

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda



12th March 2026 at 7pm

**Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Duke Street,
Chelmsford, CM1 1JE**

Membership

Councillor J. Jeapes (Chair)
Councillor A. Thompson (Vice Chair)

and Councillors

C. Adutwim, N. Bugbee, D. Clark, H. Clark, P. Davey, S. Davis, S. Dobson, L. Mascot, M. Steel, S. Sullivan and P. Wilson

Local people are welcome to attend this meeting, where your elected Councillors take decisions affecting YOU and your City. There will also be an opportunity to ask your Councillors questions or make a statement. These have to be submitted in advance to committees@chelmsford.gov.uk. Further details are on the agenda page. If you would like to find out more, please email committees@chelmsford.gov.uk or phone the Democracy Team on Chelmsford (01245) 606480.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

12 March 2026

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

2. Chairs Announcements

3. Minutes

To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2026.

4. Declaration of Interests

All Members are reminded that they must disclose any interests they know they have in items of business on the meeting's agenda and that they must do so at this point on the agenda or as soon as they become aware of the interest. If the interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest they are also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting.

5. Public Question Time

Any member of the public may ask a question or make a statement at this point in the meeting. Each person has two minutes and a maximum of 20 minutes is allotted to public questions/statements, which must be about matters for which the Committee is responsible.

The Chair may disallow a question if it is offensive, substantially the same as another question or requires disclosure of exempt or confidential information. If the question cannot be answered at the meeting a written response will be provided after the meeting.

Any member of the public who wishes to submit a question or statement to this meeting should email it to committees@chelmsford.gov.uk 24 hours before the start time of the meeting. All valid questions and statements will be published with the agenda on the website at least six hours before the start time and will be responded to at the meeting. Those who have submitted a valid question or statement will be entitled to put it in person at the meeting.

6. Decisions Called-In

To report on any Cabinet decisions called in and to decide how they should be progressed.

7. Chelmer Waterside – Inform and Debate

8. Work Programme

9. Urgent Business

To consider any other matter which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

MINUTES
of the
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

held on 16 February 2026 at 7pm

Present:

Councillor J. Jeapes (Chair)
Councillor A. Thompson (Vice-Chair)

Councillors, C. Adutwim, D. Clark, H. Clark, P. Davey, S. Dobson, K. Franks, L. Mascot, M. Steel, S. Sullivan and A. Thorpe-Apps.

Also in attendance –

Councillor N. Dudley, R. Hyland, R. Moore and S. Robinson

1. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies were received from Councillors N. Bugbee, S. Davis and P. Wilson.

Councillor K. Franks and A. Thorpe-Apps substituted for Cllrs Bugbee and Wilson respectively.

2. Chairs Announcements

No announcements were made for this meeting.

3. Declaration of Interests

All Members were reminded to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary interests or other registerable interests where appropriate in any items of business on the meeting's agenda. None were made.

4. Public Question Time

No public questions had been submitted for the meeting.

5. Decisions Called-In

The Committee noted that Cabinet decision relating to Community Infrastructure Levy – Governance Update had been called in and would be considered at this meeting.

6. Community Infrastructure Levy – Governance Update – Call-in

The Committee considered the called-in decision regarding amendments to the governance arrangements for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Chair began by outlining the reasons for the call-in. It was explained that concern had been raised that no evidence had been presented showing whether the adjacent parishes of Great Waltham, Broomfield and Writtle had been considered as potential recipients of Neighbourhood CIL related to the Hollow Lane development. It was noted that a view had been expressed at Cabinet that the policy did not allow for such areas to be included, and Members sought further clarification on whether that interpretation was correct.

The Chair referred to additional information that had been requested ahead of the meeting, including details of eligibility criteria for CIL grants, information on applications previously considered, and clarity regarding questions asked at Cabinet. It was explained that minutes of the Community Funding Panel were not available because the Panel was not a decision-making body under the Constitution

The Cabinet Member for a Greener Chelmsford, explained that the call-in related specifically to Neighbourhood CIL generated in Chignal Parish. It was clarified that national regulations required such funding to be spent on infrastructure or measures addressing the demands arising from the development area, using this criteria, areas such as Great Waltham, Broomfield and Writtle were not considered to fall within the area most directly impacted by the Hollow Lane development.

The Council's Economic Development and Implementation Services Manager, provided procedural clarification. It was explained that the revised policy brought to Cabinet was designed to address all potential future scenarios involving CIL Cap balances. It was confirmed that the change sought to allow the Council to spend retained CIL Cap funds on its own capital projects, where these met the definition of infrastructure and were in the vicinity of the development, as permitted by national regulations. It was reiterated that the national test, that addressing the demands a development places on an area, must always be applied.

It was further explained that earlier approaches relying on expressions of interest from parishes or neighbourhood groups had not generated sufficient viable projects, leaving an unallocated balance. This, combined with the Council's financial context, prompted the move toward aligning CIL Cap spending with the Council's capital programme.

