

Chelmsford Local Plan

Review of the adopted Local
Plan

Issues and Options

Topic Paper:

Climate Change

August 2022



1. Purpose

- 1.1. This Topic Paper is one of a number produced by Chelmsford City Council to set out how the review of the adopted Local Plan has been developed. Topic papers will be refreshed and updated at each stage of the Local Plan Review process to ensure the latest information/position is available. This will avoid confusion and duplication and the latest topic paper will supersede any previous versions.
- 1.2. The intention of the topic papers is to provide background information; they do not contain any policies, proposals or site allocations. Topic papers will form part of the Local Plan evidence base which will be submitted alongside the Local Plan for independent examination.
- 1.3. This paper covers how climate change has been considered when preparing the review of the adopted Local Plan and how the Review will seek to provide a development strategy which seeks to support the transition to a low carbon future.
- 1.4. The Topic Paper provides background information and provides context of how the Local Plan has been formulated. This Topic Paper should be read alongside the other Topic Papers produced.
- 1.5. The main issues covered by this Topic Paper are:
 - Implementation of the Climate Change Act
 - Implementing the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan
 - Policy proposals to assist in combating climate change

2. Background

- 2.1. The Climate Change Act 2008 establishes a legally binding target to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions by 100% in 2050 from 1990 levels. To drive progress and set the UK on a pathway towards this target, the Act contains a legally binding requirement for carbon budgets which acts as 'stepping-stones'. The sixth carbon budget announced in April 2021 includes a target to reduce emissions by 78% by 2035 compared with 1990 levels.
- 2.2. The Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency on 16 July 2019. Essentially this declaration represents a commitment to take appropriate action to make the Council's activities net-zero carbon by 2030. In January 2020 the Council agreed a Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan with an initial focus on fifteen key areas of activity. It is aimed at:
 - reducing carbon emissions
 - lowering energy consumption
 - reducing waste and pollution
 - improving air quality

- greening Chelmsford
- increasing biodiversity
- encouraging more sustainable travel choices

2.3. We are already experiencing some of the impacts in Essex with hotter summers, water supply pressure and more frequent and intense weather events. The number of homes at risk of flooding in Essex could double by 2050¹. This is all consistent with projections of climate change. The independent Climate Commission for Essex has been established and published its interim report in November 2020. This report recommends that all new homes and commercial buildings granted planning permission should be carbon net zero by 2025 and carbon positive by 2030.

2.4. Progress is being made in Essex and in Chelmsford, from extensive tree planting to improvements to the cycle networks, but we can do so much more and the sooner we do the better to avoid the worst effects. The responsibility doesn't just lie with the national and local government but with parish councils, businesses, voluntary groups as well as individuals.

3. Issues and Options

Policy Context

National Policy

- 3.1. All policies in the Local Plan must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the overarching planning policy framework, supported by the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).
- 3.2. The adopted Local Plan was examined under the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). There have subsequently been updates to the NPPF and the Review of the Local Plan needs to be considered against the requirements of the 2021 NPPF.
- 3.3. Although large areas of the NPPF remain unchanged in respect of climate change any new development proposals and policies will still be required to be tested against the relevant NPPF requirements. There are also some areas of the NPPF which have been updated/amended since the adoption of the Local Plan which will need to be reflected.
- 3.4. Further detail on these key changes for consideration are set out in the table below, included under the section 'Local Plan Approach'.

¹<https://assets.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/1fzMJKNmIfz8WHx4mzdy2h/e7c57523466f347fd6cdccb3286c113c/Net-Zero-Report-Making-Essex-Carbon-Neutral.pdf>

National Policy Guidance

- 3.5. Paragraphs 001 Reference ID: 6-001-20140306 to 012 Reference ID: 6-012-20190315 of the PPG set out the relevant climate change evidence base required to support plan making and decision taking in full. The following is a summary of the points for consideration.
- 3.6. Addressing climate change is one of the core land use planning principles which the National Planning Policy Framework expects to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. To be found sound, Local Plans will need to reflect this principle and enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework. These include the requirements for local authorities to adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change in line with the provisions and objectives of the Climate Change Act 2008, and co-operate to deliver strategic priorities which include climate change.
- 3.7. In addition to the statutory requirement to take the Framework into account in the preparation of Local Plans, there is a statutory duty on local planning authorities to include policies in their Local Plan designed to tackle climate change and its impacts.
- 3.8. The PPG includes the following as examples of how the challenges of climate change could be addressed through a Local Plan:

