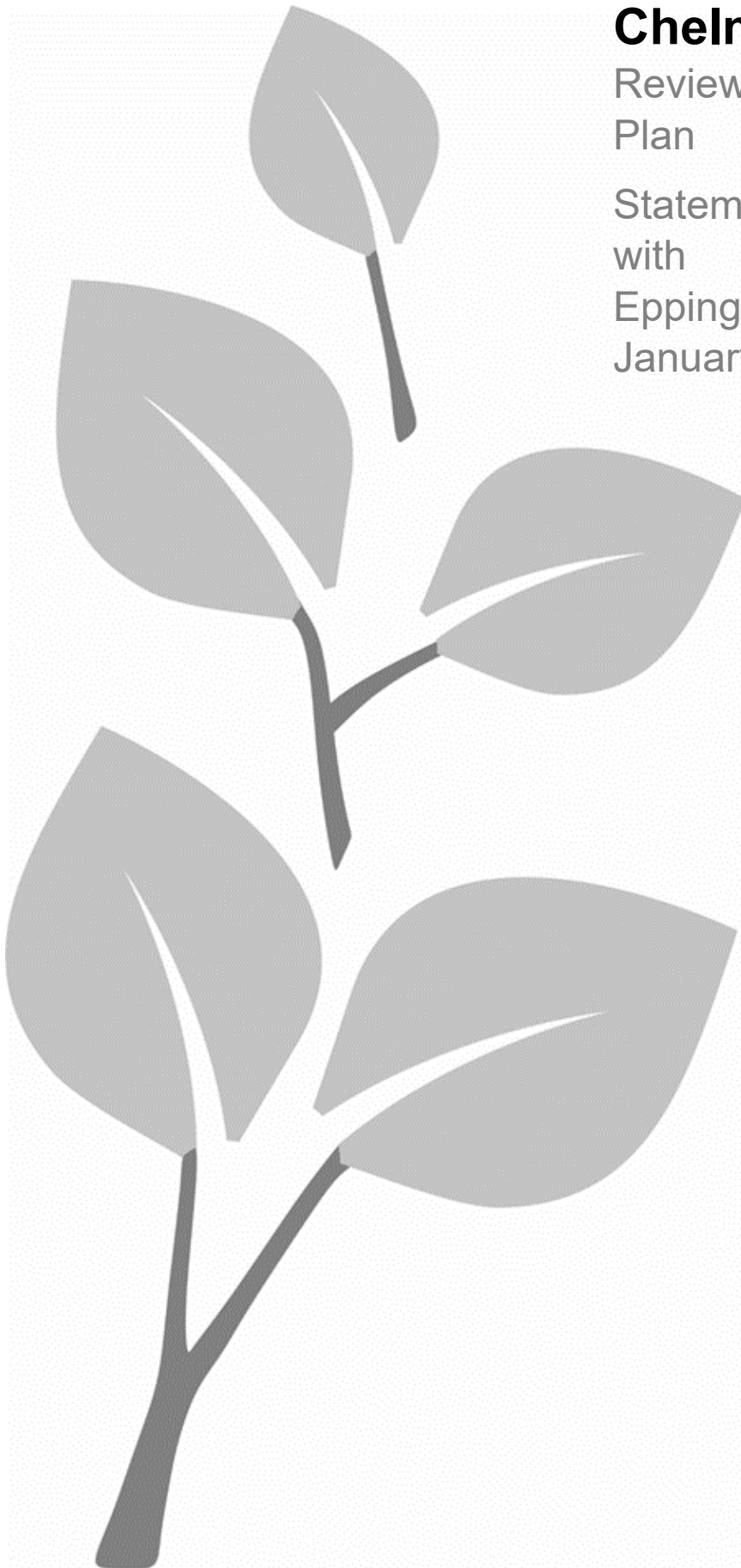


**SOCG003**

## **Chelmsford Local Plan**

Review of the adopted Local  
Plan

Statement of Common Ground  
with  
Epping Forest District Council  
January 2025



# **Statement of Common Ground**

## **Chelmsford City Council and Epping Forest District Council**

### **1. Introduction**

Chelmsford City Council (CCC) is currently reviewing the Chelmsford Local Plan adopted in 2020. This is at Regulation 19 (Pre-Submission) stage, following two Regulation 18 consultations on Issues and Options in 2022 and Preferred Options in 2024.