Members explained that the interpretation of policy wording, particularly terms such as "adjacent," "adjoining," and "impacted" should be amended as they were ambiguous and open to wider interpretation than intended. It was highlighted that national policy referred to "addressing the demands development places on an area," and some Members considered that the local policy should more clearly reflect this.

It was questioned whether the wording in the amended policy ("immediately adjoin" and "impacted") accurately reflected the national requirement relating to the "vicinity" of the development. Councillors queried whether adjacent parishes had ever been invited to submit projects under earlier policies and what consideration had been given to potential facilities used by residents of the new development. Officers provided clarification on these points and reiterated that in the specific case of Hollow Lane, the primary impact was assessed as falling within the adjoining urban area rather than in neighbouring parishes.

Clarification was sought in relation to the transparency of the Community Funding Panel's processes. It was explained that while the Panel did not produce minutes due to its

advisory status and that details of applications and recommendations were included in Cabinet reports. Officers supported the Panel through structured criteria and assessment processes. The constitutional basis for the Panel's operation was outlined.

It was suggested that clearer policy wording would help to minimise ambiguity in future. It was formally proposed that the decision be referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration, specifically for the purpose of refining the policy wording so that it aligned clearly with national regulations and set out the process for considering adjoining parishes in future scenarios. When put to a vote, the majority ruled against this recommendation.

Therefore, it was **RESOLVED** that Cabinet decision be implemented, unamended, as agreed at Cabinet.

(7.02pm to 8.20pm)

7. Urgent Business

There were no matters of urgent business.

The meeting closed at pm

Chair



Chelmsford City Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee

12th March 2026

Chelmer Waterside Inform and Debate

Report by:

Director of Public Places

Director of Sustainable Communities

Officer Contact:

Joe Reidy – Corporate Property Services Manager, Joe.Reidy@chelmsford.gov.uk

Stuart Graham - Economic Development and Implementation Services Manager, stuart.graham@chelmsford.gov.uk

Purpose

The report outlines the project history, funding and decisions enabling the Chelmer Waterside regeneration and construction of Bow Bridge as requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation

That the content of the report is noted.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 - Briefing Note for Inform And Debate: Chelmer Waterside

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: This report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee enables the Committee to fulfil its function per section 3.2.3(e) of the Constitution “*to oversee the proper and efficient administration of the Council; and review the effectiveness of the Council’s work and services*”.

Financial: None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None.

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None.

Personnel: None.

Risk Management: None.

Equality and Diversity: Impact assessment not required.

Health and Safety: None.

Digital: None.

Other: None.

Consultees:

None.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 12 March 2026

Briefing note for inform and debate item: Chelmer Waterside

Scope of discussion

- i. Establish the original project objectives costs and delivery timelines from inception to conclusion

The wider project objectives are set out in the chronology. In relation to Bow Bridge, the project objectives are set out at paragraphs 22 and 24 of the chronology and the wider delivery timelines for the access road and bridge are set out at paragraphs 30, 35-38, 49 and 60-64 of the chronology.

- ii. Provide the rationale for the decision-making process that resulted in the Chelmsford City Council assuming the full cost of the bridge build albeit supported by various grants and associated funding. As opposed to engaging with a developer to pay all or part of the costs of the bridge construction

The decision-making rationale is set out through the chronology with key decisions highlighted.

- iii. The financial position and specific funding sources for the scheme to build the Bridge, including the additional cost of land in Baddow Road to provide access to the Bridge

The financial position is set out at paragraphs 83-90 of the chronology. The cost of the land at Baddow Road car park is set out at paragraph 81.

- iv. The value of the Waterside site prior to the completion of the bridge and after completion

Values of the sites will be examined and considered as part of the procurement process for the future development of the Chelmer Waterside site.

- v. The purpose of the bridge in terms of users and any restrictions in terms of private vehicles and access for the general public

The purpose of the bridge was considered through the relevant planning application (21/00024/FUL). Whilst there are traffic calming measures and a Traffic Regulation Order in place, there are no restrictions in terms of access for private vehicles.

- vi. The Council's regeneration and affordable housing objectives for the site and the original time frame for their delivery

The Council's regeneration and affordable housing objectives are set out in the adopted Chelmsford Local Plan (2020) and the Chelmer Waterside Development Framework. See paragraphs 32 and 50 of the chronology. The chronology (paragraphs 9-13) also sets out how the regeneration and planning objectives have evolved over the last 30 years.

- vii. Progress on securing a development partner and anticipated timeline for development

This will be subject to a future Cabinet report on conclusion of the procurement process.

