Chelmsford Local Plan
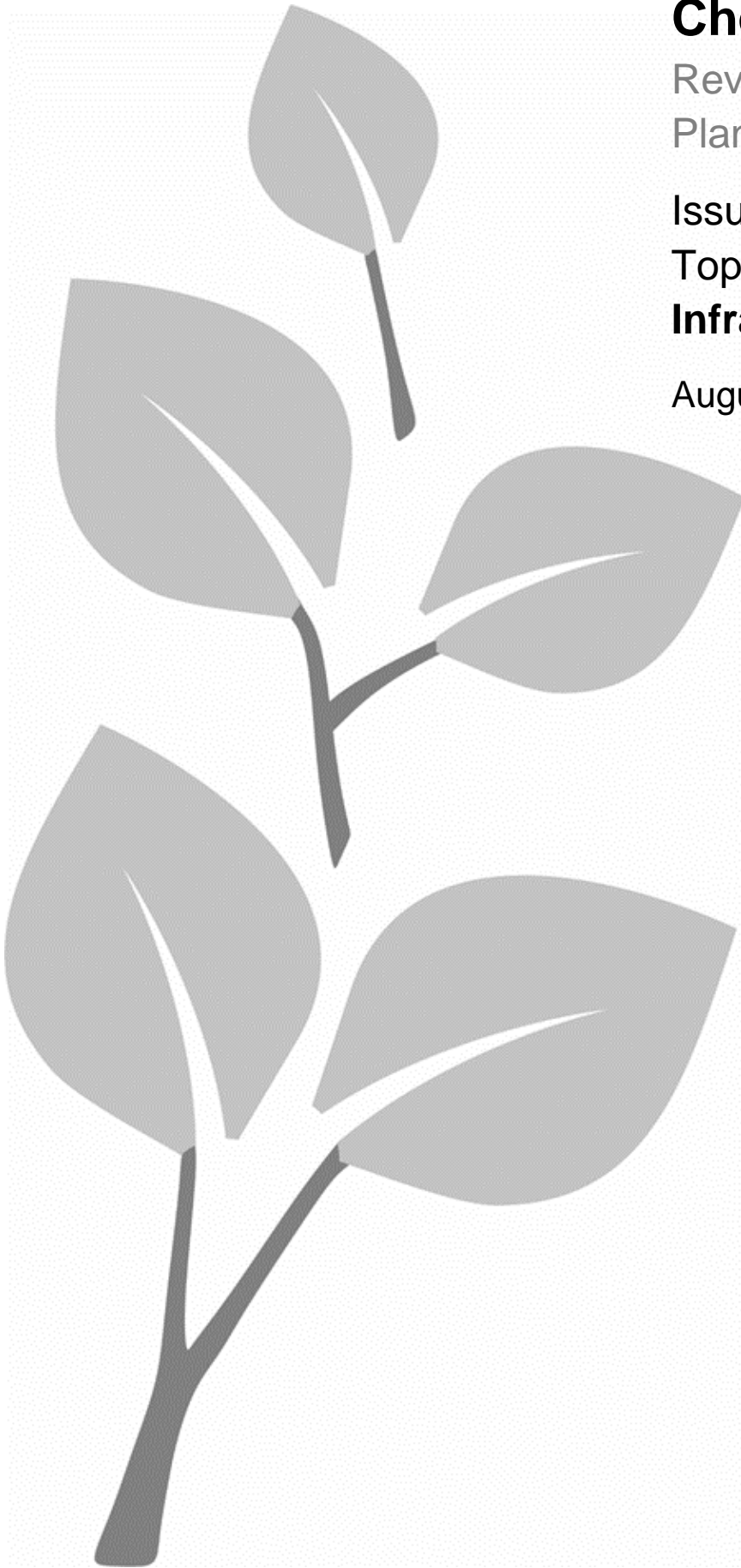
Review of the adopted Local Plan

Issues and Options
Topic Paper:
Infrastructure

August 2022

1. Purpose

1.1. This Topic Paper is one of a number produced by Chelmsford City Council to set out how the review of the Local Plan has been developed. Topic papers will be refreshed and updated at each stage of the Local Plan Review process to ensure the latest information/position is available. This will avoid confusion and duplication and the latest topic paper will supersede any previous versions.

1.2. The intention of the topic papers is to provide background information; they do not contain any policies, proposals or site allocations. Topic papers will form part of the Local Plan evidence base which will be submitted alongside the Local Plan for independent examination.

