

FAQs, November 2025

What is happening now?

The Council is undertaking a focused consultation until 8 January 2026 seeking comments on additional site allocations for inclusion within the review of the Local Plan. The additional sites comprise 11 new housing sites, three expanded housing sites and one expanded employment site. The additional sites development trajectory and key consequential plan changes arising from the additional sites allocation policies are also subject to consultation alongside an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) Addendum which assesses the changes.

What is a Local Plan?

The Council's Local Plan adopted in 2020 guides growth and development across Chelmsford City Council's area to 2036. This includes locations for new homes, employment opportunities and facilities for local people such as new schools, healthcare provision and upgraded transport infrastructure. It also identifies areas for protection including open space.

Why do we need an up-to-date Local Plan?

We need to review the plan at least every five years to ensure that it remains up to date and continues to meet our needs for development growth to 2041. Without an up-to-date Local Plan, the Council could have very little influence over the location of new development and the provision of infrastructure. Sites could be promoted for development in locations that the Council and its communities want to protect, and which are not considered sustainable. Not having an up-to-date Local Plan would create uncertainty and make it harder to secure appropriate sites for new infrastructure such as schools and health facilities.

Why are we consulting on Additional Sites now?

During the plan's preparation, 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. These events, outside the City Council's control, mean we do not have enough allocated housing sites to meet our needs for the first five years of the plan when measured against our housing target.

The additional sites will provide around 1,592 additional homes over the plan period to 2041 and help meet the latest housing needs figure of 1,210 new homes a year. We are also proposing to expand the floorspace of a proposed employment site by 10,500sqm.

Where are the Additional Sites?

The additional sites are located in areas accessible to the local highway network and services and facilities such as schools and local shops. They are:

- On previously developed/brownfield land in Chelmsford City Centre
- On the edge of Chelmsford Urban Area to the north (Newlands Spring area) and north-west (Patching Hall Lane/Scot's Green area)
- Around the villages of Boreham, Great Leighs, Bicknacre, Ford End, East Hanningfield, Rettendon Place and Woodham Ferrers.

How were the Additional Sites chosen?

We have selected the additional sites following detailed testing of site constraints and opportunities in relation to matters like flood risk, heritage, traffic and archaeology. They are also on land being promoted for development and in areas considered sustainable and suitable for the development proposed.

What does the consultation say about the A12 Widening Scheme?

The Government cancelled the A12 widening scheme in July 2025 resulting in uncertainty over the delivery of highways improvements to Junction 19 or Boreham Interchange which is specifically needed to support the growth in the plan.

The consultation document outlines how in the absence of the A12 widening scheme, a phased approach to deliver the Junction 19 improvements is being pursued. The design of the first phase of works to support future growth at Chelmsford Garden Community is agreed with National Highways and Essex County Council and discussions are on-going with Homes England regarding funding and delivery. Discussions are also continuing with key stakeholders to fund and deliver the remaining elements of the Junction 19 works.

What is the Additional Sites Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) Addendum?

We have updated our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) to consider the additional sites and other policy changes. This IIA Addendum assesses sustainability and strategic environmental impacts, Habitats Regulations, and health and equality impacts of the proposals and is also published for consultation alongside the Additional Sites Document.

What has happened to the previous Pre-Submission Local Plan consultation responses from February-March 2025?

The review of the adopted Chelmsford Local Plan commenced in Winter 2021 and following consultations in 2022 and 2024, the Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) version was published for consultation in Spring 2025. We have published a [Feedback Report](#) setting out the main issues and changes sought in the comments to the Pre-Submission plan. We will also publish a statement responding to the main issues and changes sought after the Additional Sites consultation.

Do I need to re-submit my comments to the Pre-Submission Local Plan consultation in February-March 2025?

No, comments made to the previous Pre-Submission Local Plan consultation in Spring 2025 will be sent in full to the Inspector, together with a high level Council response, for independent examination. The Council will only be accepting representations that are related solely to the content of the Additional Sites Consultation Document and supporting Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) Addendum.

Where can I view Additional Sites consultation documents?

You can read the consultation documents in the following ways:

- On the Council's Consultation Portal at www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planningpolicyconsult. This system also allows you to submit comments to the consultations
- On the Council's website alongside the Local Plan evidence base documents at www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review
- At the Chelmsford City Council Customer Service Centre, Chelmsford City Council, Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford CM1 1JE (10am to 4pm Monday to Friday).

At some staffed drop-in public exhibitions – see later in FAQs for details.

If you do not have access to a computer, you can request paper copies by telephoning (01245) 606330. A charge will be made to cover printing and postage costs.

How can I comment on the Additional Sites consultation documents?

You can comment on the consultation documents in the following ways:

Online Consultation Portal:

Go to: www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planningpolicyconsult where you can:

- Read the consultation documents
- Make your comments via the specially designed representation form
- Sign up for alerts to feedback reports and future consultations

This is our preferred means of receiving comments as it ensures that your comments are recorded accurately and are processed quickly. If you have not used this system before or have any difficulties logging in, please see our guidance notes at: www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-portal-guide or call us on (01245) 606330.

In writing:

If you prefer to send comments in writing, please fill in the relevant specially designed representation form.

The Local Plan representation form can be downloaded at www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review. Paper copies of the representation form are also available from Chelmsford City Council's Customer Service Centre (details above) or on request by telephoning (01245) 606330 or emailing planning.policy@chelmsford.gov.uk

Forms can be returned:

- By e-mail to planning.policy@chelmsford.gov.uk

- By post to Planning Policy, Chelmsford City Council, Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1JE
- By hand to Chelmsford City Council Customer Service Centre (details above).

If you have difficulties making representations by e-mail or post due to a disability, please call us (01245) 606330.