Context

1. Over the last 30 years one of the primary objectives of the Council has been to find an appropriate way to deliver the regeneration of Chelmer Waterside – the largest and most challenging brownfield development site in the city - a collection of former industrial uses, the old gas works site and public car parking.
2. The delivery of regeneration at scale is not easy. It is complicated, expensive and time consuming, but given that Government planning policy for the last few decades has directed local authorities to prioritise brownfield development to meet housing needs, it remains a core principle followed by most local authorities.
3. From a planning policy perspective, the area defined as Chelmer Waterside includes sites beyond the ownership of the City Council. The City Council does however own a significant area of land in this wider area, primarily focused on the former gas works site on Wharf Road, Baddow Road Car Park and the area formerly known as Lockside, north of the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation.
4. The approach to realising this regeneration of this land has changed over time (reflecting changes to national policy and the wider economic conditions), but the overarching objective has consistently been for a high-quality regeneration suitably linked to the city centre to the west and the wider open countryside to the east, making the best use of the waterways that frame it.
5. Development at Chelmer Waterside is constrained by the lack of capacity on the highway network, the presence of the Gas Pressure Reduction System / high pressure gas mains and the need for land remediation. For example, the residential development of the gas works site would be limited to around 50 units

if these constraints remain, increasing to 450 units if new access arrangements are provided and the GPRS and high-pressure gas mains are relocated.

6. Redevelopment of the area involves various land acquisition and sales, the construction of a new access road and bridge to service the development, land remediation to allow any development to take place and relocation of the Gas Pressure Reduction System to increase potential site capacity for development.
7. The regeneration of Chelmer Waterside area has been supported by significant investment from the Homes England administered Housing Infrastructure Fund.

Chronology

1993 to 2020 - Land remediation works to former gas works undertaken

8. Some elements of land remediation took place between 1993 and 2020 by other parties

1994 - Springfield Basin & Chelmer Waterside Planning Brief adopted by CCC

9. This Brief set out a planning strategy for Chelmer Waterside. In respect of the existing 'bailey bridge' the Brief notes at para 5.3 "*should it be desirable to continue to achieve access in this location for public car parking, a permanent and more visually satisfactory bridge will need to be constructed which still provides a minimum of 2.3m headroom above normal water level.*"

1997 - Chelmsford Local Plan adopted by CCC

10. The 1997 Local Plan does not specifically allocate land for development at Chelmer Waterside for any specific land uses. The Proposals Map contains a notation on the Gas Works site that indicates "*Subject to Separate Planning Study*".

1997 to 2003 - Chelmer Waterside Strategy & various site planning briefs produced

11. Following the adoption of the 1997 Local Plan a Chelmer Waterside Strategy (2002) and a series of Site Planning Briefs were produced that considered development opportunities on a site-by-site basis in the area.

April 2005 - Planning permission granted for the Relocation of the Gas Pressure Reduction System

12. A planning application for the relocation of the GPRS was approved in April 2005. This coincided with the then proposal to develop the gas works site for a retail expansion of the city centre.

2008 - Chelmsford Core Strategy and Town Centre Area Action adopted by CCC

13. The 2008 Chelmsford Town Centre Area Action Plan identifies Chelmer Waterside as a development opportunity area, including proposals for a series of the sites within the area as 'specific opportunities.' At this point in time the gas works was not identified as a specific opportunity for development, whilst the peninsula and Lockside were identified as residential led developments. This Plan was the first adopted Plan that proposed new access to Chelmer Waterside, a new route from Chelmer Road to the east and a new bridge and access road southeast of the Essex Record Office.

2011 – Cabinet Approved the purchase of the Cornell Industrial Estate

14. Cabinet Approved the purchase of the Cornell Estate in February 2011 to adding to its property holding in the location. The purchase was concluded in December 2011 for £2.275m plus costs.

2013 – The Council Acquire Workshops 4&5 Brockley Road

15. The Council completed the purchase of Workshops 4&5 Brockley Rd for £76,000 plus costs increasing its land holding in the area.

2017 - Peninsula site sold by CCC to Taylor Wimpey and planning application approved

16. A planning application (16/01630/FUL) was approved, subject to a S106 agreement in March 2017. The S106 agreement provided for the Navigation Road/Springfield Road junction improvement and a £1.8m financial contribution to the new access road and bridge. This site has delivered 450 new homes.

July 2017 - Government launches Housing Infrastructure Fund (Marginal Viability)

17. The aim of Housing Infrastructure Fund was to:

- *Deliver new physical infrastructure to support new and existing communities*
- *Make more land available for housing in high demand areas, resulting in new additional homes that otherwise would not have been built*
- *Support ambitious local authorities who want to step up their plans for growth and make a meaningful difference to overall housing supply*
- *Enable local authorities to recycle the funding for other infrastructure projects, achieving more and delivering new homes in the future*

18. The intention was to award grants up to £10m to local authorities on a competitive basis, to provide funding for new infrastructure that will unlock new homes in the areas of greatest housing demand.

September 2017 - Former Gas Works site acquired from National Grid

19. The decision to acquire the former gasworks site from National Grid was approved by Cabinet on 12 September 2017. The purchase was completed in 2018 at a total cost of £2.678m, inclusive of fees. As part of the acquisition, the

Council also agreed to provide a capped contribution of £750,000 towards the demolition of the former gas holders and accepted responsibility for any decontamination works required to bring the site into operational use.

20. The Cabinet report indicated that the estimated cost of decontaminating the site to enable use as a surface car park was approximately £250,000. [For comparison, the estimated remediation cost to bring the land forward for residential development was over £800,000.]

September 2017 - Application to Housing Infrastructure Fund (Marginal Viability)

21. The Council made an application to the Housing Infrastructure Fund (Marginal Viability) in September 2017. At the time of the application CCC applied for £5.7m to support the costs of the delivery of the access road and bridge and land remediation.

