

SD004

Chelmsford Local Plan

**Statement of
Co-operation**

June 2026

Our Planning Strategy 2022 to 2041

Chelmsford
Local Plan



1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Duty to Co-operate (DtC) was introduced through the Localism Act 2011, and until recently set out in the [2024 National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) (from Paragraph 24). However, this formal duty was removed from 25 March 2026 following introduction of the [Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 \(Commencement No. 11 and Saving and Transitional Provisions\) Regulations 2026](#).
- 1.2 The Housing and Planning Minister Matthew Pennycook MP, announcing the removal of the Duty to Co-operate, stressed that local authorities should continue to work together across boundaries.
- 1.3 Chelmsford's Local Plan has been developed along the formal lines of the Duty to Co-operate, and the Council is committed to ongoing co-operation with adjoining local planning authorities (LPAs), Essex County Council and key stakeholders to bring forward its Local Plan. Co-operation will continue on strategic planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, such as providing land for new homes, jobs and infrastructure. These have a wider impact than local issues and cannot be dealt with by one LPA alone.
- 1.4 Although no longer a legal test with regard to the Duty to Co-operate, this Co-operation Statement has been prepared to accompany the Submission of the Chelmsford Local Plan. It sets out the strategic context for Chelmsford, the bodies involved with strategic issues and how the strategic approaches and policies have resulted from effective co-operation and joint working. It also reports on how continuing co-operation will be taken forward to plan implementation and monitoring.

2. About Chelmsford

- 2.1 Chelmsford is located in the East of England, at the heart of Essex, 30 miles north-east of London. The City Council is within a two-tier area for local government, with Essex County Council (ECC) providing public services such as education, highways and social services. ECC is also the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority and Highway Authority for this area. The principal settlements of Chelmsford and South Woodham Ferrers are surrounded by villages set within countryside.
- 2.2 Chelmsford shares boundaries with seven Local Planning Authorities and covers around 34,000 hectares (shown at Figure 1). The Green Belt covers almost 34% of the land in the south and west of Chelmsford. A map of the strategic planning area and its settlements is included at Appendix A.



Figure 1: Map of Local Planning Authorities that surround Chelmsford

3. Review of Chelmsford's adopted Local Plan

- 3.1 Chelmsford's adopted Local Plan (May 2020) covers the period from 2013 to 2036. The Council's review of the Local Plan updates our planning framework to meet local development needs for the whole period of 2022-2041, running from when it is adopted until 2041. The key decisions and processes are attached at Appendix B.
- 3.2 The Local Plan outlines the strategic priorities and long-term vision for Chelmsford and identifies locations for delivering housing and other strategic development needs such as employment, leisure, community and transport development. It contains a Spatial Strategy to deliver this vision. It sets out the amount and location of new development, and how places will change and be shaped throughout the Local Plan period and beyond. The Local Plan together with the adopted Minerals and Waste Local Plan, South East (Inshore) Marine Plan and six made (adopted) Neighbourhood Plans form the statutory Development Plan for the area.
- 3.3 The Local Plan is supported by a range of up-to-date evidence studies relating to a number of topics including economy, environment and heritage, monitoring and equality, population and housing, sustainability and habitats, transport and infrastructure, together with documents focused on the then former Duty to Co-operate, consultation and feedback, and other City Council Strategies. The full evidence base can be viewed on the Council's website:
<https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-local-plan/local-plan-review/>

4. Key Relationships and Bodies - Strategic Co-operation in Chelmsford

- 4.1 The Council makes every effort to seek co-operation on cross-boundary and strategic planning matters in a focused, positive and structured way. At the same time, the Council will continue to work constructively with nearby planning authorities on their own local plan preparation including Basildon Borough Council, Castle Point Borough Council, and Southend-on-Sea City Council.
- 4.2 The Duty to Co-operate Strategy relating to the adopted Local Plan was refreshed in advance of work commencing on the review of the adopted Local Plan, to ensure we are taking the correct approach to meeting the duty. Public bodies who are subject to the Duty to Co-operate were invited to comment, and we used the feedback to finalise the Strategy. The updated Duty to Co-operate Strategy was published in January 2022 (attached at Appendix C).
- 4.3 The Council has also reported progress in its Duty to Co-operate Position Statements, dated May 2024, December 2024, and November 2025 (attached at Appendix D, E and F) to accompany each stage of the review of the Local Plan.
- 4.4 The prescribed duty bodies are set out in Regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Of the bodies listed, the following are considered relevant to Chelmsford City Council:
- The Environment Agency
 - Neighbouring and nearby planning authorities
 - Historic England
 - Natural England
 - Mayor of London (Greater London Authority)
 - Civil Aviation Authority
 - Homes England
 - Primary Care Trust / Clinical Commissioning Group
 - Office of Rail and Road
 - Transport for London
 - Integrated Transport Authority (Transport East)
 - Essex County Council (the Highway Authority)
 - National Highways
 - The Marine Management Organisation
- 4.5 The Council has also co-operated with a number of other public bodies including the following:
- Essex Police
 - Essex Fire and Rescue
 - Network Rail
 - Office of Rail Regulation
 - Sport England
 - Essex Wildlife Trust
 - Essex Local Nature Partnership
 - Relevant private sector bodies (including higher education providers)
 - Relevant utility and infrastructure providers (including transport network, water, sewerage, energy and telecoms).

Co-operation with the prescribed bodies

4.6 The Council continues to work with partners such as the Highway Authority, National Highways, Natural England, the Environment Agency, and the NHS Integrated Care Board to identify and bring forward the necessary infrastructure that will be required in order to deliver the Local Plan's Spatial Strategy, as follows:

- The Environment Agency – have been involved with the preparation of the Water Cycle Study (CC002, CC003, CC017) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (CC001, CC001-A to G, CC010, CC018) evidence base work.
- Historic England – have been consulted during the Local Plan preparation, including advice on heritage policy formation and individual site allocations.
- Natural England – have been involved during the Local Plan preparation, and particularly with the Essex-Wide Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS).
- Homes England – have been involved in development proposals outside the Local Plan process.
- Essex County Council (as Highway Authority) – have been closely involved with the Local Plan development for traffic modelling; wider ECC involvement has included education, archaeology, waste and minerals advice.
- The Marine Management Organisation – the Local Plan takes consideration of the South East (Inshore) Marine Plan (OSP010), to provide a consistent approach for planning on land, and within the inter-tidal and marine environment in respect of a stretch of the Crouch Estuary in the Plan area.
- NHS Integrated Care System (Mid and South Essex) – have been kept informed of progress on the Local Plan and long-term growth; the Council has attended Mid-Essex Estates Forum meetings.
- National Highways – involved with Local Plan preparation and attended regular meetings, mainly in respect of impact on the A12 and strategic highway network.
- Mayor of London (Greater London Authority) – has been kept informed of progress on the Local Plan.
- Civil Aviation Authority – has been kept informed of progress on the Local Plan.

Key documents are listed above and in the evidence base listed in the sections below, including Statements of Common Ground. Evidence Base reference numbers are included alongside the document titles. They are all available to view on the Council's Local Plan web page: <https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-local-plan/local-plan-review/>

Co-operation with neighbouring authorities

4.7 Existing joint working arrangements include the Essex Planning Officers' Association (EPOA), the Co-operation for Sustainable Development Group, and the Officer Strategic Spatial Planning Liaison Group (associated with the London Plan), as well as close relationships with Essex County Council. EPOA is an Essex-wide group of LPA officers which brings forward strategic action on various topics such as Gypsy and Traveller provision, biodiversity net gain, health impacts, and response to national policy consultations.

4.8 As part of devolution and local government reorganisation proposals, the Council is engaged in ongoing discussions on strategic matters with the North Essex Councils (including councils for Epping Forest, Harlow, Uttlesford, Braintree, Colchester, Maldon and Tendring); and the Association of South Essex Authorities (including councils covering Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock).

- 4.9 Other joint working groups include the Chelmsford and Braintree Bus Group comprising the Council, Braintree District Council, the local bus operators First Bus and Heddingham Omnibus, Broomfield Hospital Foundation Trust, and Essex County Council. Discussions include network improvements, passenger information, access for people with disabilities, links to Broomfield Hospital, and ticketing.
- 4.10 The Council has also participated as a consultee on the East Anglia GREEN (Norwich to Tilbury) power lines proposal, Stansted Airport airspace redesign, the A12 Chelmsford to A120 Marks Tey widening scheme, and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- 4.11 The Council has continued to engage with neighbouring authorities and arranged joint officer and Member briefings at each formal stage of the Local Plan in September 2022, June 2024 and March 2025. In addition, a programme of meetings has been maintained with individual authorities, as set out in the Duty to Co-operate Position Statements attached at Appendix D, E, and F.
- 4.12 In preparation for Submission of the Local Plan in June 2026, Statements of Common Ground have been agreed with the following neighbouring authorities and key bodies:
- Basildon Borough Council (TBC)
 - Braintree District Council (SOCG005)
 - Brentwood Borough Council (SOCG034)
 - Castle Point Borough Council (SOCG013)
 - Colchester City Council (SOCG024)
 - Epping Forest District Council (SOCG025)
 - Maldon District Council (SOCG010)
 - Rochford District Council (SOCG011)
 - Southend-on-Sea City Council (SOCG030)
 - Tendring District Council (SOCG012)
 - Thurrock Council (SOCG026)
 - Uttlesford District Council (SOCG031)
 - Essex County Council (SOCG021)
 - Anglian Water (SOCG019)
 - Environment Agency (SOCG018)
 - Historic England (SOCG008)
 - Natural England (SOCG014)
 - National Highways (SOCG033)
 - Marine Management Organisation (SOCG042)
 - Essex Police (SOCG040)
 - Defence Infrastructure Organisation (SOCG036)
 - East of England Ambulance NHS Trust (SOCG037)
 - Essex & Suffolk Water (SOCG041)

5. Strategic Planning Priorities and Cross Boundary Matters

- 5.1 A number of broad strategic matters with possible cross-boundary implications were examined in the early stages of the preparation of the Local Plan, through evidence gathering, consultation on the update to the Council's Duty to Co-operate Strategy and meetings from early 2022 with Duty to Co-operate bodies. Throughout the Local Plan preparation process, the list of strategic matters and co-operation activities has been kept under review.

The Chelmsford Local Plan Strategic Priorities, and the strategic policies which will deliver them, are set out below:

1 Addressing the climate and ecological emergency

Strategic policies S2, S4, and S16

2. Promoting smart, active travel and sustainable transport

Strategic policies S9, S10, and S16

3. Protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, and support an increase in biodiversity and ecological networks

Strategic policies S3, S4, and S11

4. Ensuring sustainable patterns of development and protecting the Green Belt

Strategic policies S1, S7, and S11

5. Meeting the needs for new homes including Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation

Strategic policies S6 and S7

6. Fostering growth and investment and providing new jobs

Strategic policies S6, S12, and S17

7. Creating well designed and attractive places, and promoting the health and social wellbeing of communities

Strategic policies S5, S14, and S15

8. Delivering new and improved strategic and local infrastructure

Strategic policies S9 and S10

9. Encouraging resilience in retail, leisure, commercial and cultural development

Strategic policies S8, S12 and S17

5.3 Using these Strategic Priorities and the outcomes of the on-going Duty to Co-operate process the following Strategic Planning Issues have been identified as the focus for co-operation:

i) Meeting the needs for new homes including Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation

ii) Fostering growth and investment and providing new jobs

iii) Delivering new and improved strategic and local infrastructure

iv) Encouraging resilience in retail, leisure, commercial and cultural development

v) Protecting and enhancing the natural environment and support an increase in biodiversity and ecological networks

vi) Creating well designed and attractive places, and promoting the health and social wellbeing of communities

The sections below set out a summary of the background to the Strategic Planning Issues and key examples of co-operation activity. Where specific comments were received during consultation stages these are also summarised. More detail of the topics discussed is contained in the Duty to Co-operate Position Statements.

i) Meeting the needs for new homes

- 5.4 The requirements for all new housing in Chelmsford are outlined in Strategic Policy S6 – Housing and Employment Requirements, and the distribution in Strategic Policy S7 – The Spatial Strategy.
- 5.5 The adopted Local Plan was examined under the 2012 NPPF. There have subsequently been updates to the NPPF – the Review of the Local Plan Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Local Plan has been considered against the 2023 NPPF as set out in the Strategic Housing Need Assessment (SHNA). A SHNA addendum was prepared in 2024 to have regard to the proposed housing numbers for the progression of Local Plans at an advanced stage of preparation using transitional arrangements set out in the NPPF published on 12 December 2024. Among other factors the SHNA looks at how higher growth might drive increased net in-migration to the Council’s area from adjoining authorities, reflecting an increase in net in-commuting to the Chelmsford area for work.
- 5.6 Whilst it is still considered that Chelmsford shares a Housing Market Area with Braintree, Colchester, Maldon and Tendring Councils, joint housing need studies are no longer appropriate to address the requirements of meeting the Government’s 2024 Standard Method of calculating housing need.
- 5.7 However, there are several evidence base documents which have been undertaken in partnership, and by the Council alone, to support the Local Plan, which include:
- Chelmsford Strategic Housing Needs Assessment 2023 (AH001)
 - Chelmsford Strategic Housing Needs Assessment Addendum 2024 (AH004)
 - Chelmsford Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2024 (AH003) undertaken in consultation with Basildon, Braintree, Brentwood, Epping, Maldon, Rochford and Uttlesford Councils and Essex County Council.
- 5.8 Taking into account the range of housing needs identified in the SHNA 2023 and 2024 addendum note, the Council proposes a Housing Requirement figure of 1,210 homes per annum for the plan period 2022 – 2041. This equates to 84% of the latest local housing needs figure of 1,433 calculated using the Standard Method published in the December 2024 NPPF.
- 5.9 In total, provision is made for a total of 24,914 new homes in the period 2022 – 2041. When considering existing housing completions (3,057), existing sites with planning permission (2,259), existing Local Plan allocations to 2036 (11,953) and Windfall Projection to 2041 (2,218), the residual new Local Plan Allocations for the period to 2041 is 5,427 new homes.
- 5.10 In accordance with the National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), the Council, in partnership with other Essex Local Authorities, undertook a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) in 2023. This identifies a requirement for 40 permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches and 38 permanent Travelling Showpeople plots to be developed by 2041 within Chelmsford for households that meet the definition of Gypsies and Travellers in the PPTS at the time the GTAA was published.
- 5.11 The Council expects to see Gypsy and Traveller Pitches and/or Travelling Showpeople accommodation provided on all suitable strategic development allocations, but not all the identified need can be met this way. In order to meet the identified need, sites providing a total of 30 permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, and 28 permanent plots for Travelling Showpeople will be allocated with

the remainder of the need to be met through regularisation of existing pitches/plots and windfall applications using the criteria of Policy DM3.

