



Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) Spring 2026

Part 8 of 9
Glossary

April 2026



Chelmsford
City Council

GLOSSARY

Affordable housing: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers). This may consist of affordable housing for rent, starter homes, discounted market sale housing, and other affordable home ownership models – as set out in the NPPF.

Achievability: A site is considered achievable for development where there is a reasonable prospect that the development will be developed on the site at a particular point in time. This is essentially a judgement about the economic viability of a site, and the capacity of the developer to complete and let or sell the development over a certain period.

Annual position statement: A document setting out the 5-year housing land supply position on 1st April each year, prepared by the local planning authority in consultation with developers and others who have an impact on delivery.

Ancient woodland: An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites.

Ancient or veteran tree: A tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient, but are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage.

Availability: A site can be considered available for development, when, on the best information available (confirmed by the call for sites and information from land owners and legal searches where appropriate), there is confidence that there are no legal or ownership impediments to development. For example, land controlled by a developer or landowner who has expressed an intention to develop may be considered available.

Best and most versatile agricultural land: Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

Brownfield land: See Previously developed land.

Brownfield land registers: Registers of previously developed land that local planning authorities consider to be appropriate for residential development, having regard to criteria in the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Registers) Regulations 2017. Local planning authorities will be able to trigger a grant of permission in principle for residential development on suitable sites in their registers where they follow the required procedures.

Conservation (for heritage policy): The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

Deliverable: To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years.

Designated Heritage Asset: A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

Developable: To be considered developable, sites should be in a suitable location for housing development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged.

Development plan: Is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and includes adopted local plans, neighbourhood plans that have been made and published spatial development strategies, together with any regional strategy policies that remain in force. Neighbourhood plans that have been approved at referendum are also part of the development plan, unless the local planning authority decides that the neighbourhood plan should not be made.

Employment Area/Allocation: Local planning designation to safeguard areas for employment uses

Flood Zones: Zones determined by the likelihood that flooding will occur in the area. Zone 3 represents the area at the greatest risk of flooding, whilst Zone 1 represents the area with the lowest risk of flooding

Green Belt: Statutory planning designations that prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence.

Green Wedge: Local planning designation that protects the role and function of river valleys permeating into Chelmsford's Urban Area

Greenfield Land: Land which is not Previously Developed Land (see below)

Green infrastructure: A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity.

Habitats Site: Any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites.

Heritage Asset: A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

International, national, and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity: All international sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Ramsar sites), national sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites.

Local housing need: The number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance (or, in the context of

preparing strategic policies only, this may be calculated using a justified alternative approach as provided for in paragraph 62 of this Framework).

Local planning authority: The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area.

Local Plan: A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. A local plan can consist of either strategic or non-strategic policies, or a combination of the two.

Major development: For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Major hazard sites, installations and pipelines: Sites and infrastructure, including licensed explosive sites and nuclear installations, around which Health and Safety Executive (and Office for Nuclear Regulation) consultation distances to mitigate the consequences to public safety of major accidents may apply.

Mineral Consultation Area: a geographical area based on a Mineral Safeguarding Area, where the district or borough council should consult the Mineral Planning Authority for any proposals for non-minerals development.

Mineral Safeguarding Area: An area designated by minerals planning authorities which covers known deposits of minerals which are desired to be kept safeguarded from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development.

Nature Recovery Network: An expanding, increasingly connected, network of wildlife-rich habitats supporting species recovery, alongside wider benefits such as carbon capture, water quality improvements, natural flood risk management and recreation. It includes the existing network of protected sites and other wildlife rich habitats as well as and landscape or catchment scale recovery areas where there is coordinated action for species and habitats.

Neighbourhood plan: A plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area. In law this is described as a neighbourhood development plan in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Neighbourhood Centre: local planning designation of an area of amenity providing an important retail, business and community role

Open space: All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity

Planning obligation: A legal agreement entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

Previously developed land: Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.

Primary shopping area: Defined area where retail development is concentrated.

Ramsar sites: Wetlands of international importance, designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention

Renewable and low carbon energy: Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

Self-build and custom-build housing: Housing built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual. Such housing can be either market or affordable housing. A legal definition, for the purpose of applying the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended), is contained in section 1(A1) and (A2) of that Act.

SHELAA: Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment. This is the assessment Chelmsford City Council have developed to adhere to NPPF requirement that strategic policy-making authorities prepare housing land availability assessments to identify land for development.

Special Areas of Conservation: Areas defined by regulation 3 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which have been given special protection as important conservation sites

Special Protection Areas: Areas classified under regulation 15 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds

Site of Special Scientific Interest: Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Suitability: A site or broad location can be considered suitable if it would provide an appropriate location for development when considered against relevant constraints and their potential to be mitigated.

Town centre: Area defined on the local authority's policies map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or

adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Unless they are identified as centres in the development plan, existing out-of-centre developments, comprising or including main town centre uses, do not constitute town centres.

Viability: A site is considered viable if it is economically feasible to be delivered in accordance with national and local planning policy.

Yield: The number of dwellings that could be delivered on a site.