

# Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) Spring 2026

Part 1 of 9  
Non-Technical Summary

April 2026



**Chelmsford**  
City Council

## **NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY**

## Introduction

The National Planning Policy Framework requires Local Planning Authorities to produce and update a land availability assessment. The Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) is the assessment developed and used by Chelmsford City Council.

The SHELAA is a study of sites promoted by landowners and developers that may have development potential. It forms part of the evidence base of the Local Plan and is published every year.

The outcomes of the SHELAA are used to help the Council make decisions on plan making. It helps us to understand where we can allocate future development, by showing us the locations of potential development sites.

The SHELAA is not a decision making document and does not allocate sites for development or grant planning permission.

## Policy Background

The Government requires Local Authorities to understand how much housing and employment land they have available in their area.

The main role of the SHELAA is to:

- Identify sites and broad locations with potential for development
- Assess their development potential
- Assess their suitability for development and the likelihood of development coming forward (the availability and achievability)

The SHELAA provides a high-level profile of the sites and highlights their strengths and constraints. It is an assessment of whether the site is likely to be developable.

The SHELAA can include:

- Sites that have planning permission but where development has not yet started
- Site allocations within the Local Plan which do not yet benefit from planning permission and
- Sites which do not have planning permission and are not allocated for development, but which land promoters believe would be suitable for development.

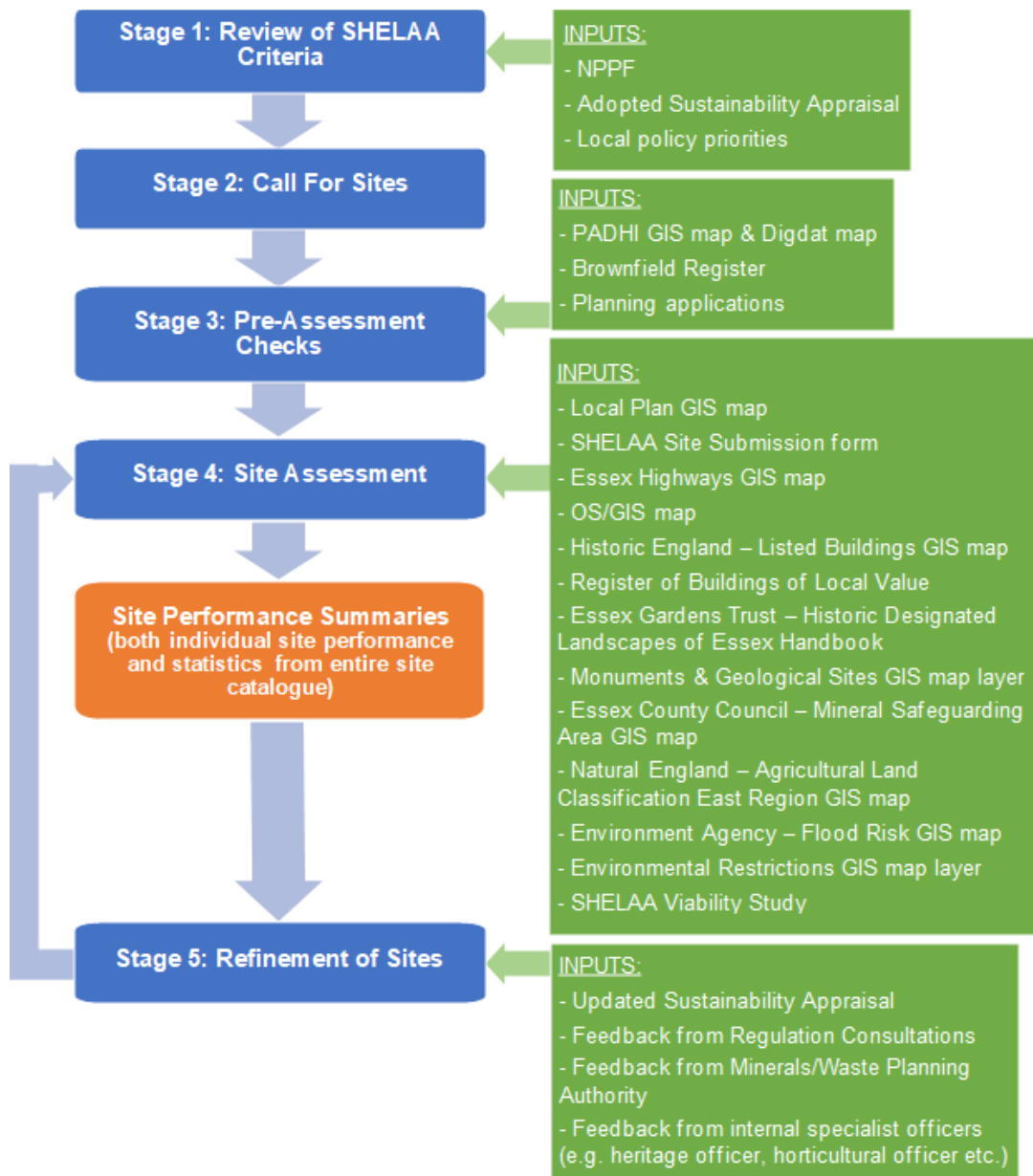
Members of the public, site owners, developers and interested parties can submit sites that have potential for new development to the Council for consideration for allocation as part of the local plan. This process is known as 'Call for Sites'.

