods of surface water drainage. The next most preferable solution in the Sustainable urban Drainage system (SuDs), hierarchy is to dispose of water by connection to a watercourse. The investigation of the ghost ditch system on the site has revealed that this system no longer has a positive outfall to the west and therefore this system cannot be used to dispose of water from the site. However the opportunity exists to reuse the outfall from the eastern developed portion of the site to Anglian Water sewers in Fox Crescent and to make a new connection to Anglian Water sewers in Highfield Road via a new footpath link to the site.

These proposed connections will need to be agreed in detail with Anglian Water. Anglian Water have indicated that such connections would be acceptable to them in principle subject to the agreement of details at the appropriate point of the development process. The development will encompass the existing brownfield impermeable area of the site and also the greenfield western area of the site. It is important to ensure that the peak rate of outflow to the Anglian Water sewers is restricted such that development does not increase flood risk in the area or within the development itself. To achieve this requirement it is proposed that the flow rates from the site be restricted to match those set by Anglian Water.

The restriction of the surface water outflow from the development will require that water is stored on site in larger rainfall events. This storage will take place in a SuDS train, (A suds train is a system of sustainable drainage elements that collect, convey, treat, store, and finally outfall surface water), that is to include a number of SuDS features including, permeable paving, swales and detention basins. These features will be designed as dry features expect during heavy rain events and as such will be an integral part of the open space.

They will have sections that are designed to convey and treat normal low flows. In larger rainfall events the areas used to store water will increase temporarily. These areas will then drain down over a short period of time. It is anticipated that these areas of temporary water storage will be available for use by the community for outdoor pastimes for the vast majority of the time thus limiting the land use of the drainage systems. The maximum depths of stored water will be restricted to accord with the lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) guidance.

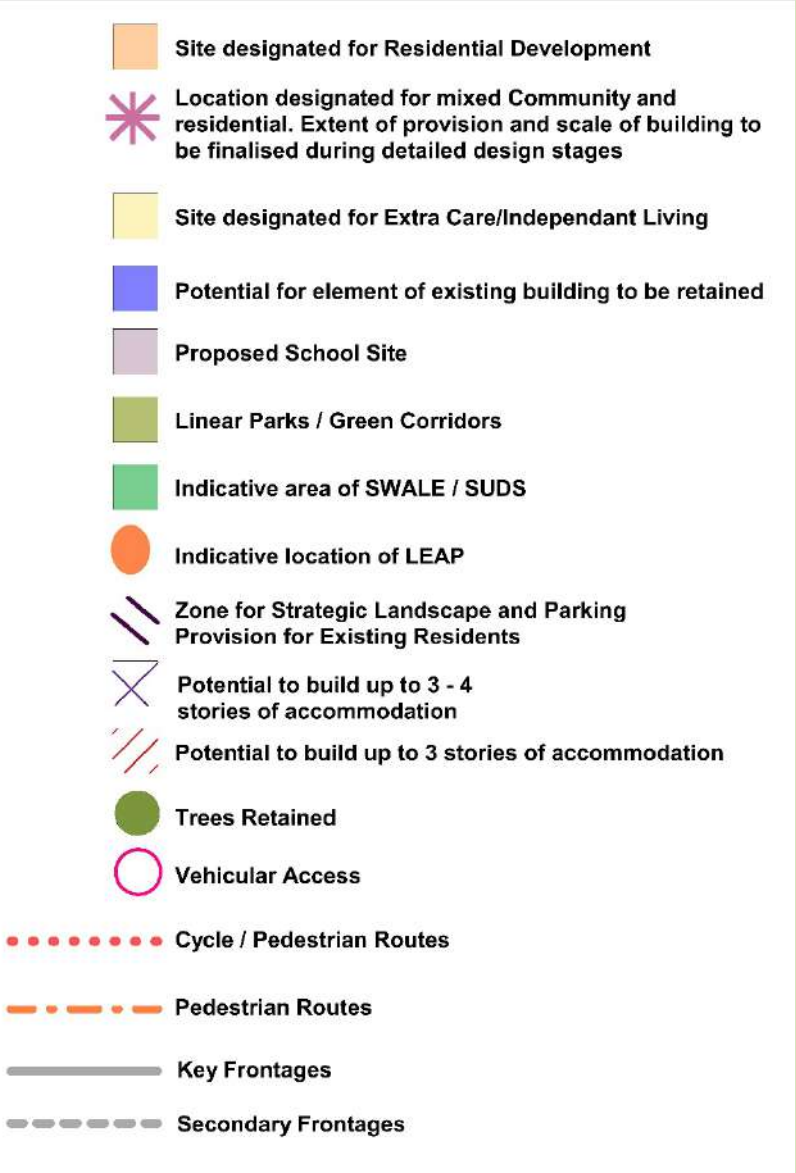
The Suds train will also allow the overland flow route for surface water identified in the flood risk section above to flow through the site without impacting directly on any of the new properties. Extreme event flow routes will be identified as part of the design process to reduce flood risk within the site.