Examples of mitigating climate change by reducing emissions:

- Reducing the need to travel and providing for sustainable transport
- Providing opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy technologies
- Providing opportunities for decentralised energy and heating
- Promoting low carbon design approaches to reduce energy consumption in buildings, such as passive solar design

Examples of adapting to a changing climate:

- Considering future climate risks when allocating development sites to ensure risks are understood over the development's lifetime
 - Considering the impact of and promoting design responses to flood risk and coastal change for the lifetime of the development
 - Considering availability of water and water infrastructure for the lifetime of the development and design responses to promote water efficiency and protect water quality
 - Promoting adaptation approaches in design policies for developments and the public realm
- 3.9. When preparing Local Plans local planning authorities should pay particular attention to integrating adaptation and mitigation approaches and looking for 'win-win' solutions that will support sustainable development. The PPG offers examples that could achieve this:
 - by maximising summer cooling through natural ventilation in buildings and avoiding solar gain;

- through district heating networks that include tri-generation (combined cooling, heat and power); or
- through the provision of multi-functional green infrastructure, which can reduce urban heat islands, manage flooding and help species adapt to climate change – as well as contributing to a pleasant environment which encourages people to walk and cycle.

3.10. The PPG advises the impact of climate change needs to be taken into account in a realistic way so Local Plans should consider:

- identifying no or low cost responses to climate risks that also deliver other benefits, such as green infrastructure that improves adaptation, biodiversity and amenity
- building in flexibility to allow future adaptation if it is needed, such as setting back new development from rivers so that it does not make it harder to improve flood defences in future
- the potential vulnerability of a development to climate change risk over its whole lifetime

3.11. The Local Plan's evidence base should include information on climate change risks, such as the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Water Resource Management Plan and water cycle studies.

3.12. The National Planning Policy Framework expects local planning authorities when setting any local requirement for a building's sustainability to do so in a way consistent with the government's zero carbon buildings policy and adopt nationally described standards. Local requirements should form part of a Local Plan following engagement with appropriate partners, and will need to be based on robust and credible evidence and pay careful attention to viability. In this respect, planning authorities will need to take account of government decisions on the Housing Standards Review when considering a local requirement relating to new homes.

3.13. If considering policies on local requirements for the sustainability of other buildings, local planning authorities will wish to consider if there are nationally described standards and the impact on viability of development. Further guidance can be found under Viability.

3.14. Different rules apply to residential and non-residential premises. In their development plan policies, local planning authorities:

- Can set energy performance standards for new housing or the adaptation of buildings to provide dwellings, that are higher than the building regulations, but only up to the equivalent of Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.
- Are not restricted or limited in setting energy performance standards above the building regulations for non-housing developments.

Other relevant legislation

- 3.15. [Section 19\(1A\) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#) requires local planning authorities to include in their Local Plans “policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in the local planning authority’s area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change”. This will be a consideration when a Local Plan is examined.
- 3.16. The [Climate Change Act 2008 \(2050 Target Amendment\) Order 2019](#) establishes a legally binding target to reduce the UK’s greenhouse gas emissions by 100% in 2050 from 1990 levels. To drive progress and set the UK on a pathway towards this target, the Act contains a legally binding requirement for carbon budgets which acts as stepping stones. The sixth carbon budget announced in April 2021 includes a target to reduce emissions by 78% by 2035 compared with 1990 levels.
- 3.17. The Climate Change Act 2008 also requires the government:
- to assess regularly the risks to the UK of the current and predicted impact of climate change;
 - to set out its climate change adaptation objectives; and
 - to set out its proposals and policies for meeting these objectives.
- 3.18. These requirements are fulfilled by the [UK climate change risk assessment](#) and the [National adaptation programme report](#) respectively, which may provide helpful information for plan-making.
- 3.19. In 2021 the government carried out a public consultation on proposed changes to the Building Regulations ([The Future Buildings Standard](#)). This was the second stage of a 2-part consultation. It built on the [Future Homes Standard consultation](#) by setting out energy and ventilation standards for non-domestic buildings, existing homes and includes proposals to mitigate against overheating in residential buildings. It set out proposals for a Future Buildings Standard, which provides a pathway to highly efficient non-domestic buildings which are zero carbon ready, better for the environment and fit for the future.
- 3.20. The interim outcomes of this consultations are awaited, but it is understood that they are intended to be implemented through a statutory instrument and new approved documents which will deliver an uplift in energy efficiency standards for new homes and buildings, improved ventilation and a requirement to mitigate any overheating in residential buildings.