- 5.12 With regard to unmet housing need, a Mechanism for the Consideration of Unmet Housing Need (AH005) was developed and agreed by the Essex Planning Officers' Association (EPOA) in September 2017 for use across the Essex authorities (Appendix G). This sets out the methodology by which each local planning authority, together with their HMA partners:
- i) should agree their full objectively assessed housing number, and
 - ii) if there is likely to be an unmet housing need because of constraints applicable to the area of that authority, the process to follow to request an adjoining HMA to meet or contribute towards meeting the unmet need.
- 5.13 The following Councils wrote to Chelmsford City Council, making a formal request for assistance in meeting their unmet housing need:
- Basildon Borough Council – post Pre-Submission consultation stage
 - Castle Point Borough Council – at Issues and Options and Preferred Options consultation stages
 - Southend-on-Sea City Council – at Preferred Options stage, and at Regulation 18 Stage of its draft Local Plan.
- 5.14 These requests were seeking assistance due to Green Belt constraints and increased housing need identified through the Government's revised Standard Methodology. The Council responded that it did not share a housing market with these local authorities and noted more recently that its housing need had also risen, and that additional sites would need to be identified to meet its own housing supply requirements – meaning there was no capacity to accommodate any unmet housing need from other authorities. The Council also suggested that the South Essex authorities should undertake a strategic green belt review across the whole of the area to re-consider what level of housing could be met within their boundaries.
- 5.15 Basildon Borough Council also formally sought assistance on meeting its needs for Gypsy and Traveller pitches to meet increased needs identified in their Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment. The Council responded that it was unable to identify sites to meet its own need, and therefore had no capacity to help meet Basildon Borough Council's unmet need.
- 5.16 The Council will continue to work closely with neighbouring authorities and Essex County Council, to monitor requirements for all types of housing including affordable units and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation, through the Plan's Monitoring Framework and when the Plan is next reviewed.
- 5.17 Monitoring for the delivery of housing will be undertaken by the Council through its Annual Monitoring Report and the Five Year Land Supply Position Statement. Further detail on this and the evidence base can be found in the Submission Housing Topic Paper (TP009).

STRATEGIC PLANNING ISSUE i - MEETING THE NEEDS FOR NEW HOMES

Key Strategic Partners

Essex County Council
EPOA
Essex LPAs

ACTIONS

Action: Preparation of a joint evidence base on Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation requirements (GTAA)

Partners: Essex local authorities/EPOA.

Outcome: The Chelmsford GTAA (2024) is part of a wider study that covers the whole of Essex, together with Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock. Although Basildon were not part of this commission, they have been a partner in the process and have used the same consultant and methodology for their GTAA. Essex-wide guidance for unmet Gypsy and Traveller accommodation has been developed by EPOA, through a working group of officers from Chelmsford, Basildon, Harlow, Colchester and Thurrock Councils, and is maintained to date.

Date: Chelmsford GTAA, September 2024
Mechanism for the consideration of unmet Gypsy and Traveller Need, December 2018.

Action: Maintain the Essex-Wide Mechanism on unmet Housing Needs

Partners: EPOA comprising Essex Local Planning Authorities and Essex County Council.

Outcome: A Task and Finish group of officers from Essex Local Planning Authorities was formed by EPOA to agree a process of considering unmet housing need within and outside Essex Housing Market Areas, which is maintained to date.

Date: Mechanism for the consideration of unmet Housing Need, September 2017 (Appendix G).

Outcomes from Strategic Working

The key outcomes from strategic working are:

- Joint working with North Essex Councils and the Association of South Essex Authorities
- The completion of an Essex-Wide assessment of Traveller accommodation needs in partnership with Essex Local Authorities using a consistent and robust methodology
- Maintaining the Essex-Wide Mechanism on Unmet Housing Need agreed.

Comments made on the policy approach during consultation:

- Broad support of the policy and CCC's commitment to meeting its identified housing, employment and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs within the

administration's boundary (Brentwood Borough Council, Rochford District Council)

Local Plan Policies:

- **Strategic Policy S6 - Housing and Employment Requirements** has been formulated to ensure that the identified housing need is met in full. The Council will review housing numbers regularly in accordance with national policy requirements, and will continue to have regard to the housing market area when consulting on any strategic matters that apply, including any housing needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas.
- **Strategic Policy S7 – The Spatial Strategy** sets out development locations and allocations for housing, and provision of Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots.
- **Policy DM1 – Size and Type of Housing** sets out the mix of housing sizes needed to meet future housing needs and create mixed communities. This policy reflects latest evidence from the Strategic Housing Needs Assessment, and from joint working with ECC for provision of Specialist residential Accommodation.
- **Policy DM2 – Affordable Housing and Rural Exception Sites** reflects the latest evidence from the Strategic Housing Needs Assessment.
- **Policy DM3 – Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Sites** sets out provision for the accommodation needs identified through the joint GTAA.

Unresolved issues

- There are no outstanding Duty to Co-operate Issues.

ii) **Fostering growth and investment and providing new jobs**

- 5.18 National policy requires Local Plans to proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver jobs. This includes identifying sites to meet identified needs. Levels of proposed new employment and new housing are intrinsically linked, to accommodate anticipated growth. In particular, the Employment Land Review 2023 (and Focused Update 2024) which includes employment growth forecasts and identifies a functional economic market area with neighbouring LPAs, and the Retail Capacity Study Update 2023 have informed the amount and type of employment and retail floorspace that will be required within the Local Plan period.
- 5.19 The evidence base documents which have been produced to support the Local Plan include:
- Retail Capacity Study Update 2023 (ECON001)
 - Employment Land Review 2023 (ECON002)
 - Employment Land Review Focused Update 2024 (ECON003)
 - Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA001)
 - Essex Sector Development Strategy 2022 (ECON005)
- 5.20 These studies have informed the amount of land allocated for employment use for the Local Plan. The Plan allocates 173,146sqm of new employment floorspace to accommodate economic growth and employment requirements. As a result, the Local Plan exceeds the recommended minimum employment space requirements over the period to 2041. The Council will monitor employment development growth alongside housing delivery through subsequent reviews of the Local Plan to ensure that new employment space broadly matches the future growth of the resident workforce in Chelmsford.
- 5.21 Over 50% of Chelmsford's working population both live and work in Chelmsford.

Around 20% of workers commute to London. Other popular destinations for Chelmsford residents to work are Basildon, Maldon, Brentwood and Braintree, where collectively 16% commute to work. Around 36% of Chelmsford's workforce lives outside the area with significant commuting across North Essex, with over 13,000 people commuting from Braintree, Colchester and Maldon each day to work in Chelmsford. This reflects the functional economic geography which Chelmsford shares with Braintree, Maldon and Colchester districts.

- 5.22 In 2022, Chelmsford City Council participated in an employment and economy workshop hosted by Basildon Borough Council as an early part of their Local Plan preparation. Strategic matters included transport for accessing jobs and challenges of relatively lower levels of employees needed for warehousing and logistics companies.
- 5.23 The Council is working closely with the Greater Essex Business Board and the North Essex Economic Board. The Council has also set up an Investors' and Developers' Network. The Council's Economic Strategy and Employment Land Review, alongside Essex County Council's Essex Sector Development Strategy and the Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Local Skills Improvement Plan, provides the local evidence to support the relevant Local Plan policies.
- 5.24 There have been no requests for Chelmsford City Council to meet the employment needs of any neighbouring authorities.
- 5.25 The Council will continue to work closely with neighbouring authorities and Essex County Council, to agree requirements for employment growth. Ongoing engagement will continue through the Essex Planning Officers' Association (EPOA).
- 5.26 Monitoring for the delivery of employment will be undertaken by the Council through its Annual Monitoring Report. Further detail on this and the evidence base can be found in the Submission Employment Topic Paper (TP014).

STRATEGIC PLANNING ISSUE ii – FOSTERING GROWTH AND INVESTMENT AND PROVIDING NEW JOBS
<p>Key Strategic Partners Basildon Borough Council Castle Point District Council Essex County Council EPOA</p> <p>Other Strategic Partners Greater Essex Business Board North Essex Economic Board</p>
ACTIONS
<p>Action: Preparation of evidence - Employment Land Review (ELR)</p> <p>Partners: All Essex LPAs and ECC.</p> <p>Outcome: Evidence document used to underpin Local Plan policy development.</p> <p>Date: Employment Land Review (2023) and Focused Update (2024) published alongside Local Plan consultation stages.</p>

Outcomes from Strategic Working

The key outcomes from strategic working are:

- The completion of evidence base reports including an Employment Land Review, setting out a core functional economic market area, using a consistent and robust methodology.
- Ongoing strategic discussions with other LPAs through the EPOA.

Comments made on the policy approach during consultation:

- The Plan should seek to match employment growth and skills capacity to housing growth; an appropriate mix of uses should reflect market need (Essex County Council)
- Support for approach, and clarity sought on keeping jobs and housing growth balanced (Basildon Borough Council)
- Development of Thames Freeport could generate a substantial level of economic activity across a wider area (Castle Point Borough Council).

Local Plan policies:

- **Strategic Policy S6 – Housing and Employment Requirements** has been formulated to ensure that the full need for employment land is met, reflecting the most up to date assessment
- **Strategic Policy S8 – Delivering Economic Growth** sets the wider scene for economic growth including for investment, economic diversity and skills improvement. The new employment growth allocations will ensure a flexible rolling supply of employment land
- **Strategic Policy S9 – Infrastructure Requirements** sets out how the Council will continue to engage with infrastructure providers to ensure appropriate infrastructure can and will be provided and planned for.

Unresolved issues:

- There are no unresolved Duty to Co-operate issues.

iii) Delivering new and improved strategic and local infrastructure

5.27 A key consideration for the Local Plan is the additional demand on existing infrastructure as a result of new development and how this can be accommodated and/or mitigated. Infrastructure covers transport, healthcare, education, energy, utilities, emergency services and waste management.

5.28 Initial duty to co-operate activities indicated that there may be cross boundary impacts related to education provision, primary healthcare provision (GP surgeries, dentists), other emergency services and providing new or improved transport infrastructure.

The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) (INF012) was updated in 2026 and is a key evidence base document and sets out details of the infrastructure identified by the Council and other service providers as being needed to support the delivery of new development across the City up to 2041.

Other evidence base studies to support the Local Plan include:

- Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document 2026 (INF011)
- Local Plan Viability Note 2026 (V003)
- Strategic and Local Junction Modelling, and Transport Impact of the Local Plan (T001 to T007)

- ECC Guide to Developer Contributions 2025 (INF002)
- ECC School Organisation 10-year Plan 20204 (INF006)

- 5.29 From these studies, and ongoing engagement with Essex County Council, the Council has developed its requirements for infrastructure including transport and highways, flood risk management, community facilities, green and natural infrastructure, and utilities.
- 5.30 Strategic infrastructure requirements are outlined in Strategic Policy S9 – Infrastructure Requirements; Strategic Policy S10 - Securing Infrastructure and Impact Mitigation addresses the mechanisms; and individual site policies list the site-specific details for infrastructure provision.
- 5.31 The Council will continue to work closely with its partners, particularly with Essex County Council to progress the Housing Infrastructure Fund bids and transport mitigation, and with Braintree District Council on cross boundary matters of Chelmsford North East Bypass funding and proposals for provision of secondary education.
- 5.32 Monitoring for the delivery of infrastructure will be undertaken by the Council through its Annual Monitoring Report. Further detail on this and the evidence base can be found in the Submission Infrastructure Topic Paper (TP016).

STRATEGIC PLANNING ISSUE iii – DELIVERING NEW AND IMPROVED STRATEGIC AND LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE
<p>Key Strategic Partners Essex County Council Essex LPAs Environment Agency Anglian Water Services Essex and Suffolk Water</p> <p>Other Strategic Partners National Highways, National Grid, UK Power Networks, Sport England, Mid Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust, Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board, East of England Ambulance Trust, Essex Fire and Rescue Services, Essex Police, Natural England.</p>
ACTIONS
<p>Action: Preparation of evidence – Strategic and Local Junction Modelling</p> <p>Partners: Essex County Council, National Highways</p> <p>Outcome: Joint commissioning between CCC and ECC for Local Plan transport modelling to inform Local Plan development. To assess current and ‘do-nothing’ scenarios, and Local Plan proposals. Outcomes of modelling have influenced the overall spatial strategy, and ongoing engagement has resulted in site specific requirements and mitigation – such as walking/cycling routes and road crossings, access points, bus priority measures.</p> <p>Date: Reports published at Issues and Options, Preferred Options, Pre-Submission and Additional Sites stages of Local Plan preparation (from 2021 to April 2026). Ongoing co-operation with regular meetings (at times, weekly) with ECC and National Highways to develop the Local Plan strategy.</p>

Action: Preparation of Evidence – Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)

Partners: Essex County Council, other Essex LPAs, Environment Agency, Anglian Water Services, Essex and Suffolk Water, National Highways, National Grid, UK Power Networks, Sport England, Mid Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust, Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board, East of England Ambulance Trust, Essex Fire and Rescue Services, Essex Police.

Outcomes: Neighbouring authorities worked alongside the Council to produce a joint approach to infrastructure delivery, particularly through DtC meetings and through consultation on the IDP.

Service providers have worked alongside the Council to advise on the impact the Local Plan growth would have upon their services and facilities. As a result, the requirements for services, facilities and appropriate mitigation measures to support the Local Plan growth have been assessed and agreed with all partners.

