

Integrated Impact Assessment of the Review of the Adopted Local Plan: Focused Consultation Additional Sites (Regulation 19) Document

Chelmsford City Council needs to make sure that the Review of its Adopted Local Plan contributes to the sustainable development of Chelmsford's communities, economy and the natural and built environments.

To meet this requirement, and to ensure sustainability is integrated into the Local Plan, independent consultants WSP carried out an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA Addendum) of the Focused Consultation Additional Sites (Regulation 19) Document (the Additional Sites Document).

What is an Integrated Impact Assessment?

An Integrated Impact Assessment combines into a single framework five different strands of assessment: Sustainability Appraisal (SA), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Health Impact Assessment (HIA), Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) in order to assess the socio-economic and environmental effects of the Local Plan. Where negative effects are identified, measures will be proposed to avoid, minimise or mitigate (compensate for) such effects. Where any positive effects are identified, measures will be considered that could enhance such effects.



An Integrated Impact Assessment is not a one-off exercise. It is ongoing and will help the Council make important decisions about how Chelmsford should change in the future.

This leaflet provides a summary of the full IIA Addendum, which can be viewed at:
www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review

Changes to the Context of the Local Plan Review

Following the conclusion of the Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation in March 2025, several significant events have taken place, these being:

- Three strategic sites in the Pre-Submission Local Plan, which were expected to contribute to housing delivery in the next five years, have either stalled or have been significantly delayed.
- The reassessment and re-profiling of the Council's housing land supply (August 2025) shows that other development sites will not be built as quickly as originally envisaged in the next five years.
- As the adopted Local Plan became more than five years old on 27 May 2025 the housing need figure is out of date which means for decision-making on current planning applications the Council currently does not have 5 years of deliverable housing supply.
- The Government announced the cancellation of the A12 Chelmsford to A120 Widening Scheme which had planning permission through a Development Consent Order (DCO).

Consequently, the Council is not currently able to demonstrate a 5 Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS) for decision-making. Taking into account the changes above, the reassessment and re-profiling of the Council's housing land supply indicates that for decision making on current planning applications there is a projected 3.88 years of housing supply, rather than the five needed.

Purpose of the IIA Addendum

This Addendum to the Pre-Submission IIA and has been produced to accompany the Focused Consultation Additional Sites (Regulation 19) Document produced by Chelmsford City Council. In light of changed circumstances for preparation of the Local Plan (described above), the City Council is undertaking a focused consultation seeking representations on additional site allocations for inclusion within the review of the Local Plan to ensure that sufficient land is identified. The additional sites comprise 11 new housing sites, three expanded housing sites and one expanded employment site.

The Integrated Impact Assessment Addendum has considered the effects of the Additional Sites Document on:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| ⌘ biodiversity and geodiversity | ⌘ water |
| ⌘ housing | ⌘ flood risk and coastal erosion |
| ⌘ the economy, skills and employment | ⌘ air quality |
| ⌘ sustainable living and revitalisation | ⌘ climate change |
| ⌘ health and wellbeing | ⌘ waste and natural resources |
| ⌘ transport | ⌘ cultural heritage |
| ⌘ land use and soils | ⌘ landscape and townscape |

Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives

To demonstrate a 5YHLS, the key choices to address the residual need are:

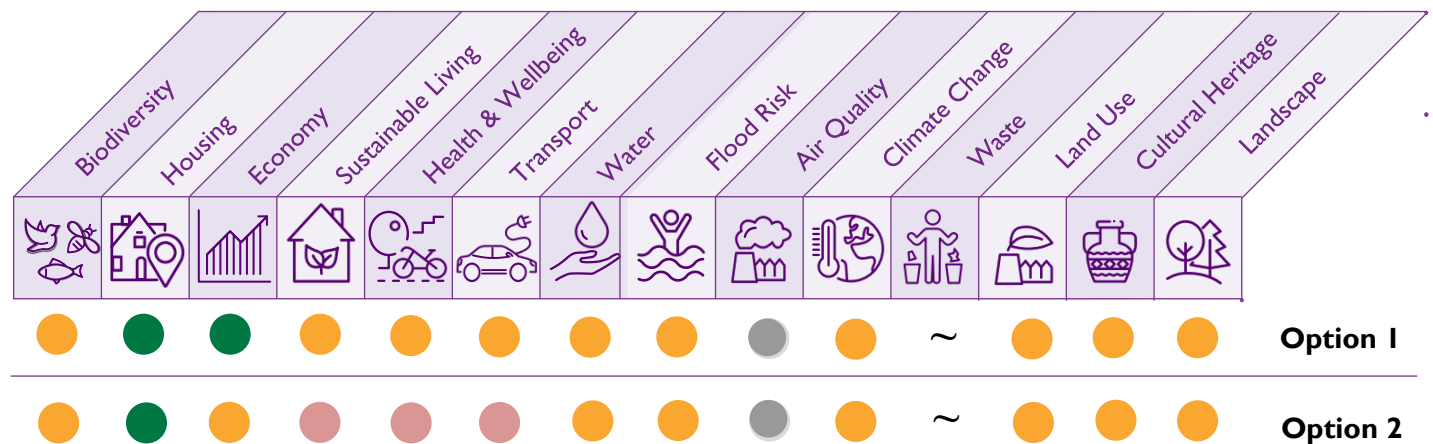
- **Option 1:** Allocate a number of additional small sites and increase capacity at some existing small allocations, that are able to deliver the required number of homes early in the plan period.
- **Option 2:** Allocate an additional large strategic site or sites (assume a maximum of two) that is/are able to deliver the required number of homes early in the plan period. The Local Plan defines a strategic site as comprising 100 dwellings or more, but these allocations would need to be in order of 500 to 1,000 dwellings.

