

Chelmsford Policy Board Agenda

3 December 2020 at 7pm

Remote Meeting

Membership

Councillor G H J Pooley (Chair)

and Councillors

H Ayres, N Chambers, W Daden, I Fuller, J Galley, M Goldman,
S Goldman, N Gulliver, G B R Knight, R Moore, R J Poulter,
I C Roberts, A Sosin, N Walsh, R T Whitehead
and T N Willis

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

CHELMSFORD POLICY BOARD

3 DECEMBER 2020, 7pm

AGENDA

PART 1

Items to be considered when members of the public are likely to be present

1. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Members are reminded that they 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

Minutes of meetings on 5 November 2020

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Any member of the public may ask a question or make a statement at this point in the meeting, provided that they have been invited to participate in this meeting and have submitted their question or statement in writing and in advance. Each person has two minutes and a maximum of 15 minutes is allotted to public questions/statements, which must be about matters for which the Board 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 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, provided they have indicated that they wish to do so and have submitted an email address to which an invitation to join the meeting and participate in it can be sent.

5. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW
6. RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON LONGFIELD SOLAR FARM
7. CHELMSFORD POLICY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME
8. URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any other matter which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be considered by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

PART II (EXEMPT ITEMS)

NIL

MINUTES
of the
CHELMSFORD POLICY BOARD
held on 5 November 2020 at 7.05pm

Present:

Councillor I Fuller (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Councillors H Ayres, N Chambers, D Clark, W Daden, M Goldman, S Goldman,
N Gulliver, G B R Knight, R Moore, R J Poulter, I Roberts, A Sosin, M S Steel,
N Walsh and T N Willis

Also present:

Councillors A Davidson, C Davidson and M J Mackrory

1. Attendance and Apologies for Absence

The attendance of those present was confirmed. Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors J Galley, G H J Pooley and R T Whitehead. The latter two had appointed Councillors D Clark and M S Steel respectively as their substitutes.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 15 October 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

3. Declarations of Interest

All Members were reminded to disclose any interests in items of business on the meeting's agenda and that they should do so at this point on the agenda or as soon as they became aware of the interest. They were also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of the meeting, if they had not previously notified her about it.

4. Public Questions

A member of the public asked whether the Council would adopt a policy or motion that guidance in Department for Transport Local Transport Note 1/20, Cycle Infrastructure

Design, be followed in all developments and highway schemes, as had happened at, for example, Peterborough City Council and Shropshire County Council.

The Board was informed that Essex Highways was responsible for setting design standards for cycle infrastructure and generally applied the standards set out in the guidance note. There were occasions, however, when it was not possible to meet those standards, for example when linking to older infrastructure not constructed to the latest standards or when physical constraints prevented it. Flexibility in applying the standards was needed in those circumstances but the intention was to meet them where possible.

5. Authority Monitoring Report 2019-20

The latest Authority Monitoring Report (AMR), which monitored the implementation of the Local Development Framework (LDF) and the extent to which the policies set out in the Local Plan were being achieved, was submitted for approval before its publication.

In summary, the AMR showed that:

- housing completions had fallen to 832 units but this still exceeded the housing requirement for the year of 805
- there had been 189 affordable housing completions, which accounted for 23% of all completions, including those below the threshold to provide affordable housing
- on sites granted planning permission over the affordable housing threshold, 28% of the total would be delivered as affordable housing
- as a result of development on strategic greenfield sites in North Chelmsford, targets were not currently being met for the required percentage of residential development built on Previously Developed Land
- just under 9,000 sqm of employment floorspace was granted planning permission in the period 2019/20
- just over 22,000 sqm of employment floorspace was permitted to be lost to residential dwellings, mainly through the prior approval process
- fourteen of the City Council's parks had Green Flag awards.

In response to a comment expressing disappointment that the target for affordable housing had not been met in 2019-20, officers informed the Board that of the five permissions shown in Table 11 of the AMR, four were zones of development in the Beaulieu Park development where, owing to the planning obligations as a whole associated with the developments, the affordable housing requirements were 27%. As these zones accounted for a large proportion of development in the city during 2019-20, this had meant that the general affordable housing target of 35% had not been met. A similar situation was likely to appear in future years' AMRs as further development zones in Beaulieu Park came forward. It was noted, however, that there had been an increase in the number of affordable rented housing units compared to the previous monitoring year, which more closely reflected the need for that type of affordable housing in Chelmsford.

Asked whether the development densities shown on page 37 of the AMR represented minimum or maximum targets, officers said that they indicated minimum densities and the report would be amended to make that clear. The target densities varied according to the location of the development, with higher densities in urban locations. Density targets had been used since a 2008 government directive but the drive at the time to maximise the use of development sites had been overtaken in recent years by other considerations and there would be a move away from the use of such targets in future.

Responding to a question on why Local Wildlife Sites had reduced, members were informed that EECOS had reviewed the original list compiled by EECOS in 2004 and assessed them against updated criteria, resulting in 10 sites being deleted from the list. The source evidence used by EECOS in that assessment would be made available to members.

RESOLVED that the Authority Monitoring Report for 2019-20 be approved and that the Director of Sustainable Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development be authorised to make any minor changes to it, if required, prior to publication.

(7.08pm to 7.37pm)

6. Improving Movement Around Chelmsford Working Group – Progress Update

The Policy Board was provided with an update on the following four workstreams being examined by the Working Group established to improve movement around Chelmsford:

- Develop a Chelmsford Sustainable Transport and Parking Strategy;
- Make proposals to improve infrastructure and/or interventions to facilitate greater use of sustainable transport and Park & Ride;
- Make proposals to improve the provision for safe cycling and walking in and around the City in line with the Local Plan and public transport travel; and
- Explore opportunities to improve place making and urban regeneration through the promoting of sustainable transport and ensure interrelationships with other Chelmsford Policy Board working groups.

The Board was asked whether the Council had responded to the government consultation on pavement parking. Members were told that the matter had not been formally considered by the City Council but that the County Council, as highway authority, was likely to have responded, and the matter had been considered by the South Essex Parking Partnership Joint Committee in September, which had favoured decriminalising the obstruction of footways to allow both the police and enforcement authorities to enforce it.

RESOLVED that the report of the Improving Movement Around Chelmsford Working Group be noted.

(7.37pm to 7.48pm)

7. Chelmsford Policy Board Work Programme

The Board received the latest version of its Work Programme for 2020/21.

In response to a question on whether Masterplans should include details of traffic projections associated with new developments, the Board was informed that traffic modelling had been carried out to support the allocation of the sites in the Local Plan. Masterplans were spatial frameworks and detailed traffic assessments were best carried out as part of subsequent planning applications.

RESOLVED that the latest Work Programme of the Board be noted.

(7.48pm to 7.53pm)

8. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7.53pm

Chair



Chelmsford Policy Board

3 December 2020

Community Governance Review

Report by:

Legal & Democratic Services Manager

Officer Contact:

Lorraine Browne, Legal & Democratic Services Manager, lorraine.browne@chelmsford.gov.uk,
01245-606560

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the Terms of Reference in relation to a proposed Community Governance Review for approval by Full Council on 9 December 2020. An update is also provided in relation to the recent informal consultation.

Recommendations

1. That the Policy Board recommends the Terms of Reference for approval by Council.
 2. That the Policy Board notes the outcome of the informal consultation.
-

1. Background

- 1.1. The Connectivity and Local Democracy Working Group have been considering whether the Council should commence a community governance review of its own volition.
- 1.2. The Council has the legal power to do so in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and associated statutory guidance.
- 1.3. The 2007 Act devolved powers to the City Council to undertake a community governance review where a wide range of issues can be considered including for example, the creation or naming of a parish, the establishment of a separate parish from an existing parish, alteration of parish boundaries, abolition or dissolution of a parish, change to parish electoral arrangements or parish grouping.
- 1.4. Guidance recommends that such a review should be undertaken every 10-15 years and often arise where housing developments have taken place.