Local Policy

Current policy

3.21. The adopted Local Plan includes a variety of policies which seek to support the transition to a low carbon future. However, it does not include a specific strategic priority to address this issue and it is not specifically covered within the 'Vision'. It is, however, a thread which runs through the adopted Plan in the following ways:

- **Strategic Policy S1 (Spatial Principles)** – includes a requirement to locate development to avoid or manage flood risk.
- **Strategic Policy S2 (Addressing climate change and flood risk)** - encourages development to provide opportunities for green infrastructure and new habitat creation. Requires all development to have appropriate flood mitigation measures in place.
- **Site allocation policies** – where relevant, require developments to provide conserve and enhance nearby designations such as Local Wildlife Sites, create a net gain in biodiversity, habitat mitigation and enhancement/protection, ensure appropriate surface water management and SUDs are provided, improved GI network, including tree planting/protection. enhanced and additional sustainable modes of transport (cycle, pedestrian, public transport, car clubs), all of which contribute to a transition to a low carbon future.
- **Development Management Policies** – **DM18** requires all development to be safe from flooding. Major development is required to incorporate appropriate water management measures to reduce surface water run-off and volumes as far as is reasonably practical. **DM19** supports the provision of renewable and low carbon energy development subject to relevant criteria being met. **DM23** seeks to ensure all development is built to a high quality. This includes minimising the use of natural resources. **DM25** sets out the expectation for all new buildings to meet specific sustainability criteria, including water efficiency criteria, EV charging points and build criteria for non-residential buildings. **DM30** deals with contamination and pollution and seeks to ensure developments in or adjacent to an Air Quality Management Area, or where an air quality impact assessment has been provided, that appropriate mitigation is put in place so the development will not have an unacceptable impact on air quality and the health and wellbeing of people.

3.22. The adopted [Making Places Supplementary Planning Document](#) (SPD) and its [Self Build and Custom Design Code Template](#) (January 2021) seek to promote and secure high-quality sustainable new development. It is aimed at all forms of development, from large strategic developments, public spaces and places, to small extensions to individual homes. It sets out detailed guidance for the implementation of the policy requirements set out in the adopted Local Plan and provides practical advice to help with schemes from single house extensions to strategic sites and their masterplans. It also provides good practice examples on how development can go beyond planning policy requirements to create the most sustainable and environmentally friendly development possible.