Foul Water Drainage

Similarly to the surface water drainage strategy it is anticipated that foul flows will be connected to existing sewers in Fox Crescent and Highfield Road. The connection points will be agreed with Anglian Water but again they have approved the principles of reused and new connections at this locations.



The site is of sufficient size to deliver approximately 185 new homes as outlined within the Local plan and around 60 Independent Living Units





The assessment of density in the surrounding areas has aided the forming of the masterplan layout, form and massing. Careful analysis of the scale and heights of the neighbouring buildings ensures a consistency of the built form of the Melbourne area of Chelmsford whilst creating a variety of residential densities to create a sustainable and balanced community.

The design concept is to create a garden development with linear parks and green corridors strengthening desire lines through the site with three different types of built form around these green spaces comprising:

1. Linear predominantly 2 storey dwellings to reflect the urban grain to as discussed previously in Character Area 1. Relates to neighbouring residential development
2. 3-4 Storey flats facing out onto the open green space reflecting the scale and massing of the 3 storey flats to the north west and south of the site. Forming a perimeter to the residential development and the active edge to the linear park and green routes.
3. Extra Care / Independent Living building, building typology is larger than domestic residential, the design to forming an active edge framing the open park land and street scene.
4. Community facilities mixed with residential , with the potential to go up to 3 stories in height with located off the open park land, accessible for the wider area.
5. Site selected by the DfE for the provision of 2 new schools, the location shown on the masterplan represents the current planning application.
6. Potential to retain the central element of the former college facing onto Fox Crescent, to be converted into residential accommodation.
7. Land forming the boundary of the site and Fox Crescent to be considered for additional parking for neighbouring residents.

Initial study looking at additional parking to Fox Crescent

A traffic count has been undertaken at various time of the day over a 7 day period to establish the current typical amount of on-street car parking; the results indicate that over the period it would be beneficial to provide in the region of 12 additional parking spaces, (final figures to be confirmed), for the use of the residents. As a result 2 main options have been identified, option A and option B as out lined below.



- Option A** – Parking spaces in 3 banks of 4 perpendicular to existing road, landscaping to rear and sides
- Footway diverted to rear of parking spaces
 - Parking reasonably close to existing residents front gates
 - As much as possible existing trees and shrubs can be kept and enhanced
 - Can be provided early on in the development process easing traffic issues
 - Parking spaces over looked by residents