2. Consultation

- 2.1. The Council undertook informal consultation between July and 25 September 2020. Details of the outcome of the informal pre-Community Governance Review consultation are set out on Appendix 1. The number of responses received to the informal consultation are insufficient statistically to be representative of residents' views but do give some helpful early indications. Responses that did not deal with community governance related matters have not been included.
- 2.2. The Council will be required to undertake further statutory consultation (firstly during the initial stages and secondly in relation to any recommendations) during the community governance review. A communication plan has been developed in relation to the initial statutory consultation which is planned to commence in January 2021. This includes additional actions to help generate increased responses to the statutory consultation. A dedicated area within the Council's website is being further developed.
- 2.3. Throughout the review periodic updates will continue to be provided to the Working Group in addition to the formal reporting set out in the Terms of Reference.

3. Terms of Reference

- 3.1 Draft Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix 2. These have been presented to and discussed with the Connectivity and Local Democracy Working Group. The Terms of Reference will need to be approved by Full Council and the Policy Board is asked to recommend these for approval.

3.2 As a result of the above initial consultation, it is advisable that any Community Governance Review remains broad and covers the whole of the City of Chelmsford area.

3.3 The Terms of Reference note that the focus is likely to be upon the potential creation of new parishes and/or changing existing parish boundaries in the unparished areas as well as changes resulting from housing development. This approach will also enable there to be sufficient flexibility to address any community governance issues that emerge should that be necessary.

3.4 As there is potential for parish boundaries to be changed that could have an impact upon City Council and County Council ward boundaries, the Council will consult with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, as necessary.

4. Conclusion

4.1. The Terms of Reference are presented to Chelmsford Policy Board with a recommendation that it be approved by Council.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Outcome of Informal Consultation

Appendix 2 – Terms of Reference

Background papers:

Joint Statutory Guidance on community governance reviews (2010)

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: these are set out in the report and Terms of Reference

Financial: Some additional costs in relation to consultation will arise (approximately £8,000) and approval is being sought for this.

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: An Equalities and Diversity Impact Assessment will be undertaken during the review in relation to any decisions proposed.

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees:

Connectivity and Local Democracy Working Group

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

Our Chelmsford Our Plan – Bringing people together, empowering local people and working in partnership to build community capacity, stronger communities through encouraging participation in local democracy, increasing representation of community interests to help people feel better represented at a local level and more involved in deciding how best the interests of their community can be met.

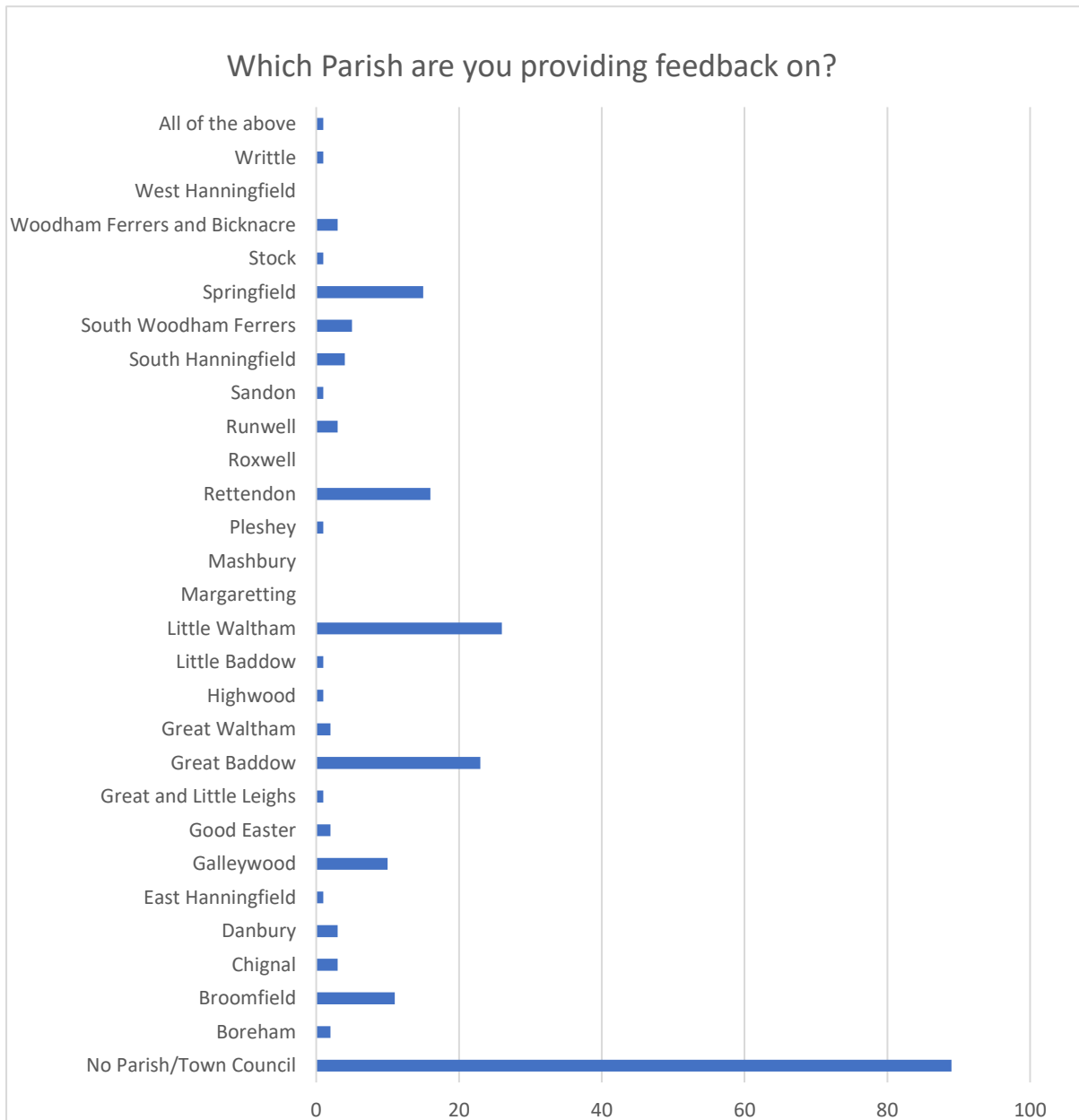
Outcome of Informal Community Governance Review Consultation

