

# Chelmsford Policy Board Agenda

**15 March 2021 at 7pm**

**Remote Meeting**

**Membership**

Councillor G H J Pooley (Chair)

**and Councillors**

H Ayres, N Chambers, W Daden, I Fuller, J Galley, M Goldman,  
S Goldman, N Gulliver, G B R Knight, R Moore, R J Poulter,  
I C Roberts, A Sosin, N Walsh, R T Whitehead  
and T N Willis

Local people are welcome to attend this meeting remotely, where your elected Councillors take decisions affecting YOU and your City. There is also an opportunity to ask your Councillors questions or make a statement. These have to be submitted in advance and details are on the agenda page. If you would like to find out more, please telephone Brian Mayfield in the Democracy Team on Chelmsford (01245) 606923 email [brian.mayfield@chelmsford.gov.uk](mailto:brian.mayfield@chelmsford.gov.uk)

# CHELMSFORD POLICY BOARD

15 March 2021, 7pm

## AGENDA

### PART 1

Items to be considered when members of the public are likely to be present

#### 1. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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.

#### 3. MINUTES

Minutes of meeting on 4 March 2021 (to follow)

#### 4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Any member of the public may ask a question or make a statement at this point in the meeting, provided that they have been invited to participate in this meeting and have submitted their question or statement in writing and in advance. Each person has two minutes and a maximum of 15 minutes is allotted to public questions/statements, which must be about matters for which the Board 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](mailto: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, provided they have indicated that they wish to do so and have submitted an email address to which an invitation to join the meeting and participate in it can be sent.

5. CHELMSFORD GARDEN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT (MASTERPLAN) UPDATE
6. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK AND NATIONAL MODEL DESIGN CODE CONSULTATIONS
7. WORKING GROUP UPDATES
8. URGENT BUSINESS

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

## PART II (EXEMPT ITEMS)

NIL



---

## Chelmsford City Council Chelmsford Policy Board

15 March 2021

---

### Chelmsford Garden Community Development Framework Document (masterplan) Update

---

#### Report by:

Director of Sustainable Communities

---

#### Officer Contact:

Gemma Nicholson, Planning Officer, [gemma.nicholson@chelmsford.gov.uk](mailto:gemma.nicholson@chelmsford.gov.uk), 01245 606631

Claire Stuckey, Principal Planning Officer, [claire.stuckey@chelmsford.gov.uk](mailto:claire.stuckey@chelmsford.gov.uk), 01245 606475

---

#### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update the Policy Board on the progress of the Development Framework Document (masterplan) for Chelmsford Garden Community.

#### Recommendations

That the Board note progress on the preparation of the Development Framework Document (masterplan) for the Chelmsford Garden Community.

## 1. Introduction

### Background/Context

- 1.1. Strategic Growth Site 6 (SGS6) – North East Chelmsford (Chelmsford Garden Community) is an allocated site in the Chelmsford Local Plan and will be supported by a Development Framework Document (masterplan). The masterplan is currently being prepared and will demonstrate how the site will satisfy the requirements of the policies in the Local Plan. It will set a framework for the future planning applications to follow and build on the success of the Beaulieu and Channels developments. A fact sheet for the Chelmsford Garden Community is set out at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.2. This report provides updates on the work programme since the report presented to the Chelmsford Policy Board on 15 October 2020.

## 2. Vision

- 2.1. A key part of the Development Framework Document will be to establish a Vision for the Garden Community, this vision will shape its future growth and ensure the development meet the Garden Community principles. The Vision has been prepared in partnership with the Consortium and follows input from the project Delivery Board, Steering Group (including technical stakeholder workshop), CCC Members and Community Liaison Group. Further information and the terms of reference for these groups are set out on the Council's website at:  
  
[www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/developments-and-improvements-in-chelmsford/chelmsford-garden-village/](http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/developments-and-improvements-in-chelmsford/chelmsford-garden-village/)
- 2.2. The Vision was reported to the Delivery Board in January 2021, whereby members were presented with core objectives focused around six key themes: well-connected, governance, healthy and inclusive, green and blue infrastructure, prosperous and environment performance. These are attached at **Appendix 2**.

- 2.3. The Vision will be used in each of the stakeholder workshops as a mechanism to continually test the emerging design of the garden community throughout the masterplan process. It will also be presented in the public consultation later this year providing local people with an opportunity to help shape what the new communities might look like in the future. This will include metrics such as distances/travel times from new homes to community facilities, public transport using the 20-minute neighbourhood principles. The working metrics for the well-connected theme are attached at **Appendix 2**. Further metrics are being developed to cover all the Vision themes.
- 2.4. Following the stakeholder and public consultation the final vision will be presented within the Development Framework Document to ensure that the masterplan and future developments meets the objectives and design principles. It will act as the overarching guide for the development of the site, as a form of quality control to ensure the creation of a high-quality place with sustainable transport, ecological net gain, healthy living, achieving net zero-carbon development and community-led governance.

### 3. Project Plan

- 3.1. A project plan has also been prepared and sets out the anticipated key dates for the project, which are:
- Spring - Summer 2021 – stakeholder workshops, member briefings, public exhibition and quality review panel briefing
  - Autumn 2021 – Submission of draft masterplan
  - Late 2021 – Quality Review Panel review and formal public consultation, further member briefings follow public consultation
  - February/March 2022 – Submission of final draft masterplan
  - Spring 2022 – Report to Chelmsford Policy Board & Cabinet
- 3.2. The project plan has been drafted in accordance with the Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) requirements and the current Project Plan is attached at **Appendix 3**.
- 3.3. The main stakeholder workshops will cover the following topics:
- Movement and transport
  - Blue, green and wild infrastructure
  - Land use and place making
  - Sustainability and energy
  - Community engagement and stewardship

## 4. Workstreams

### Technical Studies

- 4.1. In order to effectively deliver Chelmsford Garden Community and to inform the master-planning process, a series of strategies and studies are being developed by CCC in collaboration with ECC and the Consortium. These are funded by the capacity grant awarded to the Council by Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) through Homes England or through the Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) being agreed with the Developer Consortium.
- 4.2. The studies or advice which are complete include:
  - Employment Strategy
  - Planning Strategy Advice
- 4.3. Further studies in preparation include:
  - **Energy Mapping and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Feasibility Study.** This will provide independent advice on the predicted energy demand of the site as well as the most appropriate on-site renewable and low carbon energy schemes, including district heating. In line with the Garden City Principles, the study will also explore how the energy demand of the development can be minimised and how feasible it would be to make the buildings on site net zero carbon. Currie & Brown have been commissioned to undertake the study which is due to report initial findings in February 2021 with a final report expected in Spring 2021. It is also being funded by the Garden Communities programme.