February 2017 - Initial scope for Access Road and bridge [now Bow Bridge]

22. Work to scope a new access road and bridge was commissioned by Essex Country Council [on behalf of Chelmsford City Council], including an assessment as to the potential impact of the proposed road link I. The investigation focused on the traffic impacts of the residential development on the network immediately surrounding the site and the feasibility, impact and potential associated costs of a Link Road, including a suitable bridge over the River Chelmer. At this stage some early high-level costs were provided.

February 2018 – Initial Housing Infrastructure Fund grant award

23. Government made an initial award of £5.7m of HIF funding for Chelmer Waterside, for the purpose of contributing to the delivery the new access road and bridge and land remediation.

6 March 2018 – Cabinet resolved to undertake land assembly.

RESOLVED that:

1. the Director of Financial Services, after consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Legal & Democratic Services Manager, be authorised to conclude terms with the owners of each of the properties referred to in recommendation 1 of the report to the meeting on all aspects of the acquisition of these properties, including the procurement of consultants and contractors for works that may need to be undertaken;
2. the Director of Financial Services, after consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Legal & Democratic Services Manager, be authorised to secure the demolition of each of the properties referred to in recommendation 2 of the report to the meeting, including the procurement of consultants and contractors for works to be undertaken; and

3. the Council be recommended to approve the addition of a new capital scheme of £4.5 million to the capital programme to fund the acquisitions (including costs to ascertain the owner(s) of the property that comprises unregistered land), associated costs and demolition works; should there be a need to obtain earlier financial approval to achieve a successful outcome to negotiations then a decision be sought under Part 3.4 Para 2 (a) (vi) of the Constitution (Chief Executive's urgency powers)

April 2018 - Scope and objectives developed for bridge and access road

24. Following the initial scoping work the City Council developed a series of design objectives to be considered in the Preliminary Design stage as set out below:

Key objective:

To prepare a fully costed design, for a proposed new adopted highway link, including a bridge over the River Chelmer, from Wharf Road to Baddow Road / Parkway in Chelmsford, together with a programme for its completion.

Wider objectives:

- i. To deliver a solution that maximises housing delivery in Chelmer Waterside in accordance with the City Council's successful bid to the Housing Infrastructure Fund
- ii. To consider the appropriate solution for traffic circulation and management in the wider vicinity, including the minimisation of rat running and appropriate public transport routing
- iii. To relieve traffic congestion at the Navigation Road/Springfield Road junction
- iv. To ensure the appropriate access point for the key development sites in the Chelmer Waterside Area
- v. To ensure the future proofing of other development opportunities that may come forward in the longer term, including the Essex Record Office and B&M Home Store
- vi. To integrate the proposal into the strategic cycle and footpath network, including National Cycleway Network Route 1
- vii. To create a bridge design of high quality that makes a statement in a key City Centre gateway location
- viii. To design and cost the replacement of two existing foot/cycle bridges over the Rivers Can and Chelmer
- ix. To design a bridge with sufficient clearance from the River Chelmer to allow Navigation

July 2018 – Purchase of 45a Baddow Road

25. The Council completed on the purchase of 45a Baddow Road as agreed in the land assembly strategy. The purchase was concluded for £250,000 plus costs.

August 2018 - Planning permission for removal of gas towers

26. The gas towers were dismantled by National Grid. Parts of gas tower number 114 have been retained and are currently in storage, with a view to them being used in some form as part of the regeneration of the area, in order to reflect the site's industrial heritage.

October 2018 Cabinet approved the use of Compulsory Purchase Powers for land assembly

RESOLVED that:

1. the exercise of Compulsory Purchase Powers under the provisions of Section 226(1)(b) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) in respect of the land and property identified in the report to the meeting be approved and the Director of Finance after consultation with the Legal and Democratic Services Manager is authorised to take all necessary action for the making, submission, confirmation and implementation of Compulsory Purchase Orders pursuant to the Act, including the publication and service of all statutory and other notices including High Court Enforcement notices and the presentation of the Council's case at any Public Local Enquiry; and that the Director of Financial Services after consultation with the Leader of the Council be authorised to (i) acquire each or all of the properties compulsorily where this is appropriate, and (ii) to deal with all matters in relation to compensation and statutory interest including the institution or defending of proceedings as necessary; and
2. the Legal & Democratic Services Manager is authorised, after consultation with the Director of Finance, to appoint external legal advisors to progress the making of the Compulsory Purchase Orders and complete all necessary legal work arising from the above recommendations provided that the value of the assembled land is greater than the total value of the land to be acquired in this process.

October 2018 – Purchase of Unit 5 Buckingham Court

27. This property was acquired for £335,000 plus costs as part of the relocation strategy for the occupiers of the Brockley Road Industrial Estate under the CPO strategy.