Date: ECC – regular meetings on education and highway matters as part of wider DtC meetings, and as focused discussions.

Neighbouring Authorities and other providers engaged via online meetings and email in Autumn 2023, and Spring/Summer 2024.

Action: Funding for infrastructure

Partners: Essex County Council.

Outcome: CCC is working closely with ECC to secure funding for major projects included within the Local Plan, from the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF).

The new railway station at Beaulieu Park (opened in 2025) was largely funded through the HIF (£141 million) with £12 million from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, and £22 million from developers. The Chelmsford North East Bypass will be delivered in stages with the first section funded by the HIF and further sections subject to developer contributions and DfT/Major Road Network funding. The Policies Map safeguards the route.

Date: Ongoing.

Action: Preparation of evidence – Water issues

Partners: Environment Agency, Anglian Water, Natural England, Essex and Suffolk Water.

Outcomes: a) Strategic Flood Risk Assessment prepared working closely with the Environment Agency, including: development of Sequential and Exception Tests for potential development sites; Flood Risk Assessment Level 1; and Level 2 to provide detailed data on flood risk for preferred sites.

b) Chelmsford Water Cycle Study prepared with partners to determine appropriate locations of development with respect to water infrastructure and the water environment. Mitigation included in Local Plan for upgrades/phasing of development at Great Leighs, otherwise no significant constraints identified for delivery of Local Plan development.

Date: a) February 2024, May 2024, October 2025; b) February 2024, October 2025

Outcomes from Strategic Working

The key outcomes from strategic working are:

- Traffic modelling has informed the Council's strategy for directing growth to the most sustainable locations where the impact on the local and strategic network can be minimised. It has also led to the emphasis on provision of sustainable transport infrastructure, non-car modes of travel, and sustainable access of future development.
- Consideration of cross boundary traffic impacts included in Local Plan.
- The IDP sets out the cost of infrastructure and how it will be delivered, giving clarity to developers on what development is required to deliver.
- Clear funding routes are set out for key strategic infrastructure projects.
- Robust evidence base developed with partners for water issues.

Comments made on the policy approach during consultation:

- Concerns over the potential impact of site SGS16a on the road network (Maldon District Council)
- Ensure that site SGS16b is adequately supported by local infrastructure (Rochford District Council)

Local Plan Policies:

- **Strategic Policy S7 – The Spatial Strategy** focuses development at well-connected locations for example in areas with a good level of existing or proposed transport infrastructure
- **Strategic Policy S9 – Infrastructure Requirements** includes requirements for contributions towards transport and highways, flood risk management, community facilities, green infrastructure and natural environment, and utilities
- **Strategic Policy S10 – Securing Infrastructure and Impact Mitigation** covers the requirements to demonstrate how infrastructure can be secured, including through Section 106 agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy
- **Site Policies** – include site specific requirements for provision of infrastructure

Unresolved issues:

- There are no unresolved Duty to Co-operate issues.

iv) Encouraging resilience in retail, leisure, commercial and cultural development

- 5.33 The Local Plan seeks to reinforce Chelmsford's important regional and sub-regional role as a focus for jobs, shopping, healthcare, education, leisure and recreation. The City Centre has recently seen significant expansion through the development of Bond Street comprising 27,900sqm of new retail and leisure floorspace, including John Lewis and other leading retailers.
- 5.34 Retail matters for the Local Plan are underpinned by the Chelmsford Retail Capacity Study 2023 (ECON001). This sets out how jobs in retail are focused in Chelmsford City Centre, South Woodham Ferrers Town Centre, and Principal Neighbourhood Centres. It also reviews the performance of the retail centres, leading to an assessment of predicted need from future growth and capacity to accommodate it. Neighbouring LPAs contributed to the evidence underpinning the Study.
- 5.35 The Retail Capacity Study is still considered robust, and nothing significant has changed. Impacts on the local economy remain following COVID 19 and businesses are changing the way they operate, and City Centre retail is contracting. The Study concluded that there was limited capacity for convenience goods floorspace (which

has now been completed), and no capacity for comparison goods floorspace, with no significant gaps in the provision of larger commercial facilities. Other LPAs are meeting their needs through their own Local Plan preparation.

STRATEGIC PLANNING ISSUE iv – ENCOURAGING RESILIENCE IN RETAIL, LEISURE, COMMERCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Outcomes from Strategic Working

The outcomes from strategic working are:

- LPAs are meeting their needs through their own Local Plans.

Local Plan Policies:

- **Strategic Policy S6 – Housing and Employment Requirements** does not include provision of retail floorspace, based on the conclusions of the Chelmsford Retail Capacity Study 2023
- **Strategic Policy S17 – Future of Chelmsford City Centre** sets out a co-ordinated approach to the City Centre’s future role for the economy, culture and heritage, living in the City Centre, climate and sustainability, and use of the waterways, along with site specific principles for key City Centre sites
- **Policy DM5 – Designated Centres** seeks to control change of use applications to prevent the erosion of retail use, which is important for community needs and local economic vitality.

Outstanding issues:

- There are no outstanding Duty to Co-operate issues.

v) Protecting and enhancing the natural environment and support an increase in biodiversity and ecological networks

5.36 There are a number of Local Plans in preparation in Essex set to deliver thousands of new homes over the coming 15-20 years. These new homes have the potential to bring new visitors to the sensitive coastal area, resulting in impacts on protected sites both individually and in combination through recreational disturbance.

5.37 To provide a joint approach to this issue, a joint Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) was adopted in May 2020.

5.38 The RAMS project assesses the mitigation measures required for European Designated Sites impacted upon by development from across Essex. It has been adopted together with an SPD by each of the participating authorities, and sets out where new development is required to make financial contributions towards implementation of the Strategy. Chelmsford City Council manages the project on behalf of all the partner authorities.

5.39 The RAMS has therefore informed the Council’s policy approach to mitigation with the Spatial Principles of the Plan seeking to protect and enhance the character of valued landscapes, heritage and biodiversity. Strategic Policy S4 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment gives a commitment to securing management, mitigation and compensation measures, and Policy S9 – Infrastructure Requirements specifies the need to contribute towards the RAMS. This policy requirement is further set out in specific site policies.

5.40 The public facing tool to implement the RAMS comes in the form of a campaign called Bird Aware Essex Coast, with a website and a team of rangers who organise awareness events around the whole of the county’s coastline.

- 5.41 The participating authorities have included the RAMS requirement in their Local Plans, and joint work with all the partners continues to enable appropriate monitoring of the Strategy.
- 5.42 The Council also participated in the development of the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy (BG007), led by Essex County Council and involving all Essex authorities to research and contribute to the development of the strategy.

Further detail on this and the evidence base can be found in the Submission Natural Environment Topic Paper (TP017).

STRATEGIC PLANNING ISSUE v – PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND SUPPORT AN INCREASE IN BIODIVERSITY AND ECOLOGICAL NETWORKS
<p>Key Strategic Partners Natural England Essex County Council 11 Essex LPAs</p>
<p>Action: Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)</p> <p>Partners: Natural England, Essex County Council, Basildon, Braintree, Brentwood, Castle Point, Colchester, Maldon, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea, Tendring and Thurrock Councils.</p> <p>Outcomes: Essex local authorities are working alongside Essex County Council and Natural England following a joint approach to recreational disturbance avoidance and mitigation across Essex. A joint Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) was adopted in May 2020.</p> <p>Date: Monthly steering group meetings are on-going.</p>
<p>Action: Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy</p> <p>Partners: Essex County Council (as Responsible Authority), all Essex authorities (and wider range of stakeholders such as landowners, businesses, charities)</p> <p>Outcomes: Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy and interactive web map published, following a number of workshops and focused meetings with individual authorities (including Chelmsford).</p> <p>Date: Workshops held between June 2023 and publication in June 2025</p>
<p>Outcomes from Strategic Working</p> <p>The outcomes from strategic working are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement to produce a joint strategy to recreational disturbance avoidance and mitigation across Essex • Inclusion in the Local Plan of the requirement for developers to have regard to the LNRS in formulating proposals

Local Plan Policies:

- **Strategic Policy S4 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment** sets the requirement for management, mitigation and compensation measures for impacts on the natural environment
- **Strategic Policy S9 – Infrastructure Requirements** includes requirements for contributions towards recreation disturbance avoidance and mitigation measures
- **Policy DM16 – Protection and Promotion of Ecology, Nature and Biodiversity** includes European Designated Sites, RAMS and LNRS requirements

Outstanding issues:

- There are no outstanding Duty to Co-operate issues.

vi) Creating well designed and attractive places, and promoting the health and social wellbeing of communities

- 5.43 The Local Plan is based around a commitment to secure sustainable development, reflecting the presumption in favour of sustainable development outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 5.44 Each stage of the Local Plan development has been subject to ongoing Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment (IIA001 to IIA013). These tested the emerging Plan against high level objectives, options for housing and employment targets, and the Vision and Spatial Principles. The outcomes have influenced the choice of location so that development proposals for new housing are focused at the most sustainable locations such as those, for example, with good transport links, and/or access to education and community facilities.
- 5.45 Evidence base documents guiding the Council's policy approach to well designed and healthy places include:
- Essex Parking Guidance Part 1 (Design and Good Practice) and 2 (Garden Communities/Large Scale Development) 2024 (PL016, PL017)
 - Making Places Supplementary Planning Document 2021 (PL019)
 - Chelmer Waterside Framework 2021 (PL020)
 - A New Development Model for Essex (Walkable Neighbourhoods) 2023 (PL023)
 - Historic England Advice Note: Tall Buildings (PL024)
 - Sport England Active Design Guidance 2023 (HS004)
 - Livewell Accreditation Guidance 2019 (HS002)
 - Safer Parks Improving Access for Women and Girls Guidance 2025 (HS005)
 - Chelmsford Health and Wellbeing Plan 2022 (HS007)
 - Essex Net Zero documents (CC004 to CC007, CC020)
- 5.46 Monitoring for the delivery of design and wellbeing policies will be undertaken by the Council through its Annual Monitoring Report. Further detail on this and the evidence base can be found in the Submission Health and Wellbeing Topic Paper (TP013).

STRATEGIC PLANNING ISSUE vi – CREATING WELL DESIGNED AND ATTRACTIVE PLACES, AND PROMOTING THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELLBEING OF COMMUNITIES

Key Strategic Partners
Essex County Council

Other Strategic Partners
Sport England
Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board (Essex Integrated Care Board)

from 1 April 2026)

Action: Plan preparation – Design issues

Partners: Essex County Council

Outcome: The Essex Design Guide has been updated and relaunched by the EPOA and ECC. All Essex LPAs including Chelmsford City Council have been involved in its development. Theme specific and technical working groups agree updates to the new Essex Design Guide, and development continues on a rolling basis. The Essex Parking Guidance has been developed through this route, and has been included in the Council’s Local Plan policy.

Date: Launched as an online resource February 2018, updated frequently.

Action: Development of model policy for Net Zero Carbon

Partners: Essex County Council

Outcome: CCC has engaged with ECC on a new model policy for all Essex LPAs to use relating to embodied carbon emissions from new development. A comprehensive evidence base has been collaboratively established between the Essex Climate Action Commission, Essex County Council and Essex LPAs. The aim of the evidence base is to provide a clearly defined, consistent planning policy approach to net zero carbon development providing certainty and clarity to the development industry and other stakeholders.

This has been translated into a new policy introduced at Preferred Options stage, included as Policy DM31 Net Zero Carbon Development (In Operation) and supporting evidence base has been included in Chelmsford’s Local Plan. To date this has also been included in Uttlesford District Council’s Local Plan, with the policy being found sound at Examination.

Date: Ongoing engagement since 2024.

Action: Plan preparation – Masterplans

Partners: Environment Agency, Historic England, Natural England, adjoining local planning authorities

Outcome: The Strategic Growth Sites will be expected to meet high standards of built and urban design, which will be informed by masterplans/development frameworks. CCC will work with site promoters and key partner stakeholders to develop masterplans, which site promoters will consult on, prior to reaching planning application stage. This approach has been supported by other Essex local planning authorities.

Date: Masterplan process updated in November 2025.

Outcomes from Strategic Working

Outcomes from strategic working are:

- Design policies are based on collaborative Essex-wide design guidance

- Model policy developed for embodied carbon
- Masterplans will involve key partners and stakeholders to bring sites forward.

Comments made on the policy approach during consultation:

- The wide range of functions and benefits of green and blue infrastructure for people and wildlife could be emphasised (ECC)
- Housing should be more readily adaptable to the changing requirements of occupiers (ECC)
- Larger scale developments should be subject to a Health Impact Assessment (Mid & South Essex ICB)

Local Plan Policies:

- **Strategic Policy S5 – Protecting and Enhancing Community Assets** seeks to ensure that new community facilities are provided in developments such as for education, community halls, social, sports and leisure facilities, and their role in creating safe, cohesive and sustainable communities is protected
- **Strategic Policy S9 – Infrastructure Requirements** identifies infrastructure priorities including green and blue infrastructure
- **Strategic Policy S14 – Health and Wellbeing** aims to promote active and healthier lifestyles, healthy living environments and reduced inequalities through high quality placemaking and Health Impact Assessments
- **Strategic Policy S15 – Creating Successful Places** requires development to be designed to be attractive, of high quality, accessible, inclusive and safe
- **Strategic Growth Site 6 – North East Chelmsford** sets out the requirements for this site including the Garden Community principles
- **Strategic Growth Site 16a – East Chelmsford Garden Community** sets out the requirements for this site including Garden Community principles
- **Policy DM1 – Size and Type of Housing** sets out the requirements for accessible and adaptable housing
- **Policy DM23 – High Quality and Inclusive Design** sets the overall principles for ensuring good design in new development including safe and accessible places
- **Policy DM24 – Design and Place Shaping Principles in Major Developments** includes urban design principles and includes the requirement for masterplans in major development
- **Policy DM25 – Sustainable Buildings; Policy DM26 – Design Specification for Dwellings; Policy DM27 – Parking Standards; Policy DM28 – Tall Buildings** contain further detail on specific design and place making matters to ensure high standards of design
- **Policy DM31 – Net Zero Carbon Development (In Operation)** lists policy requirements for designing new development to be net zero carbon in operation, to improve building fabric standards and energy efficiency to minimise energy demand.

