

Chelmsford Local Plan

Statement of Common Ground with Essex County Council and Chelmsford City Council: Sustainable Transport Measures and Other Matters

October 2018

Our Planning Strategy to 2036



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) identifies areas of agreement between Essex County Council (ECC) and Chelmsford City Council (CCC) regarding sustainable transport and other matters of soundness and legal compliance.
- 1.2 The agreed matters in this SOCG do not preclude any further written or verbal representations that the City Council or County Council may wish to make as part of the Local Plan Examination, in relation to any other matters which may not have been agreed and/or which do not form part of this SOCG.
- 1.3 For more information on how the Local Plan seeks to provide a development strategy compatible with sustainable movement objectives, please see Topic Paper 3 – Transport (TP 003).

2 Duty to Co-operate

- 2.1 It is considered that CCC has fully fulfilled its obligations with ECC under the Duty to Co-operate. ECC are a key partner in CCC's Local Plan Transportation Duty to Co-operate group.

3 Highways Modelling Evidence Base

- 3.1 The Pre-Submission Local Plan evidence base comprises a series of traffic modelling reports (EB 023-EB 029).
- 3.2 ECC and CCC agree that:
 - 3.2.1 The highways modelling work shows that it will not be possible to sufficiently mitigate the impact of the allocated development locations to feasibly ensure that the network operates fully within capacity at the end of the plan period without a step change in the provision and uptake of sustainable transport.
 - 3.2.2 The Local Plan inclusion of ECC's Strategic Zonal Focus proposes a range of measures to implement this step change, including new and expanded park and ride sites, provision of connections between new development and existing walking and cycling routes, bus priority measures, and dedicated car clubs for residents and businesses.
 - 3.2.3 The transport modelling reports indicate that the impacts of proposed Local Plan growth on the Chelmsford transport network can be mitigated so as not to result in any severe cumulative impact in the network (in line with para. 32 of the 2012 NPPF)

4 Essex County Council's Chelmsford Future Transport Network Strategy

- 4.1 ECC and CCC accept that at present Chelmsford city centre's road network is under significant strain with only about 4% capacity left at peak times. This leads to queuing, unreliable journey times, impact on air quality, and increased traffic on unsuitable residential streets. It also affects bus users, and the quality of journeys made by walking or cycling. Without improvements to the transport network, future growth will lead to significant and continuing congestion on the road network and will impact the economy of Chelmsford.

- 4.2 ECC and CCC acknowledge that there is neither the space, nor the funding, to deliver carriageway widening and major junction improvements. There is however capacity on the public transport, cycling and walking network and therefore use of these sustainable transport options need to be maximised and sustainable transport infrastructure improved.
- 4.3 ECC is committed to the delivery of Chelmsford's Future Transport Network Strategy (see Appendix A) which is a zonal approach focused on managing journeys over short, medium and long distances and CCC has included ECC's Strategic Zonal Focus within their Local Plan.

5 Chelmsford City Growth Package

- 5.1 ECC has secured £15M (£10M Local Growth Funding via SELEP and £5M ECC monies) to deliver the Chelmsford City Growth Package (CCGP), a package of schemes with a sustainable transport focus designed to help alleviate pressure on Chelmsford's road network and provide improvements to the transport network for all users. The package includes bus priority measures, new and improved cycleways and cycle parking, pedestrian environment and crossing improvements, small scale highways capacity improvements and a city wide signage and technology upgrade.
- 5.2 ECC is committed to the delivery of the CCGP to kick start a step change in the way Chelmsford residents, visitors and commuters travel into and around Chelmsford and will support future sustainable economic growth and CCC support ECC's intentions.
- 5.3 Works commenced on these improvements to the network in April 2018 and all of the proposals within the package will be complete by March 2021.
- 5.4 Further information on the CCGP can be found at <https://www.essexhighways.org/tell-us/highway-schemes-and-developments/major-schemes/chelmsford-city-growth-package.aspx>

6 Sustainable Transport Mitigation

- 6.1 ECC and CCC recognise that the delivery of sustainable transport schemes is vital to support the delivery of the Local Plan.
- 6.2 Whilst ECC and CCC agree that the CCCGP will enable a step change in the short term, both parties agree that a number of key sustainable transport proposals are required to be implemented during the plan period:

6.3 Park and Ride

- 6.3.1 Capacity of Park and Rides will be increased through site expansion of the existing Sandon and Chelmer Valley sites; additional buses; and/or by providing additional sites, specifically to the west and north east of the city.
- 6.3.2 A new Park and Ride site serving the south west of the city would support Sandon which is currently at capacity and will also provide an alternative to driving into the city centre for trips approaching from the west and south-west of Chelmsford.
- 6.3.3 ECC has undertaken feasibility work for a Park and Ride located in south west Chelmsford and currently has 2 site options. Further work is being progressed looking towards the development of a business case to secure a funding option for example via further SELEP Local Growth Fund rounds or utilising CIL funding.
- 6.3.4 ECC and CCC are working jointly to encourage use of existing and new Park and Rides including an appropriate fare structure for, and provision of, long stay city centre parking.