Consultation undertaken July – 25 September 2020

Breakdown of Responses by area

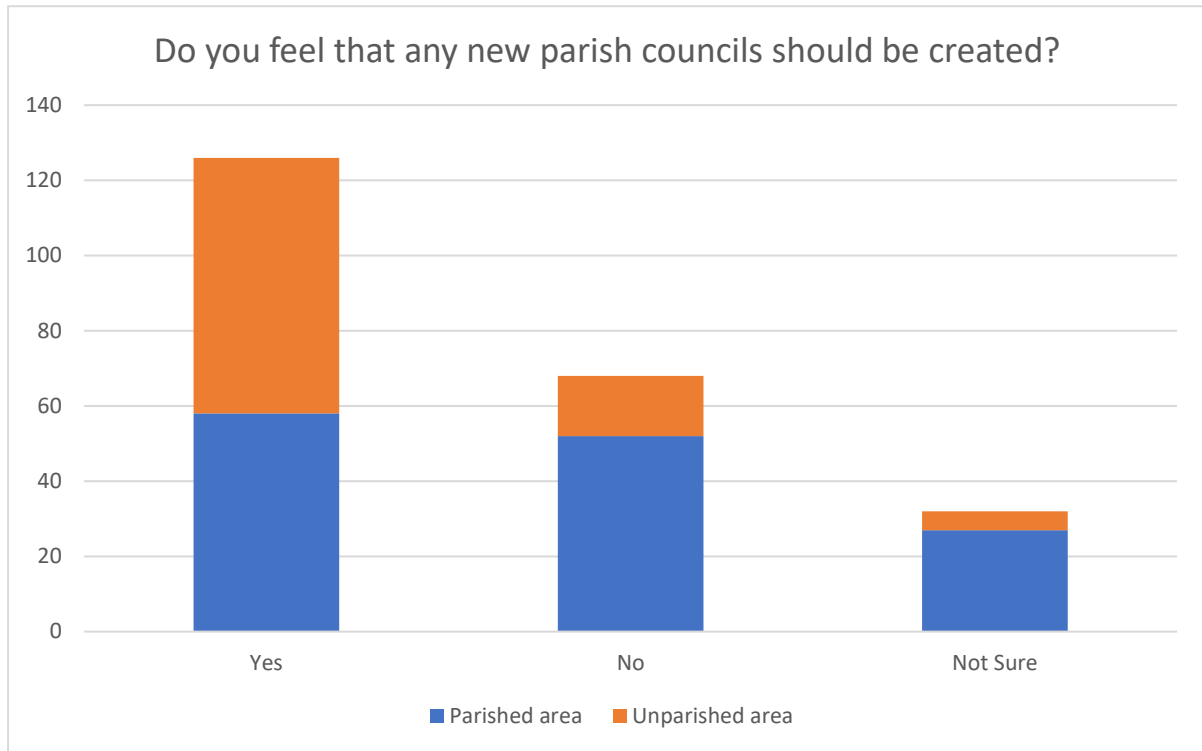
In total, we received 226 responses to the pre-community governance review consultation. 211 from individuals, i.e. local residents/employees or individual councillors. 15 were from organisations, including 13 parish councils.

Most of the responses were from areas with a parish council (including 122 from individuals) and the Parish areas with the most engagement were: Little Waltham (26), Great Baddow (23), Rettendon (16) and Springfield



(15).

Summary of support for the creation of new Parish Councils



Analysis of all the responses reflects that 55.8% of respondents thought that a new Parish Council should be created in the area they were providing feedback on. The chart above reflects the support for new Parish Councils broken down into Parished and Unparished areas. Most respondents in unparished areas supported the idea of setting up a new parish, whereas the residents that responded in already Parished areas were more divided.

However, when we explored the detailed responses to this consultation it became apparent that the responses to this broad question did not best reflect their opinions as when they provided detailed responses, they often expressed conflicting opinions. Detailed responses by area are set out below.

Detailed responses from parished areas

1. Boreham	
Total Responses to CGR:	2
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	Yes
Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	No change deemed necessary
Comments made in responses received :	Boundaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The current arrangements serve the area well and the village plan is expanding according to plan. - The 2 grade 1 listed buildings in the area to remain in Boreham. No change necessary in the area as they would like the part of Beaulieu that falls in their area to remain so. Number of Councillors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No feedback.

2. Broomfield	
Total Responses to CGR:	12
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	No
Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	8 support the creation of a new parish, 3 were unsure and 1 was opposed.
Comments made in responses received:	<p>Boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 7 supported the creation of a new parish to serve the residents of the Beaulieu/Channels area as the current parish councils do not serve the residents as effectively as a parish based on the new community could. Some would group the new areas together, but others think that they should remain separate to improve engagement. - 1 respondent saw the benefit of creating a new parish from the developments to the north of Essex Regiment Way. They felt this would consolidate the developments in Springfield, Boreham, Little Waltham and Broomfield and that the residents of this area will have much more in common with each other than with their current parishes - A new parish was suggested by some with it's boundary along Essex Regiment Way. - One respondent suggested that the new area is wholly in Springfield. - 1 supported expanding the parish areas with Broomfield and Little Waltham becoming one. - 4 did not think that the boundaries required changing. <p>Number of Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5 think the number of Councillors on Broomfield Parish Council should be reduced. - 2 thought the number of Councillors should be increased. - 3 thought it should remain as it is. - Remaining respondents did not engage with this topic.

3. Chignal	
Total Responses to CGR:	3
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	Yes
Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	No change deemed necessary
Comments made in responses received :	<p>Boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consensus that no change required to the boundaries, the Parish council serve the area well. - Noted that in 2015 the City Council explored merging Chignal PC with Mashbury parish meeting but decided not to proceed with this. Respondent was happy to revisit this issue.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcomed the diversity and representation that the new development in Little Hollows has brought. <p>Number of Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All responses said that the number of Councillors was appropriate. - 2 reflected that there are often issues in filling all seats
--	--

4. Danbury	
Total Responses to CGR:	3
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	Yes
Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	No change deemed necessary in Danbury area
Comments made in responses received:	<p>Boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responses from residents in Danbury reflected that are happy with their parish and would like them to have more responsibility. - The area that Danbury covers fits in well with its neighbouring parishes - 2 respondents expressed support for parish councils to be established elsewhere in Chelmsford. <p>Number of Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One respondent supported reducing the number of councillors - One noted that the council composition of 15 councillors that has never been achieved - The final respondent thought that no change was required

5. East Hanningfield	
Total Responses to CGR:	1
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	N/A
Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	No change deemed necessary in East Hanningfield
Comments made in response(s) received:	<p>Boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No change required - The parish is presently a built-up centre surrounded by dispersed settlement, which looks to the centre for the shop, school, village hall and churches. <p>Number of Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current number of councillors is appropriate

6. Galleywood	
Total Responses to CGR:	10
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	Yes

Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	6 respondents reflected that no changes were needed, 2 would like Galleywood to expand, 1 would like the parish council area to be made smaller and 1 suggested that the parish council is no longer needed.
Comments made in responses received:	<p>Boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One respondent suggested that the area should be made smaller as crime is impacting house prices and insurance premiums - It was also suggested by one respondent that the boundary is expanded to include Galleywood Road - 6 believe the boundaries do not need reviewing but there were suggestions as to taking on more responsibility and what the parish council should be doing - One respondents suggested that Goat hall should become a parish itself, or merge with Galleywood. <p>Number of Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One respondent suggested reducing the number of Councillors as the vacancies are hard to fill - 3 believed that the number of Councillors should increase to reflect the population

7. Good Easter	
Total Responses to CGR:	2
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	Yes
Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	No change deemed necessary
Comments made in responses received:	<p>Boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both respondents are happy with the arrangements with the parish council area. - One respondent expressed concern about the precept <p>Number of Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both respondents comfortable with current number of Councillors.

8. Great and Little Leighs	
Total Responses to CGR:	1
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	N/A
Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	Yes
Comments made in responses received:	<p>Boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As Chelmsford Council have adopted the new local plan which would double the number of houses within the Great Leighs boundary, (750 one side of A131 and 350 the other side) The residents of these new properties' needs, i.e.

