

SOCG007

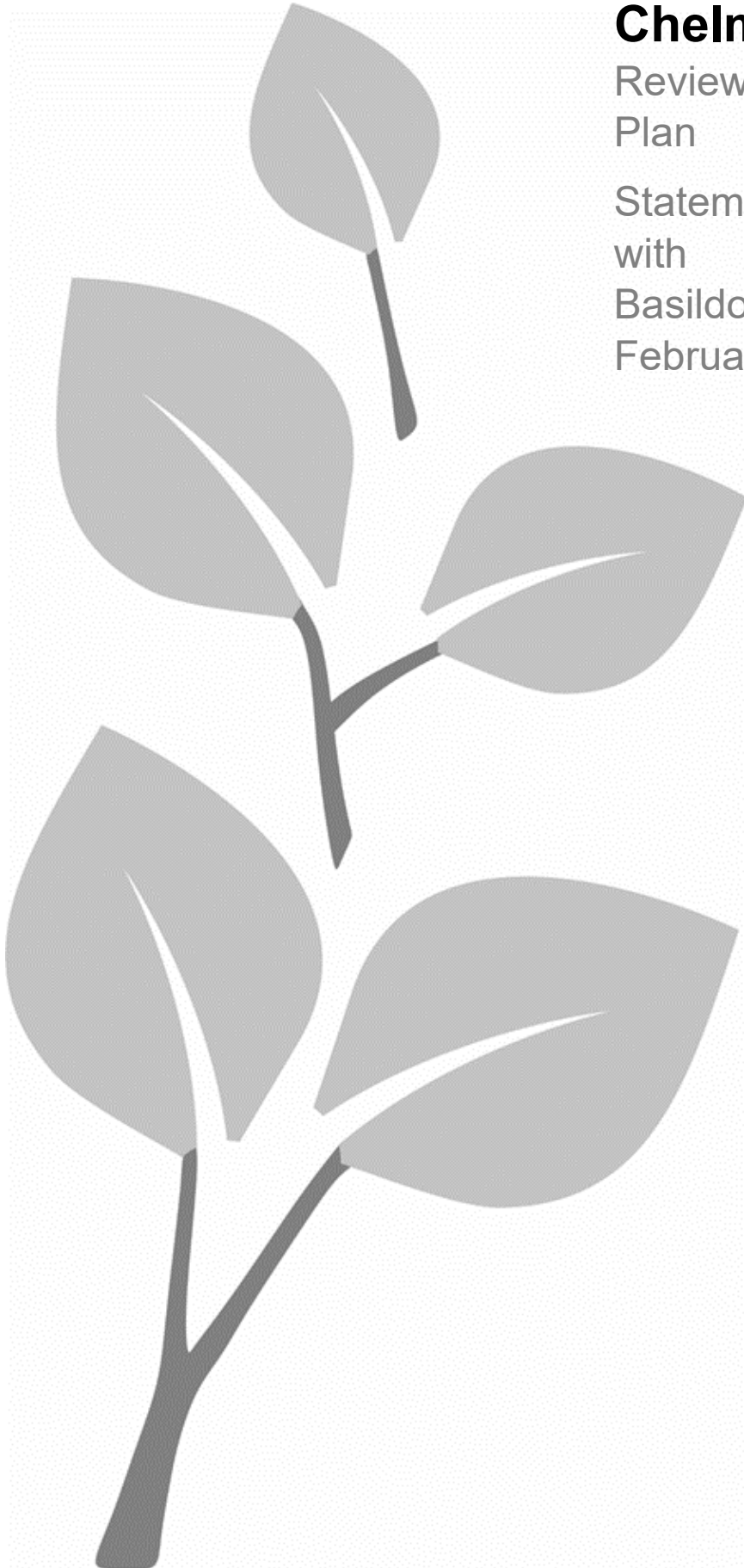
Chelmsford Local Plan

Review of the adopted Local Plan

Statement of Common Ground
with

Basildon Borough Council

February 2025



Statement of Common Ground

Chelmsford City Council and Basildon Borough Council

1. Introduction

Chelmsford City Council (CCC) is currently reviewing the Chelmsford Local Plan adopted in 2020. This is at Regulation 19 (Pre-Submission) stage, following two Regulation 18 consultations on Issues and Options in 2022 and Preferred Options in 2024.