- 3.23. The SPD offers further detailed guidance on principles to consider in respect of sustainable design and construction. It covers ways to reduce water consumption, BREEAM, reducing carbon dioxide and nitrogen emissions, and recycling and waste requirements. Following this guidance will help to secure high quality, well designed sustainable development, future proof new development to allow for fast changing technology and building standards, as well as reduce the use of non-renewable resources and carbon emissions from new buildings. It will also ensure appropriate recycling and waste requirements are provided to all developments.
- 3.24. The [Council's Planning Obligations SPD](#) (January 2021) sets out the Council's approach to seeking planning obligations needed to make sure development is acceptable in planning terms. Of relevance to this topic is the need for possible Section 106 Planning contributions towards flood protection and water management, as well as Environmental Mitigation measures, which include tree and new woodland planting to assist in the challenge to tackle climate change. The SPD also seeks to negotiate Section 106 agreements which secure show homes that incorporate optional sustainable design features to showcase the benefits of including such features in a new build and how to move towards a zero-carbon home on developments of over 100 homes.
- 3.25. The Council also has an adopted [Solar Farm Development SPD](#). This SPD gives guidance on how to prepare and submit planning proposals for solar farms, and how we assess them. It considers and applies advice from a number of sources, including the requirements of National Planning Policy and Guidance, local planning policies and other relevant strategies.
- 3.26. Collectively these seek to mitigate and adapt development to assist in meeting the climate change challenge. In addition to the Local Plan, there are a number of other local and regional strategies or guidance that inform this topic area.
- 3.27. [Our Chelmsford: Our Plan](#) sets out the Council's priorities which will improve the lives of residents. There are four themes; a fairer and inclusive Chelmsford; a safer and greener place; healthy, active and enjoyable lives and connected Chelmsford.
- 3.28. The City Council [declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency](#) on 16 July 2019. Essentially this Declaration represents a commitment to take appropriate action to make the Council's activities net-zero carbon by 2030.
- 3.29. In January 2020 a [Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan](#) with an initial focus on fifteen key areas of activity was agreed by the Council. It is aimed at:
- reducing carbon emissions
 - lowering energy consumption
 - reducing waste and pollution
 - improving air quality
 - greening Chelmsford
 - increasing biodiversity
 - encouraging more sustainable travel choices

- 3.30. [Net Zero: Making Essex Carbon Neutral \(Essex Climate Action Commission, July 2021\)](#) The Essex Climate Action Commission was formed in 2020. It is an independent, voluntary, cross-party body. The report sets out key steps for how to reach zero carbon by 2050 and recommendations within six core themes; land use and green infrastructure, energy, built environment, transport, waste and community engagement.
- 3.31. The [South East Inshore Marine Management Plan](#) also forms part of the Statutory Development Plan. It has been adopted since the adoption of the Chelmsford Local Plan. This includes policies to help enhance and protect the marine environment and achieve sustainable economic growth while respecting local communities both within and adjacent to the marine plan area, which includes the coast within Chelmsford's administrative area.
- 3.32. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs), as set out in the Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, are a new, strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required at the local level. Essex County Council has identified 9 strategic corridors within the [Chelmsford LCWIP](#) within the urban area, which is to be updated within the timescales of the plan review. As well as assisting in providing better accessibility these will help to reduce the need for motorised transportation on the roads, helping to reduce emissions.
- 3.33. The Essex [Minerals Local Plan](#) and [Waste Local Plan](#) set out further detailed policies and guidance regarding the re-use and recycling of materials on sites.

Duty to Co-operate

- 3.34. The Council is committed to co-operating with other bodies on strategic planning matters. The Duty to Co-operate Strategy was reviewed and adopted in January 2022.
- 3.35. The Council will make every effort to seek co-operation on cross-boundary and strategic planning matters in a focused, positive and structured way. We will discuss the review of the adopted Local Plan with neighbouring planning authorities and the prescribed bodies at stages which align with and inform the stages of the review of the adopted Local Plan. These discussions will help to formulate the quantum and distribution of Chelmsford's future growth, which will be supported by updated evidence
- 3.36. At the same time, we will continue to work constructively with nearby planning authorities on their own local plan preparation. 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.
- 3.37. In some cases, discussion on strategic matters will continue through existing joint working arrangements. We will also arrange joint Officer and Member meetings, technical stakeholder meetings, focused workshops, and Statements of Common Ground.

3.38. The strategic matters that may apply to the review of the adopted 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.

3.39. As part of on-going Duty to Co-operate relevant to this topic, CCC has attended relevant meetings and provides updates on our plan review such as through the Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA). We've approached other LPAs and the Environment Agency for relevant information to support our Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) update which is in progress.

3.40. As part of the Issues and Options consultation we will be having meetings with neighbouring Local Planning Authorities as well as other relevant Duty to Co-operate bodies. Any strategic cross boundary issues relating to Climate Change raised through these meetings and the consultation will be further considered and any further engagement undertaken if required.

Integrated Impact Assessment

3.41. The Council is carrying out an ongoing Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) as the review of the adopted Local Plan develops.