### Specialist Expertise

- 4.4. The City Council has also commissioned the following external consultants to provide it with independent specialist advice to inform the Development Framework Document and supporting documents:
  - **Sustainable Transport Planning Advice** - Steer Consulting were appointed in July 2020 to provide independent advice on maximising sustainable transport opportunities on the site to embed active and sustainable travel modes. The consultants are currently working on topic papers to identifying new ideas and innovation to help future-proof the development; providing recommendations on target levels of modal shift; providing recommendations on alternative strategies for car parking provision and car free areas. They will also provide support for the stakeholder workshops.
  - **Masterplanning Advice** - AK Urbanism was appointed in 2019 to provide on-going independent master planning and design advice to help inform and assess options being proposed by the Consortium. This advice has supported in the production of the vision and will provide support for the stakeholder workshops.

#### Communication and Branding

- 4.5. The project will be supported by a communication plan that all parties will sign up to. It will define the key stages when information will need to be distributed, identify the key stakeholders and the communication channels to be used.
- 4.6. The Plan will reflect the requirements within the Planning Perform Agreement (PPA) and the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which includes information on running engagement and consultations.
- 4.7. The Delivery Board also agreed that the Garden Community also needs to have its own unique and recognisable identity throughout its communication and engagement. It is proposed that joint branding be developed and that all parties can use this branding across consultation material and documents associated with the Garden Community.
- 4.8. It is expected that the outcome of this branding exercise would be launched in for use at the upcoming masterplan workshops and associated consultation materials.
- 4.9. The branding will focus on incorporating the objective of the Garden Community Vision and Our Chelmsford, Our Plan, reflect key features of Beaulieu and Channels and be legible, contemporary and visually attractive.
- 4.10. The current website (link: <https://chelmsfordgardenvillage.co.uk/>) would also be re-branded and more information added to include information for the Community Liaison Group, a document Library and project plan.

#### 5. Engagement and Governance

- 5.1. The governance structure for the project remains unchanged.
- 5.2. The Delivery Board set up in 2019 has continued to meet regularly and provide strategic guidance and oversight and act as resolution forum to ensure the timely delivery of the Garden Community and its supporting infrastructure. The Board meets at least three times a year and comprises senior representatives from ECC, Homes England, the Consortium and CCC including the Leader, Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development and Director for Sustainable Communities. The meetings are currently chaired by CCC's Chief Executive.
- 5.3. Steering Group also continues to meet on a regular basis and comprises officers from CCC, ECC and the Consortium.



- 5.4. The Community Liaison Group (CLG) established in 2019 continues to provide updates to local interest groups. The CLG comprises CCC Members and Officers, ECC Officers, local ward councillors, representatives of local Parish Councils, and representatives from other local interest groups including Boreham and Broomfield Neighbourhood Plan Groups; Channels Resident Association; local Cycling Action Group, Essex Wildlife Trust; Bridleway Association; Beaulieu Churches and Beaulieu Schools.
- 5.5. There has been one face-to-face meeting (September 2019), the meeting in March 2020 was postponed due to the pandemic and a virtual meeting held instead in October 2020. In addition, the first newsletter was issued in September 2020.
- 5.6. Over the duration of masterplan evolution, additional CLG meetings are planned to effectively engage with the community on specified topics within the emerging masterplan. Such topics may include, transport and movement, green infrastructure and stewardship. These will follow a similar programme to the stakeholder workshops.

## 6. Government's Garden Communities Programme

- 6.1. In September 2020, a further ambitious bid for Garden Communities capacity funding was submitted to Homes England to help advance and inform the Development Framework Document and supporting documents. This bid seeks funding for a range of areas including:
  - Dedicated ECC transportation planner and ECC infrastructure planner
  - Continuation of CCC's independent advice provided by AK Urbanism, Dentons and Steer Consulting
  - Appointment of a Landscape and Wild Infrastructure Consultant
  - Development of a Community Engagement Strategy (with emphasis on the opportunities of virtual consultations and website support)
  - Development of additional technical studies including a Waste Strategy, Modular Modes of On-Site Construction and Innovation, and Mechanisms/Models for Community Stewardship and additional support for health and wellbeing.
- 6.2. Homes England are expected to announce the successful bids in early March 2021 and if so, the Policy Board will be updated at the meeting.

## 7. Conclusion

- 7.1. A number of workstreams are progressing and governance and engagement arrangements are in place to enable the preparation of a comprehensive and collaborative Development Framework Document and associated supporting documents. Officers will continue to work with the Consortium, ECC, other statutory and local stakeholders and the local community during 2021 to develop and finalise the Development Framework Document.

### List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Garden Community Factsheet

Appendix 2 – Vision themes and well-connected theme metrics

Appendix 3 – Project Plan

### Background papers:

Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) Garden City Principles -  
<https://www.tcpa.org.uk/garden-city-principles>

Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) 20-minute neighbourhood -  
<https://www.tcpa.org.uk/the-20-minute-neighbourhood>

---

## Corporate Implications

### Legal/Constitutional:

There are no direct legal/constitutional implications arising from this report.

### Financial:

There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report, although the Council is negotiating an updated Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with the Consortium to ensure it can continue to advance the site masterplan stage as effectively as possible. The Council could benefit from additional money from Government's Garden Communities capacity funding should the 2020 bid be successful.

