

**MINUTES**  
of the  
**CHELMSFORD POLICY BOARD**  
held on 15 January 2026 at 7pm

Present:

Councillor C. Adutwim (Chair)

Councillors H. Ayres, P. Davey, I. Fuller, J. Jeapes, S. Manley, S. Scott, A. Sosin, A. Thorpe-Apps and S. Young

### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs O'Brien and Whitehead. Cllr Scott substituted for Cllr Whitehead.

### 2. Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that they must disclose any interests they knew they had in items of business on the meeting's agenda and that they must do so at this point on the agenda or as soon as they became aware of the interest. If the interest was a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest they were also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting. Any declarations are recorded in the relevant minute below.

### 3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

### 4. Public Questions

No public questions had been submitted for the meeting.

### 5. Norwich to Tilbury pylon proposal – Development Consent Order Draft Local Impact Report

The Board were asked to consider a report which outlined the Council's Draft Local Impact Report following the acceptance of the Norwich to Tilbury Project Development Consent Order by the Planning Inspectorate. The report also sought the necessary Officer delegations for the Council's future involvement in the forthcoming Independent Examination. The Board were informed that the principle of the development and the acceptability of the onshore route comprised the key Local Issue for Chelmsford City Council, with detailed comments set out in the Local Impact Report. It was noted that the Council had held this position throughout the planning process for the DCO. The Board heard that the Council's objection was based on grounds including, a preference for an offshore route, visual harm to landscape, heritage, ecology and residential amenity. The Board were informed that the project would have a very clear detrimental impact across Chelmsford and that the Council were extremely disappointed at the lack of appropriate mitigation and compensation proposed by National Grid. The Board were informed that officers would continue on behalf of CCC to productively and constructively

engage to secure the best possible outcomes, mitigations and compensations if the DCO was granted.

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

- The Government had announced a separate package of compensation for those living within proximity of the pylons, leading to a modest discount against energy bills, but nothing had been proposed by National Grid. Officers were seeking to negotiate compensation, via tree planting and bio-diversity net gains and would flag any other compensation avenues to residents where available.
- The proximity of the route to Sturgeons Farm in Writtle, could be highlighted further in the LIR to see if there was any flexibility on that element of the route.
- Officers acknowledged that the proposed compensations were very low and would note this in the LIR, but as a Planning Authority it was not an area they could be directly involved in, Board members were reminded that they can submit directly to the Inspectorate themselves though.
- They would look to highlight certain areas of concern more in the LIR and Board members were reminded that the final submission of the LIR was by 26<sup>th</sup> February, with proposed delegations to the Director of Sustainable Communities and Cabinet Member for a Greener Chelmsford to finalise the document and that any specific locations should be brought to officers attention before the end of January.
- Officers would continue to make further representations during the hearing process and would continue to raise concerns about compensation and other already flagged issues.
- The position of National Grid was that an off shore solution was simply too expensive.

The Board thanked officers for their continued hard work and for the detailed and comprehensive draft Local Impact Report.

**RESOLVED** that;

1. The draft Local Impact Report be finalised by the Director of Sustainable Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for a Greener Chelmsford, to enable its submission to the Planning Inspectorate by the submission deadline of 26<sup>th</sup> February and;
2. The Director of Sustainable Communities and their appointed officers, be authorised to engage within and respond on behalf of Chelmsford City Council on all matters relating to the Examination and subsequently thereafter.

(7.02pm to 7.33pm)

## 6. Local Lettings Plans

The Board were asked to consider a report which set out a proposed process for the use of Local Lettings Plans. The Board heard that it would be beneficial to establish a legally compliant and consistent process, that would enable the Council to make best use of existing and new housing stock, whilst still meeting its legal duties to households in housing need. The Board were asked to consider the proposal and recommend it to Cabinet.