Outstanding issues:

- There are no outstanding Duty to Co-operate Issues.

6. Position Statements

6.1 The Council has reported progress in its Duty to Co-operate Position Statements covering the following periods:

- August 2022 to May 2024 (DTC001)
- Update December 2024 (DTC002)
- Update November 2025 (DTC005)

6.2 In effect the November 2025 update supersedes the previous versions, and is available here: <https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/media/etkjneup/dtc005-additional-sites-duty-to-cooperate-position-statement-november-2025.pdf>

6.3 The following account provides an update on activity that has taken place since November 2025.

Focused Consultation Additional Sites (Regulation 19) consultation

6.4 The Additional Sites consultation ran from November 2025 until January 2026. This programme of consultation followed (and exceeded) the requirements set out in legislation, and the commitments in the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (November 2025) (DTC004).

6.5 Comments were received from seven Duty to Co-operate bodies and specific consultees including neighbouring LPAs, ECC, Historic England, the Environment Agency, National Highways, Essex Police, and the Integrated Care Board.

6.6 A summary of the main issues raised in the representations is contained within the Additional Sites Feedback Report published in March 2026, available on this page: <https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-local-plan/local-plan-review/>

6.7 Comments were mainly supportive of the Additional Sites consultation, with some minor proposed amendments on detailed site-specific requirements. However, wide support was expressed by the duty and specific bodies that CCC has maintained effective co-operation and engagement.

6.8 During this period, co-operation meetings have continued to take place including with ECC as Minerals and Waste authority, Highways authority, and on strategic matters including education, water efficiency and net zero policy, Maldon District Council on cross boundary impacts from development, National Highways on traffic modelling and strategic road programmes, and Mid and South Essex ICB on future healthcare needs.

6.9 In addition, a number of Statements of Common Ground have been agreed with duty and specific bodies, as set out at paragraph 4.12 of this statement.

7. Next Steps

7.1 The City Council will submit the Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Local Plan (SD001) and the Focused Consultation Additional Sites (Regulation 19) Document (SD002), and all the representations received to both consultations, to the Independent Inspector prior to formal Examination anticipated to take place in 2026. Full feedback reports for both consultations have been published within a Regulation 22 Consultation Statement (SD003), as part of the Submission package.

7.2 The Submission will also include a Schedule of Proposed Modifications (SD005) for the Inspector's consideration, setting out non-material changes that the Council would like to make to the Local Plan. These address comments made to the Regulation 19 consultations, issues agreed through Statements of Common Ground and new information and updates since the close of the Regulation 19 consultations. The modifications include minor amendments to policy wording and other minor amendments to improve clarity or correct typographical errors. The Schedule of Proposed Modifications is intended to assist the Inspector and other parties in understanding the Council's position going into the examination process.

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Map of strategic planning area and its settlements
Appendix B	Key decisions and processes
Appendix C	Duty to Co-operate Strategy (January 2022)
Appendix D	Duty to Co-operate Position Statement (May 2024)
Appendix E	Duty to Co-operate Position Statement (December 2024)
Appendix F	Duty to Co-operate Position Statement (November 2025)
Appendix G	Mechanism for the Consideration of Unmet Housing Need, EPOA (September 2017)

Appendix A: Map of strategic planning area and its settlements



Appendix B: Key decisions and processes

Chelmsford Policy Board (CPB) oversees the Local Plan progress, assesses evidence base materials and reviews comments made to other authorities' Local Plans.

The Chelmsford Policy Board homepage can be found at the following link:
www.chelmsford.gov.uk/your-council/councillors-committees-and-decision-making/committees-and-panels/chelmsford-policy-board/

Local Plan Process – Key Decision Process	
Issues and Options Local Plan (Regulation 18)	<p>CPB 14 July 2022: Agreed to publish the Issues and Options Local Plan document for consultation.</p> <p>Consultation: 11 August 2022 until 20 October 2022.</p> <p>CPB 28 February 2023: Considered the Issues and Options Initial Consultation Feedback Report.</p> <p>CPB 14 March 2024: Considered the Issues and Options 'You Said We Did' Feedback Report. A summary of the main issues raised by DtC bodies is recorded against each section of the consultation document.</p>
Preferred Options Local Plan (Regulation 18)	<p>CPB 14 March 2024: Agreed to publish the Preferred Options Consultation Document for consultation.</p> <p>Consultation: 8 May 2024 until 19 June 2024.</p> <p>CPB 26 September 2024: Considered the Preferred Options Consultation Initial Consultation Feedback Report.</p> <p>CPB 16 January 2025: Considered the Preferred Options 'You Said We Did' Feedback Report. A summary of the main issues raised by DtC bodies is recorded against each section of the consultation document.</p>
Pre-Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19)	<p>CPB 16 January 2025: Agreed to publish the Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Document for consultation.</p> <p>Consultation: 4 February 2025 until 18 March 2025.</p> <p>CPB 26 June 2025: Considered the Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Document Initial Feedback Report. A summary of the main issues raised by DtC bodies is recorded against each section of the consultation document.</p>
Focused Consultation Additional Sites (Regulation 19)	<p>CPB 6 November 2025: Agreed to publish the Focused Consultation Additional Sites (Regulation 19) Document for consultation.</p> <p>Consultation: 20 November 2025 until 8 January 2026.</p> <p>CPB 19 March 2026: Considered the Focused Consultation</p>

	(Regulation 19) Additional Sites Initial Feedback Report. A summary of the main issues raised by DtC bodies is recorded against each section of the consultation document.
Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19)	CPB 18 May 2026: Considered the Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Document 'You Said We Did' Feedback Report; and the Focused Consultation (Regulation 19) Additional Sites 'You Said We Did' Feedback Report. A summary of the main issues raised by DtC bodies is recorded against each section of the consultation document.

Chelmsford Local Plan

Duty to Co-operate Strategy

January 2022



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- 1.1. Chelmsford City Council (CCC) is committed to co-operating with other bodies on strategic planning matters. We have a history of working together with neighbouring authorities and stakeholders on plan making and this continues today. This background of collaboration will provide a strong basis for us to continue effective joint working arrangements required to satisfy the legal duty test on our Local Plan review.
- 1.2. We adopted our previous Duty to Co-operate Strategy in March 2015, ahead of developing our Local Plan which was adopted in May 2020. We have a statutory duty to complete a review of the Local Plan at least every five years. The review needs to take into account changing circumstances affecting the area and any relevant changes in national policy. Our adopted Local Plan covers the period to 2036, and the review will move the Local Plan forwards to 2041. It is the ideal time to refresh our Duty to Co-operate Strategy, ahead of this review.
- 1.3. Legislation and national planning policy require strategic policy-making authorities to co-operate with each other, and other bodies, when preparing or supporting the preparation of policies which address strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries. This includes those policies contained in local plans (including minerals and waste plans), spatial development strategies, and marine plans.
- 1.4. This Strategy outlines our commitment to implementing the duty to co-operate for our Local Plan review. It explains in broad terms who we will seek to co-operate with, when we will co-operate and what co-operation mechanisms we will put in place. It provides a valuable guide to co-operation activity, and forms part of the evidence base supporting the Local Plan review.
- 1.5. Although the duty to co-operate is not a duty to agree, we will make every effort to seek co-operation on cross-boundary and strategic planning matters in a focused, positive and structured way. At the same time, we will continue to work constructively with nearby planning authorities on their own local plan preparation.
- 1.6. When the Local Plan review is finalised and reaches its Independent Examination, one of the legal tests will be whether we have complied with the duty to co-operate. Early engagement and demonstrating co-operation both with neighbours and the prescribed bodies through Statements of Common Ground are key to meeting the legal duty to co-operate.
- 1.7. The Government's Planning White Paper: Planning for the Future was published in 2020 setting out a series of proposals to reform the planning system in England, including a proposal to remove the duty to co-operate test.
- 1.8. Further consideration to any alternative approach to planning for cross boundary strategic issues has not been concluded. Until any alternative approach is announced, we will continue to use our Duty to Co-operate Strategy to ensure that strategic issues are fully considered as an important and helpful part of the plan-making process.
- 1.9. Comments were invited on the draft Strategy in November 2021 to ensure we are taking the correct approach to meeting the duty to co-operate. Public bodies who are subject to the duty to co-operate were invited to comment and we have used the feedback to finalise the Strategy.

- 2.1. This Strategy outlines how we will co-operate and engage on strategic matters when reviewing our Local Plan. Strategic matters are larger than local issues and cannot be dealt with by one local planning authority alone. For example, the provision of new housing, jobs, retail, infrastructure, and flood risk mitigation may impact on or depend on other organisations.
- 2.2. The Strategy sets out the co-operation and engagement arrangements which the prescribed bodies (see Appendix 1) and nearby planning authorities (see Appendix 2) can expect from us on strategic planning matters.
- 2.3. The Strategy aims to:
 - Ensure proactive, on-going, focused and constructive co-operation on cross-boundary planning matters
 - Achieve legally compliant and 'sound' Local Development Documents, and
 - Facilitate effective strategic planning in the region.
- 2.4. We are determined to ensure that duty to co-operate activities positively influence the evolution of our Local Plan review and shape the proposals as they emerge. Whilst there is no duty to agree, we will make every effort to secure the necessary co-operation on strategic cross-boundary matters before we submit the Local Plan for Examination.

Strategic matters are defined in the Localism Act 2011 as:

(a) Sustainable development or use of land that has or would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas, including (in particular) sustainable development or use of land for or in connection with infrastructure that is strategic and has or would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas, and (b) Sustainable development or use of land in a two-tier area if the development or use - (i) is a county matter, or (ii) has or would have a significant impact on a county matter.

The Local Plan review will guide growth and development in Chelmsford City Council's administrative area for the period up to 2041. It will provide the Council's vision, objectives and Spatial Strategy. It will also contain Strategic Development Policies, Development Management Policies, Site Specific land use allocations and a Local Plan Policies Map.

This Strategy is concerned with the implementation of the Duty to Co-operate on the emerging review of the Chelmsford City Council Local Plan. It is a policy document that sits alongside the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

3. Why do we need it?

- 3.1. The Localism Act creates a duty on all local authorities and prescribed bodies (defined in Regulations and guidance) to co-operate with each other to address strategic matters relevant to their areas. Specific guidance on how authorities are expected to address strategic planning matters and apply the duty to co-operate is given in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). This guidance has been used to produce this Strategy.
- 3.2. When the Local Plan reaches its Independent Examination, one of the legal tests is whether we have complied with the duty to co-operate, as set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Para 33A). It is one of the first issues addressed at a local plan examination. Early engagement and demonstrating co-operation both with neighbours and Government bodies through Statements of Common Ground are key to meeting the legal duty to co-operate.
- 3.3. We will discuss the Local Plan review with neighbouring planning authorities and the prescribed bodies at stages which align with and inform the stages of the Local Plan review. These discussions will help to formulate the quantum and distribution of Chelmsford's future growth, which will be supported by updated evidence.

The estimated timetable for reviewing our Local Plan is set out within our emerging Local Development Scheme (LDS) and summarised below.

Local Development Scheme estimated timetable:

Issues and Options Consultation	May 2022
Preferred Options Consultation	Early 2023
Pre-Submission (Final Draft) Consultation	Early 2024
Submission of Local Plan for Examination	Summer 2024
Independent Examination	Autumn 2024
Adoption	May 2025

4. Who is the strategy for?

- 4.1. The Strategy is aimed at neighbouring and nearby local planning authorities, Essex County Council and a range of other prescribed bodies as defined in legislation and guidance. These are listed in Appendices 1 and 2. These prescribed bodies are required to co-operate with us on strategic cross-boundary planning matters of common concern.

The Strategy is not aimed at other Local Plan consultees such as local residents, community groups, Parish and Town Councils, landowners and developers as these are not duty to co-operate bodies. However, we will involve, engage and consult these people and organisations on our Local Plan review and when considering Planning Applications. More details are set out in our adopted [Statement of Community Involvement \(SCI\)](#).

5.1. There is potential for a number of cross-boundary issues. The strategic matters that may apply to the Local Plan have been identified as follows:

- 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
- Climate change action and mitigation including flood risk and zero carbon
- Natural and historic environment including increased biodiversity and green/blue/wild spaces and connectivity of ecological networks
- Community infrastructure including education, health and community facilities
- Utility infrastructure including communications, waste, water and energy
- London Stansted Airport future airspace redesign.

6. Our approach to duty to co-operate

6.1. We and many other councils have a history of working together and with other bodies to address strategic planning matters of common concern. This historical background of co-operation will provide a strong foundation for implementing the duty to co-operate.

6.2. We will seek to ensure co-operation and engagement is undertaken appropriately for the Local Plan review i.e. that it is proactive, continuous, rigorous and constructive.

6.3. In some cases, discussion on strategic matters will continue through existing joint working arrangements. Key existing partnerships include:

Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA)

County-wide group which considers Essex-wide approaches to strategic issues including working groups and commissioning of shared evidence base.

Housing Market Area

Chelmsford, Braintree, Colchester and Tendring Councils.
Collaboration on Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

Essex Coast Recreation disturbance Avoidance Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) Steering Group

Ongoing partnership of 12 Essex LAs, ECC, Essex Wildlife Trust, Natural England, and RSPB. Mitigation programme for the effects of anticipated residential development on Essex coastal habitats sites.

Essex Coastal Forum

Brings together decision makers for a wide range of coastline management activity and initiatives including Essex RAMS.

Essex Climate Action Commission

Includes a range of climate bodies, Chelmsford represented by Brentwood District Council.
Advisory group to inform ECC on county-wide action to tackle climate change

Essex Flood Partnership

Key stakeholders including all Essex Planning Authorities to contribute to a strategic overview of matters around flooding in Essex, and ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to flood risk management.

North Essex Economic Board

CCC, Colchester, Braintree, Maldon, Uttlesford, Tendring and ECC
Co-operation on strategic growth issues.

Co-operation for Sustainable Development Officer Group

Includes West Essex and Neighbouring London Boroughs
Considers plan-making, delivery, and impact of growth in the West Essex sector.