1.3. This paper covers infrastructure issues and requirements which will need to be assessed to support the review of the adopted Local Plan.

1.4. The Topic Paper provides background information and provides context of how the Local Plan has been formulated. This Topic Paper should be read alongside the other Topic Papers produced, in particular:

- Transport
- Climate Change

1.5. The main issues covered by this Topic Paper are:

- The proposed approach to reviewing infrastructure requirements
- Policy proposals which relate to the provision of infrastructure

2. Background

2.1. The term infrastructure can include any structure, building, system facility and/or provision required by an area for its social and/or economic function and/or wellbeing.

2.2. New development can place additional demand upon existing infrastructure and services including the local and strategic transport network, healthcare, open spaces and education provision. The need for such infrastructure items will be identified by the relevant infrastructure providers, for example Essex County Council as Highways and Education Authority and NHS England and the Mid-Essex Clinical Commissioning Group as healthcare providers. Some existing infrastructure in Chelmsford has little or no spare capacity to cope with population growth and new development. Therefore, new development proposals must contribute to improvements in infrastructure capacity to cater for the additional needs they generate.

2.3. Infrastructure improvements can be in the form of new, co-located or expanded facilities, and can be delivered in a number of ways:
- Financial contributions towards new or expanded facilities and the maintenance thereof
- On-site provision (which may include building works)
- Off-site capacity improvement works, and/or
- The provision of land.

2.4. It should be noted that, within this Topic Paper, Transport is dealt with in so far as the general approach taken. A further and more detailed Transport Topic Paper has been produced to cover this subject.

3. Issues and Options

Policy Context

National Policy

3.1. All policies in the Local Plan must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the overarching planning policy framework, supported by the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

3.2. The adopted Local Plan was examined using the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). There have subsequently been updates to the NPPF and the review of the adopted Local Plan needs to be considered against the requirements of the 2021 NPPF.

3.3. Although large areas of the NPPF remain unchanged in respect of infrastructure provision any new development proposals and policies will still be required to be tested against the relevant NPPF requirements. There are also some areas of the NPPF which have been updated/amended since the adoption of the Local Plan which will need to be reflected.

3.4. Further detail on these key changes for consideration are set out in the table below, included under the section 'Local Plan Approach'.

National Policy Guidance

3.5. The most relevant paragraph which covers infrastructure provision in respect of the Plan making process is paragraph 059 Reference ID: 61-059-20190315.

A plan is an opportunity for the strategic policy-making authority to set out a positive vision for the area, but the plan should also be realistic about what can be achieved and when. This means paying careful attention to providing an adequate supply of land, identifying what infrastructure is required and how it can be funded and brought forward.

It is recommended that at an early stage in the plan-making process strategic policy-making authorities will need to work alongside infrastructure providers, service delivery organisations, other strategic bodies such as Local Enterprise Partnerships, developers, landowners and site promoters. A collaborative approach is expected to be taken to identifying infrastructure deficits and requirements, and opportunities for addressing them. In doing so they will need to:

- *assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure, and its ability to meet forecast demands. Where deficiencies are identified, policies should set out how those deficiencies will be addressed; and*
- *take account of the need for strategic infrastructure, including nationally significant infrastructure, within their areas.*

The government recommends that when preparing a plan strategic policy-making authorities use available evidence of infrastructure requirements to prepare an Infrastructure Funding Statement. This should set out the anticipated funding from developer contributions, and the choices local authorities have made about how these contributions will be used. At examination this can be used to demonstrate the delivery of infrastructure throughout the plan-period.

Authorities will also need to ensure that policies setting out contributions expected from development do not undermine delivery of the plan. Plan viability assessment should be carried out in accordance with guidance.

Where plans are looking to plan for longer term growth through new settlements, or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, it is recognised that there may not be certainty and/or the funding secured for necessary strategic infrastructure at the time the plan is produced. In these circumstances strategic policy-making authorities will be expected to demonstrate that there is a reasonable prospect that the proposals can be developed within the timescales envisaged.

3.6. Further detailed guidance on how an authority can demonstrate that there is a reasonable prospect that large scale development can be delivery in certain timescale are included in paragraph 060 Reference ID: 61-060-20190315.