February 2019 - HIF funding of £10.7m awarded

28. In going through the clarification process with Homes England, which was a requirement for the production of the HIF contract, Homes England contacted CCC and asked to explore the possibility of additional funding to assist with the relocation of the gas main constraints on the former gas works site, given the housing potential there. As a result, the additional funding was awarded taking the total HIF grant to £10.7m

1 July 2019 – Cabinet

RESOLVED that:

1. the report on the provision of infrastructure for the development of Chelmer Waterside be noted
2. the Director of Sustainable Communities, following consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Greener Chelmsford, be authorised to complete the Grant Determination Agreement with Homes England
3. Essex Highways be procured to progress the design of the link road and bridge, taking into account the feasibility of a new waterway connection between the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation and River Chelmer
4. Cadent be procured to carry out the full feasibility study for the relocation of the GPRS and high-pressure gas main, and on completion of this study the Cabinet review the position and agree the next steps; and
5. the Governance arrangements for the project set out in Section 5 of the report be agreed

November 2019 - Homes England Housing Infrastructure Fund (Marginal Viability) Grant Funding Agreement signed

29. The City Council entered into contract with Homes England on 28th November 2019 on the basis of a maximum grant of £10.7m, subject to the milestones and conditions set out in the agreement.

February 2020 - Preliminary Design for bridge and access road commissioned

30. Essex Highways were commissioned in February 2020 to develop the Preliminary Design for bridge and access road. This considered a range of design solutions (5 options in total) for the bridge, taking into account the objectives set out by the City Council.

February 2020 to July 2020 - Design study for Relocation of the Gas Pressure Reduction System commissioned

31. CCC commissioned Cadent in February 2020 to carry out a feasibility study that considered a full relocation of the GPRS and all gas mains and an option that diverted the high-pressure gas main that runs through the gas works site, but retaining the GPRS. Both options had estimated costs provided.

May 2020 - [current] Chelmsford Local Plan Adopted

32. The adopted Local Plan of 2020 [prepared between 2015 and 2020] sets the most recent policy framework for the regeneration of Chelmer Waterside. It identifies Chelmer Waterside as a Strategic Growth Location. The planning policy objectives for Waterside are set out under Policy SG1a (pages 81-85). In policy

terms, the Plan proposes a primarily residential led development, on 6 sites (former gas works, Peninsula, Lockside, Baddow Road Car Park, Travis Perkins and Navigation Road) with a new access road and bridge over the River Chelmer immediately to the south-west of the Essex Record Office.

33. The Council's wider planning strategy relies on Chelmer Waterside as a major contributor to its five-year housing land supply.

July 2020 – Health and Safety Executive pre application advice received for the Relocation of the Gas Pressure Reduction System

34. Based on the two options presented as part of the Feasibility Study CCC sought some pre-application planning advice from the HSE. This concluded that the full relocation represented the best opportunity to maximise housing delivery on the gas works site.

July 2020 - Options appraisal for bridge

35. A new access to serve Chelmer Waterside had been embedded in adopted planning policy for many years. In 2008, the adopted Town Centre Area Action Plan proposed an access from the east (known then as the Eastern Gateway Access Road), as well as a new bridge across the River Chelmer south of the Essex Record Office. The route to the east proved to be not deliverable.
36. As development came forward on the Peninsula site (the Aspyre development), it became apparent that highway capacity for further development was constrained. Although the Aspyre development facilitated a junction improvement at Navigation Road and Springfield Road, this alone was not sufficient to create the highway capacity for the additional sites being proposed for development in Chelmer Waterside.
37. It was therefore during the process of preparing the Chelmsford Local Plan that the need for additional highway capacity and a bridge connection across the River Chelmer was identified.
38. Essex Highways produced an Options Study in July 2020 that set out in detail the various options for the delivery of the bridge including cost estimates. As part of the design development a series of design option reviews were undertaken, with the selected design for a bow bridge structure to reflect the industrial heritage of the location and create a landmark feature around which future development could be focused. It was this design that was submitted for planning approval in late 2020.

December 2019 – Property Purchase Workshop 3 & Outbuilding, Brockley Road

39. The property was acquired for £120,000 plus costs in line with the agreed CPO strategy.

Summer 2020 - HIF funding increased by Homes England to £13.7m

40. On receipt of the Feasibility Study for the GPRS relocation in July 2020, which gave greater certainty to the cost of delivery, Homes England increased the HIF funding to the final position of grant of £13.7m.

8 September 2020 - Cabinet

RESOLVED that:

1. The approved recommendation from the October 2018 Cabinet report to use compulsory purchase powers be amended to include section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in addition to section 226(1)(b).
2. The Council work with its partners to secure the relocation and removal of the gas infrastructure from the site and that the authority to complete this project is delegated to the Director of Financial Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford.
3. It be recommended to the Council that the capital budget for this scheme is increased to fund the additional costs associated with the works. This will be partially funded by additional contributions identified from S106 contributions and additional HIF grant of £3.95m.
4. The authority for the delivery of the new bridge, road and associated works be delegated to the Director of Financial Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford.
5. The Director of Financial Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford be authorised to appoint a development partner for this project, following the completion of a design competition or suitable procurement exercise.

