

AH002

Chelmsford Local Plan

Housing Capacity in Chelmsford City Centre and Urban Area

Evidence Base Document
Technical Note

April 2024



1	Introduction	1
2	Allocated sites completed	1
3	Allocated sites with a masterplan or planning permission	2
4	Allocated sites which have not yet come forward	3
5	SHELAA sites for consideration for new allocations	4
6	Consideration of higher density on allocated sites	7
7	Allocating Small Sites	7
8	Conclusion	8
9	Next steps	9

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Maps	11
Appendix 2 – Housing Capacity Tables	13

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Chelmsford City Council adopted its Local Plan in May 2020, and in 2022 started a process to review the Plan for submission by 2025, in line with Government requirements.
- 1.2 The Council plans to extend the Local Plan end date by five years to take it from 2036 to 2041. This means that additional sites for residential development will need to be allocated to meet the housing need arising from the additional five years.
- 1.3 The Council is reviewing its spatial strategy setting out the level and type of development for different parts of the Council's area. This is being informed by consultation responses, call for sites submissions, national planning policy, and evidence base including the final development requirements.
- 1.4 The adopted Local Plan allocates sites for new housing, of which some have been delivered, some have planning permission or a masterplan, and others have yet to come forwards. All the allocated sites are retained in the review of the Local Plan (unless already developed), with the addition of further sites to meet the overall need to 2041.
- 1.5 In considering areas for growth, the urban area of Chelmsford, including the City Centre, forms a distinct growth area within defined boundaries.
- 1.6 This report provides an assessment of capacity for residential development in the City Centre and urban area (see plan at Appendix 1). It addresses the following key elements which make up the current and proposed allocations:
 - Allocated sites completed
 - Allocated sites to retain in the review of the adopted Local Plan
 - Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) submissions
 - Other potential sites.

The background data is included at Appendix 2.

2 Allocated sites completed

- 2.1 Development is complete on five sites in the adopted Local Plan, and partially completed on a sixth (GS1g), as follows:

Table 1

<i>LP Ref.</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Allocation</i>	<i>Revised</i>
CW1b	Peninsula	420	446
SGS1c	Former Royal Mail Premises	150	203
GS1g *	Private Car Park, Springfield Road	90	61
GS1j *	Car Park to the West of County Hotel	45	49
GS1o *	Church Hall Site, Woodhall Road	19	12
GS1u *	Rivermead	80	316 (136)**
TOTAL		804	907

* Small Sites of 1ha or less – see Section 7

**316 Student dwellings counted at a ratio of 2.31 as set out in the [Five Year Housing Supply Methodology](#), equivalent to 136 units.

2.2 This represents delivery of 907 units against allocations totalling 804 units.

2.3 *Recommendation:*

Remove the allocations listed in Table 1 from the Local Plan due to their completed status.

3 Allocated sites with a masterplan or planning permission

3.1 The number of units included in Table 2 relates to the site allocation figures in the adopted Local Plan, and indicates whether they have an approved Masterplan (MP) or planning permission (PP), with the revised number as permitted.

Table 2

<i>LP Ref.</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Allocation</i>	<i>PP/MP</i>	<i>Revised</i>
SGS1b	Former St Peter's College	185	MP	185 (no change)
SGS1f *	Eastwood House Car Park	100	PP	197
GS1q *	Rear of 17-37 Beach's Drive	14	PP	18
GS1s *	Garage Site and Land, Medway Close	10	PP	6
SGS2	West Chelmsford	800	MP	880
SGS3a	East Chelmsford (Manor Farm)	250	MP	360
SGS3c	East Chelmsford (S of Maldon Rd)	100	MP	109
SGS1d	East Chelmsford (N of Maldon Rd)	50	MP	65
SGS6	Chelmsford Garden Community	3,000	MP	6,250
TOTAL		4,509		8,070

* Small Sites of 1ha or less – see Section 7

3.2 These represent allocations of 4,509 units, but it is anticipated that collectively these sites will deliver in the region of 8,070 units.

3.3 *Recommendation:*

Retain the allocations listed in Table 2 within the Local Plan, noting their Masterplan or planning permission status and revised capacity. If the Masterplans or planning permissions are not implemented, site capacity will be considered on their individual merit.