### Potential impact on climate change and the environment:

New housing delivery can have a negative impact on climate and environmental change issues. Planning Policies, Building Regulations and Environmental Legislation ensure that new housing meets increasingly higher sustainability and environmental standards which will help mitigate this impact. The emerging Chelmsford Garden Community Vision also

seeks to create a distinctive, zero-carbon, healthy, inclusive, prosperous, green and well-connected community.

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030:

The new Local Plan and Making Places SPD will provide guidance to assist in reducing carbon emissions through development. This development will follow the published guidance. The emerging Chelmsford Garden Community Vision also seeks to create a distinctive, zero-carbon, healthy, inclusive, prosperous, green and well-connected community.

Personnel:

There are no immediate direct staffing implications arising from this report, although the Council is negotiating an updated Planning Performance Agreement with the Consortium to ensure it can continue to advance the site masterplan stage as effectively as possible. The Council could also benefit from additional staffing resources through the Government's Garden Communities capacity funding should the 2020 bid be successful.

Risk Management:

There are no direct risk management arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity:

An Equalities and Diversity Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the Chelmsford Local Plan.

Health and Safety:

There are no Health & Safety issues arising directly from this report.

Digital:

There are no IT issues arising directly from this report.

Other:

None.

---

### Consultees:

Spatial Planning

---

### Relevant Policies and Strategies:

The report takes into account the following policies and strategies of the City Council:

Chelmsford Local Plan 2013-2036 (Adopted on 27 May 2020)

Making Places Supplementary Planning Document

Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document

Statement of Community Involvement, 2020











Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan, January 2020

---



# Chelmsford Garden Community

## Headline information

	<b>Area of Garden Community</b> 836 hectares
	<b>Type of Garden Community</b> Transformational, self-supporting
	<b>New green space</b> Approx. 400 hectares including a new Country Park
	<b>New employment space</b> 46 hectares
	<b>New retail/commercial space</b> 19.5 hectares
	<b>New jobs</b> 10,000 by 2036
	<b>New schools</b> 5 - including Essex's first all-through school open in September 2018
	<b>New district/local centres</b> 7
	<b>New health care and community facilities</b> 5 - including Beaulieu Community Centre opened in 2018
	<b>New transport infrastructure</b> Beaulieu Train Station by mid-2020s Chelmsford North East Bypass by mid-2020s Radial Distributor Road 2 Expansion of Chelmsford Area Bus Based Rapid Transit (ChART) Expansion of Park & Ride



**New homes**  
10,000 total new homes by 2044  
1,374 complete (up Q2 2020)

Build-out rates -

Houses per Annum			
2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
282	372	270	256

- 4,350 consented at Beaulieu and Channels delivered by mid-2020s
- 3,000 allocated in new Local Plan (by 2036)
- 2,500 post-2036

35% affordable  
9 travelling showpeople



**Landowners**  
Stubbings Land Development,  
Hanson Ltd, Threadneedle  
Pensions Ltd, Countryside Zest,  
Chelmsford Land



