

Cabinet Agenda

18 October 2022 at 7pm

Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Chelmsford

Membership

Councillor S J Robinson (Chair and Leader)
Councillor M C Goldman (Connected Chelmsford
and Deputy Leader)

and Councillors

C K Davidson (Fairer Chelmsford)
M J Mackrory (Sustainable Development)
R J Moore (Greener and Safer Chelmsford)

Local people are welcome to attend this meeting remotely, where your elected Councillors take decisions affecting YOU and your City.

There is also an opportunity to ask your Councillors questions or make a statement. These have to be submitted in advance and details are on the agenda page. If you would like to find out more, please telephone Brian Mayfield in the Democracy Team on Chelmsford (01245) 606923 email brian.mayfield@chelmsford.gov.uk

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THE CABINET

18 October 2022

AGENDA

PART 1 – Items to be considered when the public are likely to be present

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

All Members must disclose any interests they know they have in items of business on the meeting's agenda and that they must do so at this point on the agenda or as soon as they become aware of the interest. If the interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest they are also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting.

3. Minutes and Decisions Called in

Minutes of meeting on 12 July 2022. No decisions at that meeting were called in.

4. Public Questions

Any member of the public may ask a question or make a statement at this point in the meeting. Each person has two minutes and a maximum of 20 minutes is allotted to public questions/statements, which must be about matters for which the Cabinet is responsible. The Chair may disallow a question if it is offensive, substantially the same as another question or requires disclosure of exempt or confidential information. If the question cannot be answered at the meeting a written response will be provided after the meeting.

Any member of the public who wishes to submit a question or statement to this meeting should email it to committees@chelmsford.gov.uk at least 24 hours before the start time of the meeting. All valid questions and statements will be published with the agenda on the website at least six hours before the start time and will be responded to at the meeting. Those who have submitted a valid question or statement will be entitled to put it in person at the meeting.

5. Members' Questions

To receive any questions or statements from councillors not members of the Cabinet on matters for which the Cabinet is responsible.

6. Sustainable Development Items

6.1 Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register – Consultation Feedback and Implementation of Locality Test

6.2 Section 106 Spending Plan

7. Greener and Safer Chelmsford Item

Health and Wellbeing Plan Update

8. Fairer Chelmsford Items

8.1 Gateway to Homechoice Sub-Regional Allocations Scheme

8.2 Financial Update Report
(Report to follow)

9. Urgent Business

To consider any other matter which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency and which does not constitute a key decision.

10. Reports to Council

The officers will advise on those decisions of the Cabinet which must be the subject of recommendation to the Council.

PART 2 (Exempt Item)

To consider whether to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of the following matters, which contain exempt information within the category of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act indicated:

11. Sustainable Development Item

Grant Funding Affordable Housing Programme

Category: Paragraph 3

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information)

Public interest statement: It is not in the public interest to release details of this report at present, on the grounds that the report contains financial information from a third party that is commercially sensitive and to disclose it could be detrimental to them

MINUTES OF CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL CABINET

on 12 July 2022 at 7.00pm

Present:

Cabinet Members

Councillor S Robinson, Leader of the Council (Chair)
Councillor M Goldman, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Connected Chelmsford
Councillor C Davidson, Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford
Councillor M Mackrory, Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development
Councillor R Moore, Cabinet Member for Greener and Safer Chelmsford

Opposition Spokespersons

Councillors K Bentley, M Steel, A Thorpe-Apps and R T Whitehead

Also present: Councillors A Davidson, R Massey, J Raven and A Sosin

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N Chambers, R Gisby, R Hyland, I Roberts and R Poulter, Opposition Spokespersons.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members of the Cabinet were reminded to declare at the appropriate time any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in any of the items of business on the meeting's agenda.

3. Minutes and Decisions Called-in

The minutes of the meeting on 7 June 2022 were confirmed as a correct record. No decisions at that meeting had been called in.

4. Public Questions

A member of the public referred to the lack of management of grassed areas in the Beaulieu area and the concerns of residents about the possibility of fire and other health and safety

risks associated with untended grass and other vegetation. The Cabinet was asked whether an assessment of those risks had been carried out.

The Cabinet Member of Greener and Safer Chelmsford said that this issue had been discussed recently with Springfield Parish Council and an assurance given that all areas the subject of the “no mowing” policy had been fully risk-assessed and the results were available on request. The policy was designed to help with biodiversity but some areas continued to be cut to enable ease of movement and preserve sightlines. It was the view of the Cabinet Member that the policy had been a success and it was hoped that local residents would work with the Council to help it remain so whilst protecting their health, safety and free movement in the areas concerned.

In response to a related question, the Cabinet was informed that if the Council adopted areas of public open space, such as the Deer Park in Beaulieu which was owned by Countryside, they would be managed by the Council on behalf of the landowner.

5. Members' Questions

Councillors who were not members of the Cabinet asked the following questions:

- (a) Councillor R Whitehead, who referred to the concerns of residents of the Galleywood area, expressed to their ward councillors, about overgrown footpaths in the area and the resulting problems associated with the “no mowing” policy referred to earlier in the meeting. He argued that rather than have a blanket policy which assumed that no grass and vegetation in an area would be cut back, the Council should follow an exceptions rule where certain areas, perhaps identified by parish councils, were routinely cut and managed to preserve, for example, sightlines at junctions and ease of movement along footpaths.

The Cabinet was told that Galleywood Common had been the subject of a successful haymaking regime for many years. Issues with overgrown verges at junctions in the area had been addressed. More generally, the City Council cut highway verges under a contract with Essex County Council which specified one and a half cuts per year and also required that junction sightlines be protected at all times. If any were missed or sightlines were thought not to be adequate, they should be reported to Public Places. The Cabinet Member added that this was the first year of the “no mow” policy and there had been clear benefits for flora and fauna, but any concerns about particular sites should be reported.

- (b) Councillor M Steel on whether the Policy Board on 14 July could approve the Council’s consultation response to National Grid’s GREEN project without reference to another Council body.

It was confirmed that this was the case.

- (c) Councillor R Massey on why Ukrainian refugees settled in Chelmsford were allowed free use of the Council’s swimming facilities when Afghan refugees were not.

The Cabinet Member for Greener and Safer Chelmsford said that she was looking into this issue and would respond to Councillor Massey.

- (d) Councillor A Sosin on whether there were any plans for housing or other development on the site of Sandford Mill.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development referred to an action point in the report on Chelmsford's Waterways and Rivers at item 7 on the agenda:

"Review future use of Sandford Mill and surrounding land in accordance with its Special Policy Area [SPA5] notation in the adopted Chelmsford Local Plan – for example introduce commercial use of the Engine House with improved visitor facilities providing the focus for the wider recreational use of the Chelmer East Green Wedge identified in the adopted Local Plan – possibly local natural resource centre on the former water works site - so that it can operate as an all-year-round destination. Linked to the master plan for East Chelmsford Strategic Growth Area which should provide some of the supporting infrastructure [new access road, car park and contribution to a new 'visitor centre'] as part of planning obligations for the wider development".

The development potential of the Sandford Mill site itself was being examined by a project group reporting to the Waterways Working Group. Initial workshop sessions were held in 2019 and 2020. A site appraisal examining the development opportunities had been undertaken by external property consultants, but further work was temporarily on hold due to other priorities arising from the Covid-19 outbreak. This would also allow the extent of the planning obligations to be confirmed.

The Cabinet Member for Connected Chelmsford emphasised that the site's development potential did not mean its potential for housing development. Sandford Mill was a valuable asset that could have leisure, cultural or educational uses and it was on those uses that its development potential would focus.

- (e) Councillor A Sosin on whether the Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) requirements for the developments east of Chelmsford would be adequate for extreme rainfall which could potentially add to flooding at Sandford Mill cottages etc, and whether this would be considered as part of the planning application for the development.

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development said that the sites in East Chelmsford where housing was being proposed were located within the Environment Agency Flood Risk Zone 1 which was the lowest risk from fluvial (river) flooding. The Local Plan was accompanied by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment prepared in consultation with the Environment Agency to inform where new development could be located.

Policy DM18 of the Chelmsford Local Plan required the provision of sustainable drainage systems for the disposal of surface water within and leading from major development sites. The principal method that should be used was SuDS which both developers for East Chelmsford (Hopkins Homes and Redrow Homes) had shown in principle in their approved masterplans. SuDS features were designed to not only mitigate the impact of development itself but factor in future climate change when working out the volumes of future water needing to be managed. The detail of SuDS would need to be approved by Essex County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority

(LLFA). As a statutory consultee, the LLFA had been consulted as part of the current planning application submitted by Redrow Homes for sites 3b, 3c and 3d.

(7.08pm to 7.25pm)

6.1 Treasury Management Outturn 2021/22 (Fairer Chelmsford)

Declarations of interest:

None.

Summary:

The report to the meeting detailed the findings of the annual review of the Council's Treasury Management function and the rates of return on investments in 2020-21.

Options:

The report was factual and no options were presented.

Discussion

In presenting the report, the Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford thanked officers for the professional way in which the Council's finances were managed and the Treasury and Risk Management Sub-Committee for overseeing treasury management activities.

RESOLVED that the Treasury Management Outturn report for 2021/22 be noted and that the Council be recommended to endorse it.

(7.25pm to 7.27pm)

6.2 Capital Programme Update and Provisional Outturn 2021/22 (Fairer Chelmsford)

Declarations of Interest:

None

Summary:

The report to the meeting detailed capital expenditure incurred in 2021/22 and the resources used to finance it; set out variations to approved capital schemes and the Asset Replacement Programme; and presented a budget for asset replacements in 2022/23.

Options:

Approve or revise the proposals for the replacement of assets in 2022/23.

Preferred Option and Reasons:

The capital programme and the amendments to it ensured that it included the resources necessary to support the Council's priorities and objectives.

Discussion:

The Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford said that the programme enabled the Council to continue to deliver all the services that residents depended on and reflected its ambitious plans:

- To modernise the theatres
- To develop various sites owned, both providing more much-needed affordable housing and creating new communities of which Chelmsford could be proud
- To invest in decent temporary homes, at lower cost, for families that have found themselves homeless
- To invest in Hylands House so that it could offer an even better experience to visitors
- To ensure the Council could deliver on its promise to plant 175,000 trees over 10 years
- To make progress towards the target of making the City Council net-zero carbon by 2030. The Cabinet Member was proud that the Council was set out on a path to convert its vehicle fleet to reduce and ultimately eliminate reliance on fossil fuels. All vehicles being purchased were now electric or other ultra-low-emission such as hydrogen, except where genuine operational constraints make these unsuitable or they were not available.

As well as updating the costs of the existing programme, there are two new schemes relating to the Army & Navy:

- The City Council had been asked to provide £4m towards the estimated £67m cost of the main scheme. The Government was expected to fund most of this cost.
- The junction improvements, enhancements to the Park & Rides and better options for cycling and walking would benefit residents and were long overdue. Essex County Council would work with the City Council to make more improvements for cycling and walking, and £1.5m of contributions from developers were allocated for this.

The two schemes were linked and the Council's contribution to the first was conditional on Essex County Council working with it on the second.

In response to a question, the Cabinet was informed that the Council was confident that it would draw down by March 2023 the remainder of the grant from the Housing Infrastructure Fund for Stage 1 of the Chelmer Waterside Infrastructure works.

Replying to an enquiry about the effect of inflation on proposed schemes in the capital programme, the Cabinet Member said that was an unknown at present and could only be determined at the time they were ready to proceed and the business cases for them finalised. It was inevitable, however, that it would affect the cost of projects.

On a question about the provision in the capital programme for the acquisition of land for a new cemetery and crematorium, the Cabinet was informed that the Council had a statutory obligation to provide a cemetery and crematorium service and it was expected that land would be purchased to enable that service to continue to be delivered. The cost of doing so

at the relevant time would need to be looked at as part of the business case for the project but that did not imply that the scheme would not go ahead.

RESOLVED that the following be approved:

the proposed Asset Replacement Programme for 2022/23, the increase in scheme costs £6k, the rephasing of spend from 2021/22 of £271k and proposals for new items £43k as shown in Appendix 3 and detailed in paragraph 4.2 of the report to the meeting.

RECOMMENDED to the Council that it:

1. approve the latest proposed budgets for Capital Schemes, an increase of £4.419m, shown in Appendix 1 and detailed in paragraph 3.1;
2. approve budgets for two new schemes, detailed in paragraph 3.5:
 - Army and Navy Sustainable Transport package, capped at £4m;
 - East Chelmsford Cycling and Walking Connectivity, capped at £1.5m;
3. note the outturn on the 2021/22 Asset Replacement Programme £3.849m, shown in Appendix 3 and detailed in paragraph 4.1;
4. note the Asset Replacement Programme for 2022/23, £6.007m as shown in Appendix 3 and detailed in paragraph 4.2;
5. note the proposed Asset Replacement programme deferred approved schemes from 2022/23 to 2023/24, £0.154m, shown in Appendix 3 and detailed in paragraph 4.2; and
6. note the method of funding the capital expenditure incurred in 2021/22, as set out in the table in paragraph 5.

(7.27pm to 7.39pm)

6.3 Medium-Term Financial Strategy (Fairer Chelmsford)

Declarations of Interest:

None

Summary:

The Cabinet received an update on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2022-23 to 2027-28, approved by the Council in July 2021. The MTFS provided a financial framework to support delivery of the Council's priorities as set out in "Our Chelmsford; Our Plan".

Options:

Approve or amend the Strategy submitted as Appendix 1 to the report.

Preferred Option and Reasons:

The proposed Strategy provided a framework to commence preparation of the detailed budget for 2023/24, taking account of the latest financial projections over the medium term and the financial risks facing the Council.

Discussion:

In introducing the report, the Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford said that it provided an update on the Council's projected finances over the next six years and the context for the next round of budget-setting.

It was usual at this stage in the budget-setting cycle to have a gap between the current forecast of spending over this period and the income expected to fund it. In July 2018, the gap for 2019-20 was expected to be £1.35m and in July 2021 the gap for 2022-23 had been forecast as £1.7m. In each case, by the time, six months later, that the budget proposals for the next year had been published, those gaps had been closed.

This year was no different. A somewhat larger gap was forecast – £4.2m for 2023-24 on the central case – but the Cabinet Member expected to present a balanced budget in January 2023. The challenges this year, however, were much greater.

As had been seen during the pandemic, the City Council's finances were very reliant on income that it generated itself. Only about a quarter of its spending came from Council Tax and almost £9 in every £10 of Council Tax collected was passed on to others, most of it to Essex County Council. Very little of the Council's spending was funded by Government grants: it kept a small proportion of the business rates it collected and sometimes received grants for specific activities. The Council therefore relied on the income it could generate through cautious investment of spare cash, rents on the property it owned and charges for some of its services.

The country had entered a cost-of-living crisis. Inflation was forecast to be in double figures later in the year. Residents were suffering with increases in the cap on domestic energy bills, diesel and petrol prices at the forecourts had hit new highs, and food prices were going up. Earnings, pensions and benefits were not keeping pace. People would spend less and that would affect the Council's income.

The City Council's spending was also caught by the same pressures. Energy costs had gone up by £900,000; fuel costs were up £300,000; the prices of building materials were pushing up the costs of the capital programme. All councils faced those pressures but Chelmsford had managed its finances carefully and was in a better position than many other councils.

The Government helped councils with very significant grants so they could survive the pandemic, when income fell and spending had to rise. Government help was now needed again, otherwise all councils would have to stop delivering vital services that residents depended on and some councils would become bankrupt. The Strategy aimed to plot a course through the current period of uncertainty.

RESOLVED that the updated financial forecast be noted.

RECOMMENDED to the Council that it approve:

1. the updates to the capital strategy set out in Appendix 2;
2. the approach to reserves set out in the report and Appendix 5 of the report;
3. the Financial Strategy as set out in Appendix 4;
4. the budget guidelines for preparation of the 2023/24 budget set out in Appendix 6;
5. the carry forward of budgets of £247k from 2021/22 for initiatives which were delayed, as detailed in Appendix 6; and
6. additional Revenue Budget of £80k for 2022/23 (equivalent to £135k in a full year) for the switch to a low-carbon fuel for the Council's larger vehicles, as detailed in Appendix 6.

(7.39pm to 7.46pm)

7. UK Shared Prosperity Fund (Leader)

Declarations of Interest:

None

Summary:

The Board received a report and a presentation on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which had been launched in April 2022 and aligned with the Government's levelling up agenda.

Chelmsford had been allocated £1,173,283 to deliver the aims of the UKSPF which would run from April 2022 until March 2025. In order to obtain the funding an Investment Plan for City needed to be developed and then approved by the government. Local authorities were also expected to form formal partnerships to oversee the development of their area's Investment Plan or to use current groups for this purpose. It was proposed that the One Chelmsford Board was the most appropriate body for Chelmsford's Investment Plan to be officially endorsed by the required partners, stakeholders and relevant MPs.

Options:

Approve or amend the Investment Plan.

Preferred Option and Reasons:

To enable the Investment Plan to be submitted to government by 1 August 2022 and ensure that funds are used for schemes that will deliver positive outcomes for local residents and businesses.

Discussion:

The Cabinet was informed that the One Chelmsford Board had endorsed the Investment Plan at its meeting on 8 July 2022. The Leader drew the Cabinet's attention to two proposed priorities in the Plan: addressing health inequalities, the funding for which could be pooled with funding that had been allocated to the Integrated Care Partnership for that purpose, and supporting the creation of jobs in the SMEs tech sector.

Asked whether the Plan included support for setting up new businesses in the green economy, the Cabinet was told that under the business support interventions mentioned in the Investment Plan the Council was already working with partners to assist businesses and that as part of that they would be looking to develop skills in businesses to support the green agenda.

RESOLVED that:

1. the publication of the prospectus for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund be noted;
2. the developing Investment Plan be endorsed and the support of the One Chelmsford Board to it be noted.
3. the Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Council's Section 151 Officer, to take the necessary actions and decisions required to finalise Chelmsford's Investment Plan and approve it for submission to the Government for approval within the stated timeframes.

RECOMMENDED to the Council that it approve the allocation of the funding in accordance with the Investment Plan.

(7.46pm to 7.57pm)

8. Amendments to the Constitution

Declarations of Interest:

None

Summary:

The Cabinet was asked for its views on a number of general amendments to the Constitution and, specifically, revised Financial Rules before their submission to the Council for approval.

Options:

Approve or amend the proposed changes to the Constitution.

Preferred Option and Reasons:

The proposed amendments and revised Financial Rules would ensure that the Constitution remained up to date and met the requirements of the Council.