Local Policy

Current policy

3.7. The key assessment of infrastructure required to support the adopted Local Plan is the Chelmsford Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2019. This covered in detail what was required for each aspect of infrastructure. The main forms of infrastructure requirements were grouped into the following three types of infrastructure:

Physical Infrastructure	Highways, Access and Transport (including pedestrian facilities) Flood protection and water management Utilities
Green and Blue Infrastructure	Recreation and Leisure Environmental Mitigation Archaeology
Community Infrastructure	Early years, childcare and Education Health and social wellbeing Social and community facilities Other community infrastructure

3.8 The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) sits alongside the adopted Local Plan and assessed the status of infrastructure across Chelmsford and identified what new infrastructure investment was required to support the Local Plan growth, when it is needed, and funding sources. This process provided timescales for the delivery of infrastructure which were tested through the Local Plan's evidence base, including viability testing.

3.9 While the IDP identifies in more detail the infrastructure requirements to support the adopted Local Plan, the Local Plan includes policies to ensure the delivery of the necessary infrastructure. A key component of the Council's overall approach in formulating the adopted Local Plan was to maximise the delivery of infrastructure needed to support new development. This is set out in the Local Plan's Strategic Priorities, Vision and Spatial Principles which in turn have closely informed the Plan's Spatial Strategy. Throughout the adopted Local Plan there a numerous references, policies and requirements which collectively seek to deliver this. The table at the 'Local Plan Approach' section below sets out the key policies which deal with the delivery of various forms of infrastructure throughout the adopted Local Plan and what changes may be required to ensure compliance with the 2021 NPPF.

3.10 Further information regarding the delivery of infrastructure is set out in the adopted Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document, available at https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-local-plan/supplementary-planning-documents-and-planning-advice-notes/

3.11 Infrastructure can be delivered directly on site by infrastructure providers to support the future population or may be secured by planning conditions or planning obligations (Section 106 Agreements) or through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

3.12 A key component of the adopted Spatial Strategy was to focus large amounts of growth at key locations to help deliver the necessary infrastructure as it provided a 'critical mass'. Infrastructure provision in the adopted Local Plan is therefore achieved either through necessary on-site provision, or off-site through appropriate financial contributions towards new or improved facilities required to facilitate each development site as set out in the policies within the adopted Local Plan in the following ways:

- **Strategic Priorities 5, 6 and 7** - these seek to deliver new and improved strategic and local and green infrastructure.
- **The Local Plan Vision** – this seeks to optimise the opportunities for new and upgraded infrastructure including cultural, leisure and recreation facilities, shops, education and healthcare service.
- **Strategic Policy S1 (Spatial Principle)** - includes Spatial Principles to ensure development is deliverable, is served by the necessary infrastructure, and that development utilises existing and planned infrastructure effectively.
- **Strategic Policy S2 (Addressing climate change and flood risk)** - encourages development to provide opportunities for green infrastructure and new habitat creation. Requires all development to have appropriate flood mitigation measures in place.
- **Strategic Policy S4 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment)** - Seeks to ensure new development does not result in water pollution and where possible enhances water quality. Sets out that management and mitigation measures will be required.
- **Strategic Policy S5** – Protecting and enhancing community assets - New health, education, social, sport and leisure, parks and green spaces, arts and cultural facilities will be secured to support new development through relevant and necessary funding streams.
- **Strategic Policy S9** – Infrastructure Requirements - Sets out the approach taken towards infrastructure requirements and that new development must be supported by the necessary infrastructure. Lists specific infrastructure items and projects that will need to be provided to support the Local Plan.
- **Strategic Policy S10** – Securing infrastructure and impact mitigation - Sets out the mechanisms for securing infrastructure and the need to demonstrate that there is the necessary capacity provided to support new development. Sets out that account will be taken of the need for infrastructure and the financial viability of a development. The Council will ensure that the cumulative impact of policy, standards and infrastructure requirements do not render development in the Plan unviable and undeliverable.
- **Site allocation policies** – All site policies set out the specific infrastructure requirements necessary to support each allocation site.
- **Development Management Policies** – **DM6, DM7 and DM8** set out the circumstances in which these policies allow for the provision of necessary facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries, local transport infrastructure and

other essential infrastructure or development which supports existing or potential utility infrastructure, community facilities, education and community uses. **DM18** requires all development to be safe from flooding. Major development is required to incorporate appropriate water management measures to reduce surface water run-off and volumes as far as is reasonably practical. **DM19** supports the provision of renewable and low carbon energy development subject to relevant criteria being met. **DM20** deals with the delivery of all new community facilities including new indoor and outdoor sports and recreation facilities, burial space and crematoriums. **DM21** seeks to protect existing community facilities. Specific requirements for the change of use or loss of open space, sports and recreational buildings and land are set out. **DM22** sets out that the change of use or redevelopment of educational establishments will only be permitted if they are surplus to educational requirements, and **DM24** sets out the need to incorporate and provide various forms of infrastructure within major new development schemes.

