

MINUTES
of the
CHELMSFORD POLICY BOARD
held on 4 September 2025 at 7pm

Present:

Councillor C. Adutwim (Chair)

Councillors, H. Ayres, P. Clark, P. Davey, I. Fuller, S. Manley, A. Sosin, A. Thorpe-Apps, R. Whitehead and S. Young

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Jeapes and Massey.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that they must disclose any interests they knew they had in items of business on the meeting's agenda and that they must do so at this point on the agenda or as soon as they became aware of the interest. If the interest was a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest they were also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting. Any declarations are recorded in the relevant minute below.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 26th June 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. Public Questions

None were received.

5. Review of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement

The Board considered a report seeking approval to consult on the Council's updated Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI sets out the Council's strategy for involving communities, organisations and statutory bodies in planning matters. This was to cover; planning policy, including local plans, supplementary planning documents, neighbourhood planning and masterplans, as well as development management, including pre-application consultation, planning applications and appeals.

It was noted that the current SCI had been adopted in 2020 and was to be reviewed every five years. The draft version had not changed significantly but had been updated for clarity. Although there was no statutory requirement to consult on an SCI, it had been the Council's practice to do so. If approved, consultation would begin the following week and run for four weeks, including direct letters to consultees, website updates and publicity through 'City Life' and social media. The outcome of the consultation would be reported to the Policy Board and then Cabinet for final approval.

A question was asked in relation to the digital advancement in the current day, with AI and other digital initiatives, whether the SCI should include reference to these newer consultation methods such as interactive mapping, virtual town halls and real-time feedback tools, and suggested it should also address how consultation success was measured. Officers explained that the SCI was a protocol document setting out how the Council meets statutory requirements. More detailed consultation strategies were prepared for each consultation in partnership with the communications team, including use of digital exhibitions and social media. Feedback on the number and composition of responses was always reported. It was also noted that investment in new engagement technologies would be considered in the context of resources and Local Government Reorganisation.

RESOLVED that:

- the draft Statement of Community Involvement be approved for public consultation.
- any subsequent changes to the draft Statement of Community Involvement and the finalising of consultation material be delegated to the Director of Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for a Greener Chelmsford.

(7.00pm to 7.14pm)

6. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm

Chair