Discussion:

A representative of one of the smaller minority groups asked whether further thought could be given to the suggestion made at the Governance Committee that groups of five or more be automatically entitled to appoint spokespersons on Cabinet functions. There was concern that leaving a decision on that until after an election would mean that there would be a period during which smaller groups with a potentially large number of members would not have formal spokespersons. The Leader said that that need not necessarily be the case and that any constitutional changes could be considered at the Annual Meeting of the Council after an election.

RECOMMENDED to the Council that it approve the general amendments to the Constitution set out in Appendix 1 to the report to the meeting and the revised Financial Rules in Appendix 2.

(7.57pm to 8.06pm)

9. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

10. Reports to Council

All of the reports to the meeting would be referred to the Council for approval.

The meeting closed at 8.06pm

Chair



Chelmsford City Council Cabinet

18 October 2022

Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register – Consultation Feedback & Implementation of Locality Test

Report by:

Director of Sustainable Communities

Officer contacts:

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Purpose

To consider the consultation responses received to the introduction and implementation of a local connection test to Chelmsford's Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register.

Options

1. Adopt or not the proposed Locality Test
2. Amend the proposed Locality Test

Preferred option and reasons

The feedback from consultation indicates support for a Locality Test and the proposed criteria are regarded as fair and reasonable.

Recommendation:

The Locality Test detailed in this report be adopted for use as part of Chelmsford's Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report is seeking the adoption of a test to prioritise those with a local connection to Chelmsford for referral for self and custom housebuilding plots. This follows a consultation approved at the Chelmsford Policy Board on 26 May 2022 on this matter which ran from 8th June 2022 to 20th July 2022.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended)¹ places a duty on Chelmsford City Council to keep a Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register ('the Register') of individuals and groups who wish to acquire serviced plots of land to bring forward self-build and custom housebuilding projects.
- 2.2 The Council has a duty to grant sufficient planning permissions to meet the demand identified on the Register. The Register therefore provides the Council with an understanding of the level and type of demand for self-build and custom build development within the administrative area.
- 2.3 In accordance with the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016², individuals and groups are currently able to apply to join Chelmsford's Register provided the following eligibility criteria is met³:
- Applicant/s are aged 18 or over;
 - Applicant/s are a British citizen, a national of an EEA state, or a national of Switzerland; and;
 - Applicant/s are looking to acquire a serviced plot/s of land within the administrative area of Chelmsford to build a house to live in as their main residence.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/17>

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/950/made>

³ Where a group is applying, every member of the group must meet the criteria

- 2.4 Planning Practice Guidance⁴ (PPG) states that authorities can choose to set additional eligibility criteria to join the Register, based upon locality. Adopting additional eligibility criteria in the form of a locality test creates a Part 1 and Part 2 to the Register. Part 1 consists of those who meet the local connection criteria set in addition to the criteria listed above, whilst Part 2 is retained for those that meet all of the eligibility criteria except for the local connection test.
- 2.5 The PPG advises that authorities seeking to introduce additional eligibility criteria, therefore introducing Parts 1 and 2 to their Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Register, consult on their proposals.
- 2.6 This report summarises the results of the consultation and proposes that Chelmsford introduce a local connection test (locality test).

3. The Extent of Chelmsford's Duty to Grant Planning Permission

- 3.1 Chelmsford City Council have a duty to grant development permission to enough suitable serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in their area. The level of demand is established by reference to the number of entries added to the Register during a base period.
- 3.2 The first base period begun on the day on which the register was established, 1 April 2016, and ended on 30 October 2016. Each subsequent base period is then the 12-month period immediately after the end of the previous base period. Subsequent base periods therefore run from 31 October to 30 October each year.
- 3.3 From the end of each base period, the Council has three years in which to permit an equivalent number of plots of land, which are suitable for self-build and custom housebuilding, as there are entries for that base period on the Register.

Progress in meeting existing identified demand

- 3.4 The Self Build legislation does not specify how suitable permissions must be recorded, but the PPG offers the following examples of methods a relevant authority may wish to consider to determine if an application, permission or development is for self-build or custom housebuilding:
 - Whether developers have identified that self-build or custom build plots will be included as part of their development and it is clear that the initial owner of the homes will have primary input into its final design and layout;

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/self-build-and-custom-housebuilding>

- Whether a planning application references self-build or custom build and it is clear that the initial owner of the homes will have primary input into its final design and layout; and
 - Whether a Community Infrastructure Levy or Section 106 exemption has been granted for a particular development.
- 3.5 Following this guidance, the Council has identified a total of 184 suitable development permissions that have contributed to meeting the identified demand on the Register. These have primarily been identified by the third method listed above as officers are able to generate lists of applications that have been granted CIL relief.
- 3.6 Table 1 below shows the base period in which each of these were permitted.

Table 1: Number of suitable permissions granted split by Base Period

Base Period	No. of permissions granted
1. 01/04/16-30/10/16	N/A
2. 31/10/16-30/10/17	38
3. 31/10/17-30/10/18	43
4. 31/10/18-30/10/19	32
5. 31/10/19-30/10/20	39
6. 31/10/20-30/10/21	30
7. 31/10/21-01/04/2022	2
TOTAL	184

- 3.7 In terms of meeting the demand identified within the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Register, Table 2 below shows how the permissions so far identified have shaped Chelmsford's performance in meeting the demand – accurate as of 1 April 2022.

Table 2: Chelmsford's performance in meeting demand identified through the Self and Custom Build Register based upon permissions granted

Base Period	Total no. Applicants on Register	Deadline for meeting Base Period demand	Development Permissions Granted to meet demand
1	18	30/10/2019	38
2	21	30/10/2020	43
3	36	30/10/2021	36
4	65	30/10/2022	65
5	42	30/10/2023	2
6	80	30/10/2024	0
7 (up to 01/04/22)	20	30/10/2025	0
TOTAL	282	-	184

Green indicates where the number of permissions granted following the respective base period have been sufficient in meeting demand.

- 3.8 Table 2 shows that to date, Chelmsford has successfully met the demand identified on the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register through granting enough suitable permissions before the relevant deadlines.

Forecast for meeting future identified demand

- 3.9 Table 2 doesn't account for plots that are in the process of coming forward through the allocated strategic sites in the adopted Local Plan. Local Plan Policy DM1 states that within developments of 100 dwellings or more, the Council will require 5% of dwellings to be self/custom build. Plots that are coming forward through this route are to be counted once the outline or full application has been approved.
- 3.10 Based upon the most up-to-date published trajectory, it is anticipated that these plots will be countable at the dates specified within Table 3.

Table 3: Anticipated Self/Custom build provision from Local Plan sites

Strategic Site	Number of Self and/or Custom Build Plots expected		Anticipated date that these plots can be counted towards demand
SGS2 – West Chelmsford	(5% of 880) 44	121	Summer 2022
SGS8 – North of Broomfield	(5% of 512) 26		
SGS10 – North of South Woodham Ferrers	(5% of 1020) 51		
SGS1b – Former St Peters College	(5% of 245) 12	30	Financial year 2023/2024
SGS3a – East Chelmsford, Manor Farm	(5% of 250) 13		
SGS3c – East Chelmsford, Land South of Maldon Road	(5% of 100) 5		
SGS6 – North East Chelmsford	(5% of 3000) 150	193	Financial year 2024/2025
SGS7a – Great Leighs, Land at Moulsham Hall	(5% of 750) 38		
SGS7c – Great Leighs, Land North and South of Banters Lane	(5% of 100) 5		
CW1a – Former Gas Works	(5% of 250) 13	21	Financial year 2025/2026
SGS1d – Riverside Ice and Leisure Land	(5% of 150) 8		
CW1c – Lockside	(5% of 130) 7	7	Financial year 2026/2027

CW1d – Baddow Road Car Park	(5% of 190) 10	10	Financial year 2027/2028
SGS7b – Great Leighs, Land East of London Road	(5% of 250) 13	18	Financial year 2028/2029
SGS13 – Danbury	(5% of 100) 5		
SGS1e – Civic Centre Land	(5% of 100) 5	5	Financial year 2033/2034

- 3.11 Comparing the remaining identified demand in Table 2 with the projections in Table 3, it is the Officers view that demand for Self-Build and Custom Build development can be met subject to those development sites coming forward as envisaged.

4. Proposal to Introduce a Local Connection Test (Locality Test)

- 4.1 Where sites coming forward with 100 or more dwellings are required to provide a proportion of self-build and custom build plots – as per Local Plan Policy DM1 – both the Self-Build Advice Note and the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (POSPD) state that the Council will secure a S106 obligation that will set out priority mechanisms ensuring the provision of self and custom build plots meet local need.
- 4.2 The POSPD expands further to specify that, as part of the priority mechanisms, one or more adults from the applicant household must live or work within the administrative area of Chelmsford. The S106 obligation will include reference to a restrictive marketing period of three months, whereby those evidencing a local connection will be given priority to purchase plots over other potential purchasers that do not work or live within Chelmsford.
- 4.3 To aid developers in the implementation of these priority mechanisms, and work towards prioritising local need, it is proposed to introduce a locality test to the Register itself. In accordance with the PPG, introducing a local connection test will separate the Register out into a Part 1 and Part 2. Part 1 of the Register would detail those applicants who evidence that they have a local connection to Chelmsford in addition to meeting the standard eligibility criteria; whereas Part 2 details those who meet the standard eligibility criteria but do not have a local connection to Chelmsford.
- 4.4 In line with the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016 and to remain consistent with the approach adopted within the First Homes Planning Advice Note, the recommendation is that the local connection test to be applied to the Register includes one of the following criteria:
- Individuals live or work within the Chelmsford administrative area; or

- Individuals are an essential local worker as defined within the National Planning Policy Framework; or
- Individuals are in the service of the regular armed forces of the Crown (as defined within section 374 of the Armed Forces Act 2006) (or are ex-personnel for a period equal to the length of the longest of any periods that may be required by the test for a condition to be satisfied)

5. Implications of Introducing a Part 1 and Part 2 to the Register

The Council's duty to meet demand identified on the Register

- 5.1 The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016 state that authorities with two parts to the Register have a duty to grant enough development permissions to meet the demand only identified on the Part 1 of the Register. Both parts however must be considered when calculating the overall demand for self-build/custom-build housing in plan development.

Prioritisation of those on Part 1

- 5.2 Those on Part 2 of the Register would not be precluded from pursuing self-build opportunities that arise within Chelmsford, but a priority mechanism would be in place to offer these opportunities to those with a local connection first.
- 5.3 In practice, this will take the form of a restriction upon the developer, secured through S106 obligation, to market their self-build and custom build plots to those with a local connection for a fixed period of time, before marketing to the wider population.
- 5.4 During this fixed marketing period, the Council will be able to raise awareness of this opportunity to those on Part 1 of the Register. Once the fixed marketing period has ended, the Council can raise awareness to the whole Register – Parts 1 and 2 – subject to there still being plots available.

Periodic review of the locality test

- 5.5 The PPG recommends that if adopted, the locality test is periodically reviewed to ensure the test remains appropriate and is still achieving the desired effect. It is proposed that this be reviewed when the POSPD is reviewed.

6. Consultation Process

- 6.1 Though not statutorily bound to do so, the PPG advises that authorities seeking to introduce additional eligibility criteria and therefore introducing

Parts 1 and 2 to their Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Register consult on their proposals and to review their adopted locality test periodically to ensure the test remains appropriate and is still achieving the desired effect.

- 6.2 Following approval from Policy Board, we consulted on the proposal to introduce a Part 1 and Part 2 to the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register as well as the criteria proposed for the locality test, via webform through the Council website at: <https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-local-plan/building-your-own-home-and-community-led-housing/consultation-on-changes-to-the-register/>. The webform that was used is attached as Appendix 1 of this report. An Equality Impact Assessment was also prepared to address the proposals and is attached as Appendix 2.
- 6.3 The webform consultation was open for 6 weeks from 8th June 2022 to 20th July 2022, to avoid the summer holidays but allow sufficient time for stakeholders to respond.
- 6.4 The consultation was accessible to all, and reference to the consultation is featured on the Council's "Building your own home and community-led housing" webpage. In addition, notification of the consultation was sent to all of those currently on the Register – a total of 289 applicants at the time of consulting – as this is the main group seen to be impacted by the outcomes.

7. Consultation Feedback

- 7.1 It was agreed at Chelmsford Policy Board that the consultation feedback and any subsequent proposed changes to the locality test be brought to Cabinet for approval.
- 7.2 A full summary of the responses can be seen in Appendix 3, noting that personal details and identifying information has been redacted. In summary, 13 responses were received, 12 via the webform method, and 1 via email. All 13 respondents were individuals, with 12 currently on the Self-Build Register. 8 confirmed that they reside in Chelmsford, 4 reside outside of Chelmsford, and 1 did not confirm.
- 7.3 In response to the question asking to what extent the respondent agreed or disagreed with proposal to introduce a Part 1 and Part 2 to the Register:
- 4 strongly agreed – with all 4 residing in Chelmsford
 - 4 agreed – with 3 residing in Chelmsford and 1 not
 - 1 neutral – who is not a Chelmsford resident
 - 3 strongly disagreed – with 1 residing in Chelmsford and 2 not
 - 1 did not confirm – unknown whether local or not

- 7.4 In response to the question asking to what extent the respondent agreed or disagreed with the proposed locality test criteria:
- 1 strongly agreed – who resides in Chelmsford
 - 6 agreed – all of whom reside in Chelmsford
 - 1 disagreed – who was not a Chelmsford resident
 - 4 strongly disagreed – 1 of which resides in Chelmsford, the other 3 do not
 - 1 did not confirm – unknown whether local or not
- 7.5 Within the comments, respondents have indicated support for the locality test criteria with respect to the opportunity it provides young people to remain in the area and support for the inclusion of Key Workers. A suggestion has been made to include a ‘family connection’ criterion so as not to fully exclude those looking to move closer to family.
- 7.6 PPG cites ‘having a family member residing in the local area’ as a criterion that local authorities may wish to include within a locality test. However, the inclusion of such criterion in a local connection test for the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register would prevent achievement of the aspiration to align the Register with the priority mechanisms stipulated within the POSPD, Self-Build Advice Note and First Homes Planning Advice Note, which seek to prioritise local demand from households already resident or working in the administrative area of Chelmsford City Council. Therefore, Officers do not consider this criterion suitable for the locality test.
- 7.7 The remaining comments provided were neutral to or not relevant to the consultation. It is noted that there is dissatisfaction expressed in the Register being split, as it is felt this would reduce or even eliminate the opportunity for those not living in Chelmsford of obtaining a self-build plot. However, this outcome is not considered an effect of the proposal but is instead a potential consequence of the prioritisation mechanism in marketing of Self-Build plots that is already adopted within the POSPD and the Self-Build and Custom Build Planning Advice Note.
- 7.8 The feedback thus shows there is a general agreement for both the introduction of a locality test to the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register that would split the Register into a Part 1 and Part 2, as well as the proposed criteria to be used for this local connection test.

8. Next Steps

- 8.1 It is therefore not recommended that any alterations be made to the proposal to adopt a local connection test for the Self-Build Register as considered at Chelmsford Policy Board and as set out above.

- 8.2 It is recommended to approve the adoption of a local connection test for Chelmsford's Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register, with the proposed criteria for this test as amended per suggestions brought forward at Chelmsford Policy Board set out in paragraph 4.4 above.
- 8.3 If approved, the local connection test will come into effect as of 13 December 2022, at which point all new applicants will be asked to evidence their locality in accordance with the test set out above if they wish to be added to Part 1, in addition to the statutory eligibility criteria set out in legislation.
- 8.4 The timeframe between now and the proposed adoption date will provide officers and the digital team sufficient time to review and update the application process for joining the Self-Build Register in addition to the associated Privacy Notice to accord with the above proposals.
- 8.5 Existing applicants who have previously been successful in joining the Register were never asked to evidence their locality. Therefore, there is currently no robust way to tell whether those on currently on the Register would be eligible or not to be entered onto Part 1 of the Register.
- 8.6 To address this, all existing applicants on the Register will be contacted and offered the opportunity to provide evidence before the 13 December 2022 to confirm they would be eligible to be entered onto Part 1 of the Register. If the appropriate evidence is not provided, they will be placed on Part 2 of the Register.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Consultation webform: Consultation on changes to the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Register

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 3 – Consultation Responses

Background papers:

Self-Build and Custom Build Planning Advice Note

Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document

First Homes Advice Note

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional:

The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended) places a duty on Chelmsford City Council to keep a Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register of individuals and groups who wish to acquire serviced plots of land and for the Council to then grant enough development permissions to meet the demand identified on the Register.

The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016 specifies that the following eligibility criteria must be met to join the Register:

- Applicant/s are aged 18 or over;
- Applicant/s are a British citizen, a national of an EEA state, or a national of Switzerland; and;
- Applicant/s are looking to acquire a serviced plot/s of land within the administrative area of Chelmsford to build a house to live in as their main residence.

Authorities can introduce additional eligibility criteria to split the Register into a Part 1 and 2. The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016 state that authorities with Parts 1 and 2 to the Register have a duty to grant enough development permissions to meet the demand only identified on the Part 1 of the Register. Both parts however must be considered when calculating the overall demand for self-build/custom-build housing in plan development.

Financial:

There is an existing administrative burden to maintain the Self and Custom Housebuilding Register. The introduction of the locality test would add minimal additional burden.

Potential impact on climate change and the environment:

Self and custom build development needs to adhere to the Council's sustainable development policies within the adopted Local Plan and the guidance within the Council's Making Places SPD. Prioritising plots for those with a local connection has potential to cut carbon emissions through reduced migratory travel into the area.

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030:

Self and custom build development needs to comply with relevant policies and Building Regulations which are currently working towards a net zero carbon position by 2030. There is scope that such development will go above and beyond these policies and Building Regulations as many are interested in self and custom build for the opportunity to improve environmental performance of their home.

Personnel:

N/A

Risk Management:

N/A

Equality and Diversity:

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been conducted to assess the effects of introducing a locality test to the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register.

Health and Safety:

N/A

Digital:

Support from Website and Content Analyst required for consultation period to ensure webforms are working and webpages are appropriately updated.

Other:

N/A

Consultees:

Digital Services

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

Local Plan Policy DM1

Appendix 1 – Consultation webform: Consultation on changes to the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Register

Consultation on changes to the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Register

* Required

1. First name *

2. Last name *

3. Organisation

4. Email address *

5. Which of the following apply to you? *

	Yes	No
I live within the Chelmsford administrative area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am on the Chelmsford Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register and seek a self-build or custom build plot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I represent a developer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I represent a town or parish council	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I represent an organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Next

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* Required

6. To what extent do you agree/disagree with our proposal to introduce a Part 1 and Part 2 to the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register? *

People with a local connection would be added to Part 1

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

7. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposed local connection criteria? *

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

8. Any other comments

Enter your answer

Back

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Chelmsford City Council Equality Impact Assessment

This form enables an assessment of the impact a policy, strategy or activity on customers and employees.