The Council maintains a 'Call for Sites' database which is open all year round. It allows the Council to hold an up to date database of sites within its area that may be suitable for development.

The Call for Sites process contains cut off times, when the database is stopped and the SHELAA is carried out. Sites that are submitted after the cut off deadline will be assessed within the following SHELAA review.

## Methodology

To undertake the SHELAA, Chelmsford City Council follows the five stages summarised in the flow chart. Refer to the Methodology document for full details.



The SHELAA assessment is undertaken at stage 4 where sites are assessed against suitability, availability, and achievability criteria. All criteria are detailed within the Criteria Note.

The assessment is desk-based meaning no site visits take place. Sites are assessed using information given to us by the land promoter and using mapping software.

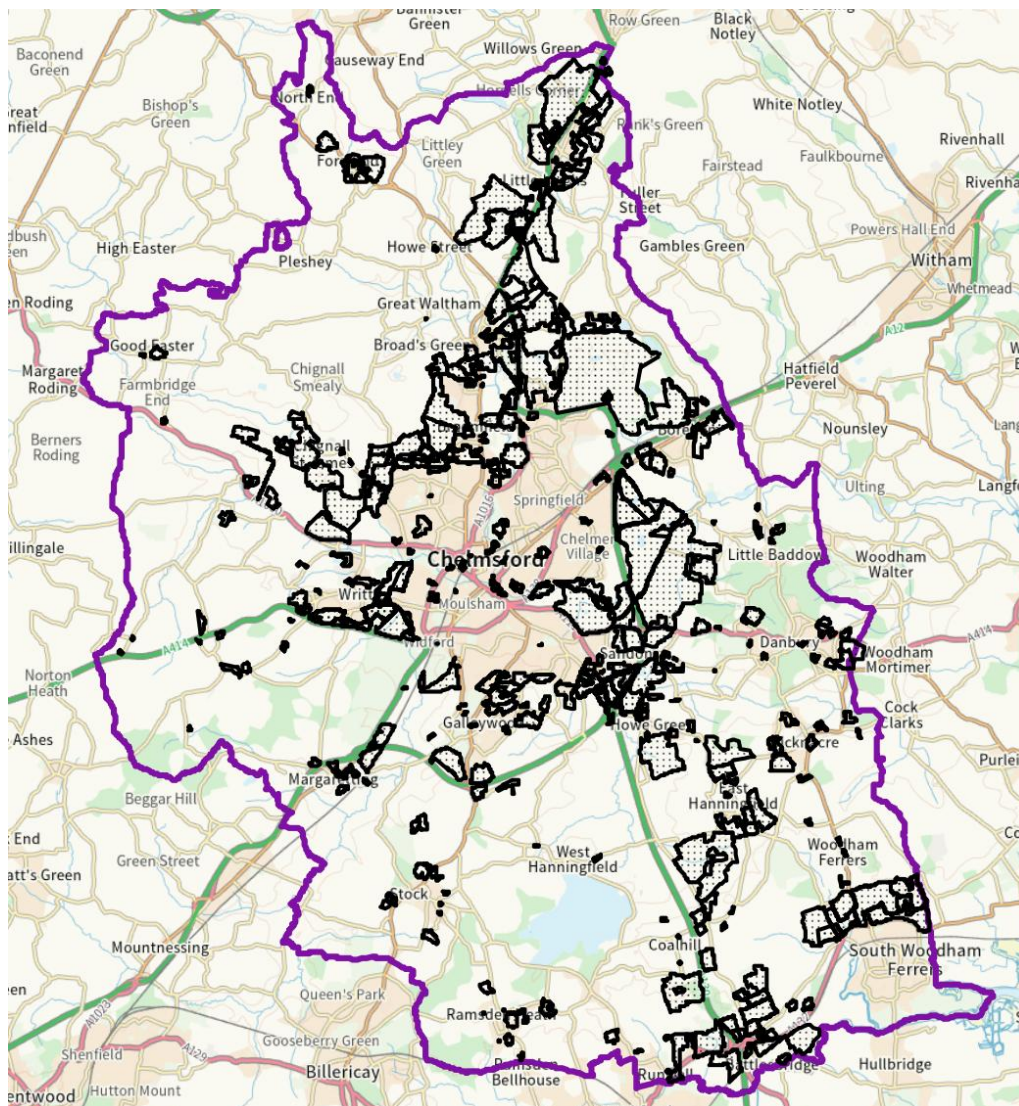
The sites are RAG (Red, Amber, Yellow, Green) rated according to their assessment scores and their compliance with national and local policy. The scores are published on the Site Performance Summaries, accompanied by GIS mapping.