4 Allocated sites which have not yet come forward

4.1 There are 17 sites which have yet to come forward for development, and the remaining part of one site which has been partially developed. Where a revised figure is shown this takes account of new information or additional land being promoted at an allocated site.

Table 3

<i>LP Ref.</i>	<i>Site</i>	<i>Allocation</i>	<i>Revised</i>
CW1a	Former Gas Works	250	450
CW1c	Lockside	130	
CW1d	Baddow Rd Car Park and Land to the East of the Car Park	190	
CW1e *	Travis Perkins	75	
CW1f *	Navigation Road Sites	35	
SGS1d	Riverside Ice and Leisure Land	125	150
SGS1e	Civic Centre Land	100	
GS1g *	Chelmsford Social Club	90	29
GS1h *	Ashby House Car Parks	80	
GS1i *	Rectory Lane Car Park West	75	
GS1k *	Former Chelmsford Electrical and Car Wash	40	
GS1l *	BT Telephone Exchange	30	
GS1m *	Rectory Lane Car Park East	25	23
GS1n *	Waterhouse Lane Depot and Nursery	20	
GS1p *	British Legion	15	
GS1r *	Garage Site, St Nazaire Road	12	
GS1t *	Car Park R/O Bellamy Court	10	
TOTAL		1,302	Additional: 162

* Small Sites of 1ha or less – see Section 7

4.2 These sites have a combined capacity of 1,464 units.

4.3 *Recommendation:*

Retain the allocations listed in Table 3 within the Local Plan, with the revised capacity where shown, to help meet the identified housing target.

5 SHELAA sites for consideration for new allocations

- 5.1 The purpose of the SHELAA is to identify additional sites that may be suitable for development in the Local Plan for the period to 2041. The first call for sites took place in late 2014 to identify available land for all types of uses, to establish what land could potentially be made available in the future. Further opportunities to submit sites for consideration have been offered on a rolling annual basis.
- 5.2 The most recent SHELAA assessment covers the period 2014 to 2022, and lists all submitted sites¹. It is not the purpose of the SHELAA to allocate land for future development, but the assessment outcomes are considered alongside other evidence base documents to enable the Council to make informed decisions of where to allocate future development. The assessment generates a potential capacity figure, and assesses sites on their suitability, availability, achievability, physical constraints, environmental impact, and compliance with existing and emerging planning policy.
- 5.3 In terms of assessment outputs, the categories are as follows:

Red	Site is contrary to national policy and/or faces significant constraints or adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated.
Amber	Site scores poorly against criteria, is contrary to local policy, and faces moderate constraints that would require mitigation.
Yellow	Site scores well against criteria but has some characteristics contrary to local policy. Site faces minor constraints that would require mitigation. Site is considered developable.
Green	Site scores highly against criteria and demonstrates compliance with national and local policy. Site faces minimal constraints and is considered deliverable

- 5.4 To accommodate future growth identified in the review of the adopted Local Plan, the City Council wants to continue to prioritise development on brownfield sites in the urban area, to minimise the amount of development on greenfield sites in the wider city area. However, very few of the sites submitted in the most recent call for sites were for brownfield land in the urban area.
- 5.5 The SHELAA capacity estimate makes a deduction for land use such as access, open space and existing site features, and applies a density depending on development typology, to arrive at an estimated number of units. Promoter information, alongside officer assessment, results in a revised capacity figure which is considered to be realistic.

¹ <https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-local-plan/call-for-sites-shelaa-and-parish-maps/>

- 5.6 The following sites have been submitted for consideration since the Local Plan was adopted:

Table 4

Location	Land Between Hoffmanns Way and Brook Street (Marriage's Mill)
Site area	1.53ha
SHELAA Ref	18SLAA16
Suitability rating	Amber
SHELAA Capacity	157
Background	Current employment designation
Key constraints	Adopted Local Plan designation as an employment site; ground conditions; heritage assets; impact on community facilities
Estimated capacity	100

Location	Former Kay Metzeler, New Street
Site area	1.44ha
SHELAA Ref	21SHELAA18
Suitability rating	Amber
SHELAA Capacity	147
Background	Pre-application discussions in 2018 proposed around 247 units. To achieve a wider mix of house sizes as set out in Policy DM1, larger units may be required which would reduce this number.
Key constraints	Adopted Local Plan designation as an employment site; ground conditions; impact on community facilities
Estimated capacity	185