A: Assessor Details

Name of policy / function(s):	Introduction of a locality test to the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register
Officer(s) completing this assessment:	Amy Rayner
Date of assessment:	13 May 2022

B: Summary Details

Description of policy, strategy or activity and what it is aiming to do	<p>The purpose of the proposal to introduce a locality test to the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register is to be able to identify those on the Register who have an evidenced local connection to the administrative area of Chelmsford.</p> <p>This will align the register with the prioritisation mechanisms as set out within the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (POSPD) and Self-Build Planning Advice Note which seek to ensure local demand is prioritised.</p> <p>Where self-build or custom housebuilding plots come forward in accordance with Local Plan Policy DM1, developers are required by S106 obligation to market these plots to those with a local connection for a fixed time period before opening up the marketing to all others.</p> <p>Knowing who on the Register has an evidenced local connection to Chelmsford means that the Council can raise awareness of self-build opportunities to this group within the fixed marketing period, before notifying all others on the Register after this fixed marketing period</p>
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Chelmsford City Council Equality Impact Assessment

	<p>has ended, helping to actively prioritise local demand.</p> <p>The approach to introducing a locality test has been guided by the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016 (the Regulations). These stipulate that in adopting a locality test, the Register will split into a Part 1 and Part 2, whereby those on Part 1 have met the locality eligibility criteria set by the Council in addition to their eligibility criteria surrounding age, nationality, and desire to build within the administrative area as set out in the Regulations. Part 2 consists of those that have met the eligibility criteria surrounding age, nationality, and desire to build within the administrative area but have not met the Council's locality criteria.</p> <p>The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016 set out that in adopting a locality test and therefore splitting the Register into a Part 1 and Part 2, the statutory duty alters so as the Council are required to grant enough development permissions within the appropriate timeframes to meet the identified demand on Part 1 only. Both Parts 1 and 2 must still be considered when calculating the overall demand for self-build/custom-build housing in plan development.</p> <p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> new OR <input type="checkbox"/> existing (<i>If existing, when was the last assessment?</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> internal OR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> external (i.e. public-facing) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> statutory OR <input type="checkbox"/> non-statutory </p>
Policy Owner (service)	Spatial Planning
Scope: Internal - Service/Directorate/Council wide External – specify community groups	Internal – Directorate of Sustainable Communities External – Existing and future applicants to the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register, developers

C: Assessment of impact

Chelmsford City Council Equality Impact Assessment

Using the information above, assess if the policy / function could potentially disproportionately impact on different protected groups. Specify if the potential impact is positive, could adversely impact or if there is no impact. If an adverse impact, indicate how the impact will be mitigated.

Characteristic	Positive impact	Could adversely impact	No impact	How different groups could be affected	Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact
Age What will the impact be on different age groups such as younger or older people?	No	No	Yes	Introduction of a locality test does not introduce a discrimination against age. However, the eligibility criteria as established by the Regulations – which must be complied for entry onto both Part 1 and Part 2 of the Register – specify that applicants must be of 18 years or over.	This is legislative and cannot be overcome.
Disability Consider all disabilities such as hearing loss, dyslexia etc as well as access issues for wheelchair users where appropriate	No	No	Yes		
Pregnancy and maternity Pregnant women and new and breastfeeding Mums	No	No	Yes		
Marriage or Civil Partnership	No	No	Yes		

**Chelmsford City Council
Equality Impact Assessment**

Characteristic	Positive impact	Could adversely impact	No impact	How different groups could be affected	Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact
Could this policy discriminate on the grounds of marriage or civil partnership					
Sex Is the service used by more than one gender and are the sexes given equal opportunity?	No	No	Yes		
Gender reassignment Is there an impact on people who are going through or who have completed Gender Reassignment?	No	No	Yes		
Religion or belief Includes not having religion or belief	No	No	Yes		
Sexual Orientation What is the impact on heterosexual, lesbian, gay or bisexual people?	No	No	Yes		
Race Includes ethnic or national	No	No	Yes	Introduction of a locality test does not introduce a	This is legislative and cannot be overcome.

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Characteristic	Positive impact	Could adversely impact	No impact	How different groups could be affected	Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact
origins				discrimination against race. However, the eligibility criteria as established by the Regulations – which must be complied for entry onto both Part 1 and Part 2 of the Register – specify that applicants must be a either a British citizen, a national of an EEA state or a national of Switzerland.	
Are there any other groups who could find it difficult to access or make use of the policy / function? For example: low income / people living in rural areas / single parents / carers and the cared for / past offenders / long-term unemployed / housebound / history of domestic abuse / people who don't speak English as a first language / people without computer access etc.	Yes	Yes	No	<p>Those unemployed or of no fixed address but residing within Chelmsford may have difficulty providing evidence of their locality to the administrative area.</p> <p>Those without access to a computer are unable to complete the registration form and submit any applicable evidence to join the Register</p> <p>Those with an existing connection to the local</p>	<p>In the same way as the Housing Register applications are process, a wide variety of evidence will be accepted to evidence locality. This can include tenancy agreements, bills, council tax records, pay slips, employment contracts etc. Informal forms of evidence such as letters or photographs will be determined at the discretion of the Council on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Application to join the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register can be made without use of the online form. The</p>

**Chelmsford City Council
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Characteristic	Positive impact	Could adversely impact	No impact	How different groups could be affected	Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact
				area – through either residence or employment gain a level of confidence that their desires to remain within the administrative area are prioritised	responsible officer can provide a paper form and details on how evidence can be provided by alternative means.

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D: Consultation process, information used to analyse the effects on protected groups/equality and key findings

Please describe the consultation process and evidence gathered. You may attach copies or links to the data / research you are using.

1.	<p><u>Consultation/engagement</u> What consultation or engagement has been undertaken regarding this policy? <i>[Please summarise what, when and who was involved]</i></p>	<p>Engaged with Digital Services to draft a web consultation and web page detailing the proposals</p>
2.	<p><u>Key findings</u> <i>(Summarise the key findings of your consultation in relation to protected groups as outlined above).</i></p>	<p>A webpage and online consultation can be set up to meet the Council's accessibility guidelines</p>
3.	<p><u>Data/Information</u> What relevant data or information is currently available about the customers and employees who may use this service or could be affected by this policy? <i>(For example: equality monitoring, surveys, demographic data, research, evidence about demand/ take-up/satisfaction etc).</i></p> <p>What additional information could be collected which would increase your understanding about the potential impact of the policy? <i>(What involvement or consultation with affected groups is still needed?)</i></p>	<p>The Council currently have a handful of webpages which provide information in relation to the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register. This includes links to the application form to join the register, an informative page on the different types for self and custom build developments, and advice and resource pages that provide links to external webpages with specialist information.</p> <p>Evidence in relation to existing demand on the register is published quarterly within the Self-Build and Custom Build Planning Advice Note – again, available on our website. This identifies current trends in demand relating to type of dwelling, location within the administrative area and number of bedrooms desired etc.</p> <p>The consultation on the proposal to introduce a locality test to the register will gauge levels of support and any concerns from those already on the register and possibly developers. This will help guide the Council on how/whether to implement the locality test.</p>

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4.	<i>For existing policies, strategy, activity only:</i> What has changed since the last assessment? <i>(For example: evidence of public concern or complaints / new information has come to light / changes in service provision / changes in service users/ assessed impact on protected groups etc)</i>	Reason for proposal to introduce the locality test to the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register is to align the approach to meeting identified demand with that stated within the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document, the Self-Build Planning Advice Note and First Homes Planning Advice Note which all take the approach of prioritising local need/demand first.
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E: Relevance to the Equality Duty Aims:

Consider how the policy relates to the aims below (directly or indirectly), and if it could be adjusted to further meet these equality aims.

1.	To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	The measures identified above will reduce any negative impact on the identified protected groups.
2.	To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not <i>(This means removing or minimising disadvantages, taking steps to meet needs of different people and encouraging participation. It can involve treating people better than others, e.g. disabled people).</i>	The measures identified above will ensure equality of opportunity between those with and without protected characteristics.
3.	To foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. If so, how? <i>(This means promoting understanding</i>	Having transparency around our proposal and implementation of a locality test through details that will be featured on our webpages will foster good relations between those with and without a local connection. This is as there will be clear justification and robustness in the

**Chelmsford City Council
Equality Impact Assessment**

	<i>between different groups and tackling prejudice)</i>	purpose and execution.
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F: Conclusion	
Decision:	Explanation:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue the policy with no changes <i>[For example: evidence suggests no potential for discrimination / all opportunities have been taken to advance equality.]</i>	Identified potential discrimination stems from legislation as opposed to the proposal to introduce a locality test. Measures have been identified to ensure any additional potential discrimination is avoided.
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue the policy with adjustments <i>[For example: Low risk of negative impact / actions or adjustments would further improve positives or remove a potential negative impact.]</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Adverse impact but continue <i>[For example: Negative impact has been objectively justified.]</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Suspend or withdraw the policy for further review / consideration of alternative proposals <i>[For example: High risk of negative impact for any group / insufficient evidence / need to involve or consult with protected groups / negative impact which cannot be mitigated or justified / unlawful discrimination etc.]</i>	

Approved by:

Lead Officer / Responsible officer: *Amy Rayner*

Date: 17/05/2022

**Chelmsford City Council
Equality Impact Assessment**



Senior Manager:

Date:

17/05/2022

[Please save a copy and send one to Human Resources for publication on the website as appropriate]

Appendix 3 - Summary of Responses to the Consultation proposing the Introduction of a Locality Test to the Self-Build Register

Method of Response	Live in Chelmsford?	Currently on Self-Build Register?	Do you represent a:			To what extent do you:		Comments
			Developer	Parish Councillor	Organisation	Agree with the proposal?	Agree with the proposed Locality Test criteria?	
Email		Yes						My comments are as follows, The register is worth than useless. I have been on for in excess of 5 years and only ever received one notification.
Webform	Yes	No	No	No	No	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	I also particularly agree with the proposal that key workers, particularly those that work within Essex and more so for Essex (such as myself) be afforded greater priority for opportunities to self build. This I feel supports equality and provides more opportunity for those people who work for local government including the health and social care sector staff, to build their own home in their area of preference which they otherwise are unlikely to be able to afford to do, due to lower earnings.
Webform	No	Yes	No	No	No	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	
Webform	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Agree	Agree	I have had very limited contact with anyone as a result of joining the register. It would be encouraging if there were more opportunities to consider.
Webform	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Agree	Agree	
Webform	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Strongly agree	Agree	I live in Chelmsford and work on Chelmsford on a full time basis
Webform	No	Yes	No	No	No	Neutral	Disagree	I have nothing against adding the local connection section to the register however, I find it unfair that those that have are already on the register would also be split. As someone that has been on the register for a number of years, and having only received information about one, possibly two, opportunities in this time (appreciating the effects of Covid), I believe that if I was to be put into part 2 of the list, I would never hear from you again. Perhaps there needs to be an expansion of the criteria for local connection or weighting for individual circumstances. From my point of view, I have lived and worked in Chelmsford, my wife comes from there and my sister in law (and family) still lives there so I do have a local connection though could appreciate current residents or workers getting a higher priority.
Webform	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Agree	Agree	I like the overall principle - the priority for me is the opportunity for local younger people to access housing, so local residency makes sense. I'm less sure about the need for people to be working 'locally'. Young people these days are just as likely to be travelling/commuting outside the area for their work. Would this rule them out?
Webform	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	
Webform	No	Yes	No	No	No	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree	I was born in chelmsford,so regard myself as a local man,but your proposal would bar me for any self build plot.It is more inportant to have experinced people with a trade background to undertake self build.
Webform	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Agree	Strongly disagree	In our case, our entire family lives in Chelmsford. We are looking to move back but there is not sufficient housing stock to fit our families needs, especially adapted for disabilities. The criteria set out would actually exclude us from the "local connections" despite us visiting fortnightly with grandparents, cousins, childhood friends, and social groups all being in Chelmsford. Ideally, these criteria would be added into "local connections" as whilst we may not currently reside there, or work there, I am sure many people will be commuting to London and have family or friends in Chelmsford, looking to return but hampered by what property is on offer.
Webform	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Strongly agree	Agree	
Webform	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Strongly agree	Agree	



Chelmsford City Council Cabinet

18 October 2022

Section 106 Spending Plan

Report by:
Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development

Officer Contact:
Stuart Graham, Economic Development and Implementation Services
Manager
stuart.graham@chelmsford.gov.uk 01245 606364

Purpose

To consider and endorse a proposed spending plan for S106 planning contributions currently held by the City Council.

Options

- a) Endorse the S106 Spending Plan, as presented
- b) Endorse the S106 Spending Plan, with amendments
- c) Not endorse the S106 Spending Plan

Preferred option and reasons

Option (a) Endorse the S106 Spending Plan, as presented, to enable the City Council to spend the held balances within the timeframes specified by the S106 agreements.

Recommendations

That Cabinet recommends the S106 Spending Plan is referred on to Full Council for approval and that the following delegations are approved:

1. The Director of Public Places, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Greener and Safer Chelmsford, is authorised to spend the approved S106 contributions for Open Spaces and Strategic Sports Provision, as detailed in Appendices 1 and 3.
 2. The Director of Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development, is authorised to approve the S106 Healthcare allocations on receipt of the proposed spend from the NHS as set out in Appendix 4.
 3. The Director of Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development, is authorised to spend the approved S106 allocations for highways and transport as detailed in Appendix 5 and
 4. The Director of Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford, is authorised to agree the spend of the approved S106 allocations for affordable housing projects as set out in Appendix 6.
-

1. Introduction

- 1.1. For a number of years, Chelmsford City Council has collected financial contributions from developments across its administrative area using agreements known as S106's, under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The majority of these contributions are linked to the Planning Contributions Supplementary Planning document, which was adopted in 2008. Although this policy framework has been superseded by the new Local Plan and the adoption of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), a number of S106 contributions are still collected and held by the City Council.
- 1.2. With the advent of the Community Infrastructure Levy, adopted in 2014, the number of new developments that generate direct financial contributions via S106 has reduced significantly. However, the City Council is currently in receipt of funding that needs to be planned for in line with the S106 to which it is linked.
- 1.3. This report sets out a Spending Plan for 2022 onwards for S106 funding currently held by the City Council.
- 1.4. In determining the spend of S106 funding the following key principles have been borne in mind:
 - The S106 legally specifies what the funding can be spent on
 - In many cases, the S106 funding must be spent in specific locations and on specific projects or infrastructure types

- Any expenditure in relation to the funding is, in the majority of cases, time limited, and if not spent by that date must be returned to the developer

1.5. A separate process is in place to allocate CIL receipts.

2. Summary of S106 Balances

2.1. The current balances held by the City Council are summarised in the table below. This is based on information at September 2022 and the Spending Plan deals with these held balances only.

S106 Purpose	Amount (£)
Strategic Sports & Recreation	2,847,156.76
<i>Beaulieu & Channels</i>	<i>1,339,651.69</i>
<i>Former Runwell Hospital</i>	<i>1,507,505.07</i>
Strategic Water Management	932,090.42
Open Space	682,570.78
<i>Local open space</i>	<i>194,229.82</i>
<i>Strategic open space</i>	<i>488,340.96</i>
Healthcare	530,154.68
Transport and Highways	530,608.43
Local Highways	440,847.73
Strategic Transport:	89,760.70
<i>Widford Park & Ride</i>	<i>6,108.14</i>
<i>Chelmer Valley Park & Ride</i>	<i>13,958.06</i>
<i>Army & Navy</i>	<i>20,455.87</i>
<i>Chelmsford Railway Station</i>	<i>22,295.38</i>
<i>North-East Bypass</i>	<i>26,943.25</i>
Affordable Housing	147,514.04
TOTAL	5,670,095.11

2.2. Appendices 1 - 6 detail proposed project spend.

2.3. The preparation of the S106 Spending Plan has been facilitated through internal and external engagement.

3. Strategic Sports and Recreation

- 3.1. The largest sum held relates to the provision of strategic sports and recreation provision using S106 funding from the Beaulieu and Channels developments and the former Runwell Hospital development.
- 3.2. Appendix 1 sets out proposed project spend.
- 3.3. The funding from the Beaulieu and Channels development is proposed to be spent on the following 4 projects:
- a) The development of the new community sports facility as part of the Chelmsford Garden Community east of New Hall School
 - b) Improvements to the existing Beaulieu Sports Ground
 - c) The development of a new 3G sports pitch facility in Chelmsford
 - d) Improvements to the athletics track and centre at Chelmsford Sports and Athletics Centre
- 3.4. The funding from the former Runwell Hospital development is proposed to be spent on the following requirements of the S106 agreement:
- a) The extension and refurbishment of the clubhouse facility
 - b) A 7v7 3G floodlit pitch facility

4. Strategic Water Management

- 4.1. The held contributions will be used as part of the Council's already agreed contributions to flood protection and alleviation measures to reduce the risk of flooding.

5. Open Spaces

- 5.1. The proposed spend on opens spaces is set out in Appendix 3 to the report.
- 5.2. The allocations take into account the purposes specified in the relevant S106 agreements, which in most cases are prescriptive.
- 5.3. The Spending Plan in Appendix 3 lists a range of 22 projects for improvements and investments across the City's parks, green spaces and strategic sports facilities.
- 5.4. Funding of £30,500 will be transferred to the Parish Councils under the terms of the relevant S106 agreements.
- 5.5. Ongoing revenue costs in relation to the projects set out in the Plan can be met from within existing budgets.

6. Healthcare

- 6.1. The NHS is currently preparing a plan for the spend of the £0.5m held contributions for the enhancement of healthcare provision.

7. Transport/Highways

- 7.1. There are a number of contributions held for local and strategic transport projects which will be used as schemes come forward, working in partnership with Essex County Council and the Local Highways Panel.
- 7.2. The local highways balance has been collected for the provision of local transportation schemes often to be delivered by Essex County Council and will be transferred to them once appropriate schemes have been identified that link to the purpose set out in the S106 agreements. This follows the previous process agreed between the City Council and Essex County Council.
- 7.3. The proposed spend on identified local transport and highways projects is set out in Appendix 5.

8. Affordable Housing

- 8.1. The held balances will be allocated to projects that support the delivery of the City Council's Housing & Homelessness Strategy.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1. The S106 Spending Plan sets out the proposed spend of the £5.7m currently held by the City Council.
- 9.2. It allocates funding to a range of projects that will be delivered by the City Council and partner organisations.
- 9.3. The Spending Plan has been prepared having regard to the purposes set out in the S106 agreements and matching these to City Council and partner organisation priorities.