East of England Strategic Spatial Planning Officers Liaison Group

Considers the cross-boundary implications of the London Plan on areas outside the capital in the East and South East of England.

Transport East

Sub-national transport body for Essex with Norfolk, Suffolk, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock, working on regional transport strategy with the Government.

Chelmsford and Braintree Public Transport Group

Officers from CCC, Braintree, ECC and First Bus.
Information sharing on operational and network planning for the Chelmsford to Braintree transport corridor.

Strategic Estates Forum

NHS provider and commissioning representatives, with CCC and other LAs.
Planning for new health facilities to accommodate anticipated residential development.

- 6.4 Other mechanisms may need to be established and any new authorities and bodies will need to be proactively engaged, in addition to the existing bodies and networks, depending on the strategic matters of common concern.
- 6.5 Throughout the Local Plan preparation process, we will keep the list of strategic matters and opportunities for joint working under review, which will in turn influence our engagement and co-operation activities. We are proposing the following co-operation arrangements and events:
- Joint Officer and Member meetings, committees and working groups
 - Technical stakeholder meetings
 - Issue or location focused workshops where appropriate
 - Commissioning of joint evidence base studies and reports
 - Memorandums of Understanding as a framework for co-operation
 - Capturing key decisions from other authorities/bodies in Statements of Common Ground which we will maintain and update throughout the Local Plan review.
- 6.6 We will carry out these arrangements in addition to statutory Local Plan and planning application consultations, and general correspondence that we issue.

- 7.1. The duty to co-operate is a legal requirement under the Localism Act 2011 and is the first thing that the Planning Inspectorate will assess before considering whether the Plan is sound. To do this, the Planning Inspectorate will require comprehensive and robust evidence to demonstrate that the duty has been met for the Chelmsford City Council Local Plan at Examination (expected in Autumn 2024, see Paragraph 3.3).
- 7.2. We will monitor and report on co-operation and engagement activities through position statements at each stage of consultation to include notes of meetings, decisions taken and justification for actions taken. We will report these to meetings of the Council and use them to update our annual Authority Monitoring Report.
- 7.3. We will collate all this evidence into a Duty to Co-operate Statement of Compliance which we will submit alongside the Local Plan. This will highlight how preferred strategic approaches and policies have resulted from effective co-operation and joint working. This will also report on how we will take the duty forward through to plan implementation and monitoring.

Duty to co-operate bodies

The following 'Duty to Co-operate' bodies are relevant to the preparation and implementation of the Chelmsford City Council Local Plan:

- Essex County Council
- Neighbouring and nearby local planning authorities including Braintree, Basildon, Uttlesford, Castle Point, Colchester, Rochford, Harlow, Southend-on-Sea, Tendring, Thurrock, Brentwood, Epping Forest, Maldon and London Boroughs adjoining Essex (see Appendix 2)
- Environment Agency
- Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (Historic England)
- Natural England
- Mayor of London (Greater London Authority)
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Homes England (previously the Homes and Communities Agency)
- Primary Care Trust / Clinical Commissioning Group
- National Health Service Commissioning Board (NHS England)
- Office of Rail and Road
- Transport for London
- Integrated Transport Authority (Transport East)
- Highway Authority (Essex County Council)
- National Highways
- Marine Management Organisation

Although not subject to the requirements of the duty, regard will also be had to the activities of the following:

- South East Local Enterprise Partnership
- Local Nature Partnership

All these organisations are registered on our Local Plan Consultation Database.

Map of adjoining or nearby planning authorities

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





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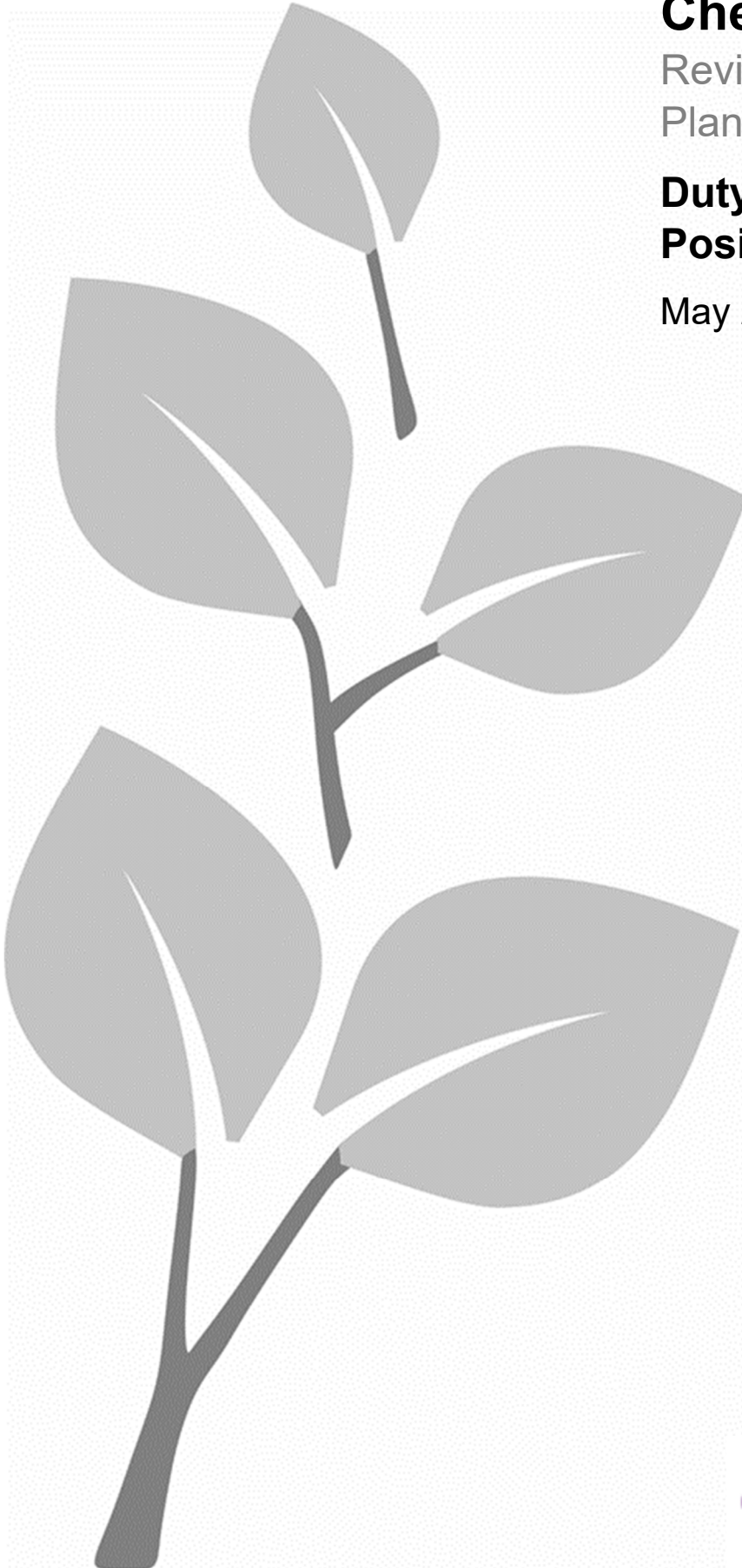


Chelmsford Local Plan

Review of the adopted Local Plan

Duty to Co-operate Position Statement

May 2024



1. Purpose of the Position Statement

This position statement provides an update on the activities undertaken by Chelmsford City Council (CCC) in respect to the Duty to Co-operate on the Review of the adopted Chelmsford Local Plan. The update focuses on activities since the publication of the Review Local Plan Issues and Options in August 2022. It also discusses future activities which will be further informed by formal consultation on the Review Local Plan Preferred Options starting on 8 May 2024.

2. Introduction

The Duty to Co-operate is set out in the [2023 NPPF](#) (Paragraph 24). This requires Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to co-operate with each other and other prescribed bodies on strategic planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, such as providing land for new homes, jobs and infrastructure. These have a wider impact than local issues and cannot be dealt with by one LPA alone. The Duty to Co-operate is the process by which strategic issues are planned for at a local level.

LPAs must produce evidence at a future Local Plan Examination to satisfy the Inspector that their Development Plan has met the legal test with regard to the Duty to Co-operate. It is expected that the co-operation sought has been a continuous process of engagement from initial scoping of a plan through to its preparation and implementation. The end result should be a plan that allocates land and promotes infrastructure provision to support future levels of sustainable growth and development. It is also expected that the co-operation sought has been constructive, pro-active and that the outcomes of collaborative working are embedded in the plan.

Although the Duty to Co-operate is not a duty to agree, the City Council will make every effort to seek co-operation on cross-boundary and strategic planning matters in a focused, positive and structured way. At the same time, the City Council will continue to work constructively with nearby planning authorities on their own local plan preparation.

3. What has happened so far?

Pre-Consultation

The City Council undertook a variety of Duty to Co-operate activities in advance of starting the review of the adopted Local Plan.

The Duty to Co-operate Strategy relating to the [adopted Local Plan \(2020\)](#) was refreshed in advance of work commencing on the review of the adopted Local Plan, to ensure we are taking the correct approach to meeting the duty. Public bodies who are subject to the Duty to Co-operate were invited to comment, and we used the feedback to finalise the Strategy.

The updated [Duty to Co-operate Strategy](#) was published in January 2022. The key strategic matters identified through the consultation are as follows:

- 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
- Climate change action and mitigation including flood risk and zero carbon
- Natural and historic environment including increased biodiversity and green/blue/wild spaces and connectivity of ecological networks
- Community infrastructure including education, health and community facilities
- Utility infrastructure including communications, waste, water and energy
- London Stansted Airport future airspace redesign.

Between the adoption of the Local Plan in May 2020 and the Issues and Options consultation in August 2020, the Council responded to a range of consultations from Essex LPAs, Essex County Council, and National Highways. The details, and a list of other collaborative work, is set out in the Council's [Annual Monitoring Report for 2021-22](#).

Issues and Options

The Issues and Options consultation for the review of the Local Plan ran from August to October 2022. The consultation document reviewed and updated the key issues for the future growth and development of Chelmsford, with potential Spatial Options for addressing projected growth up to 2041.

Comments were received from 12 Duty to Co-operate bodies and specific consultees including neighbouring LPAs, Essex County Council (ECC), Historic England, Environment Agency, Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board.

A summary of the main issues raised in the representations are contained within the Issues and Options You Said We Did Feedback Report published in May 2024, available on this page: www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review. All the responses have been carefully considered and used to progress the second formal stage in the preparation of the Chelmsford Local Plan – the Preferred Options Local Plan.

Comments have informed the approach to developing the preferred Spatial Strategy and the assessment of reasonable alternatives, and have been considered in the forming of new policies relating to health and wellbeing, connectivity and travel, the future of the City Centre, and net zero carbon development. There were also minor changes to the content including updated data, and references to issues including provision for nature and ecology, access and connections, and tall buildings guidance.

Preferred Options

A programme of Duty to Co-operate activity has continued since consultation on the Issues and Options consultation. This has been used to inform the Preferred Options Local Plan. Key areas of work are discussed below:

Duty to Co-operate Meetings and Discussions

Regular meetings/discussions continue to be held with Essex County Council, other local authorities in Essex, the principal health and education providers in Chelmsford and other key partners such as Highways England.

As the current Local Plan activity is a review of the adopted Local Plan, many aspects of the Plan's content and approach are unchanged, meaning that major changes are limited. In addition, the preferred Spatial Strategy has only recently been developed to a stage where meaningful discussions can take place. However, these meetings/discussions have still been valuable in enabling issues affecting the future growth of Chelmsford to be identified at an early stage, and for officers to continue partnership working with those bodies to take forward the review of the Local Plan.

The Council also discusses strategic matters and Local Plan preparation at ongoing established strategic partnerships including the Essex Planning Officers Society (EPOA), Eastern Community Homes, and the Chelmsford and Braintree Public Transport Group.

Examples of ongoing meetings and the topics discussed is included below:

Organisation	Topics
ECC	Biodiversity net gain Minerals Local Plan and links to CCC LP preparation Transport Education Net zero policy
Maldon District Council	Evidence base updates Local Plan timetables Cross boundary issues such as traffic and education needs
Basildon District Council	Employment and economy workshop
Joint meeting with Brentwood and Rochford Councils	General updates on timing and evidence base Infrastructure Delivery Plan
National Grid	Ongoing engagement on East Anglia GREEN (Norwich to Tilbury) power lines proposal
National Highways	Traffic modelling for LP preparation
NHS Integrated Care System (Mid and South Essex ICS)	Updates on LP preparation

Commissioning of joint evidence base studies and reports

Due to the different timings of preparation for other LPA's Local Plans, and changes in the way that housing numbers are derived, there have been fewer opportunities to work collaboratively on joint evidence base studies.

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 indicated that revised regulations will be published governing the preparation of Local Plans, with transitional periods in place for LPAs that are already progressing a new or reviewed Local Plan. For Chelmsford the decision has been made to continue with preparation of the Local Plan review, with a commitment to submit the Plan for examination by the June 2025 deadline. Other LPAs in Essex have decided to continue with initial preparation stages but await the revised regulations which will govern submission after June 2025.

However, the following are key areas where recent joint working is helping to inform the review of the Local Plan:

Net zero carbon – a comprehensive evidence base has been collaboratively established between the Essex Climate Action Commission, Essex County Council and Essex LPAs. The aim of the evidence base is to provide a clearly defined, consistent planning policy approach to net zero carbon development providing much needed certainty and clarity to the development industry and other stakeholders. This has been translated into a proposed new policy for the Preferred Options Local Plan, included as DM31 Net Zero Carbon (In Operation). A detailed account of the evidence and policy development is contained within the Climate Change Topic paper prepared to accompany the Preferred Options consultation, available on this page: www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – CCC has engaged with other LPAs, the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and the Environment Agency for relevant information to support the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) evidence update for the Preferred Options consultation.

Chelmsford Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2024 – the Council alongside the other Essex local authorities is undertaking an updated Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.

Retail Capacity Study Update 2023 – CCC has engaged with neighbouring LPAs for relevant information to inform this evidence base update.

Water Cycle Study Reports 2024 – Regular consultation was undertaken throughout the preparation of the Scoping WCS and Detailed WCS reports with the Environment Agency.