Location	Granary Car Park, Victoria Road
Site area	0.74ha *
SHELAA Ref	21SHELAA63
Suitability rating	Amber
SHELAA Capacity	47
Background	Pre-application discussions proposed that around 79 units could be delivered. However the riverside location and other constraints indicate that a lower number would be achievable.
Key constraints	Flood risk; nearby wildlife site; impact on community facilities
Estimated capacity	60

Location	Meadows Shopping Centre and Meadows Surface Car Park, Can Bridge Way
Site area	3.29ha
SHELAA Ref	21SHELAA71
Suitability rating	Amber
SHELAA Capacity	295
Background	Proposals are for a mixed-use redevelopment including residential, retail and commercial space.
Key constraints	Flood risk; reduction of retail; impact on community facilities
Revised capacity	350

Location	Essex Police Headquarters, Kingston Avenue
Site area	4.73ha
SHELAA Ref	CFS267
Suitability rating	Amber
SHELAA Capacity	81
Background	Part of the wider site is being promoted for residential development, with a suggested range of 200 to 250 homes.
Key constraints	Loss of open space; access to the strategic road network; impact on community facilities
Revised capacity	200

Location	Coval Lane Car Park
Site area	0.40ha *
SHELAA Ref	TBC
Suitability rating	TBC (Submitted to SHELAA in 2023)
SHELAA Capacity	79
Background	Council owned land
Key constraints	Impact on community facilities; established landscaping for retention
Revised capacity	40

Location	Glebe Road Car Park
Site area	0.11ha *
SHELAA Ref	TBC
Suitability rating	TBC (Submitted to SHELAA in 2023)
SHELAA Capacity	12
Background	Council owned land
Key constraints	Impact on community facilities
Revised capacity	12

* Small Sites of 1ha or less – see Section 7

5.7 *Recommendations:*

Allocate the following sites:

Land between Hoffmanns Way and Brook Street (Marriages Mill) – 100 homes

Kay Metzeler – 185 homes

Granary Car Park – 60 homes

Meadows Centre/Island Car Park – 350 homes

Coval Lane Car Park – 40 homes

Glebe Road Car Park – 12 homes

Do not allocate the following site:

Essex Police Headquarters – due to the site's current Local Plan designation as public open space. Due to its location within the urban area, if this issue can be resolved development may come forward as a windfall site.

6 Consideration of higher density on allocated sites

- 6.1 Some allocated sites may be able to achieve a higher number of units, by raising the density to 100 or 140dph. This is likely to mean increasing the building height. The following sites have been considered for this approach:

Table 5

Name	Allocation (units)	At 100dph	At 140dph
Lockside	130 at 58dph	180	250
Travis Perkins	75 at 85dph	88	125
Fairfield Road	100 at 66dph	150	270

- 6.2 Using the density figure of 100dph could generate an additional 113 units; using the higher density figure of 140dph could generate an additional 340 units. This could be achieved through revising the figures in the Preferred Options document for these allocated sites.
- 6.3 However, the costs associated with constructing taller buildings are likely to impact on viability, which could mean this approach is not appropriate. This position is outlined in Section 10 of the Chelmsford Local Plan Viability Study Update 2023.²
- 6.4 *Recommendation:*
Do not raise the density on allocated sites.

7 Allocating Small Sites

- 7.1 The NPPF requires councils to identify land in local plans to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement figure on sites no larger than one hectare. Allocated small sites can often be built out relatively quickly, boosting the supply

² www.chelmsford.gov.uk/media/w0yjkldk/v001-chelmsford-local-plan-viability-update-2023.pdf

of homes early in the plan period, and enabling smaller development companies to build locally.