List of appendices:
S106 Spending Plan.

Background papers:

Planning Contributions SPD, 2008

Relevant S106 agreements

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional:

The spend of the S106 contributions needs to accord with the defined purpose set out in the S106 agreement and regard has been had to this in preparing the Spending Plan.

Financial:

The S106 contributions are in the majority of cases time limited and if not spent by a specified date must be returned to the developer. If this occurs the opportunity to improve facilities and infrastructure will be lost.

Potential impact on climate change and the environment:

A number of the contributions and the associated projects are linked to sustainable transport improvements to the natural environment which will have a positive impact on climate change and the environment.

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030:

Investment in cycling, walking and public transport projects contributes to sustainable transport measures and an alternative mode of transport to the car.

Personnel:

None.

Risk Management:

None.

Equality and Diversity:

None.

Health and Safety:

None.

Digital:

None.

Other:

None.

Consultees:

CCC Directors, Essex County Council, NHS England

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

LDF 2001-2021; Planning Contributions Supplementary Planning Document,
Adopted Local Plan May 2020.

Appendix 1: Strategic Sports & Recreation

	PROJECT	AMOUNT (£)
1	a) A maximum of £528,000.00 to be spent on the development and improvements of outdoor sports facilities in accordance with the Sports and Playing Field Development Plan as set out in the priorities of Our Chelmsford, Our Plan. This includes sports pitch layout, cricket, and club facilities. Works are planned from April 2023 onwards. b) £27,550.00 to be spent on the existing sports ground in Beaulieu Park. This includes the 3G sports pitch, fencing, and floodlight project. Works are scheduled to take place shortly. c) £375,000.00 to be spent on the development of an additional full floodlit 3G facility/facilities in Chelmsford. Springfield, Chancellor Park and Writtle Warren Farm area are examples of where this/these could be implemented. This would likely start from 2023 and assumes 50% contribution from the FA/Football Foundation per pitch. d) £300,000.00 to be spent on track and centre improvements at Chelmsford Sports & Athletic Centre. Works are likely to begin in 2023. Whilst the centre is closed for essential track works there is an ideal opportunity to enhance and improve other aspects of the indoor and outdoor facilities. A separate project brief is being formalised.	1,339,651.59
2	a) An extension and refurbishment of the existing clubhouse b) A 7v7 floodlit 3G artificial pitch	1,507,505.07
	TOTAL	2,847,156.76

Appendix 2: Strategic Water Management

PROJECT	AMOUNT (£)
To be used as part of the Council's contribution to the flood alleviation measures	932,090.42
TOTAL	932,090.42

Appendix 3: Open Spaces

	PROJECT	AMOUNT (£)
1	Admirals Park Strategic Outdoor Pitch and Sports Pavilion Improvements	330.40
2	Andrews Park Strategic Outdoor Pitch and Sports Pavilion Improvements	3,170.87
3	Avon Road Play Area	59,466.05
4	Beaulieu Park Strategic Outdoor Pitch and Sports Pavilion Improvements	328.94
5	Central Park Lake Improvements Phase 3	31,759.49
6	Chancellor Park Strategic Outdoor Pitch & Sports Pavilion Improvements	1,523.91
7	Chelmer Park Strategic Outdoor Pitch and Sports Pavilion Improvements	3,520.30
8	Coronation Park Landscape Improvements	1,958.62
9	Coronation Park Play Area Refurbishment	1,617.80
10	Hylands Park Accessibility Improvements	4,076.49
11	John Shennan Field Play Refurbishment	1,757.56
12	Landscape Improvements Central Park	1,798.88

13	Lionmede Park Strategic Outdoor Pitch & Sports Pavilion Improvements	654.78
14	Melbourne Park Strategic Outdoor Pitch & Sports Pavilion Improvements	466,584.83
15	Noakes Park Landscape Improvements	2,699.27
16	Saltcoats Park Strategic Outdoor Pitch and Sports Pavilion Improvements	2,308.43
17	Saltcoats Park/Compass Gardens Sport Facility Improvements	2,447.68
18	Saltcoats Park/Compass Gardens Strategic Outdoor Pitch & Sports Pavilion Improvements	336.22
19	Springfield Green/Pollards Meadow Play Area	812.30
20	Springfield Hall Park Strategic Outdoor Pitch & Sports Pavilion Improvements	4,787.10
21	Woodland and Native Hedge Planting at Andrews Park	11,589.46
22	5 th Avenue Play Area Refurbishment	9,466.26
23	To be transferred to Parish Councils	30,661.24
24	To be determined	34,758.86
	TOTAL	682,570.78

Appendix 4: Healthcare

PROJECT	AMOUNT (£)
Currently under consideration by NHS	530,154.68
TOTAL	530,154.68

Appendix 5: Transport/Highways

	PROJECT	AMOUNT (£)
1	Align to Essex County Council/LHP project	125,060.08
2	East Chelmsford Cycle Links	12,315.45
3	Army & Navy Sustainable Transport Package Contribution	170,233.65
4	Tindal Square	87,206.03
5	Maintenance of Station Square	22,295.38
6	Chelmsford North East Bypass	26,943.25
7	To be determined	86,554.59
	TOTAL	530,608.43

Appendix 6: Affordable Housing

PROJECT	AMOUNT (£)
Housing/Homelessness Strategy priorities	147,514.04
TOTAL	147,514.04



Chelmsford City Council Cabinet

18th October 2022

Health & Wellbeing Plan

Report by:

Cabinet Member for Greener and Safer Chelmsford

Officer Contact:

Paul Brookes, Public Health and Protection Services Manager

01245 6096436, paul.brookes@chelmsford.gov.uk

Purpose

To approve a refresh of the Council's Health & Wellbeing Plan

Options

1. To approve the Health & Wellbeing Plan
2. To approve with amendments the Health & Wellbeing Plan
3. To not approve the Health & Wellbeing Plan

Preferred option and reasons

To approve the Health & Wellbeing Plan so as to provide a focus for the City Council and its partners on the most important health and wellbeing issues facing the residents of Chelmsford

Recommendations

Approve the Health & Wellbeing Plan

1. Background or Introduction

- 1.1 The Council has a key role in promoting healthy, active lifestyles and encouraging people to live well. To prioritise the Council's work in this area and direct resources to areas of greatest need the Council produced a Health & Wellbeing Plan which was approved by Cabinet in 2019.
- 1.2 A significant number of changes have taken place since the Plan was published in 2019 and many of our partners within the health system have developed new strategies to address the changing the needs of our population. To take these changes into account the Council's current Health & Wellbeing Plan has been refreshed and is attached at Appendix 1.

2. Health & Wellbeing Plan

- 2.1 The Plan identifies population needs and key priorities, and actions to be taken to address them as part of a wider health system. The majority of the Council's contribution to public health improvements is delivered through its day-to-day service provision. However, the co-ordination of service delivery identified as priorities in the Plan will assist in delivering more effective health outcomes.
- 2.2 The Plan is structured to provide information on the health and wellbeing of Chelmsford residents and how Chelmsford City Council, and the services it provides, contribute to health and wellbeing of its residents, the key health and wellbeing priorities, and what work the Council in conjunction with partners will do to contribute to tackling these priorities over the next few years.
- 2.3 The Plan is aimed to inform partners, wider stakeholders and residents of the approach to be taken to health and wellbeing. It is recognised that this results in parts of the Plan being detailed and technical, therefore, a simplified summary of the Plan will also be made available shortly after the Plan has been published.
- 2.4 The refresh of the Plan is informed by the Essex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which confirms a continued need to focus on preventative health issues and address the wider determinants of health and factors that impact health outcomes and health inequalities.
- 2.5 The refresh of the Plan proposes a continued focus on the current Health and Wellbeing Plan priorities whilst noting the areas of focus may have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The priority areas also align with the Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the focus of our NHS partners and wider stakeholders on the Mid Essex Alliance.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 There has been a two-stage consultation process carried out on the refresh of the Health and Wellbeing Plan. The first stage of the consultation was launched at Livewell Chelmsford on the 19th July 2022. The consultation was also sent to wider stakeholders including provider organisations, NHS, Primary Care Networks, Essex County Council, EPUT, Voluntary Sector Organisations and all Parish Councils within the District. The consultation details were also sent to the Heads of Public Health at Essex County Council.
- 3.2 After the first consultation stage a designed draft copy was produced and reconsulted on with all the organisations listed at above. This stage of the consultation started week commencing 22nd August 2022.
- 3.3 The consultation responses showed that all partners generally agreed with the vision and principles of the Plan. A suggested change was to add 'work with system partners' to reflect the new way of working and to reference 'Livewell' as a strategic theme for all partners.
- 3.5 Partners also wanted to see the principles embedded in the Plan being at a high level and not to specify commissioned services as this can change often.
- 3.6 It was proposed to include the Robert Wood Johnson model to illustrate the range of factors that influence health and wellbeing in a similar way to the Joint Essex Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 3.7 The Livewell Strategic themes have been adopted by multiple partners and all partners deliver the most relevant themes aligned to their organisation's services. It was suggested to add the 'Diwell' theme as several partners contribute to the delivery of this theme.
- 3.8 Overall, partners agreed with the health and wellbeing priorities and most noted how their organisations will help address the focus areas. Partners also provided additional information of what they would like to see referenced within the Plan. Within each priority area, the Plan notes the importance of considering our vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. It also makes references to the consideration of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and the current issues arising from the cost of living.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The Health & Wellbeing Plan will, in conjunction with Essex County Council's Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy, provide a coherent and joined up approach to tackling health inequalities and improving the health and wellbeing of people in Chelmsford.
- 4.2 It is recommended that the Council approve the Health & Wellbeing Plan

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Health and Wellbeing Plan

Background papers:

Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy

<https://data.essex.gov.uk/dataset/e6k09/essex-joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategy-2018-2022>

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: None

Financial: None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: N/A

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees:

Details of consultees and consultation process are described within the report

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

CHELMSFORD HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN



www.livewellcampaign.co.uk

www.chelmsford.gov.uk



1 Introduction

What is the Health and Wellbeing Plan?

The Health and Wellbeing Plan is our strategy for improving the health and wellbeing of people in the City of Chelmsford including the large urban areas of Danbury and South Woodham Ferrers and rural communities. This refresh builds on our previous Plan adopted in 2019 and broadly continues with a focus on the previous health and wellbeing priorities. This is informed by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which displays a continued need to focus on preventative health issues and address the wider determinants of health and factors that impact health outcomes and health inequalities.

The role of prevention and understanding where we play a significant role in addressing the social and wider determinants of health has been further enhanced by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as stated by the COVID-19 Marmot Review and the Essex County Council Health Inequalities report.

The purpose of our Plan is to express our shared set of aspirations and to provide a focus for collective action on the most important health and wellbeing issues facing the people of Chelmsford as part of a wide system of partners.

This aims to support Chelmsford City Council, Essex County Council, Mid Essex Alliance and NHS

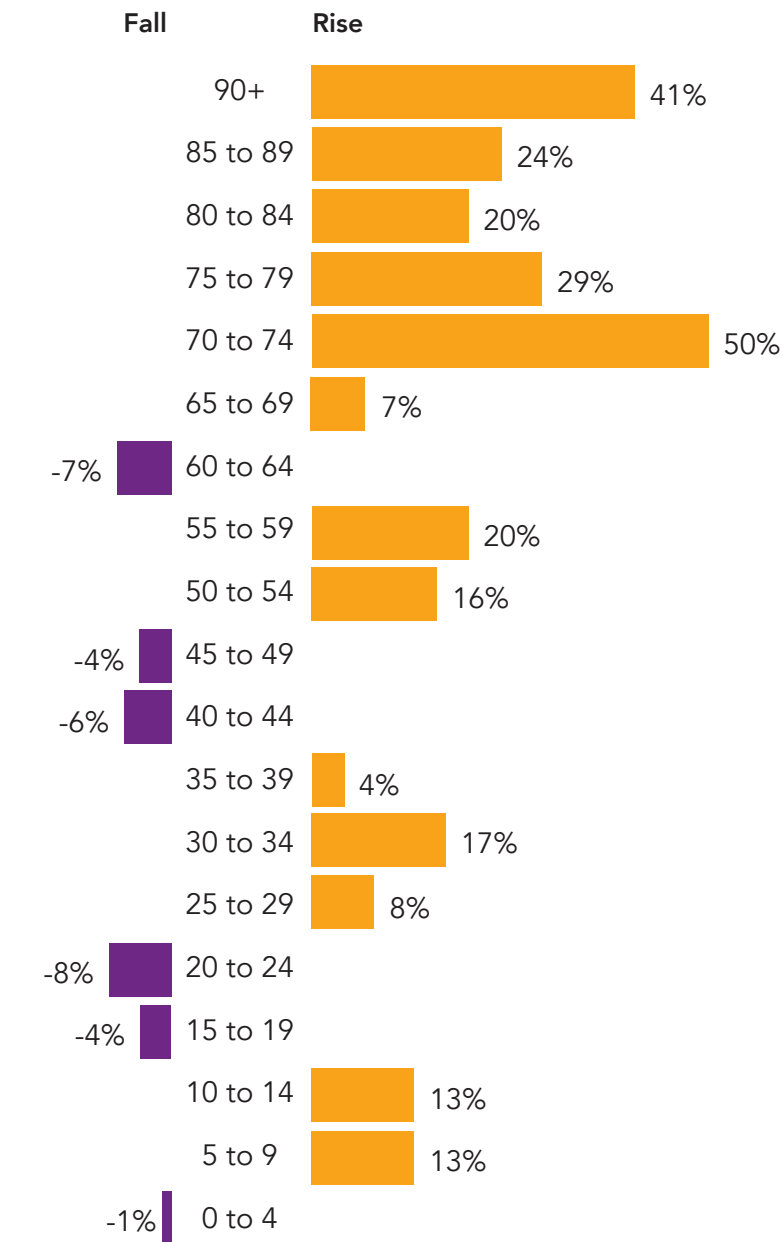
Partners, Active Essex, Culture Chelmsford and Voluntary sector organisations to combine resources and skills to help improve the health of those who live, work and play in the City of Chelmsford, including the large urban areas of Danbury and South Woodham Ferrers and rural communities.

It is only through collaborative and partnership working that Livewell Chelmsford and other key partners can support and empower people throughout their life to maximise their potential for a healthy life. The Plan also aims to encourage and enable people to do more for themselves in maintaining and improving their health and wellbeing.



2 Our District

Population change (%) by age group in Chelmsford, 2011 to 2021



Approximately 181,500 people live in the City of Chelmsford, including the large urban areas of Danbury and South Woodham Ferrers and rural communities. The population size has increased by 7.8%, from 168,300 in 2011 to 181,500 in 2021. This is higher than the overall increase for England (6.6%).

In terms of population, there has been an increase of 26.0% in people aged 65 years and over, an increase of 3.3% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 8.3% in children aged under 15 years.

Chelmsford and the surrounding areas cover an area of approximately 339 square kilometres and is the fourth largest in Essex in terms of area. As of 2021, Chelmsford is the 21st most densely populated of the East of England's 45 local authority areas, with around four people living on each football pitch-sized area of land.

Source: Census 2021

Health and wellbeing indicators across the life course in Chelmsford

BIRTH	SMOKING IN PREGNANCY In 2018/19, 6.07% of mothers were known to be smokers at the time of delivery compared to 10.59% nationally	BREASTFEEDING 77.6% mothers initiate breast feeding within 48 hours of delivery compared to the national average of 74.5%	CHILDHOOD OBESITY 17.1% children aged 10-11 are classified as obese compared to the national average of 20.4%
	TEENAGE CONCEPTION The rate of teenage conceptions is 8.0 per 1,000 which is lower than the national average of 18.8%	GCSE RESULTS Average Attainment 8 score for all pupils in state-funded school is 54.8 compared to 50.9 nationally	CHILD INJURIES 220 hospital admissions for unintentional and deliberate injuries, a rate of 68.3 per 10,000 for 0 - 14 year-olds compared to 75.7 nationally
	DIET It is estimated 55.42% of adults meet the recommended '5 a-day' compared to the national average of 57.4%	ALCOHOL 565 per 100,000 persons admitted to hospital due to alcohol-specific conditions compared to 587 nationally	PHYSICAL ACTIVITY Locally, 67.42% adults are physically active meeting the CMO recommendations. Nationally, this is 66.0%
END OF LIFE	DEATHS FROM CANCER Standardised mortality ratio for deaths from all cancer, aged under 75 is 91.4 per 100 significantly better than the national average of 100.0	EARLY DEATHS 289 per 100,000 early deaths (under 75 yrs.) significantly better than the national average of 359	UNEMPLOYMENT 3.6% of the population aged 16+ are unemployed compared to 4.5% nationally
	DEPRESSION The estimated prevalence of depression for aged 18+ is 9.2% compared to 12.3% nationally	HEALTH INEQUALITIES AND DEPRIVATION Life expectancy is 6.3 years lower for men and 4.3 lower for women in the most deprived areas of Chelmsford than in the least deprived areas. Overall inequality in life expectancy at birth is 4.3%. In 2020/21, it was recorded that there are 9.5% (3,279) children living in low income families	
	LONG TERM CONDITIONS 10.0% of population reported that they have at least two long-term conditions that limits their day to day activities and has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months. Nationally this is 12.1%	DEMENTIA The estimated dementia diagnosis rate (aged 65+) is 52.8% compared to 62% nationally	FALLS Emergency hospital admissions due to falls in people aged 65 and over is 1,850 per 100,000 compared to 2,023 nationally

The health of people in Chelmsford is generally better than the England average. The Essex Communities Needs Index also shows that on average, Chelmsford is among the best equipped for civic assets concerning community, civic, educational and cultural assets and the extent to which people have access to key services and generally has active and engaged communities. However, at smaller geographical levels, there are pockets of deprivation and higher levels of community need when compared to the district level.

3 Our Vision

“Our vision is to work with residents, communities, and partners within the health and social care system to reduce health inequalities and improve the opportunities for adults and children to livewell so that they can enjoy a healthy, safe, and fulfilling life.”

We are committed to embedding health and health equity in all local policies by following advice and guidance provided by the World Health Organisation through the UK Health Cities Network. Furthermore, by working with other organisations, we form part of a strong collective voice for public health and sustainable development.