Infrastructure Delivery Plan – Engagement with infrastructure providers and key stakeholders on this evidence base document including LPAs, ECC, Natural England, NHS Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board.

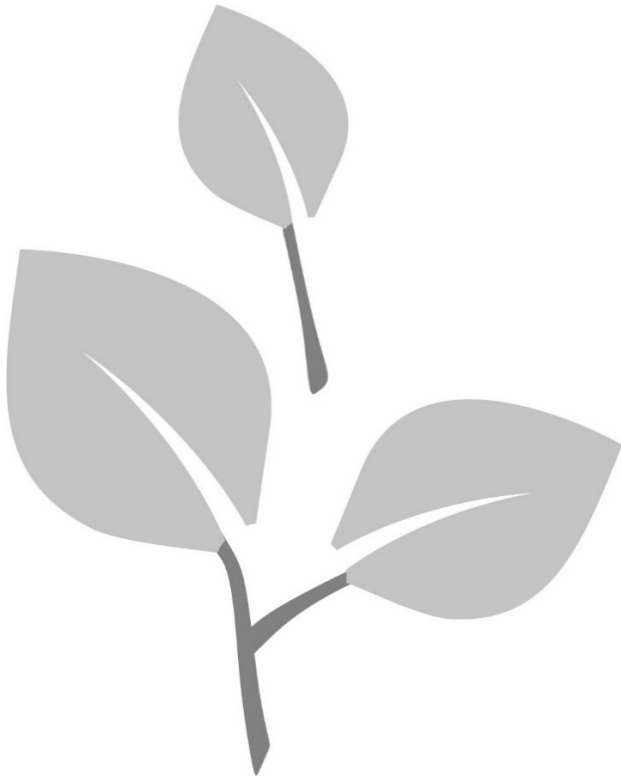
Transport modelling – CCC has worked with ECC, as the local Highway and Transportation Authority to prepare the Preferred Options transport evidence base which has also been informed by discussions with National Highways.

4. What will happen next?

The Preferred Options Local Plan consultation will run from 8 May until 19 June 2024. The City Council will arrange Duty to Co-operate Officer and Member meetings for adjoining LPAs during the formal consultation period to discuss any strategic matters that may affect the preparation of Chelmsford's Local Plan and opportunities for further joint work. The Council will also respond to any requests for additional meetings or formal discussions with Duty to Co-operate bodies that may be made.

Following the consultation, the City Council will publish and analyse the comments and use them alongside other comments, national policy and the Local Plan evidence base to inform the final draft Local Plan – the Pre-Submission Local Plan. Other duty to cooperate meeting/discussions may be organised on request, if any strategic concerns or opportunities are identified or to support the preparation of the Pre-Submission Local Plan.

The Council will also continue with the preparation of joint evidence base studies and seek opportunities for other joint evidence bases where appropriate. Statements of Common Ground will be explored with key Duty to Co-operate bodies taking into account their responses to the Preferred Options consultation.



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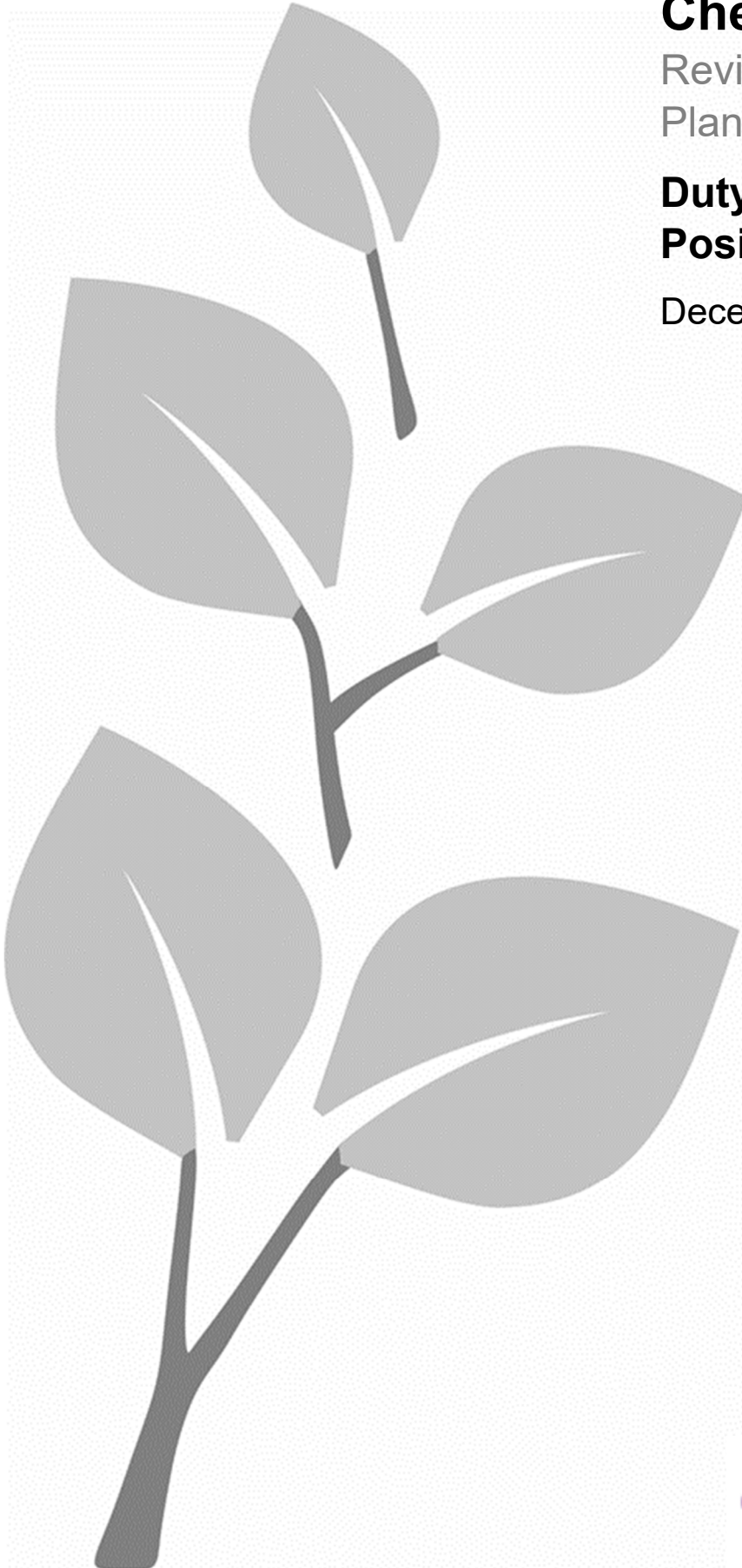


Chelmsford Local Plan

Review of the adopted Local Plan

Duty to Co-operate Position Statement

December 2024



1. Purpose of the Position Statement

This position statement provides an update on the activities undertaken by Chelmsford City Council (CCC) in respect to the Duty to Co-operate on the Review of the adopted Chelmsford Local Plan. The update covers activities including the Issues and Options Local Plan consultation launched in August 2022, and the Preferred Options Local Plan consultation launched in May 2024. It also discusses future activities which will be further informed by formal consultation on the Pre-Submission Local Plan consultation starting in February 2025.

2. Introduction

The Duty to Co-operate (DtC) is set out in the [2024 National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) (from Paragraph 24). This requires Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to co-operate with each other and other prescribed bodies on strategic planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, such as providing land for new homes, jobs and infrastructure. These have a wider impact than local issues and cannot be dealt with by one LPA alone. The Duty to Co-operate is the process by which strategic issues are planned for at a local level.

LPAs must produce evidence at a future Local Plan Examination to satisfy the Independent Inspector that their Development Plan has met the legal test with regard to the Duty to Co-operate. It is expected that the co-operation sought has been an ongoing process of engagement from initial scoping of a plan through to its preparation and implementation. The end result should be a plan that allocates land and promotes infrastructure provision to support future levels of sustainable growth and development, and which aligns with those of other strategic bodies. It is also expected that the co-operation sought has been constructive, pro-active and that the outcomes of collaborative working are embedded in the plan.

Although the Duty to Co-operate is not a duty to agree, the City Council makes every effort to seek co-operation on cross-boundary and strategic planning matters in a focused, positive and structured way. At the same time, the City Council will continue to work constructively with nearby planning authorities on their own local plan preparation.

3. What has happened so far?

Pre-Consultation

The City Council undertook a variety of Duty to Co-operate activities in advance of starting the review of the adopted Local Plan.

The Duty to Co-operate Strategy relating to the [adopted Local Plan \(2020\)](#) was refreshed in advance of work commencing on the review of the adopted Local Plan, to ensure we are taking the correct approach to meeting the duty. Public bodies who are subject to the Duty to Co-operate were invited to comment, and we used the feedback to finalise the Strategy.

The updated [Duty to Co-operate Strategy](#) was published in January 2022. The key strategic matters identified through the consultation are as follows:

- 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
- Climate change action and mitigation including flood risk and zero carbon
- Natural and historic environment including increased biodiversity and green/blue/wild spaces and connectivity of ecological networks
- Community infrastructure including education, health and community facilities
- Utility infrastructure including communications, waste, water and energy
- London Stansted Airport future airspace redesign.

Since the adoption of the Local Plan in May 2020 the Council has responded to a range of consultations from Essex LPAs, Essex County Council, and National Highways. The details, and a list of other collaborative work, is set out in the Council's [Annual Monitoring Reports](#) for 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24.

Issues and Options

The Issues and Options consultation for the review of the Local Plan ran from August to October 2022. The consultation document reviewed and updated the key issues for the future growth and development of Chelmsford, with potential Spatial Options for addressing projected growth up to 2041.

Comments were received from 12 Duty to Co-operate bodies and specific consultees including neighbouring LPAs, Essex County Council (ECC), Historic England, Environment Agency, Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board.

A summary of the main issues raised in the representations is contained within the Issues and Options You Said We Did Feedback Report published in May 2024, available on this page: www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review. All the responses were carefully considered and used to progress the second formal stage in the preparation of the Chelmsford Local Plan – the Preferred Options Local Plan.

Comments informed the approach to developing the preferred Spatial Strategy and the assessment of reasonable alternatives, and were considered in the forming of new policies relating to health and wellbeing, connectivity and travel, the future of the City Centre, and net zero carbon development. There were also minor changes to the content including updated data, and references to issues including provision for nature and ecology, access and connections, and tall buildings guidance.

Preferred Options

The Preferred Options consultation for the review of the Local Plan ran from May to June 2024. The consultation document set out proposed sites where new homes, jobs and other facilities could be located to meet CCC's needs to 2041, along with

updated development management policies that we would use to decide planning applications.

Comments were received from 17 Duty to Co-operate bodies and specific consultees including neighbouring LPAs, Essex County Council (ECC), Historic England, Environment Agency, Highways England, and the Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board.

A summary of the main issues raised in the representations is contained within the Preferred Options Feedback Report published in October 2024, available on this page: www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review. All the responses have been carefully considered and used to progress the third formal stage in the preparation of the Chelmsford Local Plan – the Pre-Submission Local Plan.

Comments were mainly supportive of the key Plan elements including the Vision, Strategic Priorities, Spatial Principles, Spatial Strategy, and Development Management policies. Detailed comments have influenced amendments to the Pre-Submission Local Plan including in relation to accessible greenspace and natural habitats, addressing recreational pressure on Sites of Special Scientific Interest, water efficiency targets, and changes for consistency and clarity.

Duty to Co-operate Meetings and Discussions

Regular meetings/discussions continue to be held with Essex County Council, other local authorities in Essex, the principal health and education providers in Chelmsford and other key partners such as Highways England, as part of the ongoing programme of Duty to Co-operate activity.

As the current Local Plan activity is a review of the adopted Local Plan, many aspects of the Plan’s content and approach are unchanged, meaning that major changes are limited. In addition, the preferred Spatial Strategy has only recently been developed to a stage where meaningful discussions can take place. However, these meetings/discussions have still been valuable in enabling issues affecting the future growth of Chelmsford to be identified at an early stage, and for officers to continue partnership working with those bodies to take forward the review of the Local Plan.

The Council also discusses strategic matters and Local Plan preparation at ongoing established strategic partnerships including the Essex Planning Officers Society (EPOA), Eastern Community Homes, and the Chelmsford and Braintree Public Transport Group.

Examples of ongoing meetings and the topics discussed is included below:

Organisation	Topics
ECC	Biodiversity net gain Minerals Local Plan and links to CCC Local Plan preparation Transport Education

	Net zero policy
Maldon District Council	Evidence base updates Local Plan timetables Cross boundary issues such as traffic and education needs
Basildon District Council	Employment and economy workshop
Braintree District Council	Local Plan progress Housing requirements Evidence base documents
Joint meeting with Brentwood and Rochford Councils	General updates on timing and evidence base Infrastructure Delivery Plan
Castle Point Council	Sustainable transport connectivity between South Essex and Chelmsford, and a desire to improve north-south sustainable travel connectivity
Colchester City Council	Transport matters including A12 widening and A120 improvement proposals
Thurrock Council	Local Plan progress Housing needs in relation to Green Belt Transport matters including A12 widening
National Grid	Ongoing engagement on East Anglia GREEN (Norwich to Tilbury) power lines proposal
National Highways	Traffic modelling for Local Plan preparation Strategic road programmes
NHS Integrated Care System (Mid and South Essex ICS)	Updates on Local Plan preparation Healthcare needs

Commissioning of joint evidence base studies and reports

Due to the different timings of preparation for other LPA's Local Plans, and changes in the way that housing numbers are derived, there have been fewer opportunities to work collaboratively on joint evidence base studies than during preparation of the now adopted Local Plan.

The revised NPPF published in December 2024 includes transitional periods for LPAs to progress a new or reviewed Local Plan at an advanced stage, such as Chelmsford. It is proposed that the Pre-Submission Local Plan will be submitted for examination later in 2025 providing an opportunity for further joint evidence base work, where necessary before Submission. The response from other Essex LPAs to the transitional arrangements is mixed, with some continuing with progress and others reviewing the revised regulations which will guide consultation and submission dates.