The consultation responses alongside collected evidence and national planning policy and guidance are being used to develop the Pre-Submission Local Plan.

CCC has fully engaged with Basildon Borough Council (BBC) on the development of the Council's review of the adopted Local Plan from the outset. In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, BBC has been formally consulted at both Regulation 18 stages of consultation together with its accompanying Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA).

2. Strategic matters

The strategic matters of interest to Basildon Borough Council are:

- 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
- Community infrastructure including education, health and community facilities

Delivering homes

Strategic Priority 5 of the Pre-Submission Local Plan commits the Council to meeting local housing needs including independent living accommodation for older people (55+), supported housing for adults with learning or other disabilities, and the requirements identified through the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) September 2024 for Travelling Showpeople plots and Gypsy and Traveller pitches.

The strategic housing requirements are set out in Strategic Policy S6. This meets the transitional arrangements for assessed housing need calculated using the Standard Method in the December 2024 NPPF. This increases Chelmsford's housing need from around 950 net new dwellings per annum (dpa) to 1,454 dpa.

The Local Plan is programmed to reach Regulation 19 publication (pre-submission stage) on 4 February 2024 with a housing requirement of 1,210 dpa or 83% (1,210/1,454 x100). This will exceed the minimum 80% requirement in para. 234a of the 2024 NPPF enabling the Local Plan to proceed under the NPPF transitional arrangements. The Pre-Submission Local Plan will also maintain a five-year housing land supply. Overall, CCC is accommodating its housing needs within its boundaries resulting in no unmet need.

The GTAA (September 2024) identifies a need to provide 40 new permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, and 38 new permanent plots for Travelling Showpeople. Sites to accommodate a total of 30 permanent pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, and 28 permanent plots for Travelling Showpeople, will be allocated across suitable large strategic development allocations, the detail of which are set out in relevant strategic site policies. The small shortfall will be met through appropriate windfall delivery in accordance with Policy DM3, which could be through windfall applications or regularisation of existing pitches/plots where appropriate within Chelmsford City Council's boundary.

Jobs and economy

Strategic Policy S6 makes provision for 162,646sqm of net additional employment floorspace to help accommodate economic growth and employment requirements up to 2041. This is informed by forecasts in the Employment Land Review (ELR) 2023 and partial update carried out in 2024 via a Focused Update.

The Focused Update reviewed the most up-to-date assumptions and data regarding future economic growth prospects for Chelmsford between 2022 and 2041. As a result, the Pre-Submission Local Plan exceeds the recommended minimum employment space requirements over the period to 2041.

Retail, leisure, and cultural development

Strategic Priority 9 of the Pre-Submission Local Plan commits the Council to supporting new and enhanced retail, leisure and commercial development through protecting existing assets and supporting appropriate growth in these sectors.

The strategic requirements are set out in Strategic Policy S12. This includes directing main town centre development to the relevant town or neighbourhood centre for a wide range of uses including retail, leisure, entertainment, arts, culture and tourism. Outside of specified designated centres, retail and leisure proposals above 500sqm gross floorspace will be required to undertake an impact assessment in line with the requirements of the NPPF.

Sustainable transport

Strategic Priority 2 of the Pre-Submission Local Plan commits the Council to bring about a significant change in how people make their journeys towards more active and sustainable travel choices, and support the provision of strategic and local transport infrastructure.

The strategic requirements are set out in Strategic Policy S16. This includes prioritising and maximising opportunities for active and sustainable transport and movement, such as through walking and cycling networks and increasing public transport infrastructure. Specific transport and highways projects are set out in Strategic Policy S9, and include the new Beaulieu Park Rail Station, Chelmsford North East Bypass, expanded Park and Ride, and capacity improvements to the A132 in the south of the City Council's area.

Site specific requirements are also set out in site allocation policies where relevant.