We want the district of Chelmsford to be a place where:

- The physical environment in which people live will improve their health and wellbeing
- Children grow up to reach their full potential and are happy
- Older people feel valued and supported in their local communities
- People have access to good employment and work opportunities
- People stay healthy and enjoy life and have the resilience to cope with life's changes
- People can expect to enjoy good health, whatever their social or economic circumstances
- People are connected to their communities and each other



City Events: Chelmsford Carnival

4 Our Principles

A set of principles have been identified to enable and set the foundation for decision-making and evaluating actions against our identified health and wellbeing priorities. It is important to ensure we work towards contributing to and facilitating a sustainable health system through shifting focus from health-related work and care to prevention, early intervention, and resilience.

■ Partnership working

A commitment to a holistic and collaborative approach to improving health and wellbeing in the district, enabling statutory and voluntary sector organisations to work collaboratively and build on existing assets (A Mid Essex Asset Mapping report has been produced to support health and care partners in Asset Based Community Development approach).

■ Prevention and early intervention

A focus on improving the social determinants of health contributing to the causes of ill health, poor life choices and health conditions.

■ Increase communication and make use of technology

On-going and effective communication, co-production and engagement with people and health and care partners about health issues.

We will raise awareness of local activities and events by using the "livewell" platform for information and guidance to help communicate health and wellbeing messages.

■ Improve mental health and wellbeing

Promote a joined-up approach to mental health across all streams of work. Support the promotion of mental health in all strategies and plans where possible.

■ Effective health and wellbeing services and self-care

Contribute to achieving effective health and wellbeing services and promoting self-care by utilising and promoting social prescribing and effective signposting.



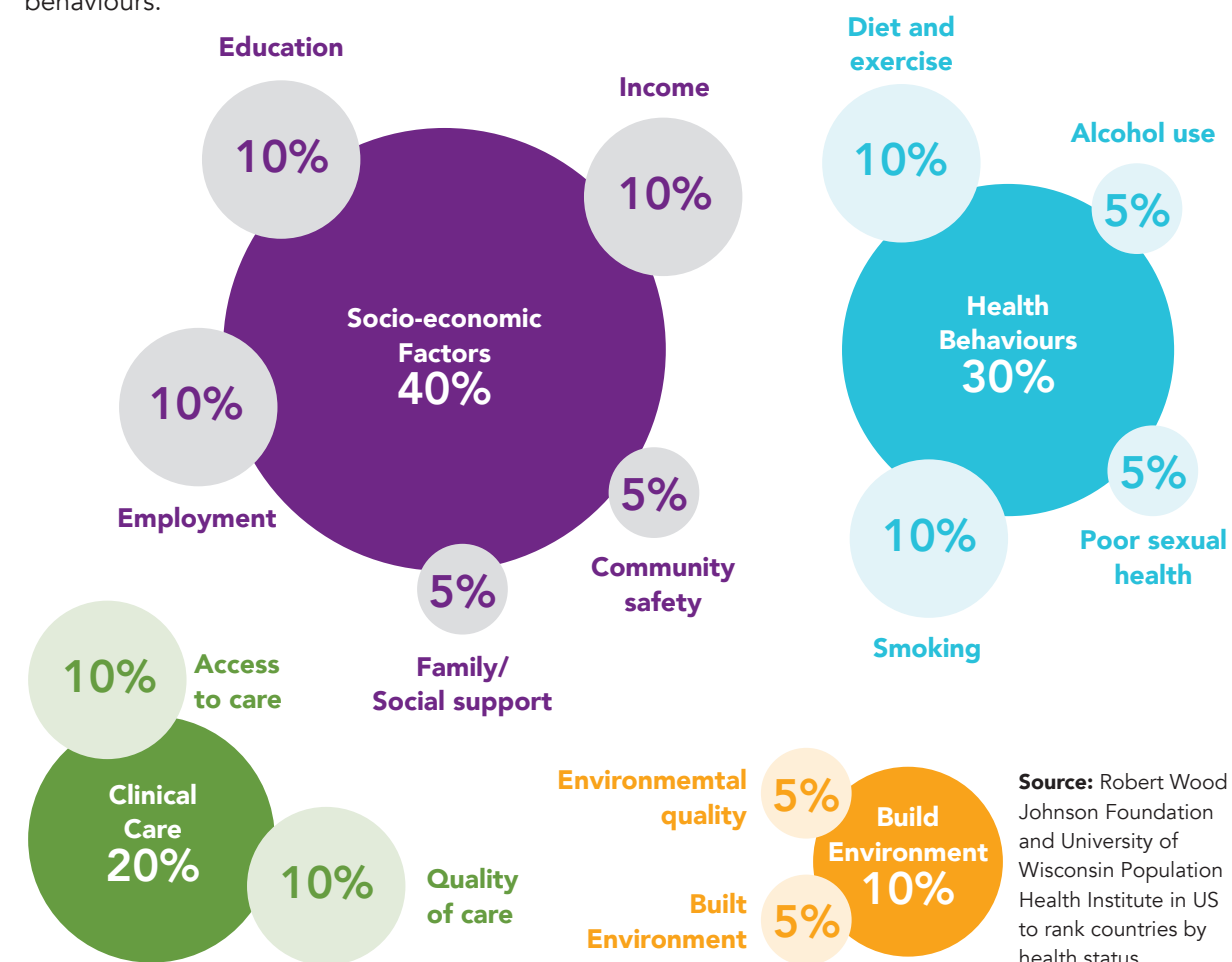
5 Strategic Context

5.1 Wider Determinants of Health

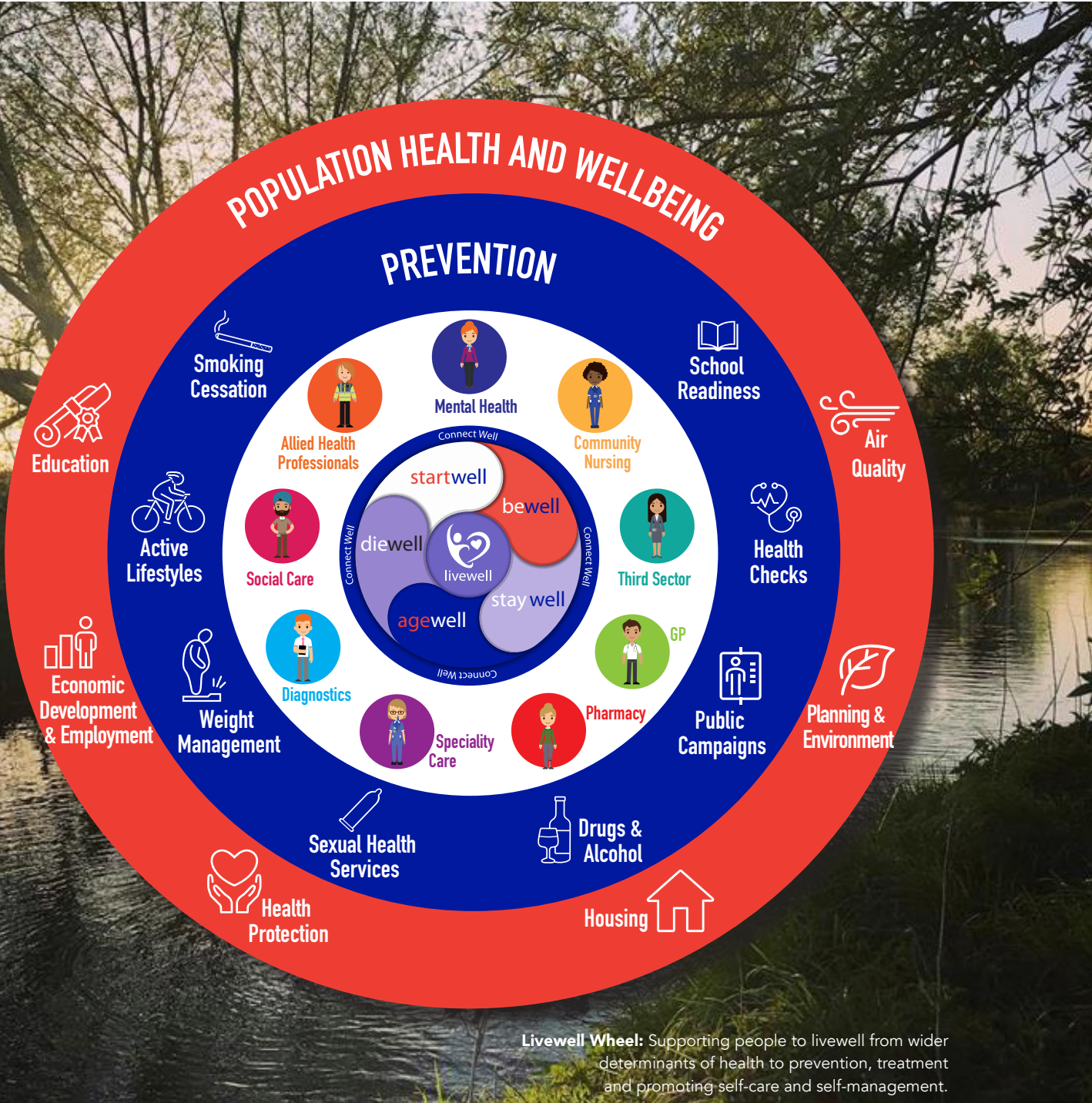
It is understood and recognised that a range of factors influences health and wellbeing. The Robert Wood Johnson model below, illustrates the wider determinants of health framework showing that health outcomes, length and quality of life are influenced by the physical environment, social and economic factors, access to clinical care and health behaviours.

The model shows that socio-economic factors have the most significant impact (40%) on health outcomes, much more than health behaviours (30%), clinical care (20%), and the built environment (10%). Consequently, our social networks, local economy, and natural environments play a crucial role in influencing our health and wellbeing.

To improve the health and wellbeing of people we must address these determinants of health collectively whilst also recognising the interdependent and interconnected nature of these. This can only be achieved by working together across the system to have an impact on all the determinants with a set of shared priorities and objectives.



5.2 Working Together



The Livewell Wheel also shows connections that support health in the system from wider determinants of health to prevention, treatment and promotion of self-care and self-management.

This Plan supportively links and is aligned to the:

- Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Mid Essex Alliance Place Plan
- Southend, Essex and Thurrock Dementia Strategy
- Essex All Age Carers Strategy
- Fit for the Future Physical Activity and Sport Strategy for Essex, Southend and Thurrock
- Chelmsford City Council's Corporate Plan.

Livewell Chelmsford is our local Health and Wellbeing Board with partners working closely to focus on and target similar priority areas. The partnership provides the opportunity for increased discussion and input into decisions that seek to maximise whole-system preventative approaches.

Chelmsford also sits under the Mid and South Essex Integrated Care System (ICS) and is covered by the Mid Essex Alliance with a Place Plan to focus on:

- Life expectancy- increasing average life expectancy
- Suicide – reducing the suicide rate
- Childhood obesity – reducing the number of children who are obese and overweight in reception and Year 6

At the neighbourhood level, there are Primary Care Networks, which are groups of GP practices covering a population of between 30,000 – 50,000. These networks are starting to work in a more collaborative way to deliver a number of nationally developed service specifications, as well as local services for their district populations. The Alliance is starting to develop integrated neighbourhood teams, complementing the work of Primary Care Networks, to deliver the hyper-local needs of our populations.

A number of key principles have been outlined for the development of these neighbourhood teams.

- Focused on prevention and wider determinants of health
- Supporting people of all ages
- Covering meaningful geographies and support all areas
- Working collaboratively with Primary Care Networks
- Demonstrably impact our population health priorities
- All health, local government and VCSE partners will be properly engaged

In Chelmsford, there are five Primary Care Networks of which two cross over local authority boundaries with Maldon and Braintree District Councils.

6 Livewell Themes

All Essex local authorities and wider partner agencies have adopted the use of the Livewell branding which highlights the high-level outcomes for the identified priority areas.

The Livewell branding enables work to be categorised in relatable formats, which can be used to convey appropriate messages through social marketing. The Livewell website has been designed to provide information about all that is on offer in Chelmsford and across Essex to improve health and wellbeing.

www.livewellcampaign.co.uk

The Diwell theme has been introduced in this refresh as our VCS and other partners on Livewell contribute to the delivery of the theme.



1 Startwell:

We will endeavour to help young families have the best start in life.



2 Staywell:

We will work together with the community and professionals to ensure our residents have access to the best clinical services.



3 Feelwell:

We will improve the access to services that address mental wellbeing.



4 Eatwell:

We will raise awareness across the district about healthier eating.



5 Bewell:

We will encourage more people to undertake regular physical activity which will, in turn, produce longer-term health benefits.



6 Agewell:

We will endeavour to encourage people to look at improving their health and wellbeing now to be able to lead a better quality of life in the future. We will also encourage and provide the opportunity for our elderly population to be more active during their retirement years.



6 Diwell:

A dignified death: palliative support for carers and relatives.



Livewell Linkwell:

A free and confidential social prescribing service that provides practical or emotional support of a non-medical nature.

7 Our Strategic Priorities

Our strategic priorities provide a continued focus on preventative health issues and addressing the wider determinants of health to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities.



Physical Activity and Healthy Weight



Alleviate Loneliness and Social Isolation



Improve Poor Housing



Enable people to Agewell in Chelmsford



Reduce alcohol, substance misuse and behavioural addictions (including supply of illegal substances)

Within each priority area, it is important to consider how our actions and how each area of focus is likely to affect certain groups, particularly the most disadvantaged and vulnerable.

This can include but is not limited to:

- Carers
- People who are homeless
- People with learning disabilities or physical health problems
- Ethnic minority groups
- Low-income groups
- Older adults
- Children and young people

For each priority area, we have sought to identify action at every stage of the 'life course' using the appropriate livewell themes.

It is also important to note that all priority areas are equal, not one is more important than the other. However, for some people some priorities may be more important than others.

7.1 Physical Activity and Healthy Weight

Obesity is associated with and increases the risk of developing a number of health conditions such as type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease and stroke. It can also exacerbate conditions such as asthma and psychological problems such as social isolation and low self-esteem.

The rising prevalence of obesity is a global and national health problem, and the fundamental causes of obesity are the imbalance between energy intake and energy expenditure. However, several factors can influence this, including genetics, lifestyle, and medication.

Childhood obesity is a good indicator of adult obesity which can lead to poor health outcomes and there is also a concern about the rise of childhood obesity and the implications of such persisting into adulthood. In Chelmsford, 58.1% of adults are classified as overweight or obese, 19.9% children in reception are overweight or obese and this increases to 31.8% for children in Year 6.

Whilst this priority mainly focuses on preventing excess weight due to the prevalence of obesity, it is also important to consider eating disorders that may impact on healthy weight such as bulimia, anorexia and body dysmorphia.

Physical Activity

Evidence shows that regular physical activity provides a range of physical and mental health and social benefits. The recent Active Lives data shows that 18.7% of adults are physically inactive, having less than 30 minutes a day of physical activity and 67.4% of adults are achieving at least 150 minutes of physical activity. Within the children and young people population, 40.8% of children aged 5 to 16 years are achieving the Chief Medical Officers' physical activity guidelines of 60 minutes or more every day.

Healthy Eating

Poor diet and nutrition are recognised as major contributory risk factors to ill health.

According to the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, 60.6% of the adult population are meeting the recommended '5-a-day' on a 'usual day'.

COVID-19 Impact on Physical Activity and Healthy Weight

Locally, nationally, and globally, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a detrimental impact on the way we all live, learn and

work. The Marmot COVID-19 review stated that the impacts of the pandemic are likely to be felt across every stage of life course, from the best start in life with the rise of child and food poverty, to employment and impact on low-income groups. Health behaviours in this priority are also likely to have been impacted where physical activity was significantly reduced and potential increases in poor dietary habits.

Within this priority, it is also important to consider the current rising issues of the increased cost of living and the rise of food poverty.

What we do and will do:

Bewell: We will encourage more people to undertake regular physical activity which will, in turn, produce longer-term health benefits.

- Promote and encourage engagement in physical activity through Active Chelmsford, Active Essex Activity Finder, Find Your Active, Livewell Campaign and other partners
- Work within the planning system to create healthier built environments designed to support healthy lifestyle choices

- Work in partnership to maximise and encourage the use of green space for exercise
- Ensure new developments encourage sustainable travel, walking and cycling
- Promote healthy placemaking principles such as access to green spaces and community facilities
- Support and promote active travel initiatives such as Stop, Swap, Go and GoJauntly Essex-based walks
- Maximise our social prescribing teams and health and wellbeing coaches working in partnership across the system to support people's health and wellbeing
- Continue to develop and offer new activities such as community gardening, walking and community My Weigh Matters sessions
- Support the delivery of Fit for the Future Strategy for Essex, Southend, and Thurrock
- Promote physical activity sessions as a part of carer wellbeing activities.
- Co-ordinate the Playing Pitch Strategy group bringing NGBs, Sport

England and Chelmsford City Council to ensure a coordinated approach to future developments and access to facilities

- Use Active Chelmsford to raise the profile of sport and physical activity while investing in local projects
- To further develop the Sport for Confidence model at Riverside (subject to UK Shared Prosperity Fund) to help a wider range of groups to participate in leisure opportunities, with a specific focus on young people
- To appoint an Active Health Coordinator (subject to UK Shared Prosperity Fund) to enhance the exercise referral scheme and develop new opportunities with key health partners, such as the cancer referral scheme and pre/post-op hospital referrals
- Use Ride London as a vehicle to promote cycling opportunities to people of all ages and abilities. Utilise the grants available from London Marathon Events and Essex County Council to achieve the objective

Eatwell: We will raise awareness across the district about healthier eating.

- Improve nutritional awareness, and healthy eating and help low-income households access healthy food options
- Produce and implement a Food Plan to raise awareness of healthy eating, and accessing healthier and more sustainable diets
- Maintain current TuckIN pledges and increase the uptake of the healthier eating pledge TuckIN by food businesses throughout the district
- Host sessions on healthy eating as part of carer wellbeing activities.
- Successful delivery of Essex Activate, providing hot meals and physical activity to children on free school meals
- To fund the launch of a Social Supermarket for Chelmsford offering discounted groceries to those Chelmsford residents who are most in need (subject to UK Shared Prosperity Fund)
- Enhance the use of Health Impact Assessment for new developments through the Livewell Development Accreditation

7.2 Alleviate Loneliness and Social Isolation

Social isolation is characterised by an absence of social interaction, social support structures and engagement with the wider community activities. Loneliness describes an individual's subjective sense of lacking contact with social interactions to the extent that they are not wanted or needed. Loneliness and isolation have both been identified as part of the most significant public health challenges of our time and one of the most significant risks to the quality of life for older people.

Anyone can experience social isolation and loneliness. There are a wide range of factors that can exacerbate feelings of being socially isolated or experiencing loneliness. This includes demographic changes, retirement, bereavement, disability, becoming a carer or hospitalisation. Research suggests that feeling lonely or socially isolated is linked to an increased risk of heart disease or stroke and depression. Livewell Chelmsford continues to prioritise loneliness and social isolation as it is recognised that it can have an impact on mental and physical health.