However, the following are key areas where recent joint working is helping to inform the review of the Local Plan:

Net zero carbon – a comprehensive evidence base has been collaboratively established between the Essex Climate Action Commission, Essex County Council and Essex LPAs. The aim of the evidence base is to provide a clearly defined, consistent planning policy approach to net zero carbon development providing much needed certainty and clarity to the development industry and other stakeholders. This has been translated into a proposed new policy introduced at Preferred Options stage, included as DM31 Net Zero Carbon (In Operation). A detailed account of the evidence and policy development was contained within the Climate Change Topic paper prepared to accompany the Preferred Options consultation, which will be updated for the Pre-Submission stage.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – CCC has engaged with other LPAs, the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and the Environment Agency for relevant information to support the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) evidence update for the plan consultations.

Chelmsford Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2024 – the Council alongside the other Essex local authorities undertook an updated Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.

Retail Capacity Study Update 2023 – CCC has engaged with neighbouring LPAs for relevant information to inform this evidence base update.

Water Cycle Study Reports 2024 – Regular consultation was undertaken throughout the preparation of the Scoping WCS and Detailed WCS reports with the Environment Agency.

Infrastructure Delivery Plan Reports – Engagement with infrastructure providers and key stakeholders on these evidence base documents including LPAs, ECC, Natural England, NHS Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board.

Transport modelling – CCC has worked with ECC, as the local Highway and Transportation Authority to prepare the transport evidence base which has also been informed by discussions with National Highways.

Parking guidance – CCC has contributed to Essex-wide consultation on updated parking guidance, which includes provision for electric charging points, and which has been translated into Local Plan policy.

4. Statements of 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.

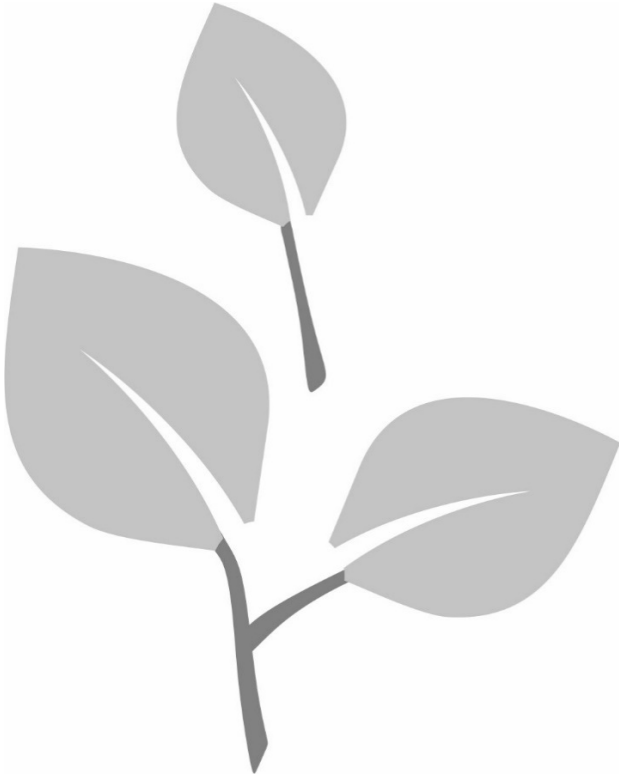
SoCG are being prepared to record agreement between CCC and each of Chelmsford's neighbouring authorities, Essex County Council, Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency. Agreed SoCG will be published

alongside the Pre-Submission consultation and reviewed ahead of Submission of the plan for Independent Examination. The aim will be to resolve any outstanding matters where cross-boundary strategic matters will be addressed by email and/or DtC meetings.

5. What will happen next?

The Pre-Submission Local Plan consultation is planned to run from 4 February until 18 March 2025. The City Council will arrange Duty to Co-operate Officer and Member meetings for adjoining LPAs during the formal consultation period to discuss any strategic matters that may affect the preparation of Chelmsford's Local Plan and opportunities for further joint work. The Council will also respond to any requests for additional meetings or formal discussions with Duty to Co-operate bodies that may be made.

Following the consultation, the City Council will submit the consultation documents and all the representations received to the Independent Inspector, prior to formal Examination anticipated to take place later in 2025.



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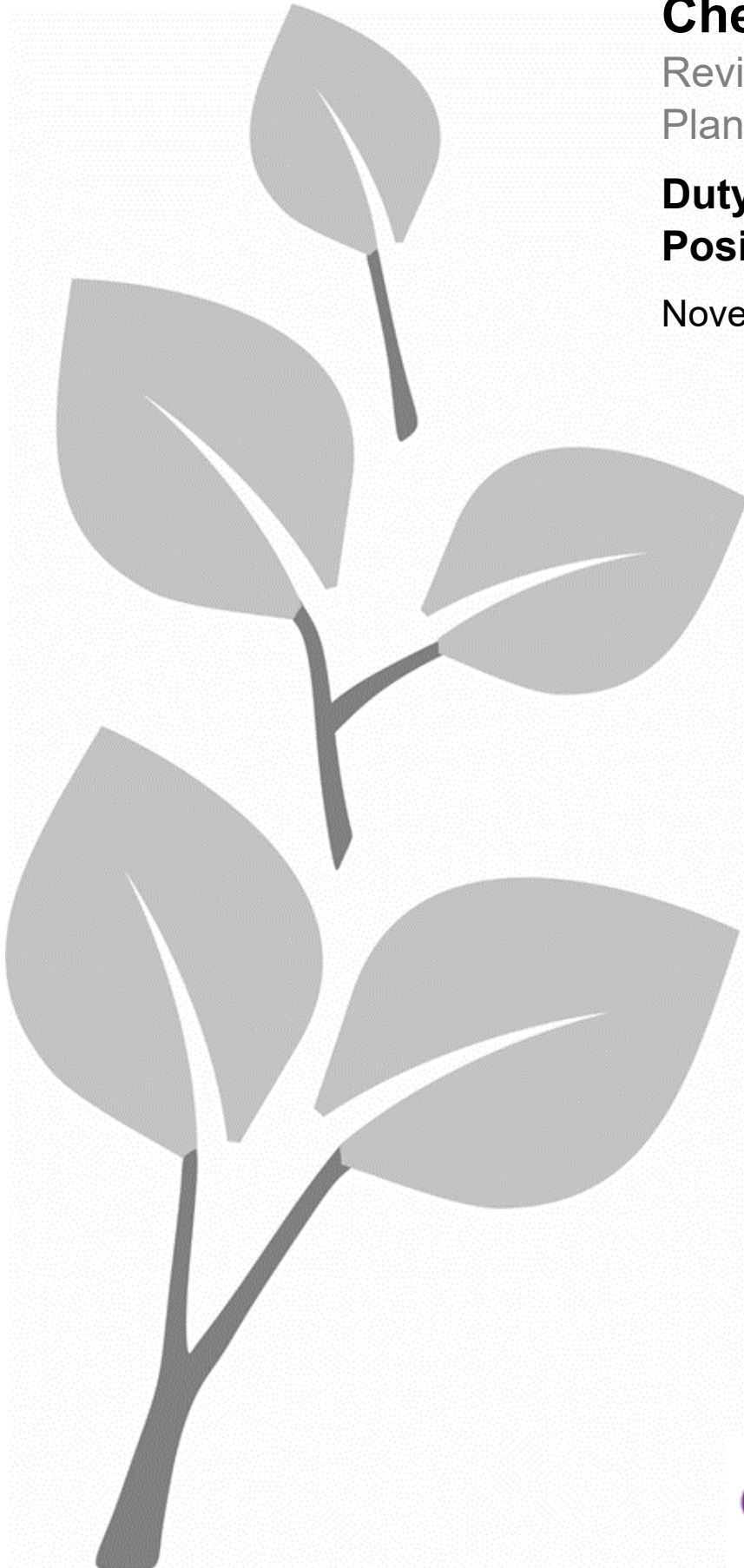


Chelmsford Local Plan

Review of the adopted Local Plan

Duty to Co-operate Position Statement

November 2025



1. Purpose of the Position Statement

This position statement provides an update on the activities undertaken by Chelmsford City Council (CCC) in respect to the Duty to Co-operate on the Review of the adopted Chelmsford Local Plan. The update covers activities including the:

- Issues and Options Local Plan consultation launched in August 2022
- Preferred Options Local Plan consultation launched in May 2024
- Pre-Submission Local Plan consultation launched in February 2025.

It also discusses future activities which will be further informed by formal consultation on the Focused Consultation Additional Sites (Regulation 19) Document starting in November 2025.

2. Introduction

The Duty to Co-operate (DtC) is set out in the [2024 National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) (from Paragraph 24). This requires Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to co-operate with each other and other prescribed bodies on strategic planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, such as providing land for new homes, jobs and infrastructure. These have a wider impact than local issues and cannot be dealt with by one LPA alone. The Duty to Co-operate is the process by which strategic issues are planned for at a local level.

LPAs must produce evidence at a future Local Plan Examination to satisfy the Independent Inspector that their Development Plan has met the legal test with regard to the Duty to Co-operate. It is expected that the co-operation sought has been an ongoing process of engagement from initial scoping of a plan through to its preparation and implementation. The end result should be a plan that allocates land and promotes infrastructure provision to support future levels of sustainable growth and development, and which aligns with those of other strategic bodies. It is also expected that the co-operation sought has been constructive, pro-active and that the outcomes of collaborative working are embedded in the plan.

Although the Duty to Co-operate is not a duty to agree, the City Council makes every effort to seek co-operation on cross-boundary and strategic planning matters in a focused, positive and structured way. At the same time, the City Council will continue to work constructively with nearby planning authorities on their own local plan preparation.

3. What has happened so far?

Pre-Consultation

The City Council undertook a variety of Duty to Co-operate activities in advance of starting the review of the adopted Local Plan.

The Duty to Co-operate Strategy relating to the [adopted Local Plan \(2020\)](#) was refreshed in advance of work commencing on the review of the adopted Local Plan,

to ensure we are taking the correct approach to meeting the duty. Public bodies who are subject to the Duty to Co-operate were invited to comment, and we used the feedback to finalise the Strategy.

This revised [Duty to Co-operate Strategy](#) was published in January 2022, to accompany the review of the Local Plan. The key strategic matters identified through the consultation are as follows:

- 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
- Climate change action and mitigation including flood risk and zero carbon
- Natural and historic environment including increased biodiversity and green/blue/wild spaces and connectivity of ecological networks
- Community infrastructure including education, health and community facilities
- Utility infrastructure including communications, waste, water and energy
- London Stansted Airport future airspace redesign.

Since the adoption of the Local Plan in May 2020 the Council has responded to a range of consultations from Essex LPAs, Essex County Council, and National Highways. The details, and a list of other collaborative work, is set out in the Council's [Annual Monitoring Reports](#) for 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24.

Issues and Options

The Issues and Options consultation for the review of the Local Plan ran from August to October 2022. The consultation document reviewed and updated the key issues for the future growth and development of Chelmsford, with potential Spatial Options for addressing projected growth up to 2041.

Comments were received from 12 Duty to Co-operate bodies and specific consultees including neighbouring LPAs, Essex County Council (ECC), Historic England, Environment Agency, Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board.

A summary of the main issues raised in the representations is contained within the Issues and Options You Said We Did Feedback Report published in May 2024, available on this page: www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review. All the responses were carefully considered and used to progress the second formal stage in the preparation of the Chelmsford Local Plan – the Preferred Options Local Plan.

Comments informed the approach to developing the preferred Spatial Strategy and the assessment of reasonable alternatives, and were considered in the forming of new policies relating to health and wellbeing, connectivity and travel, the future of the City Centre, and net zero carbon development. There were also minor changes to the content including updated data, and references to issues including provision for nature and ecology, access and connections, and tall buildings guidance.

Preferred Options

The Preferred Options consultation for the review of the Local Plan ran from May to June 2024. The consultation document set out proposed sites where new homes, jobs and other facilities could be located to meet CCC's needs to 2041, along with updated development management policies that we would use to decide planning applications.

Comments were received from 17 Duty to Co-operate bodies and specific consultees including neighbouring LPAs, Essex County Council (ECC), Historic England, Environment Agency, Highways England, and the Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board.

A summary of the main issues raised in the representations is contained within the Preferred Options You Said We Did Feedback Report published in October 2024, available on this page: www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review. All the responses have been carefully considered and used to progress the third formal stage in the preparation of the Chelmsford Local Plan – the Pre-Submission Local Plan.

Comments were mainly supportive of the key Local Plan elements including the Vision, Strategic Priorities, Spatial Principles, Spatial Strategy, and Development Management policies. Detailed comments have influenced amendments to the Pre-Submission Local Plan including in relation to accessible greenspace and natural habitats, addressing recreational pressure on Sites of Special Scientific Interest, water efficiency targets, and changes for consistency and clarity.

Pre-Submission

The Pre-Submission consultation for the review of the Local Plan ran from February to March 2025. The Pre-Submission Local Plan was the third formal stage in the preparation of the review of the adopted Chelmsford Local Plan. It refined the proposals for the provision of new housing, jobs and schools as well as areas for protection, and policies to help determine planning applications, taking previous comments into account.

Comments were received from 33 Duty to Co-operate bodies and specific consultees including neighbouring LPAs, Essex County Council, Historic England, Environment Agency, Highways England, Essex Wildlife Trust, Essex Police, and neighbouring parish councils.

A summary of the main issues raised in the representations is contained within the Pre-Submission Feedback report published in July 2025, available on this page: www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review

Comments were mainly supportive of the key Plan elements including the Vision, Strategic Priorities, Spatial Principles, Spatial Strategy, and Development Management policies, and for the changes made following the previous round of consultation. At this stage, changes being considered as a response to the comments received are not incorporated into a further version of the draft plan. Instead, a schedule of proposed changes will be submitted to the Independent

Inspector in advance of the formal Examination anticipated to take place in 2026, as part of part of the consideration of the soundness of the plan.

Duty to Co-operate Meetings and Discussions

Regular meetings/discussions continue to be held with Essex County Council, other local authorities in Essex, the principal health and education providers in Chelmsford and other key partners such as Highways England, as part of the ongoing programme of Duty to Co-operate activity.