The consultation responses alongside collected evidence and national planning policy and guidance are being used to develop the Pre-Submission Local Plan.

CCC has fully engaged with Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) on the development of the Council's review of the adopted Local Plan from the outset. In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, EFDC has been formally consulted at both Regulation 18 stages of consultation together with its accompanying Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA).

### **2. Strategic matters**

The strategic matters of interest to Epping Forest District Council are:

- Delivering homes for all including Gypsy and Traveller accommodation
- Jobs and economy including green employment and regeneration
- Retail, leisure, and cultural development
- Sustainable transport, highways and active travel
- Community infrastructure including education, health and community facilities

#### Delivering homes

Strategic Priority 5 of the Pre-Submission Local Plan commits the Council to meeting local housing needs including independent living accommodation for older people (55+), supported housing for adults with learning or other disabilities, and the requirements identified through the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) September 2024 for Travelling Showpeople plots and Gypsy and Traveller pitches.

The strategic housing requirements are set out in Strategic Policy S6. This meets the transitional arrangements for assessed housing need calculated using the Standard Method in the December 2024 NPPF. This increases Chelmsford's housing need from around 950 net new dwellings per annum (dpa) to 1,454 dpa.

The Local Plan is programmed to reach Regulation 19 publication (pre-submission stage) on 4 February 2024 with a housing requirement of 1,210 dpa or 83% (1,210/1,454 x100). This will exceed the minimum 80% requirement in para. 234a of the 2024 NPPF enabling the Local Plan to proceed under the NPPF transitional arrangements. The Pre-Submission Local Plan will also maintain a five-year housing land supply. Overall, CCC is accommodating its housing needs within its boundaries resulting in no unmet need.

The GTAA (September 2024) identifies a need to provide 40 new permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, and 38 new permanent plots for Travelling Showpeople. Sites to accommodate a total of 30 permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, and 28 permanent plots for Travelling Showpeople, will be allocated across suitable large strategic development allocations, the detail of which are set out in relevant strategic site policies. The small shortfall will be met through appropriate windfall delivery in accordance with Policy DM3, which could be through windfall applications or regularisation of existing pitches/plots where appropriate within Chelmsford City Council's boundary.

### Jobs and economy

Strategic Policy S6 makes provision for 162,646sqm of net additional employment floorspace to help accommodate economic growth and employment requirements up to 2041. This is informed by forecasts in the Employment Land Review (ELR) 2023 and partial update carried out in 2024 via a Focused Update.

The Focused Update reviewed the most up-to-date assumptions and data regarding future economic growth prospects for Chelmsford between 2022 and 2041. As a result, the Pre-Submission Local Plan exceeds the recommended minimum employment space requirements over the period to 2041.

### Retail, leisure, and cultural development

Strategic Priority 9 of the Pre-Submission Local Plan commits the Council to supporting new and enhanced retail, leisure and commercial development through protecting existing assets and supporting appropriate growth in these sectors.

The strategic requirements are set out in Strategic Policy S12. This includes directing main town centre development to the relevant town or neighbourhood centre for a wide range of uses including retail, leisure, entertainment, arts, culture and tourism. Outside of specified designated centres, retail and leisure proposals above 500sqm gross floorspace will be required to undertake an impact assessment in line with the requirements of the NPPF.

### Sustainable transport

Strategic Priority 2 of the Pre-Submission Local Plan commits the Council to bring about a significant change in how people make their journeys towards more active and sustainable travel choices, and support the provision of strategic and local transport infrastructure.