November 2020 - Options Appraisal and Land Remediation Strategy

41. The key site within Chelmer Waterside is the former gas works site. Given this former use, land remediation represents a further development constraint.
42. When the Council sold the Peninsula site to Taylor Wimpey, the responsibility for land remediation on that site was passed to the developer at that point.
43. In acquiring the gas works site (and gas towers) from National Grid in 2017, the City Council took on responsibility for land remediation on that site.
44. An Options and Remediation Strategy for the site was prepared by Campbell Reith on behalf of Chelmsford City Council setting out requirements for the completion of remediation prior to its development for residential housing and /or car parking. This considered a range of studies and some elements of remediation that took place between 1993 and 2020.
45. This study recommended a phased approach to future land remediation. Phase 1 was identified as the removal of the Non-Aqueous Phase Liquids (NAPL) located

on the site. NAPL commonly includes oil, petrol and diesel. This was procured and completed in 2023.

46. Future phases of land remediation on the former gas works site will be implemented following the completion of the removal of the GPRS and decommissioning of the gas mains, and the intention is that this will form part of the development agreement with the selected development partner.

February 2021- CCC entered agreement with Cadent for the GPRS relocation works

47. Following Cabinet's decision in September 2020 CCC entered into a customer agreement with Cadent to deliver the full relocation of the gas constraint on the former gas works site. This followed procurement advice that Cadent were the only supplier that could be used for the works.

9 December 2020 - Full Council

RESOLVED that:

1. The capital budget for the scheme to deliver the redevelopment of Chelmer Waterside, partially funded by additional contributions identified from S106 contributions and additional HIF grant be increased to the amount referred to in the report and be used to fund the additional costs associated with the works estimated to be an additional £11m.
2. The intention to enter into a contract and make an advance payment for the detailed design for the relocation of the Gas Pressure Reduction System be noted.

April 2021 - Arcadis appointed as Chelmer Waterside Project Managers

48. Given the complexity of the delivery of the infrastructure at Chelmer Waterside and the interrelationships between the bridge/road and GPRS relocation specialist project management services [with expertise in this area of work] were procured. Arcadis were appointed through a procurement exercise and have supported the City Council through the duration of the Project.

June 2021 - Planning permission granted for Bow Bridge (21/00024/FUL)

49. Based on the Options Study and the preference for the bow bridge design, a planning application was prepared and submitted in December 2020 and approved in June 2021. The planning application set out in detail the interrelationship between the new access and the existing road network, proposed traffic calming, a traffic impact assessment and cycling connectivity.

October 2021 - Chelmer Waterside Development Brief adopted by Cabinet

50. The Chelmer Waterside Development Brief was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance in October 2021 and taking into account the relationship

between the delivery of the new bridge/access road and the GPRS relocation in terms of site master planning. At the meeting on 12 October 2021 Cabinet:

RESOLVED that the Chelmer Waterside Development Framework be approved as Planning Guidance

16 November 2021 – Cabinet

RESOLVED that the budget referred to in the report to the meeting be approved for the land investigation works at Chelmer Waterside and that the use of the funds be subject to the approval of the Director of Public Places.

November 2021 - Phase 1 land remediation procurement [Non-Aqueous Phase Liquids]

51. Phase 1 was identified as the removal of the Non-Aqueous Phase Liquids (NAPL) located on the site. NAPL commonly includes oil, petrol and diesel. This was procured and completed in 2023.

January 2022 - HIF agreement varied

52. The Council entered into contract with Homes England in November 2019, after making an application to the Housing Infrastructure Fund (Marginal Viability) funding in 2017.

53. The original award was for £5.7m (for the bridge and land remediation), which was subsequently increased to £10.7m and then to £13.7m when Homes England realised the residential potential of removing the gas infrastructure from the former Gas Works site. The contract with Homes England was varied on this basis in January 2022.

54. The contract provided CCC with a grant of £13.7m from the Housing Infrastructure Fund (Marginal Viability) to support the delivery of all the Waterside infrastructure (namely the bridge/access road, GPRS relocation and land remediation). The purpose of the grant is to support the delivery of 970 homes (770 of which were identified as being deliverable on the 3 CCC owned sites). The contract requires the City Council to deliver the infrastructure and find an appropriate route to deliver the housing that the infrastructure enables.

55. The Council drew down all the £13.7m HIF funding by the deadline of 31st March 2023. In addition, revenue funding of £0.98m via the Homes England Capacity Funding has supported the costs of Project Management.

56. As part of the funding agreement, CCC are expected by Homes England to deliver the full project (infrastructure and homes) on a prescribed timetable. A failure to do so, or if there are significant delays, could trigger a clawback of the £13.7m funding drawn down. Other projects across the country that did not progress lost their funding.

57. In making the decision to apply for and accept the HIF funding, the City Council was in effect committing itself to the delivery of the infrastructure. Through entering into the agreement, there was always a high level of expectation from

Homes England to move to delivery as quickly as possible, which is reflected in a series of milestones set out in the contract.

58. Homes England consider Chelmer Waterside project as an exemplar of infrastructure delivery to enable new homes to be built on a very challenging brownfield site.
59. The agreement between CCC and Homes England was varied in January 2022 to reflect the increased funding. The window to drawdown the funding was subsequently varied to 31st March 2023.