- 7.2 There are 21 small sites allocated in the Local Plan. Some have been built (261 homes) and others are yet to come forward (608 homes), providing a total of 869 new homes.
- 7.3 Within the City Centre and urban area, 18 small sites have been submitted for consideration to the SHELAA. Of these, six are already among the allocated sites, and three are recommended for allocation. Five sites are unsuitable for development due to their location in the Green Belt or Green Wedge. The remainder are unsuitable for development due to not meeting other Local Plan policies on issues such as access. Due to their location within the urban area, if these issues can be resolved they may come forward as windfall sites.
- 7.4 Outside the City Centre and urban area there are 91 small sites promoted for development ranging from 0.01ha to 0.99ha.
- 7.5 All the submitted sites have been subject to the SHELAA assessment. Of these, 42 are unsuitable for development due to their location in the Green Belt or Green Wedge.
- 7.6 The remainder have further been assessed against the preferred spatial approach. These are considered to be unsuitable for development due to not meeting other Local Plan policies on a wide range of issues, being in an unsustainable location, being distant from defined settlements, or other factors including topology.
The full SHELAA assessment³ can be viewed on the Council's website.
- 7.7 *Recommendation:*
Do not allocate any additional promoted small sites of 1 ha or less in the City Centre and Urban Area.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 Remove the allocations (Table 1) from the Local Plan due to their completed status.
- 8.2 Retain the allocations (Table 2) within the Local Plan, noting their masterplan or planning permission status. If the masterplans or planning permissions are not implemented, site capacity will be considered on their individual merit.
- 8.3 Retain the allocations (Table 3) within the Local Plan, to help meet the identified housing target.

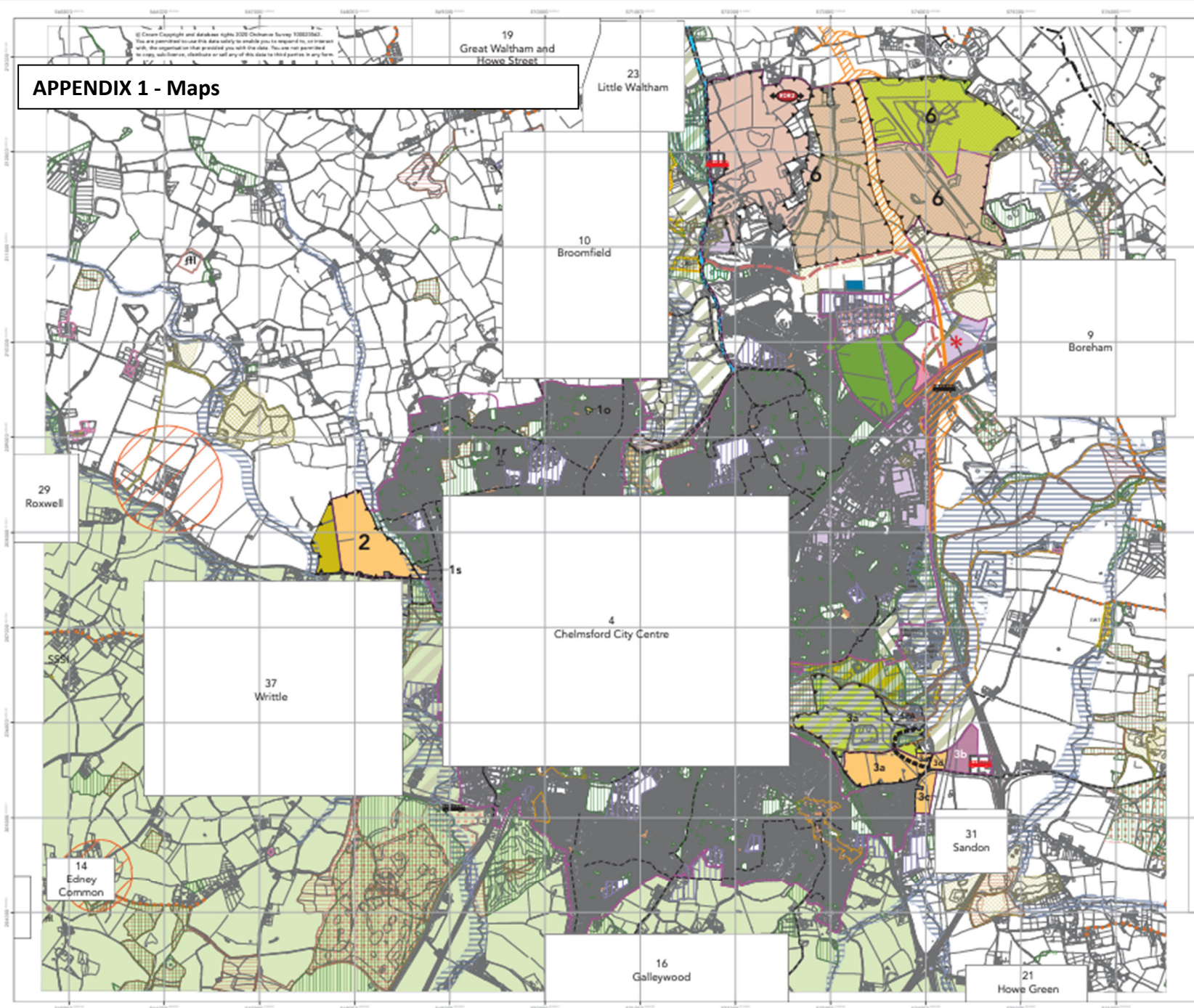
³ <https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-local-plan/call-for-sites-shelaa-and-parish-maps/>