3.13. Chelmsford has an adopted Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule which continues to be applied to appropriate new development. The Council publishes Annual Infrastructure Funding Statements which set out the infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure which the Council intends to wholly or partly fund by CIL.

3.14. The Council worked in partnership with varying authorities and bodies, including the NHS, Essex County Council, neighbouring authorities, utility providers, train and bus operators, the Environment Agency and Natural England to assess the required infrastructure to support the growth in the adopted Local Plan.

3.15. Effective partnership working also gives strength to bidding towards funding mechanisms such as the South Essex Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and the Housing and Infrastructure Fund (HIF). The City Council has been successful in securing funding from SELEP towards the City Growth Package and from the HIF towards infrastructure items in the adopted Local Plan.

3.16. The IDP attributed estimated costs to the infrastructure required in the adopted Local Plan. When fed into the adopted Local Plan Viability Study it indicated that the delivery of such facilities identified across the adopted Local Plan were viable.

3.17. Collectively these seek to ensure the necessary infrastructure is delivered to support all forms of development. In addition to the Local Plan, there are a number of other local and strategies that inform this topic area.

3.18. Our Chelmsford: Our Plan sets out the Council's priorities which will improve the lives of residents. There are four themes; a fairer and inclusive Chelmsford; a safer and greener place; healthy, active and enjoyable lives and connected Chelmsford.

3.19. The City Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency on 16 July 2019. Essentially this Declaration represents a commitment to take appropriate action to make the Council's activities net-zero carbon by 2030.

3.20. In January 2020 a [Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan](#) with an initial focus on fifteen key areas of activity was agreed by the Council. It is aimed at:

- reducing carbon emissions
- lowering energy consumption
- reducing waste and pollution
- improving air quality
- greening Chelmsford
- increasing biodiversity
- encouraging more sustainable travel choices

Duty to Co-operate

3.21. The Council is committed to co-operating with other bodies on strategic planning matters. The Duty to Co-operate Strategy was reviewed and adopted in January 2022.

3.22. The Council will make every effort to seek co-operation on cross-boundary and strategic planning matters in a focused, positive and structured way. We will discuss the review of the adopted Local Plan with neighbouring planning authorities and the prescribed bodies at stages which align with and inform the stages of the review of the adopted Local Plan. These discussions will help to formulate the quantum and distribution of Chelmsford's future growth, which will be supported by updated evidence.

3.23. At the same time, we will continue to work constructively with nearby planning authorities on their own local plan preparation. Early engagement and demonstrating co-operation both with neighbours and the prescribed bodies through Statements of Common Ground are key to meeting the legal duty to co-operate.

3.24. In some cases, discussion on strategic matters will continue through existing joint working arrangements. We will also arrange joint Officer and Member meetings, technical stakeholder meetings, focused workshops, and Statements of Common Ground.

3.25. The strategic matters that may apply to the review of the adopted Local Plan have been identified as follows:

- Delivering homes for all including Gypsy and Traveller accommodation
- Jobs and economy including green employment and regeneration
- Retail, leisure, and cultural development
- Sustainable transport, highways and active travel
- Climate change action and mitigation including flood risk and zero carbon
- Natural and historic environment including increased biodiversity and green/blue/wild spaces and connectivity of ecological networks
- Community infrastructure including education, health and community facilities
- Utility infrastructure including communications, waste, water and energy
- London Stansted Airport future airspace redesign.

3.26. As part of on-going Duty to Co-Operate relevant to this topic, CCC has attended relevant meetings and provides updates on our plan review such as through the Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA). We will continue to engage with all infrastructure providers to ensure the IDP is updated to reflect the latest infrastructure requirements. This will ensure new or updated site allocations and policies in the Local Plan fully reflect the infrastructure required to support development in the Plan

3.27. As part of the Issues and Options consultation we will be having meetings with neighbouring Local Planning Authorities as well as other relevant Duty to Co-operate bodies. Any strategic cross boundary issues relating to Infrastructure raised through these meetings and the consultation will be further considered and any further engagement undertaken if required.

Integrated Impact Assessment

3.28. The Council is carrying out an ongoing Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) as the review of the adopted Local Plan develops.

