

MINUTES
of the
CHELMSFORD POLICY BOARD
held on 26 June 2025 at 7pm

Present:

Councillor C. Adutwim (Chair)

Councillors, K. Franks, I. Fuller, J. Jeapes, R. Hyland, S. Manley, B. Massey, M. O'Brien, S. Scott, A. Thorpe-Apps and S. Young

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Ayres, P. Clark, Davey, Whitehead and A. Sosin. Cllrs Franks, Scott and Hyland substituted for Cllrs A. Sosin, Whitehead and P. Clark respectively.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that they must disclose any interests they knew they had 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 became aware of the interest. If the interest was a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest they were also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting. Any declarations are recorded in the relevant minute below.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 13th March 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. Public Questions

[One public question had been received in advance of the meeting, which related to Item 5 and can be viewed here.](#) The question was responded to during the officer presentation for Item 5 and the response is detailed in that minute.

5. Chelmsford Local Plan – Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Consultation Feedback

The Board were asked to consider a report which provided feedback on the main issues raised in the consultation responses to the Local Plan Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Consultation and the Pre-Submission Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA).

The consultation ran for six weeks and closed on 8 March 2025. It was shared that over six thousand notifications had been sent as well as social media posts, site notices and exhibitions. 6,725 representations were received from 2,798 respondents to the Pre-Submission Local Plan, including residents, developers, businesses, statutory consultees, and parish tier councils.

The Board was informed that the consultation process met all legislative requirements and the commitments set out in the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

The Board was informed that the IIA received 54 responses from 39 respondents, and these had been analysed by consultants and were available in the report.

All representations submitted would be considered by an independent Planning Inspector, appointed by the Secretary of State, as part of the Local Plan's examination process. Submission of the Local Plan for examination is expected to take place in December 2025. All representations to the Pre-Submission Local Plan and IIA are publicly available online.

In response to a public question, it was shared that the feedback report met all legislative requirements and the commitments set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, the report did not contain misleading or buried information and followed the same process used for previous Local Plans. The report was not aiming to dismiss or devalue comments that were similar in wording but rather summarised them by main issue. A focused Council response to the main issues raised in the Pre-Submission Local Plan consultation will be provided in the Regulation 22 Consultation Statement for submission alongside the Local Plan. The Board were informed that the Council had received 6,725 comments from 2,798 respondents during the Regulation 19 consultation and that the higher figure of 22,000 as mentioned in the public statement, could have come from earlier Local Plan consultations and combining figures with a previous petition..

In response to questions from the Board, officers stated that;

- In response to the report not expressing the 'strength of public feeling'. The Council was required by planning regulations to summarise the main issues raised and report the number of representations, the independent Planning Inspector would assess the strength and substance of those issues during examination. All responses were collated factually and impartially.
- Every individual representation was to be submitted to the Planning Inspector, in full and unredacted, except in cases of inappropriate content. This was confirmed as standard practice to ensure transparency and accountability.
- The Local Plan would return to the Policy Board in November, followed by Cabinet in November, and then to Full Council in December 2025, with all dates to be coordinated by Democratic Services.

RESOLVED that:

- the Board noted the outcomes of the consultation contained within the covering report and attached at Appendices 1 and 2.
- That delegated authority was given to the Director of Sustainable Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for a Greener Chelmsford to make any necessary minor amendments to the Chelmsford Local Plan Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Feedback Report and Pre-Submission Integrated Impact Assessment Feedback Report before publication as part of the Local Plan evidence base.

(7.05pm to 7.34pm)

6. Homelessness & Rough Sleepers Strategy 2025-2030

The Board received the updated Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy 2025-2030, which is a statutory requirement to be reviewed at least once every five years.

It was explained that the strategy reflected both the Council's legal duties under homelessness legislation, and a current understanding of local needs and priorities. Chelmsford City Council had seen a significant increase in temporary accommodation use, due to a fall in affordable housing supply. However, recent years had seen a reduction in both demand and cost for temporary accommodation due to local mitigation measures. It was shared that a large number of households in temporary accommodation were single people, with 80% of those experiencing mental health challenges.

It was shared that this strategy was to prioritise prevention over crisis response and aimed to remain a flexible, living document, with actions focused on short-to-medium term delivery, and be monitored regularly. Examples of progress included new supported housing units with partners such as CHESS, and ongoing work to address domestic abuse. The Council also planned to work with its communications team to raise public awareness about homelessness, including correcting common misconceptions.

In response to questions from the Board, it was stated that;

- Early referrals from partner agencies existed as there was a duty to refer, which reportedly works well in some cases, such as probation services, but was inconsistent, particularly where agencies lack statutory duties, such as GPs. The Council was working to strengthen these relationships.
- There was no statutory duty to work with neighbouring authorities but there was strong cross-district collaboration through the Essex Housing Officers Group.
- A Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) does not target rough sleepers specifically, unless there was an element of anti-social behaviour.

RESOLVED that;

- The Board recommended the report to Cabinet for approval.
- delegated authority was given to the Director of Sustainable Communities in consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford, to make any final changes to the Strategy ahead of the consideration by Cabinet.

(7.34pm to 7.58pm)

7. Work Programme

The Board considered an item detailing their future work programme.

RESOLVED that the Work programme be approved.

(7.58pm to 8.00pm)

8. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm

Chair