HS002 Matter 2

Chelmsford Local Plan

Examination Hearing Statement – Maintaining Effective Co-operation

November/December 2026



Chelmsford Local Plan

Introduction

1. This hearing statement sets out the Council's response in relation to the Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions.

2. All the evidence base documents referred to in this statement are listed at the end of the Hearing Statement, with their evidence base or examination document reference numbers as applicable.

3. Any relevant proposed modifications are included in a table at the end of each question.

Matter 2 – MAINTAING EFFECTIVE CO-OPERATION	
Issue	**Has the Council maintained effective co-operation with relevant local authorities and other bodies on strategic cross boundary matters in preparing the Plan in line with national policy?**
Q 2.1	**Has the Council maintained effective and on-going joint working with the relevant authorities on the strategic matter of meeting identified local housing needs? If so, is this demonstrated in one or more statements of common ground (SoCG), in accordance with the expectations in national policy?**

CCC Response to Q 2.1

4. It is the Council's position that effective and ongoing co-operation with relevant local authorities and other bodies has been maintained during the preparation of the Local Plan. This is in compliance with paragraphs 11 b) and 27 of the 2023 NPPF.

5. The Council's Statement of Co-operation **(SD004)** submitted with the Local Plan sets out the wider picture in relation to which bodies the Council has engaged with on-going joint working and the strategic matters addressed.

6. Section 5.3 of **SD004** (page 6, PDF page 7)) sets out the links between the Local Plan Strategic Priorities and issues that were identified as the focus for co-operation. In particular, it addresses the engagement which has taken place on meeting the needs for new homes and how approaches to meet any unmet housing need from adjoining authorities have been addressed (paragraph 5.13 onwards, page 8 (PDF page 9)).

7. Throughout the process of the preparation of the Local Plan Basildon Borough Council, Castle Point Borough Council and Southend-on-Sea City Council have made formal requests for assistance in meeting their unmet housing need. They referenced

Green Belt restrictions as constraints and/or issues relating to increased housing need through the application of the revised Standard Method.

8. There is no capacity in Chelmsford's proposed Spatial Strategy to accommodate any unmet housing need from neighbouring or nearby local authorities.

9. This position has been agreed through Statements of Common Ground with the three neighbouring authorities listed above:

- Statement of Common Ground with Basildon Borough Council **(SOCG027)** The issue of meeting unmet housing needs and Gypsy and Traveller needs was raised after the close of consultation on the Pre-Submission Local Plan **(SD001)**. The details of the request and the Council's response are set out in **SOCG027** (pages 6-7 (PDF pages 7-8)). There are no areas of disagreement or unresolved strategic matters. Basildon Borough Council has since consulted on a third Regulation 18 Plan detailing how they can meet their own housing and Gypsy and Traveller needs in full.

- Statement of Common Ground with Castle Point Borough Council **(SOCG013)** As part of Castle Point Borough Council's response to the Preferred Options consultation a request for assistance in meeting their potential unmet housing needs was made. The details of the request and the Council's response are set out in **SOCG013** (page 5 (PDF page 6)). There are no areas of disagreement or unresolved strategic matters.

- Statement of Common Ground with Southend-on-Sea City Council **(SOCG030)** Southend-on-Sea City Council made a request for assistance in meeting their housing need at Preferred Options consultation stage. As part of its Regulation 18 consultation on its Local Plan, Southend-on-Sea City Council again requested assistance in meeting its identified housing need. The details of the request and the Council's response are set out in **SOCG030** (page 5 (PDF page 6)). There are no areas of disagreement or unresolved strategic matters.

10. The Local Plan is considered to be sound and legally complaint in this regard.

Q 2.2	**Does the Plan give rise to any other strategic cross-boundary matters requiring effective co-operation? If so, what evidence is there in the form of SoCGs to demonstrate that the Council has maintained effective co-operation with the relevant authorities and statutory bodies on these matters?**

CCC Response to Q 2.2

11. The Council has identified the strategic matters for the focus of co-operation in the Statement of Co-operation **(SD004)** (paragraph 5.1, page 6 (PDF page 7)). These have been identified as follows:

- Meeting the needs for new homes including Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation
- Fostering growth and investment and providing new jobs
- Delivering new and improved strategic infrastructure
- Encouraging resilience in retail, leisure, commercial and cultural development
- Protecting and enhancing the natural environment and support an increase in biodiversity and ecological networks
- Creating well designed and attractive places, and promoting the health and social wellbeing of communities.