- 8.4 Allocate the following sites (Table 4):
Land at Brook Street (Marriages) – 100 homes
Former Kay Metzeler – 185 homes
Granary Car Park – 60 homes
Meadows Centre/Island Car Park – 350 homes
Coval Lane Car Park – 40 homes
Glebe Road Car Park – 12 homes
- 8.5 Do not allocate Essex Police Headquarters (Table 4) due to the site's current Local Plan designation as public open space. Due to its location within the urban area, if this issue can be resolved development may come forward as a windfall site.
- 8.6 Do not raise the density on allocated sites (Table 5).
- 8.7 Do not allocate any additional promoted small sites of 1 ha or less in the City Centre or urban area. (Section 7).

9 Next steps

- 9.1 This report forms part of the evidence base for the Local Plan Review – Preferred Options. This study been used to help select sites for allocation in the Preferred Options document. Capacity estimates have, in most cases, been rounded for inclusion in that document.
- 9.2 Officers will continue to update background data as new information on site availability or clarity on site area and capacity emerges.

APPENDIX 1 - Maps



3 Chelmsford Urban Area

The Policies Map shows the spatial definition of policies. It includes Policy Areas proposed by the Chelmsford Local Plan.

Neighbourhood Plans are currently under preparation within this map area. Please see separate plan showing the extent of the current Designated Neighbourhood Areas.

For the application of relevant policies within the Local Plan, the designation of the Rural Area includes all those areas outside of Urban Areas, Defined Settlement Boundaries, Green Belt and specific allocations or Policy Areas. The Rural Area has no notation to appear as 'white land' on the Policies Map and its insets.

Important Note

This Policies Map shows areas at a higher risk of flooding. Areas at a higher risk from flooding are defined and regularly updated by the Environment Agency.

For further details please see the flood maps published on the Environment Agency's website at:

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

* Beaulieu Park Employment Site

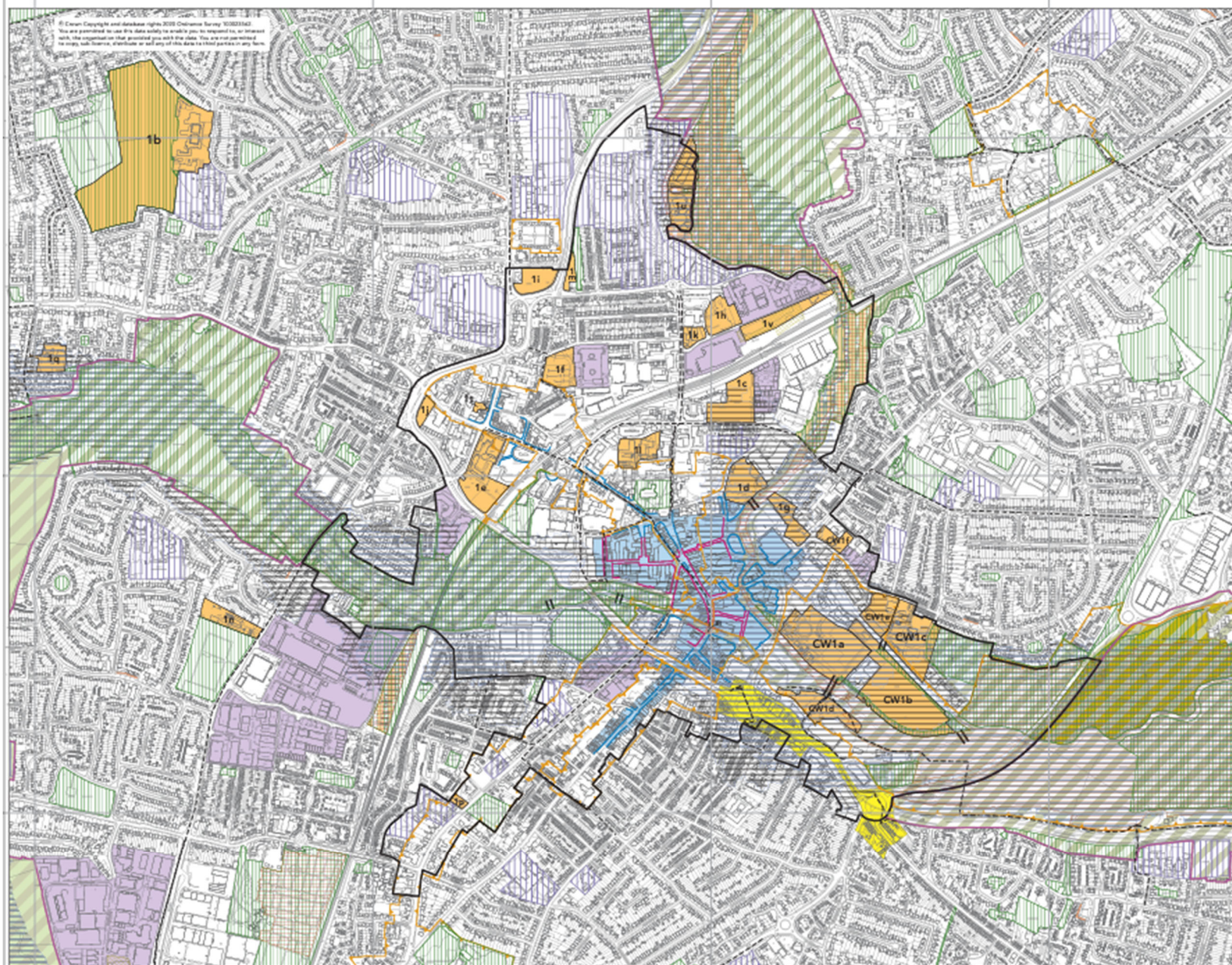
The precise boundary will be confirmed through the detailed design process in relation to Chelmsford North East Bypass and the Radial Distributor Road.



Spatial Planning Services
Directorate for Sustainable Communities

Chelmsford City Council
Civic Centre
Duke Street
Chelmsford
CM1 1JE

Telephone 01245 666330
planning.policy@chelmsford.gov.uk
www.chelmsford.gov.uk



APPENDIX 2 – Housing Capacity in Chelmsford City Centre and Urban Area

Table 1	2020 adopted Local Plan allocated sites where development has been completed	907
Table 2	2020 adopted Local Plan allocated sites with a Masterplan or planning permission	8,070
Table 3	2020 adopted Local Plan allocated sites where development is yet to come forwards	1,464
Table 4	Promoted sites for new allocations in the review of the Local Plan	747
Table 5	Potential for higher density	Allocation: 305 At 100dph: 418 At 140dph: 645

Density figures are estimated, and will be further informed by detailed masterplanning which will take account of topography, utilities, open space, land for SuDS etc. Where appropriate, density calculations take account of the relevant Site Typology as set out in the [Local Plan SHLAA report](#), where a percentage of land is netted off to take account of site factors such as access, parking, open space etc.