**Developers/Promoters**  
Countryside Zest, L&Q,  
Ptarmigan Land,  
Bellway,  
Home Group, Croudace  
and Marden Homes



**HIF Funding**  
£218,000,000 for Beaulieu Train  
Station and Chelmsford North East  
Bypass

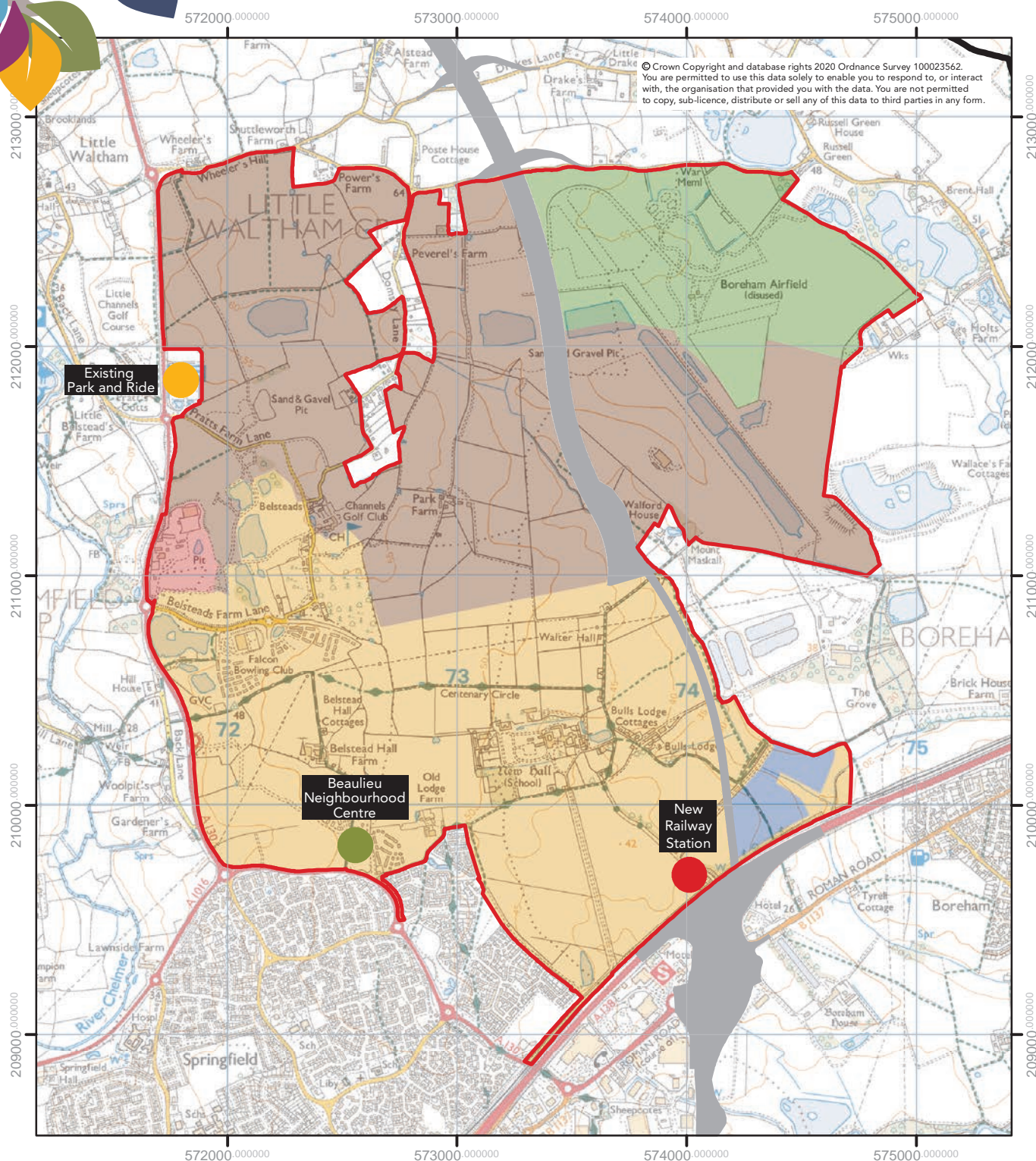


**Garden Community Funding**  
£150,000 in 2019





# Chelmsford Garden Community Map



- Area of Chelmsford Garden Community
- Proposed Chelmsford NE Bypass - Detailed Design within Masterplan Area
- Proposed Chelmsford NE Bypass - Safeguarded Corridor
- Proposed Employment Area
- Existing Employment Area
- Proposed Country Park
- New Garden Community for Major Housing and Employment Development
- Masterplan Area for Existing Committed Development



0 250 500  
Metres

January 2021

**Spatial Planning Services**  
**Directorate for Sustainable Development**  
Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1JE  
01245 606330  
[www.chelmsford.gov.uk](http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk)



# Chelmsford Garden Community Emerging Vision







## Participative governance

- Supreme stewardship - a community led and managed by its residents.
- Collaborative community. A Garden Village led and managed by its residents. An innovative culture of sharing produce, products, ideas and knowledge exchange.
- A locally connected and sociable community with accessible and well-run local services supporting all ages to live a healthy life.
- A strong, vibrant and inclusive community with flexible spaces that support community activities.



## Well-connected

- Vibrant neighbourhoods, where walking, cycling and sustainable forms of transport are a way of life.
- Streets reimaged for people to enjoy and reduce their use for parking and vehicle use.
- A highly permeable network of safe and pleasant routes for sustainable movement.
- Future-proofed for net zero-carbon movement.
- Infrastructure and network design to support future modes of travel, including electric and autonomous vehicles.
- Connected to the city and beyond by high-quality public transport services.



## Green and blue infrastructure

- Mutually beneficial relationship between the city and the surrounding countryside.
- Integrated green network for playing, educating, producing and growing.
- A biodiverse and ecologically rich living landscape, where wildlife and people live in harmony.
- Generous space, unbounded living. A new lifestyle, living within a community at one with wildlife and nature. The best of village life set within the countryside, a new model for the Garden Community.



## Healthy and inclusive

- Accessible and well-run community facilities and local services.
- High-quality built and natural environment that instils civic pride and a sense of belonging.
- A variety of homes, flexible and adaptable, for all generations and life stages.
- A Building for a Healthy Life and Livewell Development exemplar community.



## Prosperous

- Accessible and highly attractive employment land, offering development opportunities for key sectors.
- Ultrafast digital connections everywhere - offering the ability to work anywhere and communicate with people wherever you are.
- Smart homes, adaptable for home working.
- Liberty to weave work into your life, to suit you. A variety of workspaces to support a sharing economy that fosters collaboration.
- An entrepreneurial community linked to the wider city economy, with opportunities for training, retraining, and lifelong learning.



## Environmental performance

- Environmentally conscious - a community striving for sustainability, self-sufficiency, and working with nature.
- Use resources efficiently by reducing energy consumption and waste.
- Innovation in residential, commercial and infrastructure design - leading the way towards net-zero carbon.
- A development that builds in climate change resilience and adaptability.



## Participative governance

...local people and organizations, the voluntary and third sectors working together to build capacity and resilience and provide effective stewardship of the Garden Community.

## Environmental performance

...managing in a sustainable way to help reduce energy consumption and waste, and helping to preserve natural resources.

## Prosperous

...helping to position and promote Chelmsford as a place for investment, business location, and the creation of new jobs.



## Healthy and inclusive

...providing attractive, high-quality green areas and public places that are clean, safe and easily accessible for everyone.

## Green and blue infrastructure

...protecting and enhancing wildlife, habitats and landscapes, and connecting people with the built and natural environment.

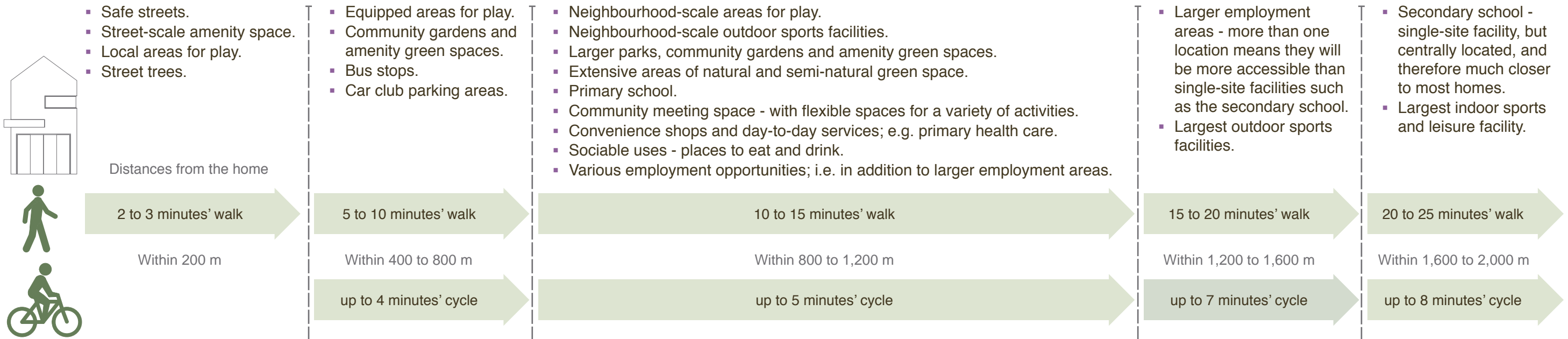
## Well-connected

...walkable neighbourhoods, where the things people want to access on a day-to-day basis are close enough to reach by walking and cycling.