6.4 Beaulieu Railway Station

- 6.4.1 The project is currently at Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) Stage 3 and the current programme for the opening of the station is 2025.

- 6.4.2 ECC, with support from CCC, has been successful at Expression of Interest stage for the Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF). A Final Business Case is now being prepared for a joint bid for £250m to fund the Station and the first phases of the Chelmsford North East Bypass. The submission will be made in March 2019 with announcements expected from Government in summer 2019. Funding towards the new station is ECC's priority HIF bid.
- 6.4.3 ECC and CCC will work with developers during the masterplanning and planning stages to ensure that provisions are in place for residents to access the railway station using sustainable modes.

6.5 Enhancement of Essex Regiment Way (North East Chelmsford)

- 6.5.1 The provision of the phase 2 of the Radial Distributor Road (RDR2) and Phase 1 of Chelmsford North East Bypass (CNEB) will result in strategic transport movements being made via the RDR2 and bypass and therefore enable the reclassification of A130 Essex Regiment Way and associated enhancement as a sustainable transport corridor.
- 6.5.2 Sustainable transport measures will be prioritised along Essex Regiment Way in line with ECC's Chelmsford's Future Network Transport Strategy.

6.6 Bus Provision

- 6.6.1 The following will be prioritised, in line with ECC's Chelmsford's Future Transport Network Strategy to encourage more people to use buses and to increase the reliability of bus journey times:
- Bus priority measures (such as bus lanes or bus gates) along key bus corridors and on heavily congested roads.
 - Removal of obstructions on existing bus lanes to maximise their impact.
 - Bus access to junctions to ensure free flowing movement of buses through key corridors.
- 6.6.2 ECC will work jointly with CCC and developers during the masterplanning and planning stages to ensure developments within the Local Plan build upon the CCGP passenger transport schemes and provide high quality and high frequency services and infrastructure, as appropriate, within the development and between the development and the city centre and other key destinations.

6.7 Walking and Cycling

- 6.7.1 The following will be prioritised, in line with ECC's Chelmsford's Future Transport Network Strategy to encourage more people to cycle:
- Complete gaps in the cycle network to create longer and more seamless routes.
 - Improve signage so new users can easily navigate their way into and around the City Centre and to key services.
 - Create additional cycle parking hubs within the city centre.
 - Improve safety on the cycle network to ensure people feel at ease using bikes in the city centre.
 - Improve crossing with traffic and shared routes with pedestrians to, where possible, create seamless links.
- 6.7.2 ECC will work jointly with CCC and developers during the masterplanning and planning stages to ensure developments within the Local Plan build upon the CCGP and Chelmsford Cycling Action Plan and provide further cycling improvements as appropriate within the development and between the development and the city centre and other key destinations.

- 6.7.3 Maximising opportunities for cycling and walking within Chelmsford's extensive network of Green Wedges, which are designated along the main river valleys and permeate into the existing or proposed urban areas, will be essential to ECC and CCC.

7 Legal Compliance and Duty to Co-operate

- 7.1 All parties consider that the Chelmsford Pre-Submission Local Plan is legally compliant and consistent with national planning policy including the National Planning Policy Framework (2012). It is considered that Chelmsford City Council has been prepared in accordance with the timetable set out in the Local Development Scheme. Furthermore, it is considered that the consultation on the Local Plan has been in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and appropriate bodies have been consulted.

8 Spatial Strategy and SA/SEA

- 8.1 The Spatial Strategy contained within the Pre-Submission Local Plan is sound and supported by a comprehensive and robust evidence base including highways modelling.
- 8.2 Appropriate and robust Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) has been undertaken throughout the preparation of the Local Plan in an iterative and consultative manner which has led to the Local Plan containing the most appropriate and sustainable strategy.

9 Strategic Priorities, Vision and Spatial Principles

- 9.1 The Strategic Priorities, Vision and Spatial Principles within the Pre-Submission Local Plan provides a robust and sound strategic framework.

10 Strategic Policies

- 10.1 The Pre-Submission Local Plan contains a suite of sound Strategic Policies supported by a sound evidence base that delivers the Strategic Priorities and Vision and are in accordance with the Spatial Principles.