Community infrastructure

Strategic Priority 8 of the Pre-Submission Local Plan commits the Council to ensure that necessary new or upgraded strategic and local infrastructure and facilities are provided alongside the development of new residential communities

The strategic requirements are set out in Strategic Policy S9. These include facilities for education, police, ambulance and fire and rescue, primary healthcare, recycling facilities and appropriate drainage, as well as community facilities such as halls and places of worship, open space, and sports and leisure provision.

Site specific requirements are also set out in site allocation policies where relevant.

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.

Areas of Common Ground

Rep Number	Local Plan Reference	Summary of representation	CCC Agreed response
PO24-10363	Strategic Policy S1	The particular focus on addressing the climate emergency as the first strategic priority is significant. The three priorities of climate, growth and place effectively balances the demands of the planning system and provides coherent priorities for the Local Plan. BBC support the updated draft Strategic Priorities.	Support noted. No change to the Plan.
PO24-10364	Vision	The new draft Vision has been effectively streamlined and is now more concise, reflecting on the importance of sustainable development and community cohesion. BBC support the new draft Vision.	Support noted. No change to the Plan.
PO24-10365	Strategic Policy S6	BBC supports the approach to future housing requirements that has been taken to date.	Support noted. Changes to the Plan in response to the revised Standard Method are covered in Section 2.
PO24-10365	Strategic Growth Site S16/ Strategic Policy S6	BBC supports the allocation of sites for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople housing needs. BBC recognises the wider identified need regarding Gypsy, Travellers	Support noted. Changes to the Plan in response to the GTAA are covered in Section 2.

		and Travelling Showpeople sites is dependent on the publication of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.	
PO24-10368	Strategic Policy S6	BBC supports the approach to future employment requirements that has been taken to date.	Support noted. Changes to the Plan in response to the ELR Focused Update 2024 are covered in Section 2.
PO24-10368	Policy DM4	<p>CCC may wish to make it clearer in DM4 that the 'redevelopment of existing employment areas should be for employment uses only', and that planning permission would only be granted for a change of use from B2, B8 and E(g) where criteria i, ii, iii and iv apply, and/or if there is no reasonable prospect for the site/premises to continue in those uses.</p> <p>CCC may also wish to provide some general clarity on how the overall employment floorspace allocations relate to the aims of building above standard method, and whether it is considered to keep job and housing growth balanced.</p>	<p>The policy is considered to be clear. Proposals must meet the main policy test, before criteria i to v are applied. No change to the Plan.</p> <p>Changes to the Plan in response to the ELR Focused Update 2024 are covered in Section 2.</p>
POQ24-111	Strategic Policy S7	BBC strongly support locating development to City Centre/ Urban Areas with capacity to make the best use of underutilised brownfield land.	Support noted. No change to the Plan.
POQ24-113	Strategic Policy S7/ Strategic Growth Site S16	<p>BBC recognises the importance of promoting sustainable transport, to encourage modal shift. Ongoing discussions with partners are encouraged to assist with the ongoing delivery of infrastructure.</p> <p>Joint working between the Local Planning Authorities would be needed to ensure there are no detrimental impacts on Basildon Borough and its residents.</p>	Infrastructure requirements are set out in Strategic Policy S9, and their delivery is set out in Strategic Policy S10. The LP consultation will be supported by an updated Infrastructure Delivery Plan. DtC will be ongoing to address cross boundary matters.
PO24-10366	Strategic Policy S13	BBC is supportive of the method of introducing new planning policies and updating planning policies to remain compliant with the most recent national planning policies and legislation.	Support noted. No change to the Plan.
POIIA60	Preferred Options Integrated	Accordance of the analysis of the IIA with the emerging Basildon Plan is acknowledged. Reference to the	The IIA includes monitoring information. No change to the IIA.

	Impact Assessment	effects and monitoring of policies should be taken into consideration.	
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Areas without agreement

There are no areas relating to BBC's representations to the Preferred Options consultation without agreement or unresolved strategic matters.