	<p>schools, Village hall, Community centre, Nursery etc would be better served by a new parish.</p> <p>Number of Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No change needed but there are vacancies that are a struggle to fill.
--	---

9. Great Baddow	
Total Responses to CGR:	23
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	No
Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	11 respondents considered the arrangements to be acceptable as they are, but the rest expressed the need for a change
Comments made in responses received:	<p>Boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 11 respondents thought the parish council are able to serve the area well - 4 reflected that the area has grown significantly, and the parish should be divided - 8 respondents said they did not know what the parish council did or suggested abolishing the parish council <p>Number of Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 11 said that the number of Councillors was appropriate - 4 suggested reducing the number of Councillors - 7 suggested adding more seats on the parish council

10. Great Waltham	
Total Responses to CGR:	2
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	Yes
Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	No change required in Great Waltham
Comments made in responses received:	<p>Boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One respondent had no objections to the arrangements and suggested changes elsewhere - Support was expressed for great and little Waltham to remain as they are <p>Number of Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No change to the number of Councillors deemed necessary

11. Highwood	
Total Responses to CGR:	1
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	N/A
Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	No change required in Highwood
Comments made in responses received:	<p>Boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boundaries still reflect the relevant area around Highwood <p>Number of Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No change to the number of Councillors deemed necessary

12. Little Baddow	
Total Responses to CGR:	1
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	N/A
Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	No change required in Little Baddow
Comments made in responses received:	Boundaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The arrangements in place are acceptable and the parish are able to serve the area well. Support was offered to the idea of parishing unparished areas Number of Councillors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No change to the number of Councillors deemed necessary

13. Little Waltham	
Total Responses to CGR:	27
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	No
Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	All respondent, other than 2, support a change of some sort.
Comments made in responses received:	Boundaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 19 respondents expressed concern regarding the inclusion of new developments within the parish. Most of these responses were from parties within the 'original' Little Waltham Parish and did not express any thoughts on how a new parish should be composed. - A suggestion was put forward for the creation of a new parish for the garden community. - Channels – One respondent took the view that Parish boundaries should encompass communities as opposed to dividing them. The section of the new development known as 'Channels' has been built as a self-contained area and considered Channels should be wholly within the Parish of Little Waltham. - Blasford Hill – one respondent noted that the actual impact of the housing will fall squarely upon the Parish of Little Waltham as those new residents will be using facilities such as the school and the GP surgery both within the village centre and there will be an increase in traffic along the B1008 and a re-modelling of the road probably including a new roundabout adjacent to current allotment site. Thus, it would clearly be completely inequitable for those houses to be part of the Broomfield Parish as this would mean any CIL contribution would be paid to the Broomfield Parish despite the fact that the vast majority of impact of the new housing would fall upon the residents of Little Waltham. - 1 respondent expressed their conundrum regarding the identity of the residents and how new boundaries could affect them as their home falls in the area of the new development. - 2 respondents thought that no change was necessary to the current arrangements.

	<p>Number of Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16 said that no change was required, the number of Councillors serve the area well. - 5 supported adding additional positions for parish councillors. - The remaining respondents did not engage with the topic.

<p>14. Mashbury No Responses</p>

<p>15. Margaretting No Responses</p>

16. Pleshey	
Total Responses to CGR:	1
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	N/A
Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	No change required in Highwood
Comments made in responses received	<p>Boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The respondent was comfortable with the arrangements in Pleshey and supported the idea of parishing. <p>Number of Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No change to the number of Councillors deemed necessary

17. Rettendon	
Total Responses to CGR:	16
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	No
Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	All respondents other than 1 think a change is needed
Comments made in responses received:	<p>Boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 12 of the respondents believe that Hayes Country park should be its own parish or part of South Woodham Ferrers. - 3 expressed the need for the parish council area to be realigned. - 1 considered the boundaries to be acceptable as they are. <p>Number of Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 5 thought there should be fewer parish councillors. - 2 thought there should be more councillors sitting on the parish. - 5 thought that the number of councillors did not need to change. - The remaining respondents did not engage with this issue.

18. Roxwell
No Responses

19. Runwell

Total Responses to CGR:	3
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	Yes
Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	No changes needed in Runwell
Comments made in responses received:	<p>Boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No recommendation, the current arrangements were deemed appropriate. <p>Number of Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 comment supported increasing the number of councillors - 1 comment that the Parish Council supports a growing community and has sufficient members to cover and discuss needs of the parish

20. Sandon

Total Responses to CGR:	1
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	N/A
Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	No changes needed in Sandon
Comments made in responses received :	<p>Boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The respondent said that they did not want any changes to the existing Council arrangements. They said there may be a wish to change the Parish name to encompass the 3 distinct hamlets. <p>Number of Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No changes deemed necessary.

21. South Hanningfield

Total Responses to CGR:	4
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	Yes
Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	No changes are deemed necessary in South Hanningfield
Comments made in responses received:	<p>Boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All respondents feel that the parish council are able to serve residents well in the current boundaries and warding arrangements <p>Number of Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 respondents though the number of councillors was appropriate - 1 reflected that the number of councillors should be reduced to improve decision making

22. South Woodham Ferrers

Total Responses to CGR:	5
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	Yes
Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	All respondents suggested minor changes to the arrangements in South Woodham Ferrers
Comments made in responses received:	<p>Boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One respondent suggested eliminating the town council and turning it into a parish council - It was noted that people in unparished areas pay less tax than those in parished areas an whether this is fair. - One respondent supported the creation of parishes in other areas and thought that all parishes should have more responsibility <p>Number of Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 thought that the council should have fewer councillors to improve decision making - 1 thought that as the council covers a large area, more councillors should be added - The other respondents did not engage with this question

23. Springfield	
Total Responses to CGR:	15
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	No
Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	Opinion is divided, 10 thought that some change was necessary and the remaining respondents thought that the current arrangements were suitable
Comments made in responses received:	<p>Boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 6 respondents suggested breaking down the Springfield parish area to create new parishes. New parish areas that were identified include Chelmer, Beaulieu and a smaller Springfield Parish. - 3 respondents pointed out that Springfield Parish doesn't contain the whole area currently known as Springfield, extension of the parish to include the whole area now defined as Springfield was supported in this case. - 1 response suggested the removal of the parish. - 5 did not think any changes to the current arrangements were necessary. - 1 respondent considered that the Chelmer Village area should have its own parish council, as well as the new Beaulieu/channels development. Further that the reduction of the electorate from doing this would allow Springfield Parish Council to expand the parish to include the 'older' area of Springfield that is not within the current boundaries and are currently unparished. <p>Number of Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10 respondents did not think that the number of Councillors needed to change to serve the area effectively.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 thought the number of councillors should be reduced to make it cheaper/more effective. - 2 thought that more representatives should be added so that the community could be best served.
--	---

24. Stock	
Total Responses to CGR:	1
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	N/A
Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	N/A
Comments made in response(s) received	<p>Boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The respondent thought that parish councils were ineffective and should be abolished. <p>Number of Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The number of Councillors should be reduced, or the parish council abolished completely.

25. Woodham Ferrers and Bicknacre	
Total Responses to CGR:	3
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	No
Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	1 respondent thought that change was required in relation to the parish council
Comments made in responses received:	<p>Boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One respondent thought that the area the parish council cover should be expanded. - The other respondents thought that the current arrangements work well. <p>Number of Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 of the respondents though that no change was required - One suggested that more Councillors are added to improve the representation from both villages

26. West Hanningfield No Responses
--

27. Writtle	
Total Responses to CGR:	1
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	N/A
Is a change to the current arrangements welcomed:	N/A
Comments made in response received	<p>Boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The current arrangement were considered to be suitable. <p>Number of Councillors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the Warren Farm development is built there should be consideration for additional councillors, representing

Warren Farm, when a significant proportion of the houses are occupied.