Signatories:

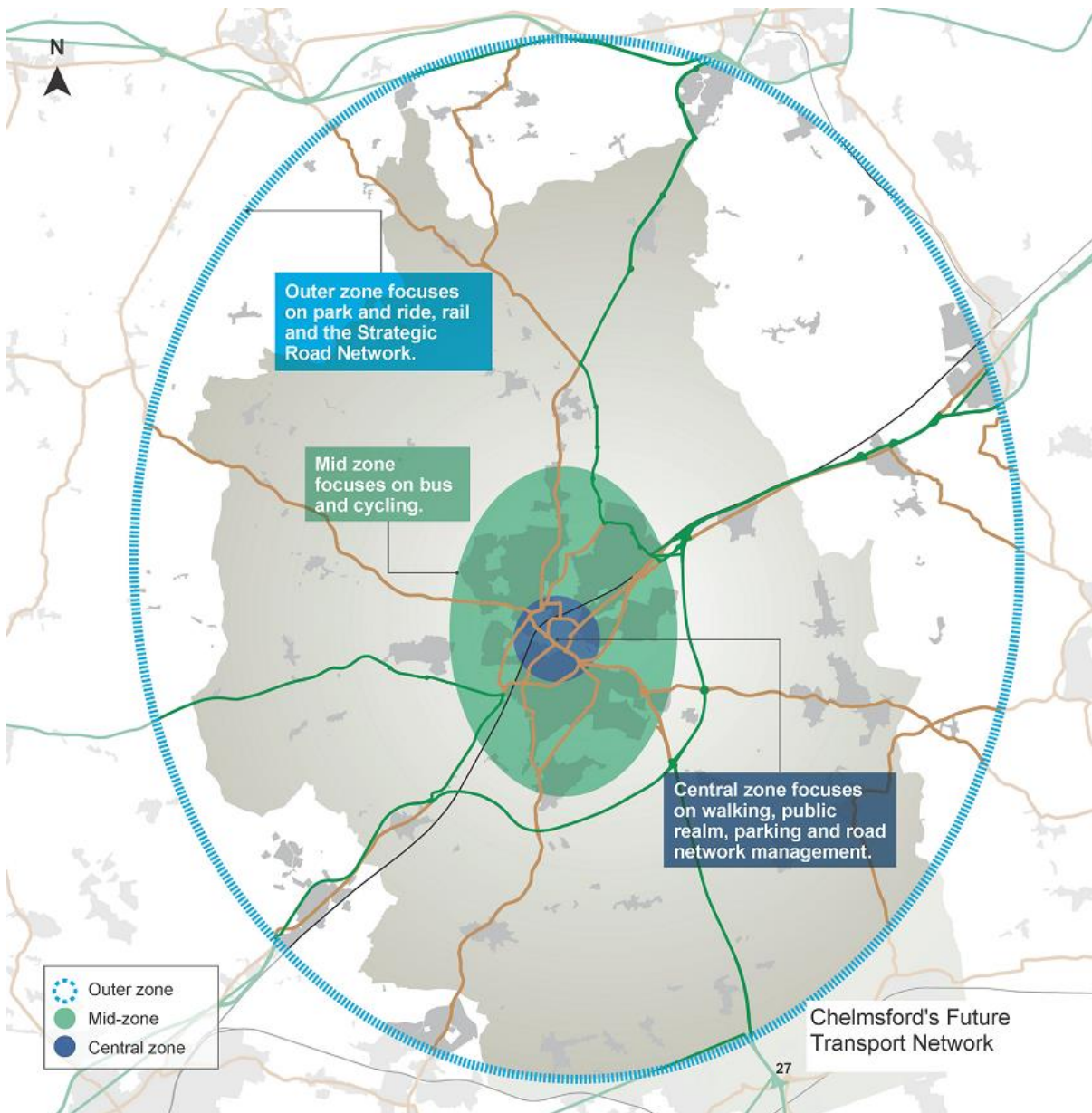
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Appendix A: Chelmsford's Future Transport Network Strategy: Strategic Zonal Focus



Outer zone

The approach for this zone is to target journeys from outside of Chelmsford.

Schemes will focus on:

- Removing as much traffic as possible on the outskirts of the city using the existing and potential future Park and Ride services
- Encouraging rail use to access Chelmsford from outside the city
- Providing appropriate and innovative signage systems to direct drivers onto the most appropriate route for their final destination. To target investment for strategic schemes for long distance journeys, such as widening of the A12 and the Chelmsford North East Bypass



Mid-zone

The approach for this zone is to target journeys within the city limits (56% of which are currently by car).

Schemes will focus on:

- Targeting investment on providing viable sustainable alternatives to the private car
- Encouraging trips to be made using fast and reliable public transport and safe, high quality cycling and pedestrian network



Central zone

The approach for this zone is to target journeys in the historic heart of Chelmsford.

Schemes will focus on:

- Improving the quality of the public realm, which is an important factor in attracting businesses and visitors
- Improving the quality of the walking environment for residents and visitors
- Providing high quality and sustainable alternative solutions
- Managing remaining traffic as efficiently as possible with clear and innovative signage to direct drivers onto the most appropriate roads for their journey, minimising rat-running, and to move vehicles off the road and into the most appropriate car park as quickly as possible



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Document published by
Planning and Housing Policy
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