3.29. The IIA will assess the following aspects of sustainable development:

- Sustainability Appraisal (SA)
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)
- Health Impact Assessment (HIA)
- Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

3.30. The SA, SEA and HRA are a requirement of national policy. The HIA and EqIA are voluntary, but the Council believes they will help to provide a complete picture of the sustainability of the review of the adopted Local Plan.

3.31. The IIA identifies the key sustainability issues for the review of the adopted Local Plan, which feed into a framework against which proposals will be assessed. It will cover the potential environmental, social, economic and health performance of the proposed changes to the adopted Local Plan and any reasonable alternatives. It will be used at each stage of reviewing the Plan, and be subject to separate consultation, as follows:

- Scoping Report
- Issues and Options – Current Stage
- Preferred Options
- Submission
- Adoption

3.32. The Issues and Options IIA appraises key sustainability issues (Table 3.19) and Appraisal Framework Objectives (Table 4.1) relating to this Topic Paper. Please see the Issues and Options IIA for more information.

Evidence base

3.33. In accordance with the requirements of the NPPF, policies and their requirements should be based on up-to-date evidence.

3.34. The following documents are documents of particular relevance to infrastructure requirements of the adopted Local Plan and will require reviewing and or updating to support the review of the adopted Local Plan:

- Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)
- Local Plan Viability Study
- Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities Study and addendums
- Chelmsford City Council Outdoor Sport Pitch and Facility Strategy and Action Plan – Future Growth Supplement 2018
- Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan 2018-2036
- Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan 2017
- Essex Minerals Plan 2014
- Essex County Council School Forecast Plans
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Chelmsford Water Cycle Study
- Strategic and Local Junction Modelling
- Planning Obligations SPD 2021

3.35. The following documents are new or updated documents of particular relevance to infrastructure requirements to support the review of the adopted Local Plan which have been completed:

- Infrastructure Funding Statement
- Integrated Impact Assessment of the review of the adopted Local Plan
- Sustainable Accessibility Mapping and Appraisal

3.36. Following the feedback from the Issues and Options consultation and further engagement with relevant infrastructure providers further relevant evidence may be undertaken to support any new policies or requirements intended to be included in the Plan.

Local Plan Approach

3.37. The table below sets out the key issues to be considered at this Regulation 18 Issues and Options Stage. The table below assesses the adopted Local Plan against the key NPPF requirements in respect of infrastructure and Plan making and identifies CCC's assessment of the adopted Local Plan's compliance with the 2021 NPPF. The proposed approach to the Review of the Local Plan is then set out using the following colour codes:

Adopted Local Plan meets NPPF requirement
Adopted Local Plan partially meets NPPF requirement
Adopted Local Plan does not meet NPPF requirement

NPPF Paragraph	NPPF Requirement	Approach in Review of the Local Plan
NPFF Para 8,11	For sustainable development to support an economic objective it should help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure. Sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development and includes the need for Plans to promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects.	Applied throughout the adopted Local Plan with growth supported be the necessary infrastructure. Included in adopted Local Plan (Strategic Policies S1 to S13 and all Site Allocation policies which require specific infrastructure to support allocations). Further DM policies support specific forms of infrastructure. Need to check any amendments through the review continue to be NPPF compliant.
NPPF Para 16, 25, 26	Includes the need for Plans to be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees. Strategic policy-making authorities should collaborate to identify the relevant strategic matters which they need to address in their plans. They should also engage with their local communities and	Adopted Local Plan engaged with all relevant providers at an early stage and throughout the Plan process. The review of the Plan will follow the same approach and the Councils adopted Duty to Co-Operate strategy and Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) set out how the Council will engage throughout the review of the Local Plan.

	relevant bodies including Local Enterprise Partnerships, Local Nature Partnerships, the Marine Management Organisation, county councils, infrastructure providers, elected Mayors and combined authorities (in cases where Mayors or combined authorities do not have plan-making powers). Effective and on-going joint working between strategic policy-making authorities and relevant bodies is integral to the production of a positively prepared and justified strategy. In particular, joint working should help to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary, and whether development needs that cannot be met wholly within a particular plan area could be met elsewhere.	
NPPF Para 20	Requires local planning authorities to set out strategic priorities for the area in the Local Plan. This should, amongst other things, include strategic policies to deliver the provision of: • infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat) • community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure) • conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.	Set out clearly in adopted Local Plan (Strategic Policies S1 to S13 and all Site Allocation policies as set out at paragraph 1.9 of the adopted Local Plan). Need to check any amendments through the review continue to be NPPF compliant.
NPPF Para 28	Sets out that non-strategic policies can include allocating sites, the provision of infrastructure and community facilities at a local level.	The adopted Local Plan includes a number of policies which include the provision of different types of infrastructure, including DM6, DM7, DM8, DM19, DM20, DM21, DM22, DM24. Need to ensure any amendments through the review continue to do so.