The Board were informed that a Local Lettings Plan would allow the Council to respond flexibly to very local and temporary issues such as anti-social behaviour, management of tenants during regeneration and the maximisation of housing stock. It was noted that due to them allowing allocation outside of the Council's Allocations Policy, they would need to be restricted

to a particular locality based on either the needs of that particular area or the need for a particular type of property that is unique to, or rarely available outside of a particular location. The Board noted that it was difficult to predict where or when a plan might be required, but that it was important for the Council to have a legally compliant process that would not unreasonably disadvantage Housing Register applications. It was noted that the proposed process achieved the optimum balance between oversight and expediency.

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

- A plan would allow the Council to have greater flexibility when deciding allocations with registered providers and could lead to chain lettings, by freeing up larger properties that were more in demand.
- The exceptional circumstances would be based off priority needs, and would be property based rather than person based.
- A housing provider may inform the Council of anti-social behaviour issues, or the Council might already be aware and a Local Lettings Plan could be used to tackle that issue, by perhaps saying one bed properties had to go to couples, rather than single people. A policy could be prepared for every situation, but once resolved the plan would be stopped and they would remain dynamic and time limited where used.
- The Council's Allocations Policy already prioritised Local Residents and this would not change.

**RESOLVED** that;

1. The process be agreed.
2. The proposed document for creating Local Lettings Plans be recommended to Cabinet, as this would allow the Council to make best use of existing and new housing stock whilst still meeting its legal duties to households in housing need.

(7.34pm to 7.48pm)

## 7. Chelmsford Local Plan – Draft Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document

The Board were asked to consider a report presenting the feedback on the consultation on the Draft Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and to consider approving the proposed changes. The Board heard that the SPD sets out the scope and scale of planning obligations applicable to different scales and types of development, and included changes to reflect the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Local Plan, changes in national policy and updates to evidence base documents. The Board heard that the consultation had taken place alongside the Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Local Plan consultation between 4 February 2025 and 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025. The Board also heard that the appendices set out the external and internal representations received and the subsequent proposed changes to the Draft Planning Obligations SPD and that proposed modifications had been reviewed and agreed with service leads.

The Board heard that in November 2025, the Government had published a Plan-making regulations explainer to enable local planning authorities to see the direction of travel for the new plan making system. This guidance notes that the final adoption date for new SPDs is the 30 June 2026, however, it is not clear if this deadline applies to plans and documents being submitted under transitional arrangements. A number of other Councils have already raised queries with this timing and further clarification is being sought on this from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as formally adopting an SPD that provides implementation guidance on yet to be examined planning policies does appear to be an oversight. Officers informed the Board that a clarification had not been provided by

Government, but that the recommendations had been designed to allow flexibility and meet either date if required.

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

- The SPD was a very useful document for the Planning Inspector to see how the Council would implement policy as part of the Local Plan evidence base, hence why it was normally adopted at the same time as the Local Plan.
- Community Infrastructure Levy was in addition to Section 106 contributions and was only for residential and retail properties. Other types of development were still liable for S106 such as warehouses. Officers also stated that they would want certainty from Government on their future plans for CIL before any changes could be sought, but that they would continue to look to maximise S106 and CIL contributions where possible.

**RESOLVED** that;

1. The proposed changes to the Draft Planning Obligations SPD be approved.
2. The Director of Sustainable Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for a Greener Chelmsford, be delegated authority to make any necessary amendments and updates to the Draft Planning Obligations SPD before publication.
3. The Director of Sustainable Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for a Greener Chelmsford, be delegated authority to publish the modified Planning Obligations SPD as a new Evidence Base document supporting the review of the Local Plan.
4. The modified Planning Obligations SPD be recommended to Cabinet for adoption either before 30<sup>th</sup> June 2026 or after adoption of the new Local Plan, subject to clarification from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

(7.49pm to 8.06pm)

## 8. Work Programme

The Board considered a report updating them on their future work programme. The Board noted that the SHEELA reports would no longer be presented to the Board for noting, as they formed part of the evidence base, and would be circulated to Board members instead.

**RESOLVED** that the work programme be noted.

(8.07pm to 8.08pm)

## 9. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 8.08pm

Chair