Detailed responses from unparished areas

Unparished area	
Total Responses to CGR:	89
Is there a consensus among the respondents:	No – 68 responses supported the idea for a variety of reasons, 17 expressed opposition and 4 were unsure.
Comments made in responses regarding the creation of new parishes:	<p>On analysis of the responses in support of creating a new parish council we explored the reasons given for this. The most popular answers were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To improve a sense of community by creating local spaces and having a way of getting our voice heard (25). - Because we don't have one and other areas of Chelmsford do (14). - No clear reason was given (29). <p>Those opposed to the creation of parish councils cited reasons including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Another level of government is not needed as we are represented by CCC and ECC already (4). - Concerns about funding and precepts (7). - Concerns regarding representation of different demographics on Parish Councils (1). - No clear reason was given (4). <p>The responses from residents that were unsure at this stage stated that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Did not know where parish councils are, or what they do (3). - Did not think there would be any local interest (1). -
Suggestions as to potential boundaries from respondents:	<p>The breakdown of areas that people suggested included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 large parish (20) - East/West/North/South 6 - The same as city ward boundaries (5) <p>The areas that received the most feedback regarding creating a new parish were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Moulsham/Moulsham Lodge (20) - Old Moulsham (7) - Melbourne (3) - Patching Hall (3) - Old Springfield/Springfield South (3) - The Lawns and Trinity (1) - Waterhouse Lane (1) - St Andrews (1) - Marconi (1)

1. Draft Terms of Reference for a proposed Community Governance Review

- 1.1 Chelmsford City Council has decided to undertake a Community Governance Review (CGR) under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (“the 2007 Act”).
- 1.2 The review will comply with the legislative and procedural requirements set out in the 2007 Act as well as any statutory guidance (this currently includes Joint Guidance produced in 2010 by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England). It will follow the approach set out in the Terms of Reference, including the indicative timetable.
- 1.3 The review will initially consider the whole of the City of Chelmsford area but concentrate on those areas where issues to address are, or become, apparent. The City area currently has 27 parishes (25 parish councils, 1 Town Council and 1 parish meeting) and an area in the central part of the city which currently has no parishes. The area covered by the review is set out on the attached map in Section 3 below.
- 1.4 The review will consider whether community governance arrangements across the District area are suitable, taking account of areas where housing developments have occurred or are proposed, with a view to ensuring these remain fit for purpose for the future. The review will also consider whether it is appropriate to parish unparished wards, including whether to create new parish council(s) or make changes to existing parish arrangements.
- 1.5 The Council is keen to encourage all interested parties to engage in this important project and has already proactively undertaken early consultation, which secured over 220 responses from various bodies and interested parties.
- 1.6 The Council is developing an area on its website for the Community Governance Review. This area will be developed further to include maps and statistical information together with updates that will be published as the review progresses. A summary of the results of the early consultation will be included in this area. All relevant consultation responses, available evidence and legal considerations (including those referred to in paragraph 1.2 above) will be used to help inform the decisions made during this review.

2. Reasons why a Community Governance Review is being proposed at this stage

The benefits and timing of undertaking a community governance review are set out in Section 2 of the Joint guidance referred to in paragraph 1.2 of the Terms of Reference. It is good practice for the Council to consider undertaking a community governance review every 10-15 years. The Council has decided to exercise its discretion to undertake a community governance review so that it can determine whether it is appropriate to parish the unparished wards and whether changes are necessary as a result of housing developments (including proposed developments) in the area. The Council will also consider any other community governance related proposals that may arise during the review.

3. Map of the area of Chelmsford City covered by the Community Governance Review

CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL AREA **PARISH BOUNDARIES**



0 2,500 5,000 Metres
JUNE 2015

Directorate for Sustainable Communities
Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1JE
Tel: 01245 606606 Fax: 01245 606642
Web: www.chelmsford.gov.uk



4. Next steps including an indicative timescale for the Chelmsford Community Governance Review 2020-2023

9 December 2020	Full Council to approve Terms of Reference for the Community Governance Review
Mid-January to end-March 2021	Formal initial Community Governance Review consultation
June-July 2021	Consideration of responses and drafting of recommendations (including any recommendations to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England) by Connectivity and Local Democracy Working Group, Governance Committee and Full Council
July-early September 2021	Further Public Consultation on draft recommendations
Autumn 2021	Formulation of final recommendations (including any recommendations to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England) by Connectivity and Local Democracy Working Group and Governance Committee
8 December 2021	Final recommendations to be considered by the Full Council
By Spring 2022	Approval of community governance orders and consequential matters in place by Spring 2022 for implementation 2023 local and parish cycle of elections (further time will be taken for implementation should it be necessary to consult/make recommendations to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England)
May 2023	Parish Council elections to be held under any new arrangements that may be decided



Chelmsford City Council Chelmsford Policy Board

3 December 2020

Longfield Solar Farm Initial Informal Consultation

Report by:

Director of Sustainable Communities

Officer Contact:

Gemma Nicholson, Planning Officer, gemma.nicholson@chelmsford.gov.uk, 01245 606631

Claire Stuckey, Principal Planning Officer, Claire.stuckey@chelmsford.gov.uk, 01245 606475

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to outline the Council's suggested response to the non-statutory consultation on the Longfield Solar Farm. The report summarises the consultation on which views are sought, the key proposals in so far as they impact on Chelmsford City Council's administrative area and provides a summary of the proposed consultation response which is set out in detail at **Appendix 1**.

Recommendation

To approve the consultation response set out in Appendix 1 and to submit it to Longfield Solar Farm before the consultation period expires on 14 December 2020.

1. Introduction

Scope and Purpose of the Consultation

- 1.1. This is a non-statutory consultation and the first round of public consultation on the proposals at Longfield Solar Farm. The consultation runs from 2 November 2020 to 14 December 2020. The details of the consultation can be found on the website: <https://www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk/>. The proposal is at the early stages in the design process. The purpose of this consultation is to gain feedback on the early stages to inform future consultation and more detailed proposals.

Proposal

- 1.2. The proposal is for a new solar energy farm co-located with battery storage and associated infrastructure which if approved could to help meet the country's need for low carbon energy.
- 1.3. Longfield Solar Farm proposes to use ground mounted solar panels to generate electricity (350MW based on today's technology) from the sun and the batteries would store energy for when it is most needed. The proposal includes grid connection infrastructure (including new substation) to connect Longfield Solar Farm to the National Grid powerlines that cross the site.
- 1.4. The developers have a connection agreement with National Grid which would allow them to export or import up to 500 megawatts (MW) of electricity.

2. Background

Location

- 2.1. The site is located on farmland north east of Chelmsford and north of the A12 between Boreham, Hatfield Peverel, Great Leighs and Terling as shown at **Appendix 2**. The site is located on around 380 hectares of land. Whilst mainly located within the Braintree District administrative area, the western parts of the site fall within the City Council area. Not all of the proposed site area would be used for the solar arrays and battery storage, the proposed site allows space for landscaping, habitat enhancement and mitigation.

Operation

- 2.2. Longfield Solar Farm is being proposed by Longfield Solar Energy Farm Ltd., a joint venture between EDF Renewables (EDFR) and Padero Solar. EDF Renewables has over 25 years' of experience in delivering renewable energy projects in more than 20 countries around the world. EDF Renewables UK has an operating portfolio of 36 wind farms and one of the UK's largest battery storage units (together totalling almost 1GW). Padero Solar has helped to develop more than 25 Solar Farms in the UK, and this has delivered over 390MW's of renewable energy. Padero Solar is part of a group of three companies behind a number of solar projects, including Eveley Solar Farm (Hampshire).

Solar and Battery Storage

- 2.3. Energy generation currently makes up a significant amount of the UK's carbon emissions. To meet the Government's target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050, the UK requires significant investment in new renewable energy generation.
- 2.4. Solar energy is one of these sources which can contribute to offer clean, low carbon sources of energy generation.
- 2.5. The proposal is to use ground mounted PV panel arrays to generate electricity. This is supported by localised cabling and solar stations (comprising inverter, transformer and switchgear) to transfer the electricity to the substations and battery storage.
- 2.6. The battery storage element of the proposal would play a role in stabilising the National Grid. Solar and other forms of renewable energy generation are intermittent by their nature. The battery storage allows electricity to be stored at times of an excess or shortfall in demand, and then released to the National Grid when it is needed or by removing surplus power from the grid and storing it to be released later.