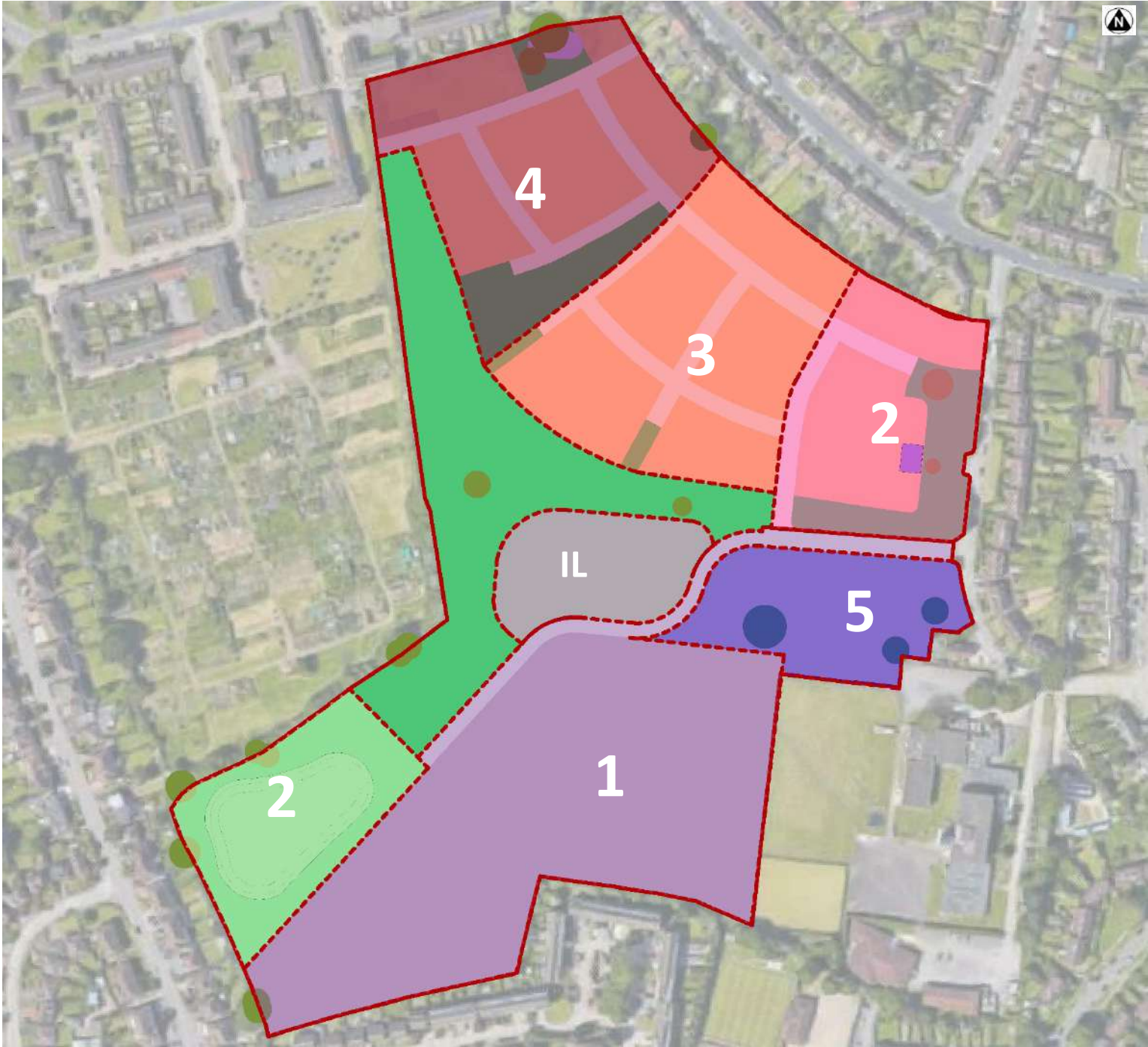
- Option B** – Two parking courts of 6 spaces each
Parking spaces further away from residents current parking location
- Less over looking from residents
 - Can be landscaped subject to visual security required
 - Larger land take
 - More susceptible to mis use



A variation of Option A with the footpath remaining in the current location and drop kerbs to access the parking spaces, was also considered. Although the land take was reduced in comparison to the option shown it was felt diverting the footpath would be safer for pedestrians.