What are the Findings?

The following likely effects associated with the reasonable alternatives have been identified and assessed. Where negative effects have been identified, these might be mitigated through the application of policy.

- Significant positive effect
- Minor positive effect
- Neutral effect
- Mixed positive / negative effect
- Minor negative effect
- Significant negative effect
- ~ No clear relationship

Options for Addressing Residual Housing Need



Option 1 is selected as the preferred approach to trying to meet the 5YHLS because:

- It complies well with the Local Plan's Strategic Priorities, Vision, Spatial Principles.
- It is in accordance with the settlement hierarchy.
- It performs well in respect of housing and economy and employment, and relatively well in respect of sustainable living and revitalisation, health and wellbeing, and transport.
- It makes the best use of existing and proposed infrastructure capacity.
- It includes employment sites.
- Sites are expected to be delivered within the first five years of the Plan.

Option 2 is rejected because:

- It deviates from the Local Plan's Strategic Priorities, Vision, Spatial Principles.
- It is not in accordance with the settlement hierarchy.
- It performs relatively poorly in respect of sustainable living, health & wellbeing and transport.
- Transport and other infrastructure requirements are unproven.
- Deliverability cannot be relied upon within the first five years of the Plan, due to being part of larger development areas.

Assessment of additional sites

The assessment of additional sites demonstrates a range of potential sustainability effects. It identifies issues such as greenfield land-take and to a lesser extent biodiversity, landscape and cultural heritage issues to be addressed through detailed site investigation and potential mitigation. It nevertheless presents a broadly positive or neutral assessment of performance.

Assessment of Local Plan Strategic Policies and Cumulative Effects

The proposed amendments to Strategic Policy S6 - Housing and Employment Requirements, and Strategic Policy S7 - the Spatial Strategy are considered to be minor in nature (see the Additional Sites Document) and reflect the need to adjust the approach to short-term housing delivery. Consequently, no changes to the assessment presented in the Pre-Submission IIA have been identified.

The proposed new and expanded sites do not change the overall assessment of cumulative effects in the Pre-Submission IIA (see Chapter 7) reflecting the fact that they are part of the existing spatial strategy. In addition, both individually and collectively, they are not of a scale to affect specific aspects of the plan (for example in respect of biodiversity or resource use).

Habitats Regulations Assessment Report Addendum

An HRA Report Addendum is included within the IIA Addendum to consider the proposed changes arising from the publication of the Additional Sites Document. The Addendum found that the proposed changes to the Local Plan do not affect the findings of the previous HRA work (presented in Appendix N of the Pre-Submission IIA Report). The Local Plan will not have adverse effects on any European sites either alone or in combination.

Health Impact Assessment, Equalities Impact Assessment

The proposed changes arising from the Additional Sites Document are not considered to require any changes to be made to the HIA and EqIA. This reflects the proposed continuation of the existing spatial strategy which was found to have beneficial effects in respect of HIA and EqIA, as well as the limited scale of the proposed allocations (comprising small scale site extensions and new sites) which neither individually nor together will influence the findings of these assessments.

This Consultation: How to Give Us Your Views

We would welcome your views on any aspect of the IIA Addendum. In particular, we would like to hear your views as to whether the effects which are predicted are likely and whether there are any significant effects which have not been considered.

Please provide your comments by 4pm on 8th January 2026.

The Council encourages people to view the consultation documents and submit comments via its consultation portal at: www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planningpolicyconsult

Alternatively, comments can be sent:

- **By email** – planning.policy@chelmsford.gov.uk
- **By post** – Spatial Planning Services, Chelmsford City Council, Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford, CMI IJE

Please note we are unable to accept anonymous representations and any comments received after the closing date cannot be accepted.

Full details of how to make comments can be found in the Consultation Statement available at: www.chelmsford.gov.uk/as-sor

For further information visit www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review