COVID-19 Impact on Loneliness and Social Isolation

Locally, nationally, and globally, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a detrimental impact on the way we all live, learn and work. The Marmot COVID-19 review stated that the impacts of the pandemic are likely to be felt across every stage of life course, from the best start in life with the rise of child and food poverty, to employment and impact on low-income groups. Within this priority, research shows that people who were already at risk of being lonely, this includes young adults, digitally excluded groups, people with low household income and adults living alone, experienced heightened risk during the pandemic. This has highlighted a need to continue to address factors that may contribute to social isolation and loneliness and enhance efforts towards increasing social interactions and helping communities to reconnect.

What we do and will do:

Bewell:

- Promote and encourage engagement in physical activity through Active Chelmsford, Active Essex Activity Finder, Find Your Active, Livewell Campaign and other partners
- Support a programming of events and activities to include those who are alone
- Work collaboratively to fill gaps in the provision
- Use our online searchable directory, Chelmsford Connects, for local assets to enable people to identify local groups, networks and activities
- With funding through Find Your Active, continue to work with Chelmsford City Council on the Forever Active programme connecting people to physical activity opportunities
- Using our Find Your Active Community Connector to meet with people and support them to access opportunities to get out of their homes and be more active

Feelwell:

- Promote health and wellbeing messages through Livewell Campaign and wider partners' communication platforms
- Support further exploration of community led creative space via Ignite Chelmsford Cultural Partnership
- Promote social interventions and capitalise on the use of local Link Workers through the Live Well, Link Well social prescribing initiative
- Work with partners to develop, invest, commission and deliver a distinctive city-wide programme of cultural events and activities that are reflective of our communities



Chelmsford CVS: The Men's Shed Chelmsford

7.3 Improve Poor Housing

The quality of housing greatly affects the health and wellbeing of residents. Poor housing can be a result of inadequate insulation, and poor and expensive heating systems. This can cause many preventable diseases and injuries, including respiratory diseases such as asthma and bronchitis, cardiovascular diseases, and cancer. It can also have a detrimental impact on mental health and living in a cold home can increase the risk of falls and other accidents.

A report by BRE states that the cost burden to the NHS caused by poor quality homes in England could be costing £1.4billion a year in treating people with illnesses directly linked to living in cold, damp, and dangerous homes. The Chelmsford housing market is made up of private-rented, and social sectors. 73.8% of households in Chelmsford are owner-occupied, 13.1% social tenants and 13.0% are private tenants.

Official Statistics show that 10.6% of households in Chelmsford were fuel poor in 2020, which is approximately 8,000 households.

A household is considered fuel poor if it spends more than 10% of its income on fuel to maintain an adequate standard of warmth. At a more local level, the 2019 statistics for LSOAs within Waterhouse Farm, Trinity, Marconi and Writtle wards show a high proportion of households in fuel poverty, at 18% (156 households), 23% (166 households) and 18% (156 households) respectively.

To reduce the risk of health from living in poor housing conditions, Livewell Chelmsford will work in partnership with local organisations and partners to raise awareness of the opportunities available to reduce fuel bills and stay warm throughout the winter months.

COVID-19 Impact on Poor Housing and Fuel Poverty

Locally, nationally, and globally, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a detrimental impact on the way we all live, learn and work. The Marmot COVID-19 review stated that the impacts of the pandemic are likely to be felt across every stage of life course, from the best start in life with the rise of child and food poverty, to employment and impact on low-income groups. Within this priority, it is particularly important to consider the implications of the pandemic and the rising costs of living for low-income and vulnerable groups in Chelmsford.

What we do and will do:

Staywell:

- Promote energy switch schemes and engage with initiatives that aim to help heat homes and reduce fuel bills
- Partnership working to deliver Warm Homes Fund, including recruitment of a Sustainable Warmth Officer to promote energy efficient schemes
- Engage with energy suppliers to identify households that would benefit from energy efficiency improvement through the Energy Company Obligation – help to heat scheme
- Engage with fuel poverty forums for partnership working and building a collaborative network
- Provision of the discretionary interest-free Healthy Homes Loan for repair works to a property to remedy health and safety hazards
- Work with partners to develop, invest, commission and deliver a distinctive city-wide programme of

cultura events and activities that are reflective of our communities

- Social Prescribers will support people to connect with local support, advice, and guidance available for people such as warm home grants, benefit checks and household support fund
- Promote the use of Chelmsford Connects, an online searchable directory of local assets including agencies that can offer expert advice such as Citizens Advice, Peabody and HomeStart
- Develop a new homelessness strategy and action plan which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and review it annually. The strategy aims to increase the number of households that are prevented from becoming homeless, increase involvement of other agencies supporting to prevent homelessness, improve the quality and reduce cost of temporary accommodation and increase choice and options for those at risk of homelessness

- Work in partnership with Aran Services to deliver the Warm Homes Fund project, delivering the commitment for 20 vulnerable families a year

Agewell:

- Promote schemes and programmes that aim to prevent falls in the City through livewell
- Increase access to available resources which support people with the rising cost of fuel
- Offer weekly benefits surgery for carers to look at income maximisation



7.4 Enable People to Agewell in Chelmsford

Chelmsford has a relatively high ageing population and has had a 26% increase in people aged 65 years and over from 2011 to 2021. ONS population projections using 2018-based estimates indicate that there will be nearly twice as many people aged 90+ by 2043.

An ageing population puts a high demand on health, social care services and housing needs.

It is therefore important for us to help people age well and remain independent for as long as possible. This includes areas of work, such as helping to prevent falls amongst those at risk and enabling people to live well with dementia.



Preventing and reducing falls

The risks and consequences of a fall amongst older people are particularly high, with potentially severe pain, injury and loss of independence. Falls are a common and serious health issue for older people with around a third of all people aged 65 and over falling each year, increasing to half of those aged 80 and over. According to the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, the standardised rate for hip fractures in people aged 65+ was 472 per 100,000 in 2020/21.

Preventing falls is important for the health and wellbeing of older people and those that care for them, as well as for the future of our health and social care services. Fortunately, many falls and fractures can be prevented by well-organised services, including those within the community and organisations working in partnership. For example, engaging older people in regular physical activity to develop and maintain strength and balance.

Enabling people to livewell with dementia

Dementia is an umbrella term that is used to describe a group of progressive symptoms such as memory loss and personality changes. While dementia is a degenerative condition, people can live with it for 7-12 years after diagnosis, so it is important that people are able to live well with dementia for as long as possible.

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities shows a decrease in the estimated dementia diagnosis rate for those aged 65+ from 55.2% in 2021 to 52.8% in 2022. The trend for the estimated dementia diagnosis rate between 2018 to 2022 has been noted as being significantly worse when compared to the national average. A timely diagnosis enables people living with dementia, their carers and healthcare staff to plan accordingly and work together to improve health and care outcomes.

Within this priority, it is important to recognise the contribution of carers and the need to support their health and wellbeing. Unpaid

family carers are more likely to be socially isolated, and experience poor health and young carers are likely to experience mental health issues, including anxiety and depression and achieve lower educational outcomes than non-carers.

COVID-19 Impact on the older population

Locally, nationally, and globally, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a detrimental impact on the way we all live, learn and work. The Marmot COVID-19 review stated that the impacts of the pandemic are likely to be felt across every stage of life course, from the best start in life with the rise of child and food poverty, to employment and impact on low-income groups.

Research by AgeUK (2020) highlighted that the pandemic had a significant impact on the older population, from anxiety and fear of the virus, loss of mental and physical capacity and loneliness and isolation. Within this priority, it is particularly important to consider the implications of the pandemic on the ageing population and ensure actions support reconditioning and reconnecting with local communities.

What we do and will do

Bewell:

- Increase opportunities for older people to engage in physical activity with an enhanced Forever Active programme
- Promote the use of Chelmsford Connects an online searchable directory of local assets that includes agencies that can offer activities or support for older people and those with dementia such as Age Concern and Mid Essex Alzheimer’s
- Continue to develop Men’s Shed to encourage older men to connect
- With funding through Find Your Active, continue to work with Chelmsford City Council on the Forever Active programme connecting people to physical activity opportunities
- Using our Find Your Active Community Connector to meet with people and support them to access opportunities to get out of their homes and be more active

Feelwell:

- Raise awareness of available information, signposting and guidance for carers through the livewell platform and other partner platforms
- Work with partners to develop, invest, commission and deliver a distinctive city-wide programme of cultural events and activities that are reflective of our communities. Providing support and information in new and accessible ways and encouraging communities to be involved in developing programmes
- Social Prescribers will support older people to connect with local support, advice and guidance, especially at times of change in their lives such as retirement, bereavement, ill health and leaving hospital
- Support digital inclusion for older people

7.4 Enable People to Agewell in Chelmsford

Agewell:

- Promote the Chelmsford Dementia Action Alliance and Dementia Friends initiative to continue to increase knowledge and understanding of dementia so that that people with dementia, their families and carers can continue to lead happy, healthy and fulfilling lives
- Raise awareness of programmes that aim to prevent falls through livewell
- Partnership working on allocation of the Better Care Fund and Disabled Facilities Grant on home adaptations to help reduce the risk of injury
- Work with partners to develop, invest, commission and deliver a distinctive city-wide programme of cultural events and activities that are accessible to communities and through outreach, harnessing existing relationships in the community and providing support and information in accessible ways
- Commit to offering all staff and volunteers Dementia Friends training
- Ensure the planning system works to provide suitable housing for all needs and provide and protect community facilities
- Our Primary Care Network partners will support to increase fall referrals
- Work towards providing an adequate supply of homes that meet the needs and demands of an ageing population



7.5 Reduce Alcohol, Substance Misuse and Behavioural Addictions (including supply of illegal substances)

Drinking alcohol and smoking can cause or contribute to the development of many preventable health conditions. Chelmsford has the 4th lowest smoking prevalence (12.6%) in Essex which is significantly better than the England average (15.9%) and Essex average (15.2%).

However, the prevalence of smoking is higher in people in routine and manual jobs (26.7%) and those with long-term mental health conditions (18%).

Alcohol-specific admissions to hospital in Chelmsford were 318 per 100,000 population in 2020/21 and alcohol-related mortality is 28 per 100,000. However, this is higher in males at 41.9 per 100,000 and lower in females at 16.1 per 100,000.

Reducing harmful drinking is one of our health and wellbeing priorities as it has a detrimental effect on the mental and physical health of an individual, and community safety. Since 2018/19 the trends for alcohol-specific conditions have slightly decreased year on year. The reasons for alcohol misuse can be complex and are primarily driven by the price and

availability of alcohol added to the social and economic disparities. Alcohol-specific and related admissions can be reduced through local intervention to reduce alcohol misuse and harm.

Chelmsford also faces issues related to gangs and drug-related violence, and the risk factors of these issues are associated with substance and alcohol misuse, anti-social behaviour, deprivation, pro-criminal peers and high unauthorised absence.

COVID-19 Impact on alcohol consumption

Locally, nationally, and globally, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a detrimental impact on the way we all live, learn and work. The Marmot COVID-19 review stated that the impacts of the pandemic are likely to be felt across every stage of life course, from the best start in life with the rise of child and food poverty, to employment and impact on low-income groups. Within this priority, it is particularly important to consider the implications of the pandemic due as research has shown that the pandemic seems to have accelerated the trends of alcohol consumption.

What we do and will do:

Staywell:

- Work in partnership with Licensing to ensure responsibility for alcohol availability and act to reduce alcohol harms
- Work with commissioned alcohol and drug intervention providers and treatment agencies and alongside charitable organisations that are addressing the needs of the community
- Deliver the Community Safety Action Plan
- Implement the Public Space Protection Order
- Partnership working to deliver services to support and prevent young people from getting involved in crime
- Work effectively with the Essex Violence and Vulnerability Team in our Community Safety Partnership Hub

- Work in partnership with charities such as Gangsline, St Giles Trust and Reach Every Generation to deliver awareness training to young people, parents and professionals on drug trafficking
 - Art and cultural services partnership working to develop events and cultural programmes accessible to communities through outreach.
- Feelwell:**
- Delivery of the Chelmsford SOS Bus Project in partnership with Open Road, Street Pastors and other partners
 - Strategic representation and engagement in key groups such as the Mid Essex Children's Partnership Board
 - Social Prescribers will support people to connect with local support, advice, and guidance available for those with drug or alcohol-related issues
 - Promote the use of Chelmsford Connects, an online searchable directory of local assets which include agencies that can offer activities or support for people with drug or alcohol-related issues to ensure effective signposting to the support available
 - We will continue to work collaboratively with agencies such as Safer Chelmsford, Open Road, the Children's Society and Keep It 100 Essex to develop and offer local solutions to emerging needs in this theme
 - Work in partnership to deliver services that support and prevent young people from getting involved in crime through the Early Intervention Youth Fund
 - Work in partnership with Essex Police on tackling drug trafficking through Operation Overwatch and Op Aegis
 - Work collaboratively across Essex to tackle the influences of gangs, organised crime and knife crime and the impact it has on our district



8 Taking health and wellbeing forward

We aim to ensure that the outcomes of health and wellbeing work that have already been implemented will be effectively evaluated to provide an evidence base to enable successful projects to continue.

Furthermore, through close partnership work, and the collaboration of ideas with our local health and wellbeing board, Livewell Chelmsford, we will continue to explore opportunities to implement new and innovative schemes that effectively promote good health.

We cannot achieve these priorities alone. Delivering this strategy will not only require the health and wellbeing board but all our partners, communities and residents.

What will success look like?

Success will be measured locally and on county-wide bases against the Joint Essex Health and Wellbeing Strategy. However, longer-term this will be measured against improvement in the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities health profile for Chelmsford.

We will also use the Thriving Places Index to help us look at the strengths and challenges of our City, to help us identify whether the conditions are in place for people to thrive, fairly and sustainably. The Thriving Place Index consists of a broad set of indicators from datasets produced by established national data agencies such as the Office for National Statistics (ONS), Office for Health Improvement and Disparities and the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

For more information:

Office for Health Improvement and Disparities – Health Profile:

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/static-reports/health-profiles/2019/e07000070.html?areaname=chelmsford>

Thriving Places Index

www.thrivingplacesindex.org/candidates/E07000070

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

<https://data.essex.gov.uk/explore-jsna-data/>



Glossary

- CMO:** Chief Medical Officer
- ECC:** Essex County Council
- EJHWS:** Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- ICS:** Integrated Care System
- JSNA:** Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- LSOA:** Lower Super Output Area
- NGBs:** National Governing Bodies
- VCS:** Voluntary and Community Sector
- VCSE:** Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise



Civic Centre, Duke Street
Chelmsford, Essex
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Chelmsford City Council Cabinet

18 October 2022

Gateway to Homechoice

Report by: Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford

Officer Contact: Paul Gayler, Strategic Housing Services Manager
Email paul.gayler@chelmsford.gov.uk Telephone 01245 606375

Purpose

To confirm that the Council wishes to become a member of the Gateway to Homechoice consortium for the allocation of affordable housing and that changes will therefore be made to the Council's policy for the allocation of affordable homes.

Options

To meet the Council's legal duty (to have a policy and a system for processing and prioritising applications for affordable housing), the Council may:

- 1) Retain its existing policy and system or
- 2) Become a partner of the Gateway to Homechoice scheme.

Preferred option and reasons

Option 2 is the preferred option and is already an action in the Council's Housing Strategy. This would provide more choice and mobility for applicants to the Council's Housing Register and make best use of existing housing supply.

Option 1 leaves the Council with greater control over the allocation of homes but the benefits of choice and mobility outweigh this.

Recommendations

1. That the current policy for the allocation of affordable homes be amended to facilitate the Council's Housing Service joining Gateway to Homechoice.
2. That the Director of Sustainable Development be granted delegated authority to make the necessary amendments to this policy in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford.
3. That the Cabinet approve £137,500 additional staffing costs for Allocations Team in Year 1 (2023/24) which from Year 2 (2024/25) will be funded through additional

homes reducing TA demand (costs). Recruitment should begin immediately, so approval of up to £60,000 additional budget for staffing is sought for 2022/23.

1. Background

- 1.1 Local Housing Authorities are required by law to have both a policy and a process for the allocation of affordable homes. Having a choice-based lettings (CBL) system to meet this obligation is strongly encouraged as applicants can see which homes are available and the lettings process is open and transparent. Chelmsford City Council adopted CBL over 20 years ago and this approach continues to work well.
- 1.2 Gateway to Homechoice is a CBL system for operating a housing register and the allocation of affordable homes procured by a consortium of local housing authorities in Essex and Suffolk. The difference compared with the Council's current CBL system is that all local authorities in the Gateway to Homechoice region have the same policy for the assessment of housing need and allocation of housing. This provides opportunities for most applicants to register with one local authority but apply for housing in the other districts as well as their own. The only exception to this is for those who are accepted as statutorily homeless who are restricted to applying for homes in the district that accepted them as homeless.
- 1.3 Our Housing Service has built links with our neighbouring authorities, for example jointly procuring services to help rough sleepers and those who are at risk of homelessness through domestic abuse. At both operational and strategic levels, it makes sense to reflect this within our policies and processes for the allocation of affordable homes as well. Joining Gateway to Homechoice would enable us to provide housing options across a much wider area than just within our own district to those on the Housing Register. This would give applicants access to a greater number of homes across a wider area. At a strategic level this will create more opportunities for the Council to work with other local housing authorities on new developments of affordable homes.
- 1.4 Most applicants will still want to find a home within the Chelmsford area but what may be a significant minority could be helped by the opportunity of moving to another area. Some families facing a wait of over four years for a larger home may prefer to bid for a home outside Chelmsford that is available more quickly. This would help them; it could also shorten the wait for others who do not wish to move areas.

2. Implications

- 2.1 Becoming part of Gateway to Homechoice will have implications which need to be recognised and understood.
- 2.2 Better mobility: As noted above, joining Gateway to Homechoice is expected to mean some applicants will wish to move areas to take advantage of quicker availability of a permanent home. We also expect movement in the other direction, but the experiences of Ipswich and Colchester suggest a net outward movement of perhaps 200 households a year to other areas. This will be monitored on a regular basis;

offers of homes to anyone from outside a district can be paused if there is an imbalance between need and supply.