Post Preferred Options Correspondence

BBC wrote to CCC in November 2024, making a formal request for assistance in meeting BBC's potential unmet housing needs, under the Duty to Co-operate.

In the request, BBC set out the increased assessed housing need resulting from the Standard Method proposed as part of consultation on the revised NPPF. The request predicted that the BBC housing need would rise from 1,039 homes a year/20,780 over the Plan period, to 1,291 homes a year/27,111 over the Plan period (including a buffer). The request also stated that emerging evidence to support BBC's Local Plan, including a new Green Belt Assessment, indicates that there is unlikely to be sufficient land available to meet BBC's housing need. The revised NPPF was published on 12 December 2024, using an amended method to calculate housing need. BBC's housing need is as set out above.

CCC responded on the basis that the proposed Standard Method of need assessment would have resulted in a 54% increase in housing numbers for Chelmsford, creating the highest annual housing requirement in Essex of 1,406 net new homes a year/26,714 over the Plan period. Through the publication of the NPPF, CCC's housing need is now confirmed at 1,454 homes a year/27,626 over the Plan period.

CCC is progressing the Local Plan through the proposed NPPF transitional arrangements, requiring incorporation of most of the housing supply buffer identified at the Preferred Option stage. Through this it aims to meet the transitional requirement of meeting a need of at least 80% the updated Standard Method figure and publishing the Pre-Submission Local Plan to meet the NPPF transitional arrangements timeline.

Significantly amending CCC's Local Plan and Spatial Strategy would delay publication of CCC's Local Plan resulting in the inability to use the NPPF transitional arrangements, with revisions requiring earlier stages of consultation to be repeated.

CCC's Local Plan evidence base, including the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA), demonstrates that there is no capacity to meet BBC's unmet housing need at this late stage of the CCC plan preparation.

BBC also wish to explore alternative options for meeting the need for 235 Gypsy and traveller pitches and at least 13 Travelling Showpeople plots. Although CCC has undertaken a specific Gypsy and Traveller 'call for sites', it has not been possible to identify suitable and deliverable site allocations to meet the whole of the identified need. CCC will allocate three sites in the Regulation 19 Local Plan with a criteria-based policy addressing the small shortfall within Chelmsford City Council's

boundary. There is no capacity to accommodate any unmet Gypsy and Traveller need from BBC.

The preparation of BBC's Local Plan will need to accord with the new NPPF which has reformed national Green Belt planning policy. Therefore, BBC's development needs will need be assessed within this revised national planning policy context. BBC agree that CCC cannot assist in meeting the need.

Finally, the Essex Planning Officers' Association (EPOA) has agreed mechanisms for dealing with unmet housing and Gypsy and Traveller need, which provide a robust process and should be the starting point for such requests.

3. Governance and on-going cooperation

CCC will continue to work collaboratively with BBC to address strategic matters that, in addition to those above, arise through the plan review process. This will occur on an ongoing basis through regular DtC meetings.

BBC will be consulted on the Pre-Submission Local Plan, where their comments will be considered alongside any existing/future strategic matters. A wider local authority Officer/Member DtC meeting will be arranged during the Pre-Submission Local Plan consultation and others will be organised where appropriate or requested.

This SOCG will be reviewed following the Pre-Submission Local Plan consultation and ahead of submission of the plan for Independent Examination (anticipated in June 2025). The aim will be to resolve any outstanding matters where cross-boundary strategic matters will be addressed by email and/or DtC meetings.

It is agreed that CCC is working collaboratively with BBC to ensure that cross-boundary strategic issues are properly considered and where appropriate reflected in the review of the Local Plan and effective and on-going joint working has, and will continue to be, undertaken.

4. Signatories

Chelmsford City Council Jeremy Potter Spatial Planning Services Manager	Basildon Borough Council Michael Murrell Assistant Director Growth and Partnerships
Signature:	Signature:
<i>Jeremy Potter</i>	<i>M. Murrell</i>
Date: 20.12.24	Date: 03/02/2025

Appendix A – Map of Chelmsford City Council’s administrative area in context with its neighbouring districts and county councils.

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