3.42. The IIA will assess the following aspects of sustainable development:

- Sustainability Appraisal (SA)
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)
- Health Impact Assessment (HIA)
- Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

3.43. The SA, SEA and HRA are a requirement of national policy. The HIA and EqIA are voluntary, but the Council believes they will help to provide a complete picture of the sustainability of the review of the adopted Local Plan.

3.44. The IIA identifies the key sustainability issues for the review of the adopted Local Plan, which feed into a framework against which proposals will be assessed. It will cover the potential environmental, social, economic and health performance of the proposed changes to the adopted Local Plan and any reasonable alternatives. It will be used at each stage of reviewing the Plan, and be subject to separate consultation, as follows:

- Scoping Report
- Issues and Options – Current Stage
- Preferred Options
- Submission
- Adoption

3.45. The Issues and Options IIA appraises key sustainability issues (Table 3.19) and Appraisal Framework Objectives (Table 4.1) relating to this Topic Paper. Please see the Issues and Options IIA for more information.

Evidence base

3.46. In accordance with the requirements of the NPPF, policies and their requirements should be based on up-to-date evidence.

3.47. The following documents are of particular relevance to addressing climate change in the adopted Local Plan and will require reviewing and/or updating to support the Review of the Local Plan:

- All local Air Quality assessments and reports
- Surface Water Management Plan
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Water Cycle Study
- Waste and Recycling

3.48. The following documents are new or updated documents of particular relevance to addressing climate change to support the Review of the Local Plan which have been completed:

- Integrated Impact Assessment of the Review of the Adopted Local Plan

3.49. Following the feedback from the Issues and Options consultation further relevant evidence will be undertaken to support any new policies or requirements intended to be included in the Plan.

Local Plan Approach

3.50. The table below sets out the key issues to be considered at this Regulation 18 Issues and Options Stage. The table below assesses the adopted Local Plan against the key NPPF requirements in respect of addressing climate change and Plan making and identifies CCC's assessment of the adopted Local Plan's compliance with the 2021 NPPF. The proposed approach to the Review of the Local Plan is then set out using the following colour codes:

Adopted Local Plan meets NPPF requirement
Adopted Local Plan partially meets NPPF requirement
Adopted Local Plan does not meet NPPF requirement

NPPF Paragraph	NPPF Requirement	Approach in Review of the Local Plan
NPPF Para 153	Take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperature.	Set out in adopted Local Plan through a suite of policies (Strategic Policy S2 and Policy DM18, DM19 and DM25). Making Places SPD further supports this. Review of adopted Local Plan needs to consider if some aspects of guidance in Making Places SPD should be added to policy within the Plan. Need to check any amendments through the review continue to be NPPF compliant.
NPPF Para 153	Support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts.	Set out in adopted Local Plan through a suite of policies (Strategic Policy S2 and Policy DM18, DM19 and DM25). Making Places SPD further supports this. Review of Local Plan needs to consider if some aspects of guidance in Making Places SPD should be added to policy within the Plan. Need to check any amendments through the review continue to be NPPF compliant.
NPPF Para 155	Increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat by providing a positive strategy for energy from these sources, identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and identifying opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers.	Set out in adopted Local Plan through a suite of policies (Strategic Policy S2 and Policy DM19). Making Places SPD further supports this. Review of Local Plan needs to consider if some aspects of guidance in Making Places SPD should be added to policy within the Plan and will need to consider identifying locations for renewables. Partial review required to address this NPPF requirement.
NPPF Para 160 & 161	Manage flood risk from all sources and apply a sequential, risk based approach to the location of development.	Set out in adopted Local Plan through a suite of policies (Strategic Policy S2 and Policy DM18). Making Places SPD further supports this. Review of Local Plan needs to consider if some aspects of guidance in Making Places SPD

		should be added to policy within the Plan and evidence needs to be updated to support any new development allocations in respect of flooding.
NPPF Para 162, 163, 164 and NPPF Annex 3	Steer new development to those areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source. If this is not possible, the exception test may have to be applied, informed by the potential vulnerability of the site and of the development proposed. Where this is the case, sites needs to demonstrate that the development would provide wider sustainability benefits outweighing the flood risk and that the development would be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere (and where possible will reduce flood risk overall).	Set out in adopted Local Plan through a suite of policies (Strategic Policy S2 and Policy DM18). Review of Local Plan needs to update evidence to support any new development allocations in respect of flooding.
NPPF Para 171	Avoid inappropriate development in vulnerable areas and not exacerbating the impacts of physical changes to the coast.	Adopted Local Plan informed by South East Coast Marine Management Plan. This has been updated since the Local Plan adoption so needs to be reviewed to ensure development is not placed in areas that would exacerbate coastal change to ensure the Plan will continue to be NPPF compliant.