Construction, operation and management

- 2.7. It is currently proposed to use A12 J19 via the B1137 Main Road, Boreham and Waltham Road/Boreham Road and A130 Essex Regiment Way via Wheelers Hill, Cranham Road and Boreham Road for access to and from the site in the construction, operation and decommissioning stages.
- 2.8. The proposal anticipates that the total construction period would take approximately 36 months to complete.
- 2.9. Whilst operational, activity across the site would be minimal and restricted to monitoring, maintenance and the management of the site. Solar farms typically have an operational lifespan of 40 years. The infrastructure can be removed once it reaches the end of its lifespan.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1. As the solar farm would have capacity to generate more than 50 megawatts (MW) of electricity, it is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). As such it is required to follow the Development Consent Order (DCO) process under the Planning Act 2008.
- 3.2. DCO applications are made to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) who manage the application on behalf of the relevant Secretary of State. In this case it would be the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy who will be the final decision maker.
- 3.3. The project would be assessed against relevant national and local planning policies, including the National Planning Policy Statements (NPS), National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the statutory Development Plans for Chelmsford and Braintree Councils.

National Planning Policy

- 3.4. The overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (NPS EN-1) and National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (NPS EN-3) set out national policy for delivery of nationally significant energy infrastructure, including renewable energy although neither explicitly covers solar powered electricity generation or battery storage. The NPSs set out assessment principles for judging impacts of energy projects so may form material considerations when considering development proposals.
- 3.5. The NPPF talks generally about renewables although does not specifically mention solar farms. It favours sustainable energy systems as long as that any impacts are (or can be) made acceptable, and that local planning authorities should approach these as part of a positive strategy for tackling climate change.

Local Planning Policy

- 3.6. Relevant adopted local planning policies and guidance, include:
 - Chelmsford Local Plan 2013-2036, May 2020
 - Essex County Council and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan, 2017
 - Essex County Council Minerals Local Plan, July 2014
 - Made Neighbourhood Plans
 - Emerging Making Places Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
 - Emerging Planning Obligations SPD

4. Environmental Impact Assessment

- 4.1. An assessment will need to be undertaken of the proposal's potential environmental impacts such as cultural heritage, landscape and visual impact, existing infrastructure, flood risk, noise and vibration, socioeconomics, transport and access, air quality, ground conditions and glint and glare.
- 4.2. Details of the types of assessments that are due to be carried out are included within the consultation material, but preliminary results of the environmental assessment work will be presented during the second consultation in 2021.
- 4.3. An EIA Scoping Opinion has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) setting out the areas that should be covered by the environmental impact assessments. CCC officers are preparing a response to the scoping opinion. An Environmental Statement will be prepared as part of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application. The Environment Statement will set out the outcomes of the assessments, as well as details of any proposed mitigation.

5. Summary of Consultation Response

- 5.1. In reviewing the consultation proposals CCC recognises that solar energy development can help meet targets for reducing carbon emissions, reduce reliance on fossil fuels and provide local energy security. They can also provide an income stream for farmers and landowners and support local employment opportunities.
- 5.2. As such, the response to the consultation is supportive of solar energy development in principle provided there are no significant environmental impacts that cannot be appropriately managed through the planning application process. It is recognised that there is limited detailed information regarding the environmental impact at this stage and further information is needed from detailed studies ahead of a judgement being made. The response to the consultation is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 5.3. CCC welcomes the opportunity to engage further with the proposal and supports the need for further assessment to be undertaken prior to any submission of the DCO application. This includes reviewing the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC), landscape and visual impact, biodiversity and nature conservation, flood risk and drainage, impacts of noise, vibration, glint and glare, impact on land changes, traffic and transport studies, impact on the historic environment, cumulative impacts and socio-economic impacts and community gain.

- 5.4. The consultation response requests further, more detailed information is provided at future consultations in respect of the community benefits and wider benefits of the electricity generation, what the temporary features are, how the site will be delivered, access points/routes detail, site design and impact on the wider local area. In addition, more details regarding the reasons for the scale, location of the proposal, potential traffic impacts, mitigation and decommissioning are sought.
- 5.5. As a host authority, CCC also welcomes the opportunity to comment on the draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) and the proposals for consulting local people, stakeholders and communities on future statutory consultations.

6. Next Steps and Timetable

- 6.1. This is the first round of consultation. Further, statutory public consultation will be undertaken before the Development Consent Order (CDO) application is submitted. Officers will collaborate with Essex County Council and Braintree District council on responding to the proposals.
- 6.2. A further consultation is expected in 2021 which will contain the proposed design for the solar farm and the preliminary results of the environmental impact assessment work and proposed mitigation measures.
- 6.3. The indicative project timescales are as follows:

Stage	Timescale
Non-Statutory Consultation	2 November – 14 December 2020
Statutory Consultation	Q2 2021
DCO Application Submission	H2 2021
Examination	2022
Decision on DCO Application	2022/23

List of appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Proposed consultation response
- Appendix 2 – Site Context Plan

Background papers:

None

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional:

CCC will be a statutory consultee for future consultations and DCO process. Failure to respond would reduce the Council's ability to influence the development process and the legacy of planning decisions which could have an impact on its area.

Financial:

The cost of responding to the consultation has been in officer time. The DCO submission and examination could involve significant officer-time so additional funding from the Councils' own resources may be required to continue to effectively engage in the process. There could also be a need for legal support associated with the DCO examination and for drafting S106 agreements in connection with associated development within the CCC area. These costs are currently unknown.

Potential impact on climate change and the environment:

The Longfield Solar Farm consultation promotes a sustainable form of energy generation. It would contribute to reducing carbon emissions, reliance on fossil fuels and provide local energy security. The proposal may also have an adverse impact on the environment, nature conservation and landscape. These would need to be assessed and mitigated against through the Environment Assessments and planning process.

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030:

To meet the Government's target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050, the UK requires significant investment in new renewable energy generation. This proposal would contribute to meeting the UK's future need for low carbon energy and achieving target of net zero carbon by 2050.

Personnel:

The cost of responding to this consultation has been in officer time. Additional officer time will be required to effectively engage in the process going forward.

Risk Management:

CCC risks not being able to influence the development proposals and the impacts it will have on its area and local communities if it does not respond to the consultation.

Equality and Diversity:

It is the responsibility of Longfield Solar Farm to satisfy itself that requirements for equality impacts assessments have been undertaken.

Health and Safety:

There are no Health & Safety issues arising directly from this report.

Digital:

There are no IT issues arising directly from this report.

Other:

Consultees:

Development Management

Economic Development and Implementation

Public Places

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

The report takes into account the following policies and strategies of the City Council:

Chelmsford Local Plan 2013-2036 (Adopted on 27 May 2020)

Draft Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document

Statement of Community Involvement, 2020

Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan, January 2020

Appendix 1 – Proposed Consultation Response December 2020

Chelmsford City Council (CCC) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the initial consultation for Longfield Solar Farm.

About Chelmsford

Chelmsford is located at the heart of the county of Essex with a population of approximately 180,000. It has a mixture of both urban and rural landscapes, with the City Centre a major draw, the town of South Woodham Ferrers and villages set within the countryside.