The strategic requirements are set out in Strategic Policy S16. This includes prioritising and maximising opportunities for active and sustainable transport and movement, such as through walking and cycling networks and increasing public transport infrastructure. Specific transport and highways projects are set out in Strategic Policy S9, and include the new Beaulieu Park Rail Station, Chelmsford North East Bypass, expanded Park and Ride, and capacity improvements to the A132 in the south of the City Council's area.

Site specific requirements are also set out in site allocation policies where relevant.

### Community infrastructure

Strategic Priority 8 of the Pre-Submission Local Plan commits the Council to ensure that necessary new or upgraded strategic and local infrastructure and facilities are provided alongside the development of new residential communities

The strategic requirements are set out in Strategic Policy S9. These include facilities for education, police, ambulance and fire and rescue, primary healthcare, recycling facilities and appropriate drainage, as well as community facilities such as halls and places of worship, open space, and sports and leisure provision.

Site specific requirements are also set out in site allocation policies where relevant.

### **Common Ground**

Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) set out how strategic matters or issues of a common nature between a local authority and a statutory body or organisation are being addressed and progressed throughout the plan-making process to provide transparency, and wherever possible, show where parties are working towards areas of agreement.

### Areas of Common Ground

| <b>Rep Number</b> | <b>Local Plan Reference</b> | <b>Summary of representation</b>   | <b>CCC Agreed response</b>   |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| POQ24-43          | Strategic Policy S7         | EFDC welcomes the proposals within the Preferred Options Consultation of the allocation of further residential and employment allocations to meet identified need.   | Support noted. No change to the Plan.  |
| POQ24-43          | Strategic Policy S7         | EFDC notes that there are no proposed changes to the Green Belt.   | Support noted. No change to the Plan.  |
| POQ24-87          | Strategic Policy S4         | EFDC also notes that the document addresses securing, where appropriate, contributions towards recreational mitigation measures at Hatfield Forest, and also welcomes the continued promotion of sustainable transport and of active travel options. | The Environment Agency has advised that contributions are no longer required to be secured towards recreational mitigation measures at Hatfield Forest SSSI/NNR. This requirement has, therefore, been removed from Strategic Policy S4. |

### Areas without agreement

There are no areas without agreement or unresolved strategic matters.

### **3. Governance and on-going cooperation**

CCC will continue to work collaboratively with EFDC to address strategic matters that, in addition to those above, arise through the plan review process. This will occur on an ongoing basis through regular DtC meetings.

EFDC will be consulted on the Pre-Submission Local Plan, where their comments will be considered alongside any existing/future strategic matters. A wider local authority Officer/Member DtC meeting will be arranged during the Pre-Submission Local Plan consultation and others will be organised where appropriate or requested.

This SOCG will be reviewed following the Pre-Submission Local Plan consultation and ahead of submission of the plan for Independent Examination (anticipated in June 2025). The aim will be to resolve any outstanding matters where cross-boundary strategic matters will be addressed by email and/or DtC meetings.

It is agreed that CCC is working collaboratively with EFDC to ensure that cross-boundary strategic issues are properly considered and where appropriate reflected in the review of the Local Plan and effective and on-going joint working has, and will continue to be, undertaken.

### **4. Signatories**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Chelmsford City Council<br>Jeremy Potter<br><b>Spatial Planning Services Manager</b><br><br>Signature:<br><br><i>Jeremy Potter</i><br><br>Date: 20.12.24 | Epping Forest District Council<br>Nigel Richardson<br><b>Planning Service Director</b><br><br>Signature:<br><br><i>N. Richardson</i><br><br>Date: 17.01.25 |
|--|--|

**Appendix A** – Map of Chelmsford City Council’s administrative area in context with its neighbouring districts and county councils.

Chelmsford City Council is adjoined by seven local planning authorities. Essex County Council is the local Highways and Transportation Authority and Education Authority. It is also responsible for the Minerals and Waste Local Plans with Southend-on-Sea Unitary Authority.