# Well-connected.

...when completed the Garden Community will be structured around walkable neighbourhoods. The things that people want to access on a day-to-day basis will be close enough to reach by walking and cycling. The target benchmarks are illustrated below.



## Chelmsford Garden Community - Project Plan

[illegible]



[illegible]

[illegible]





ts (e.g. Consortium Statement of Community Involvement and QRP reports) for consideration and recommendation to Cabinet





---

## Chelmsford City Council Chelmsford Policy Board

15 March 2021

---

### National Planning Policy Framework and National Model Design Code Consultations

---

**Report by:** Director for Sustainable Communities

---

**Officer Contact:**

Jenny Robinson, [jenny.robinson@chelmsford.gov.uk](mailto:jenny.robinson@chelmsford.gov.uk), 01245 606265

---

#### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to consider the Council's response to the Government consultation on proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, and the introduction of a National Model Design Code. The report summarises the consultation on which views are sought, and provides a summary of the consultation response which is set out in full in **Appendix 1**.

#### Recommendations

That the Board considers the consultation response to the proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, and the introduction of a National Model Design Code set out in **Appendix 1**; and provides feedback to enable the Director of Sustainable Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development to finalise the response before submitting it to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government before the consultation period expires on 27 March 2021.

---

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 30 January 2020 the Government published two documents for consultation. The consultation period runs for 8 weeks until 27 March 2020.
- 1.2 The first consultation is on proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The second consultation relates to introduction of a National Model Design Code (NMDC) and accompanying Guidance Notes. The Council's proposed response is summarised in this report, and attached in full at **Appendix 1**.

## 2. Summary of proposed changes to the NPPF

### Context

- 2.1 The NPPF is proposed to be updated to implement policy changes in response to the Living with Beauty report (Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission – January 2020). There is no proposal to review the NPPF in its entirety at the moment, pending the outcome of consultation on the wider reform of the planning system following consultation on the Planning White paper in autumn 2020. The main changes relate to policy on the quality of design of new development and a stronger focus on beauty. Other minor clarifications are proposed.
- 2.2 The proposed amendments to the NPPF include the following:
  - Policy changes in response to the Living with Beauty report (Building better, Building Beautiful Commission – January 2020) – particularly Chapter 3: Plan-making, Chapter 5: Delivering homes, Chapter 11: Making effective use of land, Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places
  - Strengthened environmental policies – particularly in Chapter 2: Achieving Sustainable Development, Chapter 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities, Chapter 14: Climate change, flooding, coastal change
  - Clarification of policy intention for Article 4 directions – in Chapter 4: Decision making
  - Updates to explain retaining and explaining statues – in Chapter 16: Historic environment
  - Minor changes to address legal issues and remove out of date information.

## 3. Summary of consultation response to changes to the NPPF

- 3.1 The Council's position is that generally the proposed changes to the NPPF are welcomed in principle, and that they provide helpful clarity on a number of detailed issues. A number of suggestions for amendments to wording are proposed, as shown in **Appendix 1**. The more substantial concerns from officers are also summarised below.
- 3.2 Chapter 4 – concern that the proposed changes will make it harder for local authorities to secure Article 4 Directions, which restrict future permitted development (Paragraph 53).

- 3.3 Chapter 5 – the Council seeks clarity on the application of policy on entry-level exception sites for affordable housing, and further definition of the thresholds (Paragraph 71 and Footnote 34).
- 3.4 Chapter 12 – concern about additional requirements for all new streets to be tree-lined (Paragraph 130). While the Council supports tree planting, officers have concerns about the implications for maintenance and potential impact on development viability.
- 3.5 Chapter 16 – the Council believes that the political debate over whether certain statues or memorials should be removed should be separated from the planning process (Paragraph 197).

#### 4. Summary of the NMDC

##### **Context**

- 4.1 The NMDC purpose is to provide guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design. It supports and implements the National Design Guide published in October 2019. Its use will be as planning practice guidance; as a toolkit to guide local planning authorities, as well as neighbourhood groups and developers, which can be tailored to the relevant context.
- 4.2 The Government believes that design codes are important because they provide a framework for creating healthy, environmentally responsive, sustainable and distinctive places, with a consistent and high-quality standard of design. This can provide greater certainty for communities about the design of development and bring conversations about design to the start of the planning process, rather than the end. The Government aims to bring about faster planning decisions aided by application of a design code, leading to faster delivery of development.
- 4.3 A testing phase will be launched with pilot schemes in 20 communities later this year. A new 'office for place' will be established to help with implementation. A date for its intended implementation has not been published.
- 4.4 The National Model Design Code sets out the principles and process of developing a design code. The Guidance Notes for Design Codes sets out greater detail on ten themes to help select issues for inclusion in a design code, why they are important, and considerations.

The themes and topics are as follows:

Theme	Topics		
<b>Context</b>	Character studies	Cultural heritage	
<b>Movement</b>	A connected network	Active travel	Parking and servicing
<b>Nature</b>	Green infrastructure	Water/Drainage	Biodiversity
<b>Built Form</b>	Compact form of development	Built form	
<b>Identity</b>	A sense of place	The identity of buildings	
<b>Public Space</b>	Streets	Social interaction	Security/Public space
<b>Use</b>	Variety and activity	Housing mix	Community
<b>Homes and buildings</b>	Housing quality	Health and wellbeing	
<b>Resources</b>	Energy	Sustainable construction	
<b>Lifespan</b>	Stewardship		
<b>Community engagement</b>	Involving communities	Content and application	

- 4.5 The Council has a number of resources available to enable its application of good design principles, including the recently adopted Making Places Supplementary Planning Document, Masterplans, Village Design Statements and emerging Neighbourhood Plans. It is envisaged that these resources will form the basis of a design code and the detail already included will stand the Council is good stead for future design code preparation. In addition, the Essex Design Guide was updated in 2018, and is anticipated to be further updated when the NMDC is published.