NPPF Para 34	Plans should set out the contributions expected from development. This should include setting out the levels and types of affordable housing provision required, along with other infrastructure (such as that needed for education, health, transport, flood and water management, green and digital infrastructure). Such policies should not undermine the deliverability of the plan.	The adopted Local Plan includes a number of policies which include the provision of different types of infrastructure, including, site allocation policies, DM1, DM2, DM6, DM7, DM8, DM19, DM20, DM21, DM22, DM24, and further supported by the Planning Obligations SPD. Collectively the requirements of the adopted Local Plan were shown to be viable. Further viability work will be required to be undertaken to ensure any amendments to the Plan not undermine the deliverability of the Plan.
NPPF Para 73	In identifying land for large scale development, consideration should be given to the opportunities presented by existing or planned investment in infrastructure.	The adopted Local Plan includes a number of large scale allocations, including North East Chelmsford, which seek to maximise the opportunities presented by the Chelmsford North East Bypass and new rail station. As part of the review of the Local Plan consideration should be given to any existing or planned infrastructure investment.
NPPF Para 82	Policies to support a strong, competitive economy should seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, services or housing, or a poor environment.	Set out in adopted Local Plan (Strategic Policies S6, S7, S8, S12, Policies DM4, DM5, DM6 to DM12). Need to review evidence to ensure it covers these and consider economic changes since adoption, included impact of COVID, and identify any potential barriers. Ensure any amendments through the review continue to be NPPF compliant. Partial review required to address this NPPF requirement.
NPPF Para 92	Policies to promote healthy and safe communities should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.	Set out in adopted Local Plan through a suite of policies (site allocation policies, Policy DM23, DM24, DM26, DM28, DM29 and DM30, as well as through the Masterplan process and supported by the Making Places SPD). Need to check any amendments through the review continue to be NPPF compliant.
NPPF Para 114	In respect of policies to support high quality communications, advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for	Part of Strategic Priority 5 and Strategic Policy S9 and supported by the Making Places SPD of the adopted Local Plan. Need to check any amendments through the review continue to be NPPF

	economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections. Policies should set out how high quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time; and should prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments (as these connections will, in almost all cases, provide the optimum solution).	compliant.
NPPF Para 152, 153	In respect of policies to assist in meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change paragraph 152 seeks to support renewable and low carbon energy associated infrastructure. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.	The adopted Local Plan supports such infrastructure through Strategic Policy S2, S9, S10, and policies DM25, as well as being supported by the Making Places SPD. Need to check any amendments through the review continue to be NPPF compliant.
NPPF Para 175	Sets out the need to take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure.	Set out in adopted Local Plan through site allocations and a suite of policies (Strategic Policies S4 and Policy DM16). Need to check any amendments through the review continue to be NPPF compliant.

3.38. The adopted Local Plan policies generally remain consistent with national policy and are leading to effective decision making as demonstrated in the latest AMR. However, as site allocations and local policies will be updated there may be further infrastructure requirements which will need to be delivered, both at a local and strategic level. The adopted Local Plan infrastructure policies will need to be updated to meet infrastructure requirements to support new development growth up to 2041. This will be informed by an updated Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and Viability Study. The IDP will identify key infrastructure needs, costs and any gaps in funding. It will also consider the funding mechanisms required to secure infrastructure in a timely manner and facilitate growth. Policies will also need to reflect any new infrastructure policy requirements in the plan.