The use of the Local Plan representation form is strongly recommended as this will ensure that comments are related to the matters relevant to the subsequent independent examination by a Planning Inspector.

Any anonymous comments and late comments received after 4pm on 8 January 2026 cannot be accepted. Individual acknowledgement of receipt will not be possible.

What is 'legal compliance'?

Local Plans are legally compliant if they are:

- Prepared in accordance with the Council's latest Local Development Scheme
- Accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment
- Subject to consultation carried out in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement
- Compliant with all relevant laws including the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (PCPA) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012; and
- Prepared in line with the Duty to Co-operate.

Please read the Statement of Representation Procedure and Statement on Availability for full details about how to make your comments available at www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review.

What is 'soundness'?

Local Plans are considered sound if they are:

- **Positively prepared** – provide a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development
- **Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence
- **Effective** – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common grounds; and
- **Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Please read the Statement of Representation Procedure and Statement on Availability for full details about how to make your comments available at www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review.

What is the 'duty to cooperate'?

The Council has a legal duty to cooperate with other national and local bodies, such as neighbouring planning authorities, Essex County Council and National Highways. The purpose of the duty is to discuss and address strategic cross-boundary issues such as housing, employment and infrastructure needs.

The Additional Sites Duty to Co-operate Position Statement provides evidence of ongoing engagement and where agreement has been reached. This Statement is also supported by Statements of Common Ground which are being agreed with organisations. These will be available on the Council's website as they are agreed at www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review.

Where and when are the Local Plan exhibitions?

The Civic Centre drop-in public exhibitions will be staffed and provide an opportunity to meet a planning officer face-to-face. The other exhibitions in High Chelmer Shopping Centre and South Woodham Ferrers Town Council offices will not be staffed – see details below. Please check our website www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review for any updates before making your journey.

Location	Date	Time
Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1JE	Thursday 11 December	6pm - 8pm
	Friday 12 December	1pm - 3pm
	Saturday 13 December	10am - 12noon
High Chelmer Shopping Centre, Exchange Way, Chelmsford, CM1 1XB	Monday 1 December to Monday 8 December	Unstaffed exhibition panels displayed all-day during shopping centre opening hours
South Woodham Ferrers Town Council, Champions Manor Hall, Hullbridge Road, South Woodham Ferrers, CM3 5LJ	Wednesday 3 December to Wednesday 10 December	Unstaffed exhibition panels displayed 9am - 4pm weekdays, Saturday 9am – 3:30pm, Sunday closed

You can also view the exhibition online at www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review.

What is the evidence base?

National policy requires the Council to ensure that its Local Plan is based on appropriate up-to-date evidence about economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of Chelmsford. The evidence base comprises studies and working with key stakeholders and groups across the City area.

More recently completed evidence base used to inform the Additional Sites Document includes:

- Review of the Air Quality Impact Assessment

- Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study
- Detailed Water Cycle Study Addendum
- Highways Impact Junction Modelling
- Heritage Impact Assessment
- Updated Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)
- Archaeological Impact Assessment
- Additional Housing Site Studies
- Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Addendum and site summary tables and maps, and
- Sequential and Exception Testing Update.

These evidence base documents are available online via www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review.

What weight does the Additional Sites Document have in decision making?

The Additional Sites Document indicates the Council's intent to address future growth requirements in Chelmsford in the period to 2041 and beyond in a planned and sustainable way. At this stage it will be of 'moderate' weight in decision making on planning applications. It will not have full Development Plan status until it has been adopted by the Council. At this point the new Plan would also replace the current adopted plan.

What happens after the Additional Sites Local Plan consultation?

We will acknowledge all 'duly made' comments received, although we cannot write to you about your individual comments. Comments will be published on the Council's planning policy consultation portal in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

The Council will produce a Feedback Report summarising the main issues raised in the consultation responses. We will then submit both the Pre-Submission version of the Local Plan published for consultation in Spring 2025 and the Additional Sites Document for examination by an independent Planning Inspector. Comments submitted to both consultations will also be submitted in full alongside a statement with a high level council response to the main issues raised in both consultations.

There is no need to resubmit representations submitted as part of the previous Pre-Submission consultation. The Pre-Submission Local Plan and the Additional Sites Document will be incorporated together in a single new Local Plan before being finalised for adoption.

How can I be kept up to date on progress?

We have a specially designed consultation portal for Local Plan and other planning policy consultations. If you register, you can:

- Read and save consultation documents
- Make your comments online
- Receive alerts on future consultations

You can find out more about how to use the consultation portal online at www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-portal-guide

You can also [sign up to the Chelmsford City Life mailing list](#), to receive news updates.

What are the key stages for the Local Plan review?

Issues and Options – Previous stage

This was the first stage of consultation which took place in August to October 2022.

Preferred Options – Previous stage

This was the second stage of consultation which took place in May to June 2024.

Pre-Submission – Previous stage

This was the third stage of consultation which took place in February to March 2025.

Focused Additional Sites - *Current stage*

This is a focused public consultation on additional housing and employment site allocations before we submit the plan for examination by a government-appointed independent Planning Inspector. The consultation will gather views on legal compliance and soundness.

Submission – Future stage (Mid-2026)

This is the formal submission of the Local Plan. All Plan documents, evidence, and comments received to the Pre-Submission and Additional Sites consultation stages will be submitted to the appointed Planning Inspector for the examination.

Examination – Future stage (Late 2026)

Public hearings will be held. The Inspector will use the comments received to the Pre-Submission and Additional Sites consultation stages to decide what matters to discuss.

Adoption – Future stage (Late 2026/Early 2027)

The new Local Plan is formally adopted by the Council, replacing the existing plan adopted in 2020.

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20 November 2025
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