3.51. The adopted Local Plan policies generally remain consistent with national policy and are leading to effective decision making as demonstrated in the latest [AMR](#). However, we want to be more proactive in addressing the climate and ecological emergency and are using the review as an opportunity to see if there are ways the Local Plan can assist further in meeting the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan. We want to ensure that tackling the climate change challenge is a theme running through the Plan so that all development contributes to addressing these priorities as well as improving the environment around us.

3.52. As set out above the adopted Local Plan includes a variety of policies which seek to support the transition to a low carbon future. However, it does not include a specific dedicated strategic priority to address this issue and it is not specifically highlighted within the 'Vision'. Given the Council declared a climate and ecological emergency review of the Local Plan is seeking to ensure that the need to address climate change is a high priority which should be addressed from the outset within the review of the Local Plan.

3.53. Considering this the review of the Local Plan seeks to amend the Strategic Priorities as set out in the Issues and Options Consultation Document. Specific to this topic paper the following priorities for Climate Change are relevant:

Priorities for climate
<p>1. Addressing the Climate and Ecological Emergency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigate the impacts of climate change and adapt to its consequences • Ensure new development moves towards delivering net-zero carbon emissions (energy efficiency, sustainable construction, renewable energy, infrastructure for active and sustainable travel) • Ensure development adapts to minimise adverse impacts that create climate and ecological change, including managing flood risk and reducing carbon emissions • Encourage tree planting and an increase in woodland expansion • Ensure sustainable drainage systems in developments
<p>2. Promoting smart, active travel and sustainable transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote/prioritise active travel and sustainable transport • Reduce reliance on fossil fuelled vehicles • Support the provision of strategic and local transport infrastructure to enable a future for alternatives to fossil fuelled vehicles • Make provision for charging electric vehicles • Make provision for infrastructure to support active travel and the use of sustainable modes of transport • Promote innovations in transport including smart technology
<p>3. Protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, and support an increase in biodiversity and ecological networks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan positively for biodiversity net gain and green infrastructure including high quality green spaces • Minimise the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land to ensure future food production • Protect/enhance the River Valleys and increase opportunities for sustainable travel • Ensure that new development respects the character and appearance of the City's varied landscapes

3.54. As a result, a new Vision is also proposed to replace the Vision in the adopted Local Plan:

Guiding Chelmsford's growth towards a greener, fairer and more connected community.

3.55. Policies will therefore need to be strengthened/updated and some new policies may be explored to better reflect the updated Plan Vision and Strategic Priorities and other relevant changes since adoption including the:

- Adoption of the Council's Climate Change and Ecological Emergency declaration and Action Plan to make the Council's activities net-zero carbon by 2030
- Recommendations of the Essex Climate Action Commission (ECAC)
- Adoption of the South East Inshore Marine Management Plan to ensure policies continue to not exacerbate coastal change
- Alternative proposals for the Chelmsford Flood Alleviation Scheme are being explored by the Environment Agency in partnership with the City Council
- Adoption of the Council's Making Places SPD and Solar Farm SPDs which encourage development requirements that go beyond the adopted plan

3.56. Areas we may explore for new or significantly altered local policies include:

- **Requiring all new development to include small-scale renewable energy on-site, such as PV panels and small wind turbines, and requiring all large-scale developments to consider community scale renewable energy generation.**

Such additional requirements would help encourage new developments to reduce carbon emissions and could also include:

- Air and ground source heat pumps (small scale)
- Solar farms (community scale)
- Combined Heat and Power energy systems (community scale)

However, it could have cost implications for new development so would need to be carefully assessed to ensure it did not adversely affect development viability.