The RAG rating is shown below:

Red	Site is contrary to national policy and/or faces significant constraints or adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated.
Amber	Site scores less well against criteria or has some characteristics contrary to a local policy and faces moderate constraints that would require mitigation.
Yellow	Site scores well against criteria but has some characteristics contrary to local policy. Site faces minor constraints that would require mitigation. Site is considered developable.
Green	Site scores highly against criteria and demonstrates compliance with national and local policy. Site faces minimal constraints and is considered deliverable.

## SHELAA 2026 Assessment

The 2026 SHELAA assessed a total of 404 sites. The locations of the sites are shown on the map below:



The map shows that many of the sites are located within the northern and eastern areas of the administrative area of Chelmsford. Most of the promoted sites are located within the countryside, outside of the Metropolitan Green Belt.

We use the SHELAA to help us understand how many new homes (dwellings) could be provided on a site. This is known as the Yield. We use the estimated yield and the land area of a site to help us understand how much land we need to allocate for development and the likely locations for it.

To avoid double counting, we do not include any sites already identified within the Council's 5-year housing supply, Housing Site Schedule or sites that lie within other SHELAA sites. This year, out of 404 sites, 78 sites were removed from the SHELAA to prevent double counting.

A full breakdown of these statistics is featured in the SHELAA Assessment Statistics document. A summary of the statistics is shown in the tables below. The first table shows how the site areas are broken down by proposed use. The second table shows how the site areas and indicative yields are broken down by RAG rating categories.

<b>Proposed Use</b>	<b>Number of Sites</b>	<b>Site Area (ha)</b>
Residential	259	1489.321
Residential – G&T	5	2.37
Residential – Older Persons	3	8.61
Residential - Other	1	0.8
Employment	20	284.123
Retail	0	0
Community Facility	4	113.085
Renewable Power Generation	0	0
Mixed Use	34	1717.026
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>3615.335</b>

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of Sites</b>	<b>Site Area (ha)</b>	<b>Yield (dwellings)</b>
<b>Green</b>	24	191.086	2697
<b>Yellow</b>	17	354.378	3072
<b>Amber</b>	169	2162.434	30315
<b>Red</b>	116	907.437	14159
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>3615.335</b>	<b>50243</b>

The figures only show us the sites that have been promoted through the SHELAA. The site areas and yields are used as a guide only. The actual number of dwellings that will be allocated / developed will be considered within the review of the Local Plan or as part of a planning application. Planning permission will need to be granted for development to take place.

## Conclusions

The SHELAA will be used, alongside other factors, to guide the Council decisions on where to allocate future sites for development in the Local Plan.

Proposed development allocations will be consulted on separately within the Local Plan. Planning permission will need to be granted before any site can be developed.