3.39. Considering this the review of the Local Plan seeks to amend the Strategic Priorities as set out in the Issues and Options Consultation Document. Specific to this topic paper the following priorities are relevant:

Priorities for climate
1. Addressing the Climate and Ecological Emergency (NEW priority) • Mitigate the impacts of climate change and adapt to its consequences • Ensure new development moves towards delivering net-zero carbon emissions (energy efficiency, sustainable construction, renewable energy, infrastructure for active and sustainable travel) • Ensure development adapts to minimise adverse impacts that create climate and ecological change, including managing flood risk and reducing carbon emissions • Encourage tree planting and an increase in woodland expansion • Ensure sustainable drainage systems in developments
2. Promoting smart, active travel and sustainable transport (NEW priority) • Promote/prioritise active travel and sustainable transport • Reduce reliance on fossil fuelled vehicles • Support the provision of strategic and local transport infrastructure to enable a future for alternatives to fossil fuelled vehicles • Make provision for charging electric vehicles • Make provision for infrastructure to support active travel and the use of sustainable modes of transport • Promote innovations in transport including smart technology
3. Protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, and support an increase in biodiversity and ecological networks • Plan positively for biodiversity net gain and green infrastructure including high quality green spaces • Minimise the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land to ensure future food production • Protect/enhance the River Valleys and increase opportunities for sustainable travel • Ensure that new development respects the character and appearance of the City's varied landscapes
Priorities for growth
4. Ensuring sustainable patterns of development and protecting the Green Belt • Ensure we plan positively to meet identified development needs • Promote development of previously developed land in Chelmsford's Urban Area • Use the Settlement Hierarchy to identify the most sustainable existing locations • Locate development in locations that are close to existing or proposed local facilities so people can walk/cycle/use public transport and be less reliant on the car • Protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development • Ensure accordance with the Minerals Local Plan, Waste Local Plan and South East Inshore Marine Plan

Priorities for place

7. Creating well designed and attractive places, and promoting the health and social wellbeing of communities

- Promote the health and wellbeing of communities
- Encourage healthy lifestyles and living environments for all residents for example by providing new green spaces, quality housing and enhanced walking and cycling infrastructure
- Ensure that the integrity of communities is maintained, and social cohesion is promoted in new development
- Ensure that all new development meets the highest standards of design
- Require the use of masterplans and encourage design codes where appropriate for strategic scale developments
- Ensure new development helps provide new primary health services
- Promote community involvement in the long-term management and stewardship of new strategic residential development
- Encourage development to be future-proofed and as sustainable and energy efficient as possible

8. Delivering new and improved infrastructure to support growth

- Address city-wide infrastructure needs
- Maximise the efficient use of existing infrastructure capacities
- Explore opportunities for new sustainable infrastructure
- Ensure that necessary new or upgraded local infrastructure is provided alongside new development when it is needed
- Ensure appropriate and timely strategic infrastructure to support new development

9. Encouraging resilience in retail, leisure, commercial and cultural development

- Promote the vitality and viability of Chelmsford City Centre, South Woodham Ferrers Town Centre and Principal Neighbourhood Centres
- Promote a range of functions which contribute to the vibrancy of Chelmsford City Centre and maintain its position as a leading destination
- Enhance the retail, leisure, commercial and cultural development offer of South Woodham Ferrers Town Centre
- Protect existing and support new/enhanced leisure, sports, arts, cultural and recreation facilities to ensure that all parts of the City Council area are vibrant and successful

3.40. In light of the proposed updated Strategic Priorities some new policies may be explored to better reflect the updated Plan Vision and Strategic Priorities and other relevant changes since adoption including a greater focus on:

- Adoption of the Council's Climate Change and Ecological Emergency declaration and Action Plan to make the Council's activities net-zero carbon by 2030
- Alternative proposals for the Chelmsford Flood Alleviation Scheme are being explored by the Environment Agency in partnership with the City Council
- Adoption of the Council's Making Places SPD and Solar Farm SPDs which encourage development requirements that go beyond the adopted plan
- Maximising/prioritising active travel and sustainable transport and their connectivity

- Supporting the provision of strategic and local transport infrastructure to enable a future for alternatives to fossil fuelled vehicles
- Increasing provision for charging electric vehicles
- Increasing provision for infrastructure to support active travel and the use of sustainable modes of transport
- Promoting innovations in transport including smart technology
- Strengthen access to the sites by sustainable modes of transport and minimise traffic pressures on local roads

3.41. There is an expectation that future infrastructure needs are likely to be at a community scale, for example, electric vehicle charging and primary education and early years in the City Centre. However, depending on the preferred Spatial Strategy, for example if another Garden Community were proposed it would require some City-wide strategic infrastructure such as secondary school, sports facilities, and new employment to support such development.