12. Each of these matters is then addressed in greater detail in **SD004** including an account of actions and outcomes from joint working. There are no cross-boundary matters outstanding.

13. Statements of common ground have been agreed with all 13 Essex local authorities adjoining the Council area, a number of duty to co-operate bodies (as defined at paragraph 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) and other key stakeholders, as set out below:

Local authorities:
SOCG010 – Maldon District Council
SOCG011 – Rochford District Council
SOCG012 – Tendring District Council
SOCG013 – Castle Point Borough Council
SOCG021 – Essex County Council
SOCG024 – Colchester City Council
SOCG025 – Epping Forest District Council
SOCG026 – Thurrock Council
SOCG027 – Basildon Borough Council
SOCG030 – Southend-on-Sea City Council
SOCG031 – Uttlesford District Council
SOCG032 – Braintree District Council
SOCG034 – Brentwood Borough Council

Duty to co-operate bodies/other stakeholders
SOCG008 – Historic England
SOCG014 – Natural England
SOCG018 – Environment Agency
SOCG019 – Anglian Water
SOCG033 and SOCG033-A – National Highways and Essex County Council
SOCG036 – Ministry of Defence (Defence Infrastructure Organisation)
SOCG037 – East of England Ambulance NHS Trust
SOCG039 – Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board
SOCG040 – Essex Police (Strategic Planning)
SOCG041 – Essex and Suffolk Water
SOCG042 – Marine Management Organisation
SOCG047 – NHS Property Services

14. The Council considers that this ongoing activity has made a major contribution to ensuring the Local Plan meets the test of soundness by being positively prepared, effective and consistent with national policy. There is also a clear commitment through the SOCGs to continue to work with all parties beyond the Local Plan adoption for the monitoring and implementation of the Local Plan.

EVIDENCE BASE LIST FOR MATTER 2	
SOCG008	Statement of Common Ground with Historic England
SOCG010	Statement of Common Ground with Maldon District Council
SOCG011	Statement of Common Ground with Rochford District Council
SOCG012	Statement of Common Ground with Tendring District Council
SOCG013	Statement of Common Ground with Castle Point Borough Council
SOCG014	Statement of Common Ground with Natural England
SOCG018	Statement of Common Ground with the Environment Agency
SOCG019	Statement of Common Ground with Anglian Water
SOCG021	Statement of Common Ground with Essex County Council
SOCG024	Statement of Common Ground with Colchester City Council
SOCG025	Statement of Common Ground with Epping Forest District Council
SOCG026	Statement of Common Ground with Thurrock Council
SOCG027	Statement of Common Ground with Basildon Borough Council
SOCG030	Statement of Common Ground with Southend-on-Sea City Council
SOCG031	Statement of Common Ground with Uttlesford District Council
SOCG032	Statement of Common Ground with Braintree District Council
SOCG033	Statement of Common Ground with National Highways and Essex County Council
SOCG033-A	Statement of Common Ground with National Highways and Essex County Council
SOCG034	Statement of Common Ground with Brentwood Borough Council
SOCG036	Statement of Common Ground with Ministry of Defence (Defence Infrastructure Organisation)
SOCG037	Statement of Common Ground with East of England Ambulance NHS Trust
SOCG039	Statement of Common Ground with Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board
SOCG040	Statement of Common Ground with Essex Police (Strategic Planning)
SOCG041	Statement of Common Ground with Essex and Suffolk Water
SOCG042	Statement of Common Ground with Marine Management Organisation
SOCG047	Statement of Common Ground with NHS Property Services
SD001	Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Local Plan Consultation Document
SD004	Statement of Co-operation



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