## 5. Summary of consultation responses to the NMDC

- 5.1 The Council welcomes the introduction of design coding for its potential to improve design quality, sustainability and better integration and co-ordination within large developments. The documents continue a theme that raises the importance of good design and place making, and follow a sequence and clear logic from the NPPF through to the Code and Guidance. A number of suggestions for amendments to wording are proposed, as shown in **Appendix 1**. The more substantial concerns from officers are also summarised below:

*Links to other parts of the planning system:*

The guidance should set out that other policy requirements need to be met as a starting point when formulating any design code, such as open space and highway standards. The wider reforms of the planning system and expansion of permitted development rules also need to be taken into account.

*Resources:*

The preparation of design codes will be a significant piece of work for local planning authorities and appropriate additional resourcing should be put in place to enable this work to be completed within a reasonable timescale.

*Nature - Green infrastructure:*

CCC believes that national thresholds cannot be set for play spaces, as they are currently derived from Local Authority open space assessments and standards in Local Plans. National thresholds take no allowance of local needs, the location for those needs, or the benefits of combining needs.

*Nature – Street trees:*

Concern about additional requirements for all new streets to be tree-lined, as outlined at 3.1 above.

*Community engagement:*

The Council believes that effective community engagement is vital to preparing design codes, but that the proposals bring a number of challenges. These include ensuring that the widest possible number of people can become involved; and how the time needed for effective engagement will fit with the proposed streamlined process for preparing new style Local Plans as set out in the Planning for the Future White Paper.

## 6. Next steps

- 6.1 The consultation on the proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, and the introduction of a National Model Design Code, closes on 27 March. Officers in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development propose to submit a draft response to the consultation, as set out at **Appendix 1**.

## 7. Conclusion

- 7.1 It is important that CCC responds to the consultation to help influence the proposals which may have direct impacts on its decision-making on planning applications, and through the introduction of the National Model Design Code.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – National Planning Policy Framework, and National Model Design Code consultation response

Background papers:

National Planning Policy Framework and National Model Design Code: consultation proposals

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-framework-and-national-model-design-code-consultation-proposals/national-planning-policy-framework-and-national-model-design-code-consultation-proposals#summary-of-proposed-amendments-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework>

---

---

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional:

There are no direct legal/constitutional implications arising from this report.

Financial:

The potential financial implications arising from introduction of the NMDC are as yet unknown, but may involve a need for officer training or consultancy input.

Potential impact on climate change and the environment:

There are no immediate environmental implications arising from this report, however positive impacts are envisaged from the introduction of the NMDC.

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030:

There are no immediate environmental implications arising from this report, however positive impacts are envisaged from the introduction of the NMDC.

Personnel:

There are no immediate direct staffing implications arising from this report.

Risk Management:

There are no immediate direct risk management implications arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity:

There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report

Health and Safety:

There are no direct health and safety implications arising from this report.

Digital:

There are no immediate direct digital implications arising from this report. The Government has indicated increased use of digital communication in the planning system.

Other:

None.

---

**Consultees:**

CCC Strategic Housing, and Development Management

---

**Relevant Policies and Strategies:**

The report takes into account the following policies and strategies of the City Council: Chelmsford Local Plan 2013-2036, Statement of Community Involvement, 2020 Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan, January 2020.

---

## National Planning Policy Framework consultation response (incorporating National Model Design Code and Guidance Notes)

### **NPPF - General Comments**

Chelmsford City Council (CCC) welcomes the greater Government emphasis on good design. There is however a huge tension between the aspiration for “beautiful places” and the seemingly unrelenting drive of the Government to expand permitted development rules.

CCC has often been disappointed in the past at Planning Inspectors placing less emphasis on good design in determining appeals. The new requirement to achieve good design should be binding on the Inspectorate.

Finally, if local planning authorities are required to produce design codes then they should receive appropriate additional resourcing to meet that objective.

### **Q1. Do you agree with the changes proposed in Chapter 2 (Achieving Sustainable Development)?**

CCC welcomes reference in Paragraph 7 to the United Nation’s 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

The change to 8.b) in relation to beautiful places is considered to be positive, as is the change to Paragraph 11 which expands the description of sustainable development. However, the reference to ‘improve the environment’ sounds vague, and reference to biodiversity net gain could be added.

### **Q2. Do you agree with the changes proposed in Chapter 3 (Plan-making)?**

The change to Paragraph 22 states that policies for larger scale development should be set within a long-term vision. This is considered to be positive.

### **Q3. Do you agree with the changes proposed in Chapter 4 (Decision-making)? Which option relating to change of use to residential do you prefer and why?**

CCC considers that the proposed changes to Paragraph 53 will make it harder for local planning authorities and their communities to secure Article 4 Directions. CCC considers that if there are unacceptable adverse impacts, there is no need to add the word “wholly” and suggests the word be removed. Subject to this change the first bullet is acceptable and preferred to the second bullet.



**Q4. Do you agree with the changes proposed in Chapter 5 (Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes)?**

*Paragraph 72 and Footnote 34:*

In Paragraph 72 which relates to entry level exception sites, CCC requests that the Government use this opportunity to clarify the application of paragraph 72, in particular footnote 34.

Is it the intention that the footnote is applied in the 'narrow' sense and that the lower of 5% of the size of the existing settlements or one hectare should be used to determine the maximum site size of an entry-level exception site? Or is it the case that that an entry level exception site could be the larger of 5% of the size of the existing settlement or one hectare?

Also, clarification is sought regarding the measurement of the '5%' referenced in footnote 34. Is the measurement to be undertaken in hectares, number of existing houses, population? Also, how is the existing settlement to be defined – measurement within a defined settlement boundary if applicable (even if this cuts across garden land of buildings in a defined settlement?). Presumably a settlement isn't contingent to a Parish Boundary?

