

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