March 2022 - Design and Build contract with John Graham Construction

60. Following receipt of planning permission in June 2021, and given the need to meet the delivery timelines set within the HIF grant funding agreement and in light of the advice received from the Council's Project Managers the decision was taken to procure a design and build contractor to deliver the approved design – this being considered to be the most effective way to deliver the project at pace and with cost certainty for a project of this nature.
61. A procurement exercise in March 2022 led to the Council contracting with John Graham Construction. The awarded contract was a two-stage contract. Stage 1 was for the detailed design stage, at the end of which the Council was provided with a Target Cost. Stage 2 was for the construction stage. This approach was selected as it had two main advantages: cost certainty and early contractor engagement to enable construction to proceed at pace.
62. The end of Stage 1 was reached in September 2023 and at that point the Council could have chosen not to proceed to construction. Following consideration at Full Council in July 2023, the decision was taken to proceed, with construction beginning in September 2023. Bow Bridge opened on 11th July 2025.
63. The final estimated cost for the delivery of Bow Bridge is £20.7m (this includes construction, design, highway inspection and project management costs). The final account will be concluded with the contractor on the completion of the 12 months maintenance period in July 2026.
64. At that point the road and bridge structure will be adopted by Essex County Council and the commuted sum of £1.3m paid by CCC to the highway authority

May 2022 - Planning permission for the relocation of the Gas Pressure Reduction System (22/00239/FUL)

65. Following the acquisition of the gas works site in 2018, and the subsequent removal of the gas towers, there remained a significant constraint on the site to maximising its residential development potential. That constraint was the presence of the Gas Pressure Reduction System at the western extremity of the site and the high-pressure gas mains that cross the site.
66. In very simple terms, the purpose of the Gas Pressure Reduction System is to reduce high and medium pressure gas (that enters the city from the east) to low

pressure, so that it can be distributed to residential and commercial properties across the city.

67. Development of certain uses within certain distances of high-pressure mains is restricted and recommended against by the Health and Safety Executive.
68. With the high-pressure gas mains in place, it is estimated that only about 50 new homes could be deliverable on the gas works site. With the constraint removed, the capacity of that site could be closer to 450 homes. This was confirmed through a pre application consultation exercise with the Health and Safety Executive in July 2020.
69. The concept to relocate the GPRS to land south of the Hill Road Allotments originally received planning permission in 2005 when the proposal to extend the retail centre of the city to the east was being considered.
70. Having received the Cadent feasibility and options study for the relocation of the gas mains to land south of Hill Road Allotments (and the associated estimated costs for doing so) in July 2020, Cabinet took the decision in September 2020 to proceed with this element of the Project, given the benefits to the wider regeneration of the area and the additional HIF funding available.
71. Following that decision, the Council entered into an agreement with Cadent to deliver the works in February 2021, following which planning permission was granted (22/00239/FUL) in May 2022.

June 2022 – Purchase of Unit 2 Brockley Road

72. The property was acquired for £515,000 plus costs in line with the Council's agreed CPO strategy.

June/July 2022 - Cadent tender contract for the GPRS works

73. Cadent tendered the works in June/July 2022 and appointed Morrison Energy Services as the principal contractor in September 2022.
74. The delivery model for the gas main works is different to the delivery of the bridge. Given that the only option to deliver the works is through Cadent, under the terms of a customer agreement with them, it is Cadent that takes responsibility for contracting the works. For these works Cadent has contracted with Morrison Energy Services.

November 2022 - Works to relocate the Gas Pressure Reduction System commence on site

75. Works began on site in September 2022 and are scheduled to complete in late Spring 2026. Delivery has been delayed by flood events through each winter during the construction period.

76. Planned completion April 2026 [completion of this work has been delayed due to adverse weather and ground conditions]

April 2023 – Purchase of Ozier Cottage

77. The property was acquired under the planned CPO following a business extinguishment claim the total cost was £935,000

25 July 2023 – Full Council

RESOLVED that:

1. An addition to the Capital Programme to enable the construction of the Chelmer Waterside Access Road and Bridge be approved
2. Additional spend on land acquisition be approved
3. That the prudential indicators for capital financing are approved (appendix 3) and that
4. Contractual matters required to enable construction to commence are delegated to the Director of Public Places in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford

September 2023 - Final Target Cost for Bow Bridge

78. Through the design stage, 6 Target Costs were prepared as the design developed. The final target cost was received in September 2023. This was in line with the Target Cost reported to Full Council in July and it was on this basis that the decision to move to construction was made.

September 2023 – works commence on Bow Bridge

79. John Graham Construction began construction of bridge and access road in September 2023 and delivered the project for the bridge's opening in July 2025.

6 December 2023 Full Council - Chelmer Waterside Developer Selection

RESOLVED that Council endorses the recommendations of the Chelmer Waterside Panel to select the preferred development partner, allowing officers to discuss options before returning to Full Council for a final decision.