As the current Local Plan activity is a review of the adopted Local Plan, many aspects of the Plan’s content and approach are unchanged, meaning that major changes are limited. The preferred Spatial Strategy has now been developed to a stage where meaningful discussions can take place, including on the additional sites proposed, as set out in Section 5 of this Position Statement. These meetings/discussions have been valuable in enabling issues affecting the future growth of Chelmsford to be identified at an early stage, and for officers to continue partnership working with those bodies to take forward the review of the Local Plan.

The Council also discusses strategic matters and Local Plan preparation at ongoing established strategic partnerships including the Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA), Eastern Community Homes, and the Chelmsford and Braintree Public Transport Group.

Examples of ongoing meetings and the topics discussed is included below:

Organisation	Topics
ECC	Biodiversity net gain Minerals Local Plan and links to CCC Local Plan preparation Transport Education Net zero policy Water efficiency
Essex Planning Officers Association	Gypsy & Traveller provision Biodiversity net gain Local Nature Recovery Strategy Health and wellbeing Response to national policy updates
Chelmsford and Braintree Public Transport Group	Bus routes, network improvements and ticketing Access for people with disabilities
Maldon District Council	Evidence base updates Local Plan timetables Cross boundary issues such as traffic and education needs Options for growth in Maldon District
Basildon District Council	Employment and economy workshop Meeting housing and Gypsy & Traveller needs
Braintree District Council	Local Plan progress Housing requirements

	Evidence base documents A12 Chelmsford to A120 Marks Tey widening scheme DCO
Joint meeting with Brentwood and Rochford Councils	General updates on timing and evidence base Infrastructure Delivery Plan
Castle Point Council	Sustainable transport connectivity between South Essex and Chelmsford, and a desire to improve north-south sustainable travel connectivity Castle Point Regulation 19 consultation
Colchester City Council	Transport matters including A12 Chelmsford to A120 Marks Tey widening scheme DCO; and A120 improvement proposals
Thurrock Council	Local Plan progress Housing needs in relation to Green Belt Transport matters including A12 widening
National Grid	Ongoing engagement on East Anglia GREEN (Norwich to Tilbury) power lines proposal
National Highways	Traffic modelling for Local Plan preparation Strategic road programmes Statement of Common Ground
NHS Integrated Care System (Mid and South Essex ICS)	Updates on Local Plan preparation Healthcare needs

Commissioning of joint evidence base studies and reports

Due to the different timings of preparation for other LPA's Local Plans, and changes in the way that housing numbers are derived, there have been fewer opportunities to work collaboratively on joint evidence base studies than during preparation of the now adopted Local Plan.

The revised NPPF published in December 2024 includes transitional periods for LPAs to progress a new or reviewed Local Plan at an advanced stage, such as Chelmsford. It is proposed that the Pre-Submission Local Plan will be submitted for examination in early 2026 providing an opportunity for further joint evidence base work, where necessary, before Submission. The response from other Essex LPAs to the transitional arrangements is mixed, with some continuing with progress and others reviewing the revised regulations which will guide consultation and submission dates.

However, the following are key areas where recent joint working is helping to inform the review of the Local Plan:

Net zero carbon – a comprehensive evidence base has been collaboratively established between the Essex Climate Action Commission, Essex County Council and Essex LPAs. The aim of the evidence base is to provide a clearly defined, consistent planning policy approach to net zero carbon development providing much needed certainty and clarity to the development industry and other stakeholders.

This has been translated into a proposed new policy introduced at Preferred Options stage, included as DM31 Net Zero Carbon (In Operation). A detailed account of the evidence and policy development was contained within the Climate Change Topic paper prepared to accompany the Pre-Submission consultation, which will be updated for the Submission stage.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2024 and updates 2025 – CCC has engaged with other LPAs, the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and the Environment Agency for relevant information to support the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) evidence update for the plan consultations.

Chelmsford Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2024 – the Council alongside the other Essex local authorities undertook an updated Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.

Retail Capacity Study Update 2023 – CCC has engaged with neighbouring LPAs for relevant information to inform this evidence base update.

Water Cycle Study Reports 2024 and updates 2025 – Regular consultation was undertaken throughout the preparation of the Scoping WCS and Detailed WCS reports with the Environment Agency.

Infrastructure Delivery Plan Reports – Engagement with infrastructure providers and key stakeholders on these evidence base documents including LPAs, ECC, Natural England, NHS Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board.

Transport modelling 2024 and updates 2025 – CCC has worked with ECC, as the local Highway and Transportation Authority, to prepare the transport evidence base which has also been informed by discussions with National Highways.

Parking guidance 2024 – CCC has contributed to Essex-wide consultation on updated parking guidance, which includes provision for electric charging points, and which has been translated into Local Plan policy.

4. Statements of 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.

SoCG are being prepared to record agreement between CCC and each of Chelmsford's neighbouring authorities, Essex County Council, Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency. Agreed SoCG were published alongside the Pre-Submission consultation and will be further reviewed ahead of Submission of the plan for Independent Examination. The aim will be to resolve any outstanding matters where cross-boundary strategic matters will be addressed by email and/or DtC meetings.

5. What will happen next?

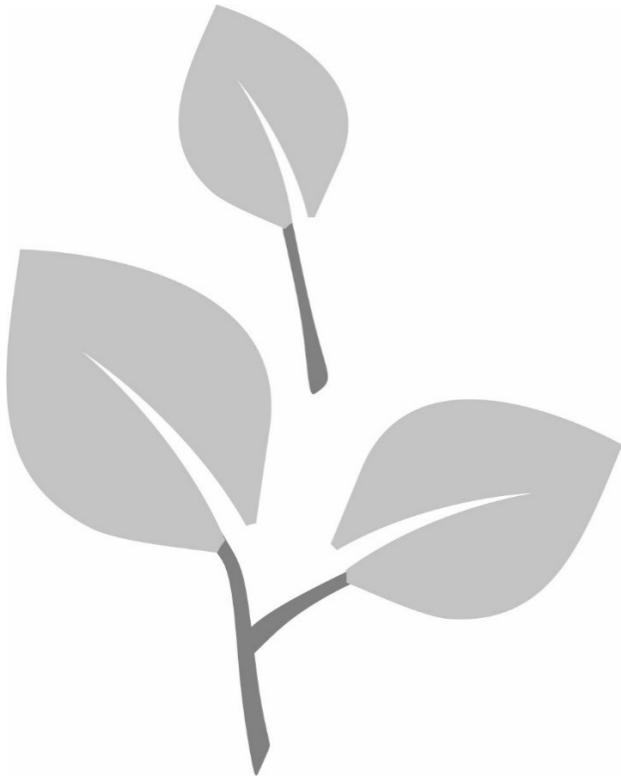
Consultation on the Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Local Plan in Spring 2025 was expected to be the third and final public consultation on the draft Local Plan before submission for examination. However, it has emerged that we need to add more land for homes and employment use into the plan to meet future needs. This is because some sites in the adopted Local Plan have not come forward and some sites will not be built as quickly as expected. When combined with the large increase in the Government's calculation of housing need in Chelmsford, this means we do not have enough allocated housing sites to meet these needs, especially for the first five years of the plan.

We have selected additional sites following detailed testing of site constraints and opportunities in relation to matters like flood risk, heritage, traffic and archaeology. The sites are located in settlements which are accessible to the local highway network and services and facilities such as schools and local shops.

We will consult on this focused Additional Sites Document for seven weeks from November 2025 to January 2026. This consultation is also a Regulation 19 consultation.

The City Council will arrange Duty to Co-operate Officer and Member meetings for adjoining LPAs during the formal consultation period to discuss any strategic matters that may affect the preparation of Chelmsford's Local Plan and opportunities for further joint work. The Council will also respond to any requests that may be made for additional meetings or formal discussions with Duty to Co-operate bodies.

Following the consultation, the City Council will submit the Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Local Plan and the Focused Consultation Additional Sites (Regulation 19) Document, and all the representations received to both consultations, to the Independent Inspector prior to formal Examination anticipated to take place in 2026. Full feedback reports for both consultations will be published within a Regulation 22 Consultation Statement, and SOCGs added or updated, as part of the Submission package.



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Guidance Note

Mechanism for the Consideration of Unmet Housing Need

This Guidance Note was approved by the Essex Planning Officers' Association at its meeting on 7 September 2017.

Essex Planning Officers' Association (EPOA)

Mechanism for the Consideration of Unmet Housing Need – September 2017

1 Introduction

- 1.1 At a Duty to Co-operate meeting for Chelmsford's Local Plan in May 2017, it was identified by participants that there was a need for a high-level process or mechanism to be agreed to guide how potential unmet housing needs are considered by all Essex authorities. Other requests by individual local authorities to potentially accommodate their 'unmet' housing need have been made in responding to recent Local Plan consultations. It was considered important to address this matter, as the lack of such a mechanism was identified as key issue by the Inspector at the Castle Point Local Plan Examination.
- 1.2 The EPOA Policy Forum discussed the matter at its meeting on 6 June and a Task Finish Group with membership from each of the Essex HMAs was established.



Housing Market Areas in Essex

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. West Essex - Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford (+East Hertfordshire) | 4. Maldon |
| 2. South Essex - Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock | 5. Brentwood |
| 3. North and Central Essex - Braintree, Chelmsford, Colchester and Tendring | |

2 Policy Context

- 2.1 **Housing Need** - Paragraphs 47 and 159 of the NPPF states the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing are assessed for the housing market area (FOAHN). Jointly prepared Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMAs) identify the 'policy off' demographic derived need, making further adjustments for employment projections, affordability, the needs of specific groups in the community and wider market signals.

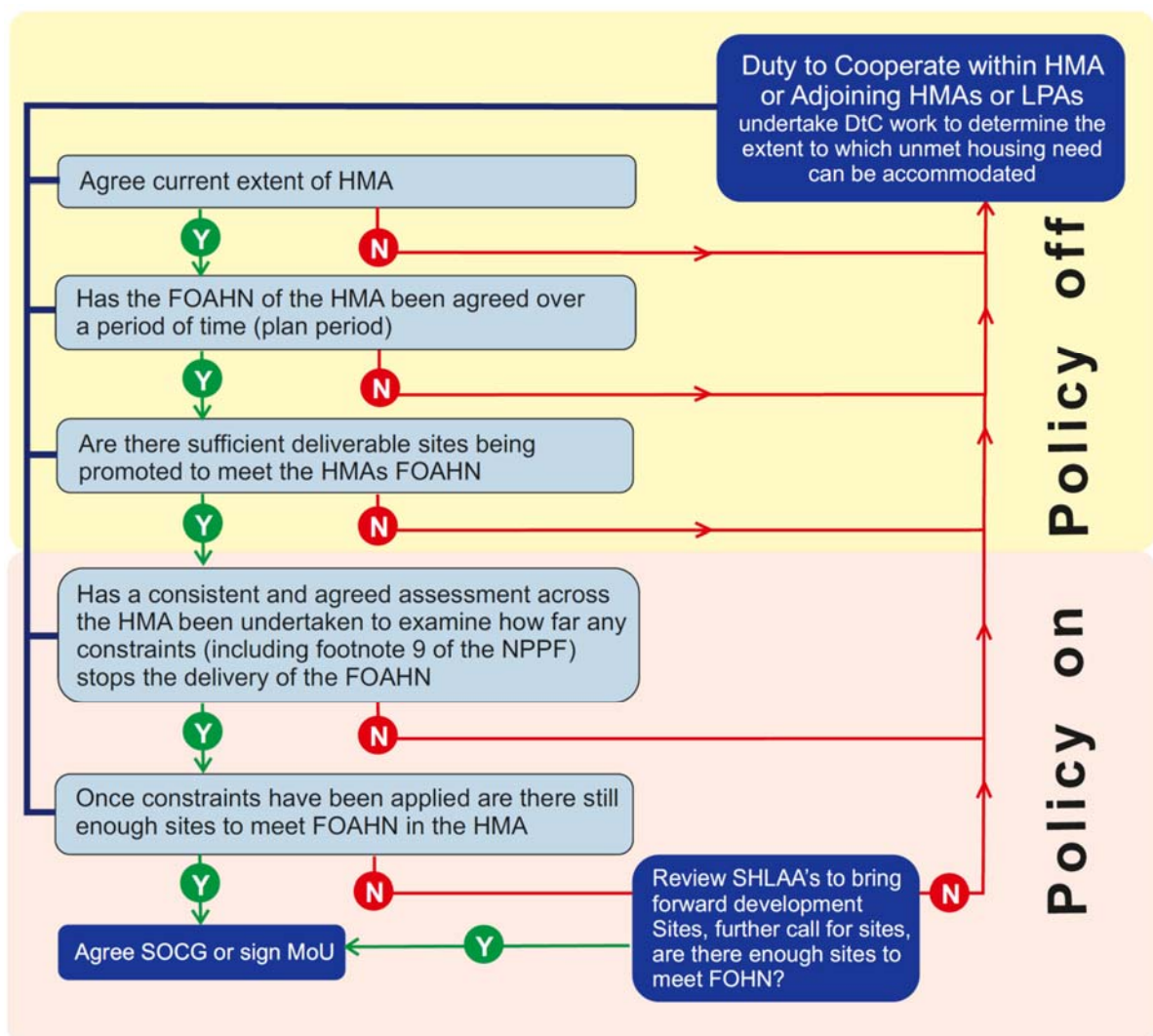
2.2 **Housing Supply** – Paragraph 159 of the NPPF identified the need to prepare a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment which identifies the potential supply of housing sites.

3 Process

3.1 To have a clear understanding of the housing needs in their HMA, local planning authorities, in partnership with neighbouring authorities and HMAs, should:

- 1) Agree their full objectively assessed housing number
- 2) Irrespective of policy constraints, assess whether there are sufficient available and achievable housing sites to deliver the identified housing need
- 3) Agree a consistent approach and methodology for assessing policy constraints across the HMA
- 4) If there is an unmet housing requirement – reassess SHLAA, potentially re-distribute within HMA and then consider request to adjoining HMA.

3.2 Consideration will be given to the use of third parties such as the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) or Planning Officers Society (POS) in the case of disputes over this process.





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