- **Net zero new homes**

Nationally a number of initiatives have been introduced to address energy efficiency, including tightening of the standards required by building regulations. The Future Homes Standard (FHS) will change the Building Regulations so that by 2025 new homes will be expected to produce 75-80% lower carbon emissions compared with current levels. Working with Essex County Council and the ECAC, we will explore how we can push these standards to achieve net zero at a faster rate.

- **BREEAM alternatives**

BREEAM is the current standard in the Local Plan used to assess the environmental performance of non-residential buildings. Policy DM25 currently requires all non-residential schemes of 500 sqm or above to meet a Very Good BREEAM standard. The Council could consider introducing a more simplified, yet robust alternative benchmark approach to verify sustainability standards and moving to net-zero. This could focus on delivering key sustainability features and could be tailor-made to meet local requirements. Similar examples elsewhere work from a core set of criteria determined by actual impacts the building has on the area, environment and user and can be cheaper and quicker than a full BREEAM assessment.

- **New site allocations**

Exploring whether we should allocate land for other land uses such as large-scale renewable energy generation sites, such as solar and wind, and areas specifically for new tree and/or woodland planting

- **Requiring three new trees to be planted for all net new dwellings**

This will assist in combating the climate and ecological emergency and reflect aspirations in the Making Places SPD.

- **Ensuring new streets are tree-lined**

This will assist in meeting the requirements of paragraph 131 of the NPPF, which recognises the importance of incorporating trees in developments to assist in mitigating and adapting to climate change and enhancing the character and quality of urban environments.

- **Water use and re-use**

Consider setting a framework to reduce water use and promote water re-use where possible, to reflect the emerging ECC Water Management Cycle Strategy and the Water Resources Regional Plan.

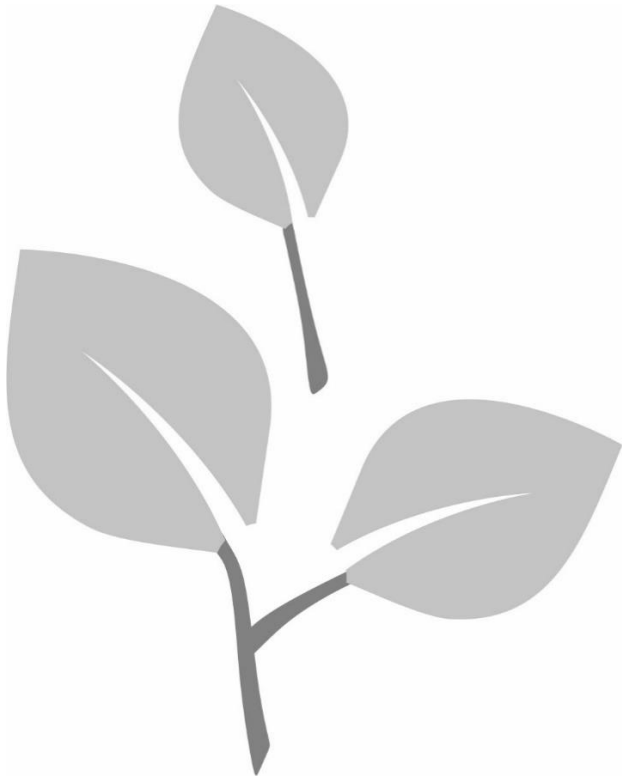
- **Re-use/recycling of materials in development**

Requiring developments to follow the waste hierarchy of reduce, re-use, recycle, recover, disposal, as set out in the policies within the Minerals Local Plan and Waste Local Plan.

3.57. Although not mutually exclusive of one another, further issues surrounding ecological issues and tree planting are covered more widely in the Natural Environment Topic Paper.

Next Steps

3.58. This Topic Paper will be updated and expanded on following feedback to the Issues and Options consultation and progress of further evidence-based documents. An updated version will then be published at the next stage of Local Plan Consultation (Preferred Options) setting out the progress made and the reasoning behind the proposals in the Preferred Options Consultation Document.



This publication is available in alternative formats including large print, audio and other languages

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