- 2.3 Better use of existing housing stock: Part of the reason for expecting to achieve a net benefit is that, for various reasons, the provision of affordable homes is not consistent from one district to another, in terms of proportion, type and size. Each area may have both an under-supply of certain types of homes and an over-supply of other types. By pooling with other local housing authorities, some local peaks and troughs between supply and need can be smoothed.
- 2.4 Common housing register: Registered Providers will also be able to dispense with their own internal waiting lists for transfers, using the same policy and process for all their homes regardless of where in the sub-region they may be, helping to create what is called a 'common housing register', i.e. one single system for all applicants regardless of whether or not they are currently tenants in affordable housing.
- 2.5 Policy change: the fundamental aspects of all allocation policies are the same as they must comply with legal requirements, ensuring that those who are owed a legal duty, such as those who are homeless and vulnerable, are given priority. There are, though, some differences between Gateway to Homechoice policy and the Council's current policy which would need to be aligned. These are described below; other than giving a wider area of choice, they are not significant.

3. Changes to Policy

- 3.1 Local connection: local housing authorities can restrict applications to their housing registers to those who have lived in the local area for a minimum period. The Council introduced a local connection requirement in 2018. By contrast, applications under the Gateway to Homechoice policy can be made by anyone, as was the case with the Council's own policy until 2018. Both policies give preference to those within their area. The 2018 change has not made any difference to the growing gap between need and supply because most if not all general needs homes are allocated to those with a higher priority (those owed a duty under the homelessness legislation or living in unsuitable housing). So this change in policy is unlikely to be disadvantageous.
- 3.2 Levels of priority: Gateway to Homechoice has an additional band for those who wish to apply for housing but have no housing need. As with local connection, this is something the Council used to allow under the previous policy but dispensed with as few if any applicants were ever housed from this group. The new band would create a helpful indication as to the level of demand (rather than need) for affordable homes and reduce delays for those whose housing need becomes more urgent in the future, so this is not seen as a negative.
- 3.3 Bids per cycle: currently, each applicant is allowed to bid for up to 3 properties at any time and they can be suspended if they refuse more than two offers which are suitable. Under Gateway to Homechoice, only 2 are bids are allowed but there is no penalty for refusing an offer of a property.
- 3.4 Bidding process: there are some differences in the way bids are made for those in temporary accommodation. These are unlikely to be significant and could reduce the number of appeals, something identified in the recent peer review of our Housing Service as being unusually high.

- 3.5 Financial eligibility: the Council's policy is to assess the amount each applicant has available to meet their housing costs and consider whether they could find suitable housing from the private sector, in which case they will not be eligible to join the Housing Register. The Gateway to Homechoice policy is to place those above a pre-set level of income into Band D. This will make it easier for applicants to understand what the threshold is at an earlier stage.

4. Implementation

- 4.1 Local Housing Authorities have a duty to consult Registered Providers on any substantial changes to their allocations policy as this may affect their own policies for granting tenancies. We will need a consultation exercise later this year. The possibility of joining the Gateway to Homechoice scheme was discussed with several Registered Providers during the consultation on the new Housing Strategy. Some were very positive about this possibility as it is what they are already familiar with and using for the majority of their housing in other parts of Essex. We are not therefore expecting any concerns to emerge.
- 4.2 Before joining the Gateway to Homechoice scheme, all current applicants would have to be checked and re-assessed. This was last done in 2019/20 when the Council changed its allocations policy. We expect this to take about three months.
- 4.3 The Housing Allocations team will need to be increased to reflect current working practices and to support with the new system; this will provide capacity to manage the transition and implement the new Gateway to Homechoice scheme. This increase in staffing will cost up to £60,000 in 2022/23 and £137,500 in 2023/24 with an offsetting saving expected from 2024/25 as the system is embedded and more properties become available to Chelmsford.
- 4.4 Given these implementation steps, the aim will be to switch over to Gateway to Homechoice in September 2023.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 As the recent report to Overview and Scrutiny on Temporary Accommodation noted, there is a growing need for temporary accommodation being experienced by many local authorities, including the City Council, which is creating a significant challenge. Joining Gateway to Homechoice is one of the measures that can widen the supply of permanent homes to help meet this need. Starting to take the preparatory steps now, as planned in the Housing Strategy, is critical if the benefits are to be realised within the next two years.

List of appendices:

None

Background papers:

Gateway to Homechoice Annual Report 2021/22

<https://www.gatewaytohomechoice.org.uk/content/Information/AnnualReport202122#Section%2010>

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: all local housing authorities must have both policies and systems in place for the allocation of affordable homes in their area. There is also a duty to ensure that reasonable preference is awarded to those in greatest need due to homelessness and overcrowding. Joining Gateway to Homechoice will improve options and the supply of homes to meet these duties. It will also resolve some challenges the Council faces in meeting the Domestic Abuse Act.

Financial: There will be an additional cost whilst two systems are needed in the same year to enable transition of data but in the longer term an improved supply will help reduce the backlog of need that would otherwise occur and the additional financial costs associated with this. The current cost of acquiring the Gateway to Homechoice system for both allocations and homelessness is less than the Council is currently paying, justifying in the longer term the additional cost of implementation.

There are additional costs of £137,500 for the new Housing Allocations team for the 2023/24 Original Budget, and up to £60,000 for 22/23 depending on when staff are appointed, but a saving will be generated to offset this once the new system is operational.

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: none

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: none

Personnel: there is a need to increase the size of the Council's Housing Allocations Team but this has already been recognised as a priority for the Service. A larger team will also mean there is capacity to manage this project.

Risk Management: the greatest risk is that inward migration in the future reduces supply to local people in need. There are controls to manage this risk mentioned above in the report.

Equality and Diversity: all allocations policies must comply with the requirements of the Equality Act. Improving the number and type of homes available, including those adapted for older people, improves options for those with protected characteristics.

Health and Safety: none

Digital: there will be a change of software used for application to the Housing Register, advertising and allocation of affordable homes included as part of membership of the group.

Other: none

Consultees: Registered Providers will be formally consulted as part of the implementation plan.

Relevant Policies and Strategies: Chelmsford City Council Housing and Homelessness Strategies



Chelmsford City Council Cabinet

18th October 2022

Financial Update Report

Report by:

Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford

Officer Contact:

Phil Reeves, Accountancy Services Manager Section 151, Phil.reeves@chelmsford.gov.uk, 01245 606562

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Council's financial position which has been adversely affected by a very significant rise in inflation that has reached 40-year highs as well broader economic disruption. The report also includes a number of recommended actions.

Options

After consideration of the updated financial information, to:

1. Approve the actions identified and note the update,
2. Note the update and amend the actions, or
3. Approve the actions identified and note the update

Preferred option and reasons

Approve the actions identified and note the update

Recommendations; that Cabinet

1. note the updated financial projection.
2. ask Directors to undertake an urgent review of fees and charges
3. approve the additional capital expenditure identified in Appendix 1 paragraph 1.24

1. Introduction

The Council-approved (July 2022) Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2022/23 – 2027/28 provides a financial framework to support delivery of the Council's priorities as set out in "Our Chelmsford; Our Plan".

This report provides an update to the MTFS, as the financial position has worsened as a result of national and international events. The chief cause is the prolonged levels of very high inflation.

The Council also faces considerable uncertainty on key elements of its current and future budgets.

The figures contained in this report are projections and will be subject to revision, as the Council is in the process of compiling a detailed 2023/24 budget. However, all indications are that the Council faces very significant budget gaps for the current and future years.

The problems the City Council is facing are not unique. Analysis undertaken nationally by Grant Thornton, who forecast budget gaps for 2023/24 for different tiers of councils, shows that similar councils across England are also grappling with very large budget gaps. Moreover, the Government has made plain that, unlike with Covid-19, we should not expect a national solution to these problems in the form of increased Government grants.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 The exceptionally difficult financial position the Council faces has arisen broadly as a result of:

- a) **Inflation of 10%** - The UK economy has not experienced such high levels of inflation in 40 years. The impact on the Council's budget has been significant in a number of areas that are discussed in the report but include higher vehicle fuel costs, especially in waste collection and recycling services, increased energy costs in all our buildings but particularly in leisure centres, higher than budgeted pay award (the national pay award for Council staff will result in an increase of staff costs of nearly 7% as a third of Council staff would otherwise have been paid less than the national living wage) and investment project costs (capital expenditure). Based on current projections, the cost of Waste and Recycling Service could increase by £22k per week and Leisure Centres £36k a week in 2023/24. The context for these variations is that a Council Tax increase of £5, the maximum allowed before referendum, generates an extra £350k in a whole year (less than £7k per week).
- b) While the Government has announced Support for Energy Costs, this seems to be designed to prevent costs escalating even higher; it remains unclear if it covers the rises that have already occurred. Moreover, both the level of support and whether it will continue into 2023/24 remain uncertain.

- c) Government Funding uncertainty – The Government announced earlier this year that it would provide a two-year funding settlement, raising hopes that it had taken into account the need for local authorities to plan ahead. But it has now asked all departments to seek savings, putting this in doubt. This may place significant further pressure on the Council's budget.
 - d) Interest Rates – higher rates impact on investment returns and borrowing costs.
- 2.2 The impact of these issues is discussed in the report, in Appendix 1. The Council faces an increasingly challenging position. On a like-for-like basis, since the MTFS was published, the forecast deficit for 2023-24 has risen from £4.2m to £7.9m. However, this report identifies a range of measures and assumptions that could be taken to reduce the deficit to £2.1m.
- 2.3 The Cabinet will receive updates next month on current year (2022/23) capital and revenue expenditure. Present indications are that a revenue overspend of up to £2.5m is possible (before allowing for business rate retention gains). This figure assumes that the pay award is agreed in line with the national offer to Council staff; a significant part of the foreseeable overspend is £1.5m of pay, reflecting the high-inflation environment.
- 2.4 There are large forecasting risks in the projections for 2023-24 and future years, given the volatility in the economy. This report is an update based on current data, but it does not provide comprehensive modelling of those risks. It should be noted that Services are currently completing detailed budgets which will determine the actual budget gap. At the same time, officers are working with Cabinet members to identify ways in which the Council can achieve a balanced budget for 2023/24.
- 2.5 At the time of drafting, it is expected that the use of unearmarked reserves in 2023/24 will be higher than normal. This use is in line with long-held Council policy that reserves are used to deal with financial uncertainty, as it is not possible to budget at the worst-case level. Also, another purpose of reserves is to enable large financial adjustments to be dealt with over several years rather than one, so providing a more effective response and outcome.
- 2.6 There are higher levels of risk than in previous years from inflation generally (pay increases are needed to retain staff, energy prices) and the ongoing lack of clarity of Government funding. Energy costs and Government funding are likely to remain unresolved beyond the point the Council is able to amend its budget planning for 2023/24, therefore the use of reserves is likely to be necessary.
- 2.7 Given the uncertainty and the need to set a balanced budget proposal in January, the MTFS published in summer 2023 will provide an opportunity to review the use of reserves in 2023/24 at a time when there should be more information specifically on energy costs and government funding.

2.8 The level of potential overspend in 2022-23 would involve significant use of reserves which would diminish them at a time when they are likely to be needed to underpin the budget proposal for 2023-24. Action therefore needs to be taken urgently to limit the scale of the overspend in 2022-23.

2.9 The report identifies a number of actions, which can be summarised as:

- Increasing capital budgets to resolve the inflationary pressures experienced with building materials and labour costs and to manage supply chain problems
- Seeking an in-year review of Fees and Charges increases in light of higher cost pressures/inflation

3. Conclusions

3.1 The financial position of the authority has become increasingly challenging reflecting the economic and political situation nationally and internationally.

3.2 The Council will set a balanced budget but is likely to need to find significant savings and use reserves to fund pressures in the short term and manage risks.

3.3 Energy and Government funding assumptions could alter drastically late in 2022. Large changes will be almost impossible to manage within the timing of the 2023/24 budget process. The MTFS report to Council in summer 2023 will give an opportunity to determine whether changes to the 2023/24 budget will be necessary on the basis of more solid information becoming available.

3.4 Meantime, action is needed to reduce the scale of the inflationary overspend in the current year and protect the level of reserves.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 : Financial Update

Appendix 2 : Core spending Power

Background papers: None

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy sets out the framework for this to be achieved.

Financial: A robust financial strategy is essential in the delivery of the Council's objectives over the medium term, ensuring decisions are taken with due regard to their financial consequences. This report supports Medium-term financial planning, which is a key element in determining the organisation's future resilience.

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: This will be considered as part of the detailed budget setting process.

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: As above.

Personnel: The financial strategy, and the development of detailed budget proposals, is supported by the Council's values and behaviour framework, which promotes a culture of responsibility and accountability.

Risk Management: Due regard to the Council's Principal Risk Register should be had when considering its budget plans, financial forecasts and level of reserves. The production of, and adherence to, the Strategy mitigates the risk of financial failure. Challenges to the Council's financial position are reflected in the Principal Risk Register, while the financial impact of other risks are considered within the Principal Risk Register as appropriate.

Equality and Diversity: Equality Impact Assessments will be considered as part of the detailed budget setting process rather than at the strategic level, to enable comprehensive assessments to be undertaken where necessary.

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees:

Cabinet Members, Chief Executive and Directors, Monitoring Officer

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

Our Chelmsford: Our Plan

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23- 2027/28

Capital and Investment Strategy 2022/23

Financial Update

APPENDIX 1

It is important to establish some context to the costs in this report:

- ❖ The maximum Council Tax increase allowed before a referendum is currently £5, which would generate £350k extra in 2023/24 and this has already been factored into financial planning
- ❖ Every 1% increase in pay results in additional costs of £360k
- ❖ A 1% increase in all non-statutory fees and charges would generate £200k

The following sections provide an update on how the financial situation has changed since the July MTFS report.

Inflation – Rising Costs

- 1.1 **Energy costs.** The Council is a significant user of gas and electricity. The budget for 2020/21 was £1.1m, and the costs have risen to £2.4m in 2022/23 (current year) with further increases projected for 2023/24.
- 1.2 The largest consumer of energy at the Council is leisure services, which accounts for approximately 50% of the Council's total energy consumption. The estimated cost of energy use in 2022/23 for our sports centres is £1.06m, reflecting an increase of 95% for gas and 90% for electricity in that year (allowing for some estimated change in usage). This equates to an extra £10k a week to keep our leisure centres open in 2022/23.
- 1.3 The Council purchases its energy through one of the largest joint frameworks in the UK (the Government's procurement agency Crown Commercial Services). The Council achieves significant economies of scale through this agreement. Existing evidence suggests that 2023-24 energy prices are up circa 190% gas and electric 115% over the cost of the 2022/23 contract. The estimated extra cost across the Council without Government support is nearly £3m.
- 1.4 Forecasts of energy costs show significant volatility, and the Council energy costs may not be known in full until March. Budgeting an appropriate amount for energy is therefore difficult.
- 1.5 The Government support package is discussed in another section further below.
- 1.6 **Actions – Energy Costs:** Officers will continue to heat and light leisure centres in the most energy-efficient way balanced against service need. Additional meters are being installed to provide more detailed monitoring. Officers will be using this additional information to try to identify further savings on energy use.
- 1.7 **Pay.** The Council's 2022/23 budget included £35.5m of funding for all staffing costs, some 60% of all expenditure (total spend £59.5m excluding benefits).
- 1.8 The 2022/23 budget included funding for a 2.5% increase in pay (£0.83m extra in 2022/23). To ensure the Council met its obligations under the Living Wage legislation, the 2.5% was awarded as an interim measure on the 1st April 2022, subject to further negotiation.
- 1.9 The Council does not belong to the national bargaining arrangement, but it is a factor in determining City Council pay, as is the local jobs market (which is heavily affected

by London pay rates, much more so since hybrid working). The national Local Government pay award for 2022/23 is likely to be a £1,925 flat payment to all staff.

- 1.10 The Chief Executive, following consultation with the Leader of the Council, believes that it would be unsustainable if pay were not to increase to the higher of £1,925 or 2.5%, whichever is the greater. The risks of not doing so would be inability to consistently provide fundamental services such as Waste and Recycling collections in future due to retention and recruitment difficulties. This equates to just short of a 7% increase (£2.3m) in the £35.5m pay-bill. This represents an increase of £1.5m over the funding included in the 2022-23 budget.
- 1.11 The 2023/24 pay award would normally be forecast to be 2%, however, high levels of inflation and tightness in the labour markets mean that it is likely that this level of pay increase will be too low. It is currently assumed that a pay award of circa 5% might be needed to ensure staff retention and continued provision of services. The cost of a 5% pay award next year would be an additional £1.8m on top of this year's £1,925 flat award cost (at cost of £1.5m extra). Over the summer, officers started to plan on this basis, however, affordability has become an increasing issue.
- 1.12 A 5% pay award currently looks unaffordable for 2023/24 and for planning purposes it is necessary to assume a 3% increase instead. This has the impact of reducing the forecast cost by £720k. The Council's planned pay increases do meet forecasts of National Living Wage (NLW) for 2023/24 but there is a risk that NLW rates could be higher than expected, resulting in extra costs.
- 1.13 The total expected cost of pay inflation between the 2022/23 budget and this projection for 2023/24 is £2.6m per year.
- 1.14 **Actions – Pay:** The Chief Executive is likely to seek an urgency action for a decision on Council pay, to increase the staff pay award from 2.5% to the higher of £1,925 or 2.5% in 2022/23. Plan for 3% level of pay cost increase in 2023/24, recognising this may not be sufficient for staffing recruitment and retention but reflects affordability constraints.
- 1.15 **Vehicle Fuel.** The MTFS allowed for increased fuel costs totalling some £300k. The current projection is currently somewhat lower than that.
- 1.16 **Action - Vehicle Fuel:** As recommended in the MTFS, use reserves to fund additional fuel costs. Some £600k has been set aside in financial planning for this purpose.
- 1.17 **Investment Project Costs (Capital Programme)**
- 1.18 The Council's capital investment programme is funded from internal borrowing, receipts, contributions and grants. Once internal resources have been used it will be necessary to undertake external borrowing. When we borrow, there is a cost to the revenue budget of funding the capital programme. This revenue cost it is made up of MRP (Minimum Revenue Provision, the annual repayment of a loan) and interest. The Council's Capital programme has, like the revenue budget, been affected by inflation and supply-chain issues. Below are the material areas where budgets need to be increased for completion of schemes. Cabinet is being asked to approve some of these budgetary increases.

Borrowing calculations have been based on PWLB rates. Loss of interest on the use of resources has been calculated using 4%.