Chelmsford has good road and rail connections. Chelmsford has a mixed economy with a high number of jobs in the service sector, education and health, administration, manufacturing and construction. For more information about Chelmsford please refer to the Chelmsford Local Plan 2013-2036 available at <https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-new-local-plan/new-local-plan/adopted-local-plan/>

Summary of proposals:

The proposal for the solar farm includes:

- Ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) panels to generate electricity from the sun;
- Battery storage that will allow Longfield Solar Farm to import, store and export electricity to the National Grid, with priority being given to the solar PV generated electricity;
- Substations, inverters, transformers, switchgear, internal cabling and other electrical infrastructure required to support the solar PV panels and battery storage;
- Grid connection infrastructure which allows export or import of up to 500MW of electricity to and from the National Grid, including a new substation;
- Mitigation for environmental impacts that the scheme would have;
- Habitats to enable biodiversity and landscape improvements;
- Other associated infrastructure required for the construction and operation of the site, such as construction compounds, access tracks and welfare facilities.

Consultation Response:

Do you have any comments on our initial proposals for the solar energy generation element of the scheme?

CCC recognises that solar energy development can help meet targets for reducing carbon emissions, reduce reliance on fossil fuels and provide local energy security. They can also

provide an income stream for farmers and landowners and support local employment opportunities.

As such, CCC may support the development of solar energy development in principle provided there are no significant environmental impacts that cannot be appropriately managed through the planning application process. There is limited detailed information regarding the environmental impact at this stage and further information is needed from detailed studies ahead of a judgement being made.

The design of the solar panels will have implications on the impact of the proposal, clarity should be given for the alignment and/or movement of solar arrays and all assessments undertaken having regard to this type of installation. The potential impact of glint and glare from the solar panels on landscape/visual amenity, aircraft, rail and road safety must also be considered in developing proposals.

The new Chelmsford Garden Community is allocated in the Chelmsford Local Plan to the south west of the site which when complete will be in the region of 10,000 new homes and significant new employment. Consideration should be given for this scheme to also directly provide neighbourhood-scale power for the new garden community.

CCC will continue to engage with the process and provides additional comments below.

Do you have any comments on our initial proposals for the battery storage element of the scheme?

The opportunity to store electricity generated and supply the National Grid throughout peak and low demand appears an efficient way to utilise the solar energy generated. Ensuring the safety and reliability of the battery storage will be important.

It is noted that three indicative battery storage locations have been shown, however further consideration of these locations is needed in terms of their scale, design, access for maintenance, landscape and visual impact, impact on the biodiversity, flood risk and drainage, and amenity impacts such as noise.

Any associated infrastructure and buildings required to support the solar equipment must be designed and constructed to minimise their landscape and visual impact and be of a design appropriate to the rural context.

Do you have any comments on our initial proposals for the cable routes and grid connection?

It is noted that the proposal includes indicative locations for powerlines, the proposal will need to assess the visual and landscape impact and take into account the amenity impacts

to the existing communities and the strategic proposals within the adopted Chelmsford Local Plan such as the proposed Chelmsford NE Bypass and new Garden Community (Strategic Growth Site 6) which make up some of the surrounding context.

The adopted Local Plan can be found at: <https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-new-local-plan/new-local-plan/adopted-local-plan/>.

Consideration is also needed for the impact where soil stripping, storage and replacement is required for excavation for site compounds, access roads, cable trenching etc. Any site level changes should also be assessed and should not have a longer lasting impact when the site is returned following the decommissioning. Where possible, excavation should be minimised, and solar arrays and associated infrastructure installed in a manner that is capable of easy removal and the site returning to former use.

Do you have any comments on our initial proposals for the construction and operation of Longfield Solar Farm?

Information needs to demonstrate impact on the local highway network and that site access is able to accommodate the type and number of vehicle movements during the construction and operation of the site. It is noted that the proposal suggests two access points/routes. It should be recognised that part of these proposed routes includes Protected Lanes.

Reference should be made to the evidence base study for the Chelmsford Local Plan which can be found at: <https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-new-local-plan/new-local-plan/evidence-base/> The evidence base which supports the Local Plan . More information regarding vehicle movements is expected in future consultations.

The proposal should also ensure that the public rights of way in the vicinity of the site remain available and convenient for public use. Public rights of way through the development site should retain their character, amenity value and usability and be integrated with the development.

It has been noted that the proposal will take approximately 36 months to construct with a potential life-span of 40 years. More details regarding the construction compounds including details of their size, location and restoration of the land post construction and decommissioning is needed. Any proposed temporary construction compound should be carefully located in order to minimise environmental or amenity impact. Access tracks to the solar farm should also be kept to a minimum to better enable the site to be returned to its previous condition.

As noted above, any associated infrastructure and buildings required to support the solar equipment must be designed and constructed to minimise their landscape and visual impact

and be of a design appropriate to the rural context, taking into account flood risk and drainage.

Are there any local environmental enhancements you feel could be included as part of the scheme?

More information about the impact and consequently the visual and ecological mitigation that is required is needed to fully understand the enhancements that could be made. However, retaining existing site features such as existing hedgerows and ecological features is crucial to maintain landscape character and support biodiversity which should include a significant net gain.

Consideration should be given to security fencing and lighting that responds to the rural context. Where possible, the solar farm should minimise the use and height of fencing using natural features such as field hedges. More details should be included of all security and lighting features with consideration given to mitigating impact on wildlife and ecology.

Trees and woodland also provide vital benefits to the environment, including filtering air pollution, reducing noise, and creating and connecting wildlife habitats. The proposal should consider providing additional tree and woodland planting in line with the City Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency declaration and action plans to increase the woodland cover significantly in the Chelmsford District.

Do you have any comments on how the scheme could contribute to local employment and skills development?

Whilst the consultation material states that the proposals are committed to helping secure local economic benefits from the scheme and engaging with education providers about the potential for Longfield Solar Farm to support local skills development initiatives, no detail is provided as to how this would be undertaken. Outlining the positive legacy for the community e.g. net gain in biodiversity, community solar energy project, and new jobs that would be created by this proposal should be provided.

Opportunities for community benefit from the proposals should be explored, for example, providing jobs to local people both during construction and operation, consideration should be given to providing free or discounted energy to a local public building and establishing a local Environmental Trust.

Do you have any information relevant to the scheme and/or local environment which you think we should take into account?

The proposed development site covers a large area which has a diverse and rich historic environment. Within the Chelmsford boundary there are 10 grade II listed buildings and one grade I listed building within close proximity to the site and more within the wider area. There are also a high number of listed building on the Braintree District Council side of the site. These buildings sit within a rural landscape, which forms part of their settings' and contributes to their significance. There are also a number of buildings/structures/lanes of local interest in close proximity to the site which should be considered as non-designated heritage assets. The landscape includes ancient lanes, woodland and field boundaries. The proposed scheme will undoubtedly have a considerable impact on the historic environment.

The proposals should be informed by baseline studies to clearly define and assess the historic environment, this should include:

- Built Heritage Assessment, including identification of all heritage assets within 1.5km of the site boundary, assessment of their settings' and measures to avoid or mitigate harmful impacts in accordance with Historic England GPA3 The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017).
- Historic landscape assessment
- Archaeological desk-based study
- Landscape Visual Impact Assessment which should be in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3).

When these studies have been produced by the developer they should submitted to the council and a baseline evidence base agreed. This should then be used to inform the scheme design, avoiding or minimising harm to the historic environment and providing mitigation measures. Any proposals prior to an agreed evidence base is premature and ill-informed.

Furthermore, there are a number of other local environmental features that would need carefully consideration, such as River Ter SSSI to the west of the site, a number of Ancient Woodland both surrounding and within the site, and number of Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS). These are protected and highly sensitive landscapes and any proposals should take into account the impact upon the natural environment and connecting wildlife habitats.