An option of parallel parking to be being provided along the site side of Fox Crescent, to facilitate the number of spaces was discounted on the grounds that it would require the entire frontage of the site to be taken up resulting in a loss of all trees and shrubs, a barriers of cars marking the boundary of the site. In addition the rebuilding of Fox Crescent would be required to insure levels, drainage and road camber were corrected, with the relaying of all services. This would create sustained disruption for all residents and others in the vicinity for a significant amount of time, it would also change the character of Fox Crescent being visually and physically much wider.

Phasing and Delivery



Essex County Council are proposing to redevelop the St. Peters school site with two new schools, a community hub, Independent living apartments for older people needing care, affordable social housing and private housing for sale. The housing element is likely to be split into 4 or 5 phases depending on the eventual layout design.

It is proposed to commence the development with the two schools and the associated infrastructure which will include the initial spine road serving the new schools and future housing, drainage and SuDs. It is currently anticipated that the schools programme is to have the schools running and taking pupils in Autumn 2022.

Additional spine road, estate roads and drainage for individual parcels will be constructed as part of the development of each parcel/ phase.

Strategic Landscaping areas will be completed in line with adjacent development parcels and completed as unit completions begin. Open space and play areas associated to parcels/ phases will be completed during the construction of these phases.

We would expect the residential phases to run consecutively with houses being completed at approximately 60 units per year, the build programme being around 4 years, this will deliver a range of unit sizes. It is intended that the affordable housing will be delivered proportionally with the market housing in accordance with the adopted policy.

The Independent Living unit of approximately 60 units with associated uses will be procured via a Registered Provider, it is envisaged this phase will be completed within the timescales of the development above.

Land has been set aside for community use within the Site, which will be made available once the spine road is complete. Proposals will be explored with the community to bring the land/building forward, but the timing of delivery will depend on the eventual form of that community use and the timing of funding to fully deliver the preferred solution

We would expect to start the housing development to the east of the site fronting Fox Crescent, the next phases moving west and north. The scheme has been designed to be flexible and other building sequences are possible. The phasing programme will allow construction work to be completed using independent haul roads while new residents and users of the school are kept to the completed infrastructure roads.



CHELMSFORD POLICY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

5 JULY 2021

AGENDA ITEM 9

Date of Meeting	Report Subject
5 July 2021	<p>Housing Strategy – To approve consultation document to inform new Housing Strategy.</p> <p>Private Rented Sector Offer Policy – To consider a policy which would enable the Council to offer to those who are homeless accommodation provided by private landlords as well as social landlords.</p> <p>Former St Peter's School Site - To consider final masterplan of site allocated in Local Plan ahead of consideration by Cabinet – subject to confirmation</p>
30 September 2021	<p>Masterplan – Land East of Chelmsford Site 3a (Manor Farm)- To consider final masterplan of site allocated in Local Plan ahead of consideration by Cabinet – subject to confirmation</p> <p>Chelmer Waterside Development Framework – To consider the recent consultation responses and the revised document for referral to Cabinet for approval.</p> <p>Solar Farm SPD – Consultation feedback, subsequent amendments and adoption.</p> <p>Special Expenses – To consider the conclusions of the Connectivity and Local Democracy Working Groups on its review of the retention of the Special Expenses mechanism.</p>
4 November 2021	<p>Local Development Scheme (LDS) To consider a new LDS which sets out the timeline and evidence requirements for the review of the Chelmsford Local Plan for referral to Cabinet for approval.</p> <p>Chelmsford Sustainable Transport and Parking Strategy Consultation Draft – To consider the draft strategy and approve for consultation.</p>
13 January 2022	To be updated when known

3 March 2022	To be updated when known
Standing or other items not currently programmed	<p>Masterplans – Land at Great Leighs - <i>To consider final masterplan of site allocated in Local Plan ahead of consideration by Cabinet.</i></p> <p>Updates for Working Groups – <i>Chairs of the Working Groups to report on their recent activities</i></p>