3.42. The review of the adopted Local Plan is also expected to strengthen some areas to reflect the updated Vision and Strategic Priorities in relation to securing infrastructure such as to secure biodiversity net gain, strengthen health and wellbeing measures and facilities, and place stronger emphasis on improving sustainable and active travel infrastructure and opportunities. These may include additional or enhanced policy requirements such as:

- Increasing provision for electric vehicle charging points (EVCPs) and fast charging EVCPs for new housing and employment development
- Increasing provision for well-designed and secure cycle parking and electric cycle charging points for new housing and employment development, as well as associated storage facilities for cycle equipment (helmets, paniers etc.)
- Requiring contributions towards or the provision of car clubs on all major development sites, not just the larger strategic sites
- Requiring the layout of major site allocations for housing and employment to explore opportunities to future proof for autonomous vehicles
- Allocating or safeguarding land for expanding current Park and Ride sites

3.43. Opportunities could also be taken to ensure that the locations and layout of future housing and employment site allocations help to enable direct access to the walking and cycling network proposed by the Chelmsford Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) in order to encourage active travel.

3.44. In additions to enhancing existing policies, we may explore the following new local policy:

- **15/20 Minute Walkable Neighbourhoods within major new developments including large strategic housing site allocations**
  This initiative would make sure that wherever possible residents can easily walk or cycle to everyday services and facilities from their homes such as schools, shops, workplaces, community facilities, open spaces and sports facilities. The approach is also being rolled out in Chelmsford Garden Community.

- **New site allocations**
  Exploring whether we should allocate land for other land uses such as large-scale renewable energy generation sites, such as solar and wind, and areas specifically for new tree and/or woodland planting
- **Require at least 20% Biodiversity Net Gain for all major developments**.
  This will help ensure that habitats for wildlife will be left in a measurably better state than before new development takes place.
- **Healthy Places**
  Explore how we can bring the objectives of the Council's Livewell Development Accreditation into planning policy.

3.45. As part of the process of preparing the review of the adopted Local Plan, we will ensure the amount of on-site infrastructure and contributions that the Council can require of new development do not affect development viability (what the development can afford to provide when taking into account development costs). We will be commissioning an updated viability assessment to help us set any new policy requirements at a level that is viable for new development to go ahead, and which considers the combined viability effects of all policies in the Local Plan to ensure it complies with national guidance regarding achieving an acceptable developer profit. See https://www.gov.uk/guidance/viability for further information on the latest requirements for Plan Making and viability.

3.46. Although not mutually exclusive of one another, further issues surrounding these potential policies and the background to them are covered in the following Topic Papers:
- Climate Change
- Transport
- Health and Well-being
- Natural Environment

Issues and Options Consultation Feedback

3.47. This Topic Paper will be updated and expanded on following feedback to the Issues and Options consultation and progress of further evidence-based documents. An updated version will then be published at the next stage of Local Plan Consultation (Preferred Options) setting out the progress made and the reasoning behind the proposals in the Preferred Options Consultation Document.
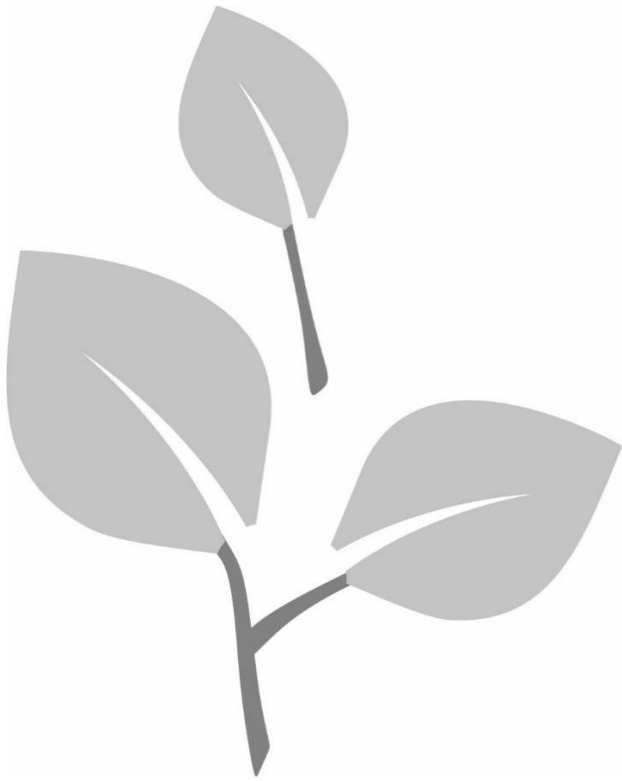
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