Table 1 – Development Completed

Ref	Name	Area (ha)	Units delivered	Units allocated	Status
CW1b	Peninsula	4.01	446	420	Development complete (16/01630/FUL)
SGS1c	Former Royal Mail Premises, Victoria Road	1.10	203	150	Development complete (18/00840/FUL)
GS1g (PART OF)	Chelmsford Social Club and Private Car Park, 55 Springfield Road	0.25*	61	90	Development complete (19/00842/FUL) (part of site)
GS1j	Car Park to the West of County Hotel, Rainsford Road	0.23*	49	45	Development complete (17/01899/FUL)
GS1o	Church Hall Site, Woodhall Road	0.37*	12	19	Development complete (19/01579/FUL)
GS1u	Rivermead, Bishop Hall Lane	0.92*	136 ^	80	Development complete (18/01326/FUL) ^ Student accommodation at a ratio of 2.31 as set out in the Five Year Housing Supply Methodology
TOTAL			907	804	

* Small sites no larger than 1 hectare

Table 2 – Sites with Masterplan or planning permission

Ref	Name	Area (ha)	Units consented	Allocation	Status
SGS1b	Former St Peter's College, Fox Crescent	11.19	185	185	Masterplan approved in June 2022 for approximately 185 new homes
SGS1f	Eastwood House Car Park, Glebe Road	0.90*	197	100	Planning application approved: 19/01618/FUL
GS1q	Rear of 17-37 Beach's Drive	0.67*	18	14	Planning application approved: 23/00116/FUL
GS1s	Garage Site and Land, Medway Close	0.30*	6	10	Planning application approved: 23/00195/FUL
SGS2	West Chelmsford	45.64	880	800	West Chelmsford Masterplan approved in February 2021 Planning application submitted: 21/01545/OUT
SGS3a	East Chelmsford (Manor Farm)	27.45	360	250	East Chelmsford (Manor Farm) Masterplan approved in November 2021 Planning applications submitted: 22/01732/FUL, 22/01732/OUT
SGS3c	East Chelmsford - Land South of Maldon Road	7.24	109	100	East Chelmsford (Maldon Road) Masterplan approved in June 2021 Planning applications submitted: 22/00916/FUL, 22/0916/OUT
SGS3d	East Chelmsford - Land North of Maldon Road (Residential)	2.83	65	50	East Chelmsford (Maldon Road) Masterplan approved in June 2021 Planning applications submitted: 22/00916/FUL, 22/00916/OUT
SGS6	Chelmsford Garden Community	355.73	6,250	3,000	Masterplan approved in December 2022 Planning applications submitted: 22/01950/FUL, 22/01950/OUT, 23/00124/FUL, 23/00124/OUT
TOTAL			8,070	4,509	

* Small sites no larger than 1 hectare

Table 3 – Allocated sites which not yet come forward

Ref	Name	Area (ha)	Units	Status
CW1a	Former Gas Works	3.29	450	Two gas holders (decommissioned 2009) and structures dismantled by National Grid Relocation of High Pressure Gas Reduction Station approved. Consequently more land is available for an additional 200 units.
CW1c	Lockside	2.25	130	CCC owns the majority of the site. Informal planning guidance prepared in 2017.
CW1d	Baddow Road Car Park & land to the east	1.15	190	Work commenced on new access road and bridge in 2023; bridge funded by HIF grant and Peninsula developer.
CW1e	Travis Perkins, Navigation Road, Chelmsford	0.88*	75	Currently in use as timber yard. Part of wider site (0.4ha) released and developed for 48 apartments (Dec 2013).
CW1f	Navigation Road Sites, Chelmsford	0.42*	35	Private car park and underused buildings; regeneration opportunity for gateway site.
SGS1d	Riverside Ice & Leisure Land, Victoria Road	1.13	150	Leisure Centre complex completed and opened in 2019. Allocation site adjoins leisure facility; residential development will follow completion of leisure centre work.
SGS1e	Civic Centre Land, Fairfield Road	1.93	100	Longer term plan pending rationalisation of existing building uses and parking areas.
GS1g	Chelmsford Social Club and Private Car Park, 55 Springfield Road	0.74*	29	Application approved for 61 apartments and parking (car park area only).
GS1h	Ashby House Car Parks, New Street	0.85*	80	Private car parking.
GS1i	Rectory Lane Car Park West	0.73*	75	Surface car parking. Informal planning guidance prepared in 2017.
GS1k	Former Chelmsford Electrical and Car Wash, Brook Street	0.32*	40	Application (22/02263/FUL) for 41 apartments, commercial at ground floor, ongoing
GS1l	BT Telephone Exchange, Cottage Place	0.97*	30	Longer term plan pending rationalisation of existing building uses. Informal planning guidance prepared in 2017.