Paragraph 72 states that entry-level exception sites should comprise one or more types of affordable housing as defined in Annex 2 of the framework. Annex 2 includes Affordable Private Rent in Build to Rent schemes. The National Planning Practice Guidance on Build to Rent housing presents some conflict with the 'exceptional' status of entry-level exception sites, particularly in terms of the perpetuity restrictions normally associated with affordable housing provided on the latter. Is it the intention of national planning policy to facilitate Affordable Private Rent on entry-level exception sites? If so, do the perpetuity provisions normally associated with affordable housing on exception sites take precedence, given these sites are exceptions to the normal planning provisions? Specific guidance on the suitability of Affordable Private Rent housing on entry-level exception sites is sought through modifications/footnote to paragraph 72 and / or the relevant planning practice guidance.

*Other Paragraphs*

CCC considers that the minor wording changes to Paragraphs 65, 70 and 80 are positive and add clarity.

In Paragraph 73, the added reference to transport modes could be reworded to include specific reference to public transport, cycling and walking infrastructure.

**Q5. Do you agree with the changes proposed in Chapter 8 (Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities)?**

*Paragraph 92:*

The changes include the addition of introduction of cycle routes and the emphasis of the routes being attractive to users, which is positive. In the audit for walkways used for the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP), comfort and directness were used as means of scoring footpaths as well as attractiveness. CCC suggests these terms are used here, and also asks for clarification on the difference between clear and legible in this context.

*Paragraph 97:*

It is not clear how simply access to high quality open space can deliver benefits for nature or efforts to address climate change, as the additional text states. CCC suggests this section can be expanded, or alternatively change 'Access to' to 'Provision of' since this could deliver benefits for 'nature' and also address climate change. 'Efforts to' should be changed to 'help to'.

*Paragraph 109c:*

The Paragraph addresses the design of streets, parking areas and other transport elements, and lists useful guidance. CCC suggests that references to Manual for Streets, LTN 1/20 and a Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking are included.

**Q6. Do you agree with the changes proposed in Chapter 9 (Promoting Sustainable Transport)?**

CCC has no comment on the changes proposed to Chapter 9.

**Q7. Do you agree with the changes proposed in Chapter 11 (Making Effective Use of Land)?**

CCC has no comment on the changes proposed to Chapter 11.

**Q8. Do you agree with the changes proposed in Chapter 12 (Achieving Well-Designed Places)?**

The changes to Chapter 12 introduce the application of beauty into guidance for well-designed places, use of design codes based on effective community engagement to reflect local character, and the weight that design codes and similar guidance should be afforded in decision taking. These changes are considered to be positive.

*Paragraph 130:*

This Paragraph says that planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree lined, among other measures to secure tree planting.

While CCC supports new tree planting and welcomes the principle of tree-lined streets, it recognises that inclusion of street trees for all new streets may not be feasible. There is potential for implications for maintenance, and development layouts will potentially require wider streets to accommodate trees which may reduce housing density and impact on development viability. CCC therefore welcomes the inclusion of Footnote 49 to cover such eventualities.

**Q9. Do you agree with the changes proposed in Chapter 13 (Protecting Green Belt Land)?**

Paragraph 148 (as renumbered) lists when new buildings are appropriate in the Green Belt. Paragraph 149 lists "certain other forms of development". This suggests that paragraph 149 is for types of development that do not include buildings. The proposed amendment to 149 f) makes it clear that development brought forward under a right to build order can include buildings. This clarification is welcomed but it would be helpful if that clarification could be

extended to the other criteria in the list where a new building would be reasonably expected e.g. park and ride ancillary buildings as part of local transport infrastructure.

**Q10. Do you agree with the changes proposed in Chapter 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change)?**

CCC supports these relatively minor changes, but national planning policy must now be urgently changed to ensure all new development is net carbon zero.

**Q11. Do you agree with the changes proposed in Chapter 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment)?**

CCC considers that the changes to Chapter 15 are positive, however, a minimum percentage of biodiversity net gain should now be explicit in national planning policy.

**Q12. Do you agree with the changes proposed in Chapter 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment)?**

Paragraph 197 relates to planning applications for removal or alteration of a historic statue, plaque or memorial. CCC suggests the list could be expanded to include information boards, interpretation and public art.

However, CCC believes that a local planning authority should not take part in the wider political debate over whether statues or memorials with links to colonialism and slavery should be removed. If the statue or memorial is listed then this is a planning matter. Otherwise it is a matter for debate but the decision should lie outside the planning process.

**Q13. Do you agree with the changes proposed in Chapter 17 (Facilitating the Sustainable Use of Minerals)?**

CCC has no comment on the changes proposed to Chapter 17.

**Q14. Do you have any comments on the changes to the glossary?**

CCC considers that the changes to the glossary are positive.

**Q15. We would be grateful for your views on the National Model Design Code, in terms of**

- a) the content of the guidance
- b) the application and use of the guidance
- c) the approach to community engagement

**National Model Design Code - General comments:**

*Principle:*

CCC welcomes the introduction of design coding as it has the potential to improve design quality, sustainability and better integration and co-ordination within large

developments. The documents continue a theme that raises the importance of good design and place making, and follow a sequence and clear logic from the NPPF through to the Code and Guidance. Design codes should also give more certainty to developers. It is questionable however whether having design codes in place would make the development process any quicker on larger sites due to the time needed to prepare them.

The benefits of the process are easier to recognise in cases where a large new development is proposed and for existing areas with a distinct character. The benefits of wider design coding are less apparent. Further, in the case of Chelmsford there could be significant cross-over with the evidence base that informed the Local Plan, the Making Places SPD, Masterplanning, Village Design Statements and Neighbourhood Plans.

#### *Links to other parts of the planning system:*

Design coding should not be separated from the wider reforms of the planning system set out in “Planning for the Future” and proposals for zoning and some developments, in effect, receiving an automatic planning permission.

CCC also considers that there is a disconnect between the publication of a lengthy document setting out to local planning authorities the need for design codes and how to prepare them, and the continuing expansion of permitted development rules where no design criteria apply.

