

Review of the adopted Chelmsford Local Plan – Preferred Options Consultation Plan

This report sets out the proposed consultation arrangements for the review of the adopted Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation Document. It covers the following areas:

- 1. Aims of the consultation**
- 2. How will we raise awareness of the consultation?**
- 3. Who are we going to consult?**
- 4. When and how will we consult?**
- 5. How people will be able to respond**

1. Aims of the consultation

- 1.1 The Preferred Options consultation will proceed in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (September 2020).
- 1.2 The aim of this consultation is to gain feedback and comments on the draft Preferred Options Local Plan including the preferred spatial strategy, preferred site allocations for the area up to 2041, and preferred policies. Consultation feedback will be used alongside the wider plan evidence base, discussions with key stakeholders and national policy to help the Council to prepare the final draft Local Plan (Pre-Submission version). This will help to ensure that the final Local Plan is relevant, addresses future development requirements and local priorities, and is beneficial to our local communities.
- 1.3 The Council will publish two consultation documents, the Preferred Option Local Plan and Preferred Option Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA).
- 1.4 Legislation sets out the minimum requirements for consulting the public and other relevant organisations and statutory bodies on a Local Plan. The Council will seek to go beyond these during this consultation.

2. How will we raise awareness of the consultation?

- 2.1 The formal consultation will start in early May 2024 (actual date TBC).
- 2.2 The Council will also publish a number of documents to support the consultation, including:
 - A tracked change copy of the adopted Local Plan to show where changes are proposed
 - Summary leaflets of the Preferred Options Local Plan and IIA
 - Responses to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- 'You Said We Did' Feedback Report setting out the Council's response/action to the main issues raised in the Issues and Options consultation
 - Topic Papers.
- 2.3 Posters/pop-ups banners will be placed in the Customer Service Centre in the Civic Centre and at other Council venues such as Leisure Centres. These will advertise the review of the Local Plan and outline how to get involved with the Preferred Options Consultation.
- 2.4 We will provide regular updates via the City Life web page to raise further awareness, and also publish social media posts.
- 2.5 The Council's website contains information on how to register interest in Local Plan updates and receive alerts on future consultations, and how to use the Council's planning policy consultation portal. It will also contain links to the Preferred Option document and the IIA.
- 2.6 Presentations to promote the consultation will be given, including a Parish/Town Councils Local Plan Forum and Developers Forum (dates TBC).

3. Who are we going to consult?

- 3.1 The Council is required by legislation to consult certain bodies which it considers may have an interest in or be affected by the document. These bodies include Essex County Council, Neighbouring Councils, Parish and Town Councils, Utility Companies and government bodies such as National Highways, the Environment Agency and Natural England.
- 3.2 In addition to this the Council will also seek to ensure a wide range of other stakeholders and individuals have the opportunity to be involved in the consultation process.
- 3.3 These organisations include the Chelmsford Business Forum, Sport England, the Police, developers, landowners, planning professionals, local businesses, voluntary and community groups and the general public.
- 3.4 The consultation will reach a wide audience if all the bodies and organisations mentioned above are consulted. A large volume of comments and feedback is therefore expected to be received.
- 3.5 Those who have registered on the Council's consultation database including those who made comments to the Issues and Options Local Plan in 2022 will automatically be notified of the consultation.

4. When and how will we consult?

- 4.1 The Preferred Options consultation period will run for six weeks from early May to June 2024 (dates TBC).

- 4.2 The consultation documents will be available to view and comment on the Council's planning policy consultation portal. They will also be available to read during normal opening hours at the Council's Customer Service Centre in Chelmsford. In addition, electronic versions of the consultation documents will be available to view at some Parish/Town Council offices and local libraries.
- 4.3 Paper copies of the full consultation documents will also be available to purchase. For those who do not have access to a computer, paper response forms will be made available and a telephone number will be published for those requiring assistance. Summary leaflets will also be produced of the Preferred Options Consultation Document and Preferred Options IIA. These will be free of charge.
- 4.4 There will be a direct email/letter notification to all consultees registered on the Council's consultation database to advise them of the consultation dates and how to view and respond to the consultation. The database currently includes around 2,900 members of the public and specific and general consultation bodies. Information on the consultation will also be posted on the Council's website.
- 4.5 As part of on-going Duty to Co-operate responsibilities we will continue to discuss the review of the adopted Local Plan with neighbouring planning authorities and the prescribed bodies in accordance with our Duty to Co-operate Strategy 2022.
- 4.6 Meetings are intended to be undertaken during the consultation period with key partners and stakeholders such as Duty to Co-operate meetings with neighbouring Local Planning Authorities, Essex County Council and National Highways.
- 4.7 There will be various activities running throughout the consultation period which will allow key stakeholders and the general public to engage with the Preferred Options documents and give their feedback. Precise dates and confirmation of engagement activities are to be agreed, but the following are a list of activities intended to be carried out during the consultation period:
- Adverts in local publications
 - Articles in City Life and South Woodham Focus
 - Posters distributed to Parish/Town Councils, Chelmsford City Council main offices and facilities, and community facilities such as post offices, libraries, GP surgeries and sports centres
 - Information packs for Parish/Town Council to include standard text on the consultation for use in their newsletters/magazines and in social media posts
 - An interactive online exhibition available during the consultation period. This will include a virtual exhibition of the same display boards which will

be used at the in-person exhibitions and will provide links to the full consultation documents and planning policy consultation portal

- In person exhibitions, staffed by planning policy officers, will be held at the Civic Centre. It is intended to hold one of these near the beginning, and one near the end of the consultation period. Subject to availability, these are expected to run over a Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The exhibitions will provide an opportunity for members of the public and other interested parties to find out more and discuss the consultation with an Officer
- An unstaffed exhibition in High Chelmer Shopping Centre (if available) and in South Woodham Ferrers for some time during the consultation period
- Summary leaflets will be available to collect from all exhibitions
- Copies of the Preferred Options Local Plan summary leaflet handed out at Chelmsford and South Woodham Ferrers train stations
- Social media campaign on Council's Facebook page and X and to 'piggy-back' on other consultation events where appropriate
- Series of gov.delivery mailshots to over 13,000 recipients
- Information banner on emails from all Council staff
- Site notices placed in locations around the proposed new housing and employment sites in the Preferred Options Local Plan, and
- An animated Local Plan video produced for the Issues and Options consultation will also be available.

5. How will people be able to respond?

- 5.1 Respondents will have a choice of ways to make their comments including answering questions in the consultation document on the portal, using a stand-alone online questionnaire on the portal or sending written comments in an e-mail or by post.