Landscape features in the countryside, also play an important part in shaping the character and appearance of an area. They can include, but are not limited to, trees, hedgerows, woodlands, meadows, field margins and water features that do not benefit from international, national or local designations.

The Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessment, 2006 provides a comprehensive Borough/District-wide assessment of landscape character within the Study Area provides a useful reference in assessing the potential landscape and visual impacts of individual proposals. Consideration must be given to the landscape and visual impacts of ancillary development such as including power

cables, fencing, access tracks and construction compound. A detailed landscape mitigation plan should identify measures to avoid, reduce or remedy impacts on the landscape. These may include landscape buffer areas and the use of natural features such as hedges and/or trees to screen the development.

Land quality varies from place to place and the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) provides a method for assessing the quality of agricultural land. The Best and Most Versatile Land is defined as Grade 1, 2 and 3a. Within the Chelmsford area, the proposed site includes Grade 2 agricultural land. The proposal should consider the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) and seek to minimise the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land and ensure there is no long-term impact on the land once the site is decommissioned.

Is there anything you would like to know more about at the next round of consultation events?

Future consultations should include more information about the community benefits and wider benefits of the electricity generation. It should also make clear the temporary features, how the site will be delivered and clarity on access points/routes, site design and impact on the wider local area. In addition, more details regarding the reasons for the scale, location of the proposal, potential traffic impacts, mitigation and decommissioning should be included.

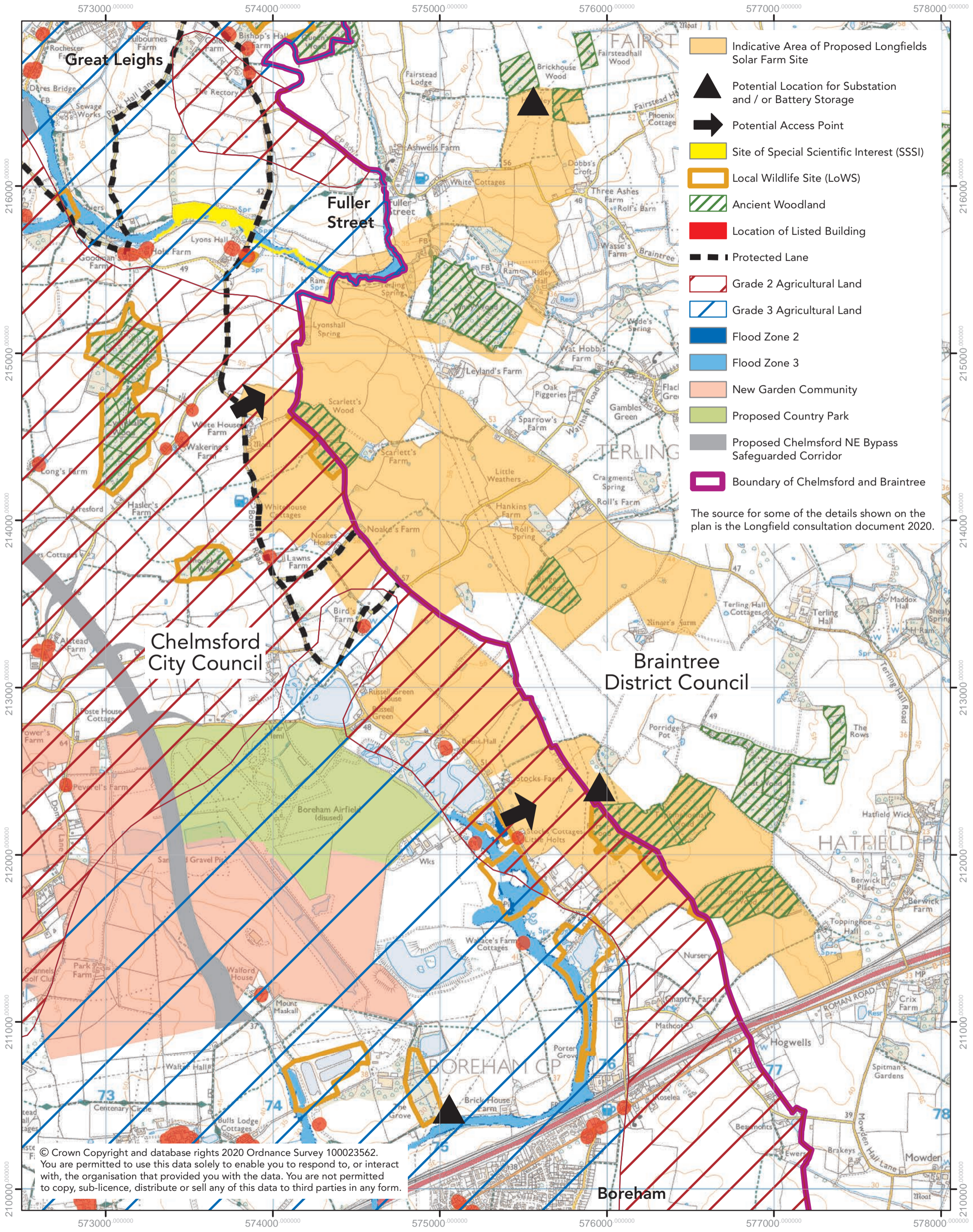
The City Council may seek a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with the applicants of Nationally Significant Infrastructure solar farm projects to enable it to provide effective and timely planning advice throughout the Development Consent Order (DCO) process.

It is recognised that in the case of a DCO applications, Screening and Scoping Opinions should be requested from the Planning Inspectorate, CCC notes that the EIA scoping opinion has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate and welcomes the opportunity to review the EIA.

Conclusion

CCC welcomes the opportunity to engage further with this proposal and supports the need for further assessment to be undertaken prior to any submission of the DCO application. This includes reviewing the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC), Landscape and Visual Impact, Biodiversity and nature conservation, flood risk and drainage, impacts of noise, vibration, glint and glare, impact on land changes, traffic and transport studies, impact on the historic environment, cumulative impacts and socio-economic impacts and community gain.

As a host authority CCC also welcomes the opportunity to comment on the draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) and the proposals for consulting local people, stakeholders and communities on future statutory consultations.



© Crown Copyright and database rights 2020 Ordnance Survey 100023562.
 You are permitted to use this data solely to enable you to respond to, or interact with, the organisation that provided you with the data. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.

CHELMSFORD POLICY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

3 December 2020

AGENDA ITEM 7

Date of Meeting	Report Subject
3 December 2020	<p>Community Governance Review <i>To consider a report from the Connectivity and Local Democracy Working Group and recommend to Council the terms of reference and consultation arrangements for the Review</i></p> <p>Longfield Solar Farm Initial Consultation <i>To agree a response to the non-statutory consultation on the proposal to the north of Boreham</i></p>
14 January 2021	<p>Masterplans – Land North of South Woodham Ferrers <i>To consider final masterplan of site allocated in Local Plan ahead of consideration by Cabinet.</i></p> <p>Masterplans – Land at East Chelmsford (provisional date) - <i>To consider final masterplan of site allocated in Local Plan ahead of consideration by Cabinet.</i></p> <p>Health and Wellbeing Working Group - <i>To consider a report from the Working Group on the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Plan adopted by the Council in November 2019, including any proposed changes in the focus of the Plan</i></p>
4 March 2021	<p>Masterplans – Land at Great Leighs (provisional date) - <i>To consider final masterplan of site allocated in Local Plan ahead of consideration by Cabinet.</i></p> <p>Chelmsford Garden Community Development Framework Document (masterplan) Update - <i>To update Policy Board on progress</i></p> <p>Essex Minerals Local Plan consultation (ECC publication date not yet confirmed) - <i>To consider representations to ECC Mineral Local Plan</i></p>