Ref	Name	Area (ha)	Units	Status
GS1m	Rectory Lane Car Park East	0.23*	23	Surface car parking. Informal planning guidance prepared in 2017.
GS1n	Waterhouse Lane Depot & Nursery	0.85*	20	Progress pending provision of alternative site for nursery/depot.
GS1p	British Legion, New London Road	0.12*	15	In use as British Legion Hall. Informal discussions in 2018.
GS1r	Garage Site, St Nazaire Road	0.24*	12	Former garage court of 53 lock-up garages. Pending resolution of ownership.
GS1t	Car Park r/o Bellamy Court, Broomfield Road	0.08*	10	Currently in use for private parking.
TOTAL			1,464	

* Small sites no larger than 1 hectare

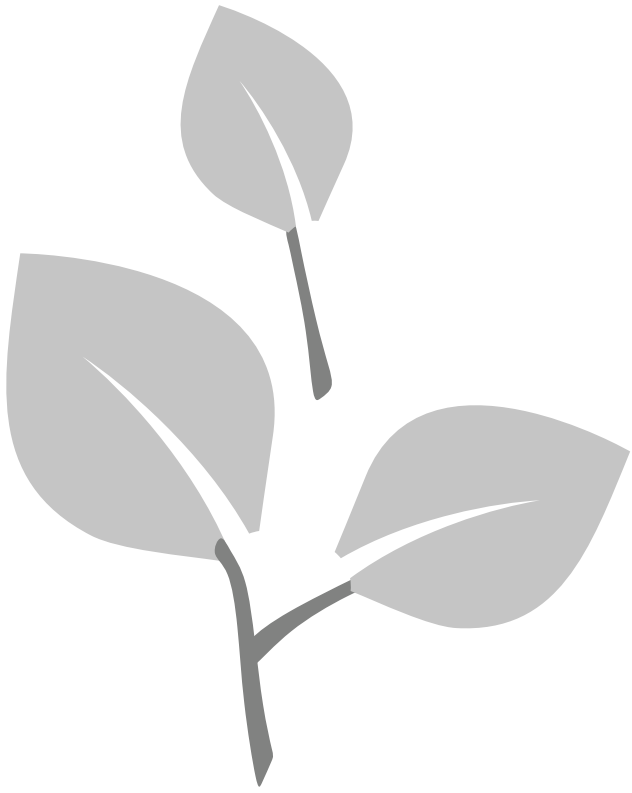
Table 4 – Promoted sites for new allocations in the review of the Local Plan

Ref	Name	Area (ha)	SHELAA Capacity	SHELAA Ref	Revised capacity
	Land at Brook Street (Marriage's Mill)	1.53	157	SHELAA Ref: 18SLAA16	100
	Kay Metzeler	1.44	147	SHELAA Ref: 21SHELAA18	185
	Granary Car Park	0.74*	47	SHELAA Ref: 21SHELAA63	60
	Meadows Shopping Centre and Meadows Surface Car Park	3.29	295	SHELAA Ref: 21SHELAA71	350
	Police HQ	4.73	81	SHELAA Ref: CFS267	No allocation
	Coval Lane Car Park	0.40*	79	-	40
	Glebe Road Car Park	0.11*	12	-	12
TOTAL			818		747

* Small sites no larger than 1 hectare

Table 5 – Potential for higher density

Ref	Name	Allocation (units)	At 100dph	At 140dph
CW1c	Lockside	130 at 58dph	180	250
CW1e	Travis Perkins	75 at 85dph	88	125
SGS1e	Fairfield Road	100 at 66dph	150	270
	TOTAL	305	418	645



This publication is available in alternative formats including large print, audio and other languages

Please call 01245 606330

Spatial Planning Services
Directorate for Sustainable Communities
Chelmsford City Council
Civic Centre
Duke Street
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 1JE

Telephone 01245 606330
planning.policy@chelmsford.gov.uk
www.chelmsford.gov.uk

Document published by
Planning and Housing Policy
© Copyright Chelmsford City Council