20 March 2024 Full Council – Chelmer Waterside Developer Selection

RESOLVED that the Director of Public Places after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford pursuant to para 3.4.5.46 of the Constitution be authorised to consider, negotiate, and agree terms for the disposal of property interests on the basis described in the report.

80. After the Council meeting and considering the due diligence undertaken and legal advice obtained, it was decided not to implement the in-principle decision taken at Council and agreed instead to undertake a new procurement exercise

March 2025 - Land at entrance at Baddow Road car park purchased

81. Baddow Road car park entrance freehold completed bringing an end to the disputed use and adoption of his land a cost of £305,000.

8th April 2025 – Cabinet

RESOLVED that marketing the land for disposal by way of a development agreement be agreed

82. Revised approach agreed to the marketing and disposal of the three sites in Council ownership at Chelmer Waterside. The Council is currently engaged in a procurement exercise to attract and select a potential development partner for the delivery of the new neighbourhood. As the procurement exercise is still in progress details cannot be discussed at this meeting.

Summary of costs and funding

83. The financial profile for the infrastructure for Chelmer Waterside has evolved as the project has progressed through its various stages. This is not unusual for a regeneration project of this scale and complexity, with many unknowns.

84. There is usually difference between early project cost estimates at the feasibility stage, which are used for budget forecasting purposes, compared to more realistic and certain project costs following planning, detailed design and contract tender/award.

85. Alongside that, and as can be seen from the chronology, project development took place during a particularly unstable economic period, with costs being significantly impacted by macro-economic factors including COVID, inflation and the war in Ukraine.

86. In September 2020, Full Council was presented with a forecast budget that showed the overall infrastructure costs at £26.75m (subsequently increased to £27.22m). This was based on the GPRS cost estimate and bridge cost estimates that had been received in June/July 2020.

87. What then followed was the process of detailed design and planning for both the bridge and relocation of the GPRS, and importantly for Bow Bridge (which accounted for the bulk of the cost increase in 2023) this followed the design and build process and a fully costed target cost, providing much greater certainty.

88. This provided a revised budget estimate in July 2023 of £43.68m which was approved at Full Council.

Infrastructure element	Approved budget	Forecast expenditure	Expenditure to date	Progress to completion
Bow Bridge	£22.61m	£20.72m	£20.02m	95%

Infrastructure element	Approved budget	Forecast expenditure	Expenditure to date	Progress to completion
Bow Bridge Commuted Sum to ECC	£2.75m	£1.33m	£0	N/A
GPRS relocation	£14.87m	£19.15m	£13.83m	85%
Land remediation	£3.07m	£1.87m	£0.37m	N/A
Project Management	£0.38m	£0.44m	£0.43m	N/A
Total	£43.68m	£43.51m	£34.65m	-

89. At the present time the overall cost of the infrastructure delivery is not expected to exceed the approved budget of £43.68m.

90. The funding sources that are contributing to the infrastructure costs are as below:

Housing Infrastructure Fund (Marginal Viability)	£13.70m
Housing Infrastructure Fund (Capacity Funding)	£0.98m
Sect 106 contributions	£5.90m
CIL contributions	£23.70m
Total	£44.28m

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Work Programme

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Author</u>
1 June 2026	
Performance Review Items	
Cabinet Portfolio Updates	Cabinet Member for Finance Deputy Cabinet member for Support Services
Customer Service Centre – Inform and Debate	Ali Naqvi Marketing and Customer Services Manager
Standing Items	
Annual Report of the Committee (2025/26)	Freddey Banks-Ayres Democratic Services Officer
Report on Decisions Taken Under Delegation to the Chief Executive	Freddey Banks-Ayres Democratic Services Officer
14 September 2026	
Performance Review Items	
Cabinet Portfolio Updates	Leader of the Council Cabinet Member for an Active Chelmsford Deputy Cabinet Member for Active Chelmsford - Cultural Services Cabinet Member for a Greener Chelmsford
Standing Items	
Updates from representatives on Outside Bodies	Freddey Banks-Ayres Democratic Services Officer
16 November 2026	
Performance Review Items	
Cabinet Portfolio Update	Cabinet Member for Economic Development

	Deputy Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport Deputy Leader and Cabinet member for a Fairer Chelmsford
Annual Report on Housing Delivery	Jeremy Potter Spatial Planning Services Manager
Standing Items	
Report on Decisions Taken Under Delegation to the Chief Executive	Freddey Banks-Ayres Democratic Services Officer
8 February 2027	
Performance Review Items	
Cabinet Portfolio Update	Cabinet member for a Safer Chelmsford Deputy Cabinet member for Support Services
Annual Presentation by Safer Chelmsford Partnership and Essex Police	Spencer Clarke Public Protection Manager Chief Inspector, Essex Police
Standing Items	
Report on Decisions Taken Under Delegation to the Chief Executive	Freddey Banks-Ayres Democratic Services Officer
12 April 2027	
Performance Review Items	
Cabinet Portfolio Updates	Cabinet Member for a Greener Chelmsford Cabinet Member for Finance
Standing Items	
Updates from representatives on Outside Bodies	Freddey Banks-Ayres Democratic Services Officer