Although these are high level design documents, CCC believes the guidance should clearly set out that other policy requirements need to be met as a starting point when formulating any design code. A design code needs to ensure it is policy compliant in all other planning policy requirements in its formulation, e.g. for open space standards, highway standards etc. It seems illogical to have area based guidance (3A) ahead of code wide guidance (3B).

#### *Resources:*

The preparation of design codes will be a significant piece of work for local planning authorities and appropriate additional resourcing should be put in place to enable this work to be completed within a reasonable timescale.

#### *Documentation:*

CCC believes it would be very helpful for all documents to be formatted as interactive pdfs e.g. with links from the contents page to the appropriate section.

In addition, the National Model Design Code could include interactive links to the appropriate section in the Guidance Notes for Design Codes. Both documents are currently difficult to navigate. CCC also questions the need for two documents, where one well laid out and helpfully linked document may be more valuable.

## **National Model Design Code – Specific comments:**

### *Paragraph 51:*

CCC queries the ordering of area guidance followed by code wide guidance, which appears illogical. Paragraph 51 says that ‘open space standards may vary’ but it makes no reference to policy requirements which are often set out in Local Plans, which should be the starting point.

## **Guidance Notes for Design Codes – Specific comments:**

### *M.1.i The Street Network:*

Figure 7 – suggest that cycling distances are included.

### *M.1.ii Public transport:*

Paragraph 25 – CCC queries the definition of ‘within walking distance’, which should be quantified.

### *M.3.i Car Parking:*

Paragraph 43 – CCC suggests adding ‘individual local authorities’ Local Plans’ for clarity.  
Paragraph 49 – CCC suggests that residential parking is also appropriate to be integrated into the built form, along with non-residential parking as listed.

### *M3 ii Cycle Parking:*

Figure 16 - Public cycle parking. CCC suggests that this section also makes reference to the need for the parking to be in close proximity to user destination; that it should not reduce footway space; that ‘well overlooked’ is preferable to ‘well supervised’; there should be a reference to larger bikes such as cargo bikes (London’s Cycling Design Standard states that particular attention needs to be paid to accommodation larger models). It recommends that at least 5% of all spaces should be capable of accommodating a larger cycle.

A reference to DFT’s Local Transport Note 1/20 on cycle Infrastructure Design (chapter 11) would be welcomed.

### *M3iii Services and utilities:*

Paragraph 56 – CCC believes it would be helpful to encourage development to be designed to minimise the need for vehicles to turn and allow travel in forward gear, for efficiency and safety reasons. These vehicles should be referred to as recycling and waste collection vehicles rather than simply just refuse vehicles (applied also to Figure 17, and Check List: Movement M.3).

## **N.1 Green Infrastructure**

Paragraphs 60-62 – It is CCC’s contention that national thresholds cannot be set for play spaces. The thresholds are currently derived from Local Authority open space assessments and standards, which are set out in a Local Plan. Setting national thresholds takes no allowance of local needs, the location for those needs, or the potential for combining needs where developments are close to each other to enable enhanced provision and efficient maintenance.

This point is further confused in N.1.ii which appears to set out ways of working out open space standards on a site by site basis. Local Authority open space assessments and standards are carried out at Local Plan stage to assess existing spaces which may be underutilised and in need of improvement, which could be achieved through contributions from new development. The documents are collectively unclear on this point of open space standards and how they are set.

Paragraph 62 sets out that guidance on ANGSt is being revisited, but does not include any proposals for future assessment of all other open spaces. The Check List: Nature at N.1 says that open space provision should be based on the 'Government's Open Space and Recreation Guidance' but it is not clear what this refers to. It is difficult to see how this will address the strategic approach to wider improvements needed to nearby spaces and maintenance.

#### *N.3.iii:*

N.3.iii (paragraph unnumbered) and the Check List: Nature at N.3 relate to street trees. While CCC supports new tree planting it does not believe that requiring inclusion of street trees for all new streets is feasible. Firstly, it will have implications for maintenance, including highways in relation to roots. Secondly, layouts will inevitably require wider streets to accommodate trees which may reduce housing density and impact on development viability. CCC suggests this should be encouraged but not made a requirement.

#### *Resources*

Paragraph 199 – CCC suggests replacing 'net zero targets by 2050' with 'The Government's net zero greenhouse gas emission targets by 2050', accompanied by a footnote for more information.

#### *R1i Energy hierarchy:*

It would be helpful to include an illustration of the energy hierarchy and/or reference the need to 1) reduce the need for energy, 2) use energy efficiently, 3) supply energy efficiently and 4) use appropriate on-site renewable and low carbon energy sources.

#### *R1ii Energy efficiency:*

Fig 81 – This figure would be easier to understand if it includes the winter and summer sun as well as a north arrow.

Fig 84 – What is Low renewable energy? Should this read 'low or zero carbon and renewable energy'?

#### *R2 Sustainable construction:*

Paragraph 208 – CCC suggests replacing the vague sounding 'Low energy materials' which with 'energy efficient materials'.

Check List: Resources at R.2 – this makes reference to BREEAM, but BREEAM is not mentioned elsewhere in this section.

*Lifespan, Paragraph 201:*

CCC would like to point out the misnumbering in this section.

Paragraph 201 – refers to a process of community participation set out in Part 1.3 – however, it is not clear what this is referring to (perhaps the community engagement section).

*Community engagement:*

CCC believes that effective community engagement will be vital to successful outcomes for preparing design codes.

A key challenge will be enthusing people to become involved, by providing clarity at the beginning of the purpose and intended outcomes of engagement activity.

CCC does have some concern about how the engagement process is envisaged in dovetailing with the reforms outlined in the Planning for the Future White Paper, in particular the streamlined process for preparing new style plans. The time needed to organise and act on meaningful engagement should not be underestimated.

**Q16. We would be grateful for your comments on any potential impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.**

Although CCC does not envisage any impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty, it believes it would be helpful to include an additional brief section outlining the duty and reminding guide users of their responsibilities and obligations.