- 1.19 Theatres Improvements: In the current economic climate, the scheme for the refurbishment of the Front of House and Bars in both theatres has faced significant pressures on both the programme and budget.
- The scheme is delayed due to supply-chain challenges, exacerbated by world events, resulting in longer lead-in times for materials. This has also resulted in increases in the project cost and has led to inflation against the budgeted cost of items with some suppliers.
 - There has been a larger volume of unexpected refurbishment issues, in part due to the age of the building, many of which could not have been anticipated.
 - There has also been the need to increase spend on external consultants to deliver the project, due to the complexity of the issues uncovered as the project progressed. The appointed consultants have actively sought compromises and alternative shorter lead-in time solutions where possible with the appointed contractor.
 - The current forecast cost from our QS to complete the scheme is estimated as £3.246m and the approved budget is £2.746m. An additional £500k, 18%, is therefore requested to be added to the approved budget.
 - As a consequence of the delays, the works have now over-run, so cancellation/deferral of some performances has been necessary. There is a cost associated with this. The key financial variance against the 2022/23 revenue budget will be from the cancellation of Pantomime which is circa £440k of lost income.
 - The additional ongoing revenue costs of the project will be to increase annual MRP by £15k in the first year. If funded from borrowing the cost for interest and repayments is estimated as £40k per annum ongoing.
- 1.20 Refurbishment of commercially leased property (Aquila House): The capital budget was increased to £1.1m in November 2021 following a review of the scheme by external consultants. Officers have now received the tender results for the scheme. Based on the returned tenders, the costs of the project including fees have been identified as £2.2m, an increase of £1.1m, which the consultants have identified as a consequence of the current construction market conditions. Aquila House, when let, is expected to generate rent of £400k a year. Without the works, any reletting will be exceptionally difficult due to post-pandemic changes in demand in the letting market. On completion of the refurbishment and when the property is let, its value will be around £5.5m compared to the value in its current condition which is around £1.6m. The revenue cost of financing the project is £176k. Resulting in a revenue surplus of £224k a year when fully let. The approval of the additional spend likely to require Urgency Action, in order to meet the timescales for the tender.
- 1.21 Tindal Square: The approved budget for Tindal Square is £3.838m, including a 10% contingency on construction and utilities costs.
- Since construction started in January 2022, there have been a variety of pressures on the scheme, which at this stage of the build are estimated to add a further £485k over and above the scheme contingency budget of £300k, bringing the final outturn full cost to £4.323m.

- The reasons for these cost increases are multiple, complex and interrelated, but many are a result of a combination of inflation, BREXIT and COVID, which in combination have added in delay and additional project costs.
- Most of this additional cost can be mitigated through an additional grant of £450k from the Government's Getting Building Fund, via SELEP, the bid for which was submitted in late August, and the use of an additional S106 contribution held by the Council. The decision on the grant application will be known later in October.
- If grant is not awarded to the Council, then the cost would be £19k in lost interest on assumed CIL funding. External borrowing would be £34k per annum in interest and repayments.

1.22 Waterside Infrastructure: This update is not intended to seek budget approval.

- The Chelmer Waterside project is progressing well. The access road and bridge are at stage 1 of a target cost contract which is establishing the detailed technical design and cost. This stage will be completed in June 2023 when the full cost should be known.
- The potential for cost increases is high. Currently there is a risk of errors in forecasting costs in the £ms, reflecting the difficult economic conditions. However, our external consultants now expect costs to be significantly higher than the Capital Programme has allocated. There is insufficient certainty to forecast the final budget requirement or update the Capital Programme but members should be aware that the additional costs are currently thought to be £5m-£9m, mostly for the bridge. The price of materials is the largest factor.
- Members would need to approve any cost increases after stage 1 has reached completion, when the business case will be updated. By then, it should be easier to forecast the gains the Council can expect to generate from what is expected to be a self-funding scheme.

1.23 Chelmsford Sports and Athletics Centre Improvements (Approval of new scheme not a consequence of inflation)

- This proposal is to replace the surface of the outdoor athletic track at Chelmsford Sports and Athletics Centre (CSAC) which is in need of replacement and scheduled for 2023/24. At the same time as the track is closed it would be sensible to take the opportunity to upgrade other external areas (such as some surfaces and toilets).
- The track was installed in 1998 and has had remedial works to extend its life in 2011 and 2018. Replacing the surface will ensure Trackmark Certification and provide a long-term safer solution and be in line with Athletics England guidelines.
- A final decision on timing will be taken in the next few weeks. The Budget permitting, the optimum time to commence works is March 2023 as this will minimise disruption and allow the track to be laid in the optimum conditions. To facilitate this, it is essential to raise an order for the track works in November 2022. There are long lead-in times and approval needs to be obtained prior to the order being placed for the track as this will enable a period of coordination of works with the appointed contractor. The works are

scheduled to take place between March and May 2023 with a resulting loss of income during the period estimated to be £4k.

- The cost of the track and external upgrades is estimated as £350k.
- It is agreed elsewhere on this agenda to use £300k of S106 contribution towards the resourcing of improvements at CSAC.
- The net capital cost to the Council after applying the S106 will be £50k. This could be reduced further, once a review of Section 106 contributions is undertaken as part of financial year-end.
- The loss of interest to the Council is £14k per annum. Should external borrowing be used to fund for the potential net cost of £50k (£350k scheme cost less the £300k S106 funding) there will be £5k per annum cost for interest and repayments.
- A further request will be made for improvements to the gym and studio and will be included with the requests for new capital schemes at January Cabinet.

1.24 Actions – Investment Project Costs: Recommendation to Cabinet to approve the following:

Increases in Budgets:- Theatres Front of House Improvements £500k and Tindal Square £485k

An additional scheme for the replacement Track at CSAC £350k.

And to note the following:-

- Increase to budget for Commercial Leasehold Property Refurbishment £1.1m for which approval will be sought under Urgency due to level of increase being over £1m
- the risk of higher costs for the Waterside redevelopment.

1.25 General Inflation. The Council has suffered from inflation on various supplies and services, e.g. software licences, maintenance contracts, postage, etc. Allowance was made (£0.2m) in the MTFs for some inflation and it will only become clear in the next 2 months whether that provision was enough.

1.26 Action – General Inflation Determine within the budget process whether service budgets have sufficient provision to cover inflation on general items of expenditure.

2.1 Interest Rates

2.2 The Council is exposed to the effects of rising interest rates in two ways

- The Council currently has cash holdings, mostly from having revenue reserves and capital contributions received (e.g. Community Infrastructure Levy). This cash is invested to generate income. The budget for 2022/23 was some £700k on income but is now expected to be at least £1.2m. This shows the benefit of rising interest rates. For 2023/24 budgets, the Council has to forecast cash holdings and expected interest rates. This is a process that is currently taking place. It should be noted that deferring expenditure would mean higher cash balances and therefore higher income.

- The Council currently funds its investment (capital programme) mostly from cash which is 'internally borrowed'. In the next 2 years, the Council is expected to exhaust the supply of internal borrowing and will have to borrow externally. This is quite normal for local authorities. The cost of undertaking capital schemes should now be assessed against external borrowing rates to enable a smooth transition to external borrowing. As interest rates have increased, the cost of capital projects has therefore increased.

2.3 The extent that interest rates will rise is relatively unpredictable. Most commentators appear to believe 6% is the maximum level likely in the short term. However, they may subsequently settle to perhaps 2.5% to 3% in the medium term as inflation falls.

2.4 **Actions – Interest Rates:** For now, the Council should plan on the cost of interest increasing to 5-6% for its projects (internal or external borrowing). The Council will review its capital investment plans to ensure that they remain affordable and any recommendations will be made in the Budget process.

3.5 Government Support for Energy Costs

3.6 Assuming the Council were to buy all its 2023/24 energy at September 2023 prices, the additional cost over 2022/23 contract prices would be £3m. However, the Government has announced some support to non-residential energy users.

3.7 At the time of writing, what we know of the support package is as follows:

- The government has proposed a 6-month scheme, with a review after 3 months. The support for the 2023/24 budget is only likely to be known to the Council just as or after it sets the budget. This makes budgeting almost impossible given the size of the cost increases.
- The 6-month cap covers organisations against a capped wholesale price. Our energy supplier has not yet provided sufficient data to allow a calculation of any potential benefits.
- The guidance indicates that support will likely only continue for “the most vulnerable non-domestic customers” and highlights that “It is important that users who are less vulnerable to energy price increases (particularly larger businesses that are not energy-intensive) use the 6 months support provided by the scheme to identify measures they can take to protect themselves against high energy prices”.
- Access to the government support depends on meeting certain criteria. We do not yet know whether the Council contract falls within these criteria.

3.8 When more information is known, it may be possible to make an assumption on the extent of the budget pressure next year. Meantime, there are two options for financial planning:

- Make an assumption about 2023/24 energy prices and the levels of Government support. Set the budget on the assumption that Government support for the Council will cease by March 2023. This of course carries the risk of budget cuts being made that are either too low or too high.
- Use reserves to cover some or all the risk of higher costs. The Council reserves would likely fall below the level recommended by the Section 151 Officer (£9m), though not catastrophically. Additionally, use of reserves is a time-limited option which may defer the financial consequences of higher energy bills until longer-term solutions are found nationally. Clearly, the use of reserves could defer the problem.

- 3.9 Currently the unknown costs of energy, the six-month life of the scheme and the lack of clarity over ongoing arrangements mean the Council cannot set a budget for 2023/24 and wait a whole year before revisiting the issues of affordability. The use of reserves would seem the best solution at this time to fund excessive energy costs. This should be reviewed in the July 2023 MTFS in light of more certainty about Government support and prevailing energy prices. A regular review may need to become a feature of in-year budget monitoring.
- 3.10 **Action – Energy**: That financial planning allows for reserves to be used to manage additional financial risk on energy. This assumption will be revised as necessary during the budget process and during the year 2023/24.

4.1 Government Funding

- 4.2 The Government committed to reviewing local Government funding for 2023/24, however, the commitment cannot be met as consultations would need to have started by July to make major changes. In appendix 2, there is an explanation of how the Government measures the financial resource of each local authority. This is called core spending power.
- 4.3 Up to the time of the publication of the MTFS, the Government had committed to reviewing Local Authority funding for 2023/24. However, these consultations did not take place. Given there should be no major review of funding allocations, it was possible for officers to re-consider the forecast for 2023/24 Government funding over the summer. Officers consider it likely that the Government would keep to its commitment to fund councils in line with core spending power. This would enable, at least for 2023/24, £1.8m of additional funding to be built into the base budget to help meet the projected budget shortfall. This judgement reflects Government statements in 2021, including: “Core Spending Power for local authorities is estimated to increase by an average of 3% in real terms each year, including investment in Adult Social Care reform. By 2024-25 it is expected to rise to £58.9 billion. This increase in Core Spending Power follows year-on-year real terms increases since Spending Review 2019.”
- 4.4 The internal planning for the 2023/24 budget since August has included this additional £1.8m of funding which helps offset the increased financial pressures on income and energy/pay/inflation identified since the MTFS.
- 4.5 However, the Government’s very recent announcements seem to indicate a need in Government to find efficiency savings whilst sticking to cash-limited spending totals. The position therefore is now less certain and a further financial statement is planned by the Government on 31 October.
- 4.6 The City Council may not know its funding position for 2023/24 until late December 2022. The budget therefore will be created on an assumption regarding funding that could be significantly different to the actual funding provided. It may be necessary during 2023/24 to find savings to deal with reduced funding, as currently identifying and implementing £1.8m of savings would be premature and damaging to the public, potentially requiring significant reduction in services.
- 4.7 Business rate retention. The Government sets a baseline level of business rate income for an area. If business rate income is above that level, a council gets to share some of

that growth. The Government had proposed resetting the baseline as part of a national review of the scheme in 2023/24. That change is now deferred. The Council's MTFS assumed £500k of business rate retention would cease on reset. This funding is now assumed to continue in 2023/24. The amount of Business Rate Retention income will be reviewed again in the next 2 months and allowed for in the 2023/24 budget.

- 4.8 The amount of Government funding may be affected by the recent changes to National Insurance. The reversal of the previous employer NI increases should reduce costs by £230k per year.
- 4.9 Local government can also expect to receive additional income in 2024-25 from the Extended Producer Responsibility scheme for managing packaging for waste. Initial indications suggest income of circa £1.0m a year. As the legislative detail has not been published in full, this City Council estimate may need to be revised.

5.0 Post Pandemic economic activity and Risk of Economic Recession

- 5.1 Approximately 45% (£27m) of the Council's expenditure is funded from discretionary income (sales, fees and other charges). Another 14% comes from rent income (including Housing properties). So, nearly 60% of the City Council's funding is self-generated; another 25% comes from Council tax. The Council is therefore very exposed in the event of an economic recession or pandemic to falls in the 60% self-generated income.
- 5.2 A fall in this self-generated income cannot be easily matched by reducing Council costs. For example, in a cost-of-living crisis, income from car parking and rental income from shopping centres may fall. But these do not correspond with any fall in Council costs as bins still need to be emptied.
- 5.3 The Cabinet will receive a Mid-Year review of capital and revenue budgets in November as normal. However, to provide members with a substantive update on the 2022/23 budget, it is important to be aware of:
 - Car Parking. Current monitoring suggests car parking income could be £1.0m-£1.3m below the 2022/23 budget. This is nearly £2m below the pre-pandemic budget levels. The 2022/23 budget assumed a return to an average 83% against pre-pandemic activity level and also allowed for increases in fees and charges. Given the weakness in income in 2022/23, the MTFS assumed a reduction against the budget level of £600k. The risk of recession and lack of full recovery of income mean the 2023/24 budget is for planning purposes assumed to be £1.3m lower than the 2022/23 budget.
 - Leisure Income. The 2022/23 income budget is likely to be achieved but this is still several hundred thousand pounds less than the pre-pandemic expectation. For planning purposes, the income is expected to recover fully. Another factor in leisure income is that the Council was successful in its litigation with HMRC concerning the VAT liability of leisure charges. This should in practice be worth £760k in the 2023/24 budget. However, the Council is still in dialogue with HMRC about this. It is unclear when this is likely to be resolved. The financial planning will include an assumption that this is resolved in the Council's favour. This carries risk of the Council having to refund HMRC if the remaining technical matter is resolved in favour of HMRC. The balance of risks would seem to indicate that making cuts to services when there is a potential VAT adjustment is not the appropriate action. The

Council will therefore cover the risk of loss from its reserves. This issue will be reviewed regularly as part of the budget process and any change reported to members.

5.4 Actions: That the risks to income are recognised and appropriate provision is made in the revenue estimates for lower income expectations. The budget process means income estimates will be reviewed up to December 2022, before setting the 2023/24 budget.

6.0 Current Projection of Budget Position for 2023/24

6.1 The projected budget gap for 2023/24 has increased from £4.2m (MTFS in July) to £7.9m. The higher gap is broadly a result of increases in pay (assumed 2.5% 2022/23 and 2% 2023/24 but now 7% 2022/23 and 3% 2023/24), energy £3m and further reduced assumption for car parking income £0.6m.

6.2 The 2023/24 gap can be reduced by making significant financial assumptions about items that cannot be considered certain (as discussed in this report)

- Core spending power – retain £1.8m of funding (see Appendix 2 for details)
- Use of reserves and/or Government funding for £2.96m of energy costs
- Take the benefit of the VAT litigation (£760k) as it is final in the Tribunal albeit subject to dialogue with HMRC concerning one remaining technical matter.

6.3 The 2023/24 projected budget gap after these assumptions is circa £2.1m.

7.0 Conclusion

This report provides an update on a very challenging financial position, which officers believe is reflected nationally for local authorities.

The report identifies a number of actions which need to be undertaken.

The level of projected gap will change but currently represents a significant challenge, particularly as many of the significant favourable assumptions made are far from certain.

The budget process will continue to run in the normal way and further reports will be made as necessary.

CORE SPENDING POWER	APPENDIX 2
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Chelmsford

Illustrative Core Spending Power of Local Government:									
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Estimate 2023-24
	£ millions	£ millions	£ millions	£ millions	£ millions	£ millions	£ millions	£ millions	£ millions
Settlement Funding Assessment	5.5	4.3	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.408	3.409	3.409
Compensation for under-indexing the business rates multiplier	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.178	0.348	0.348
Council Tax Requirement excluding parish precepts ¹	10.9	11.3	11.8	12.4	12.9	13.6	13.987	14.557	14.900
New Homes Bonus	1.6	2.3	2.7	3.2	3.8	4.4	3.130	2.155	0.000
Lower Tier Services Grant	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.645	0.645	0.645
Replacement Funding estimate 2023/24									1.812
2022/23 Services Grant	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.000	0.235	0.235
Core Spending Power	18.1	18.2	18.2	18.9	20.2	21.6	21.348	21.349	21.349
Change since 2015-16 (£ millions)								3.3	
Change since 2015-16 excluding Council Tax (£ millions)								-0.4	
Change since 2015-16 (% change)								18.1	
Change since 2015-16 (% change) excluding Council Tax increases								-6.1	
Notes:									
Settlement funding assessment is the amount of money that the City Council receives through the Government's funding formula. The City collects approximately £78m of Business rates and receives £3.4m back from Government in the form of grant. The formula grant is distributed based on data that is in some cases 20 years old. At the last revision of the formula an additional cut of £0.9m in Chelmsford's funding was proposed by Government but not implemented, as the impact of the changes nationally was seen as detrimental to a significant number of County Councils. If such a change were implemented this would be especially adverse to Chelmsford.									
Compensation for under indexing the BRM - We receive a grant known as a section 31 grant to compensate us for the Business Rates multiplier not being increased line with inflation.									
Council Tax requirement - is the total collected in Council Tax. Government assumes in its calculation that we increase our Council Tax by the maximum permitted and assumes growth in our taxbase from building additional houses. This means that in reality as Council tax income increases annually Government can reduce their funding but maintain our spending power in cash terms.									
New Homes Bonus - This is an amount given to Districts for each new home developed. This sum has reduced significantly over the last few years as Gov has reduced the period over which the 'reward' will be paid from 7 years to 1 year and also now assumes a set level of growth in our taxbase (building new homes) must be achieved before any funding is provided. The Government has made clear for the last few years that a major review of this funding stream will happen, this review has not yet taken place however as it still looms over local authorities and therefore means that our spending decisions can only reflect one year of funding.									
Lower tier services grant - given to Districts to partially protect them from a significant reduction in the level of Core spending when New homes bonus was cut. NHB was reduced by £285m nationally and authorities were partially compensated via the new lower tier services grant of £111m when it was introduced in 2021/22									
2022/23 Services Grant this has been described as a one off grant for 2022/23 and had to be provided to ensure that all authorities maintained their core spending power in cash terms. In real terms we have experienced a significant reduction in our spending power and this problem will be exacerbated by the current level of inflation unless the Government act to provide additional on going protection.									
Estimate 2023/24 assumes - service grant is increased to offset New Homes Bonus falling, which maintain core spending power. New Homes Bonus continues									