

INF007

Chelmsford City Council Housing Scenario Test – Early Years and Childcare September 2025

Background

Essex County Council's (ECC) Early Years and Childcare team has been working with Chelmsford City Council (CCC) to assist in the preparation of the Review of the Local Plan to ensure sufficient Early Years and Childcare (EYCC) places are provided, arising from new development, over the Plan period. This Scenario Test is based on CCC's Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Local Plan (2025) and the sites included in the Additional Sites (Regulation 19) consultation. It has been carried out in accordance with ECC's [Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions \(Revised 2024\)](#).

The scenario provided by Chelmsford City Council includes a total of 22,126 homes¹. In assessing the future demand for childcare places the capacity from sites with planning permission are removed as they have already been considered as part of the planning application process. The allocated site North of Broomfield (512 homes) has been excluded from the assessment as it has planning permission. As part of the permission it is to provide a new 56 place stand-alone early years and childcare nursery on 0.13 hectares of suitable land, which will help accommodate some demand from other nearby development, which is set out in the summary table of requirements.

Consequently, the scenario for testing includes 18,742 homes, of which some 15,741 are qualifying units, comprising of around 90% qualifying houses and 10% qualifying flats (largely within the Chelmsford Urban Area). The sites were matched to the relevant ward using ArcGIS. Phasing information was not used, as this test considers the full impact of growth by the end of the emerging Local Plan period of 2041. However, the full capacity of both SGS6 - Chelmsford Garden Community (6,250 homes) and SGS16a - East Chelmsford Garden Community (Hammonds Farm) (4,500 homes) have been tested to identify their full requirements. Some of these homes will be delivered post plan period of 2041. Further assessment will be undertaken to support individual planning applications once the detailed housing mix has been determined by the developer.

ECC Responsibilities

Under the Childcare Act 2006, Essex County Council (ECC) must ensure that there is sufficient high quality and accessible early years and childcare places within the local area. Section 6 of the Act defines 'sufficient childcare' as sufficient to meet the requirements of parents in the area who require childcare in order to enable them to take up, or remain in, work or undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work. Unlike education, parents can choose to access childcare away from their home area, for example near to a place of work or training.

¹ Taken from the August 2025 Housing Site Schedule with the inclusion of the sites in the Additional Sites (Regulation 19) consultation, but excluding student and older persons units.

Some children are entitled to childcare places funded by Government, namely Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE). These entitlements are for 38 weeks per year or 570 hours stretched across up to 52 weeks.

Funded Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) includes:

- **FEEE1W and FEEE2W**– For eligible working families, from the term after the child turns 9 months. Offers up to **30 hours/week for 38 weeks** (or **1140 hours/year** if stretched).
- **FEEE2** – For families receiving government financial support, from the term after the child turns 2. Offers up to **15 hours/week for 38 weeks** (or **570 hours/year** if stretched).
- **Universal FEEE for 3–4-year-olds** – From the term after the child turns 3, all families can access **15 hours/week for 38 weeks** (or **570 hours/year** if stretched).
- **Extended FEEE for 3–4-year-olds** – For eligible working families, from the term after the child turns 3 until school age. Offers an additional **15 hours/week for 38 weeks** (or **570 hours/year** if stretched).

Early Years and Childcare provision includes full day care, pre-schools, child minders, school run early years provision (2- to 5-year-olds), and ‘wrap around care’ (Breakfast, After school and Holiday clubs). This multiplicity of provision, working in partnership with the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sectors, enables a wide range of childcare options to be made available.

Assessment

The scenario has been assessed using ECC’s standard child yield factor as set out in the [ECC Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions \(Revised 2024\)](#).

	Qualifying House	Qualifying Flat
Child Yield Factor	0.09	0.045

ECC publishes a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, which details where places are required across the county. These assessments give a snapshot of different providers in an area and the number of places that are filled. It should be noted that unfilled places at one type of provider cannot be taken as evidence that provision in an area is sufficient. The work patterns and incomes of parents are all different and so are their childcare needs.

All residential developments of 20 or more dwellings that have been allocated in the adopted Local Plan, or are proposed as new site allocations in the Review of the Local Plan, have been assessed to identify the demand for childcare places over the plan period. ECC does not seek a developer contribution to those sites of less than 20 dwellings unless their co-location with other sites necessitates a holistic look at their cumulative impact. The Early Years and Childcare Service only require developer contributions where there is a current or forecast lack of capacity in the immediate area of the proposed development.

ECC has given due consideration to the requirements set out on those Strategic Sites in the adopted Local Plan, which are carried forward to the Review of the Local Plan, which have gained planning permission, and those which are subject to the determination of submitted planning applications to which ECC has identified early years and childcare requirements.

When estimating the number of children that a new housing development will generate and that will require additional provision (child yield), account has been taken of the number of houses and flats that are suitable to accommodate children. For Early Years and Childcare contribution purposes, houses are all dwellings with two or more floors (including chalet style bungalows with an attic room), and with sole access to private outdoor space. Maisonettes, single storey bungalows and trailers/caravans are treated as flats. One-bedroom units and dwellings such as student and elderly accommodation, are excluded from the calculation, amounting to 3,001 homes. It should be noted that 100% affordable housing sites will be expected to contribute using the same criteria.

Where demand is of such a scale, a new facility will be sought, either co-located with a new primary school or as a stand-alone facility along with the land. For a standard 56 place day nursery, around 0.13 ha of land is required to be provided by the developer. For a 30 place day nursery, around 0.11 ha of land is required to be provided by the developer. The process for agreeing a suitable piece of land is explained in 'Section 4' of the Developers' Guide. Department for Education (DfE) Guidance 'Securing Developer Contributions for Education' (Aug 2023) states that all new primary schools should be co-located with new nursery provision where there is capacity to do so. In addition, the Education and Skills Funding Agency currently looks to establish two form entry primary schools (420 places), to ensure financial viability. ECC supports this approach and, thereby, when considering new primary school sites an area of 2.1 hectares will usually be sought as a minimum. This is in line with DfE guidance set out in [Building Bulletin 103](#) and this land size provides space for commensurate Early Years and Childcare provision.

Any new early years and childcare facility could be built by ECC, a developer or one or more early years and childcare providers. However, it is important that any provider is agreed by ECC to ensure the required type and standard of provision is delivered in the locality. ECC has a robust process in place to allow early years and childcare providers to apply for capital funding and/or lease opportunities to create new early years and childcare places to meet the increased demand generated by developments.

Scenario test results

	Total			
Growth Area	Capacity	Qualifying	Qualifying	EYCC
(by Ward/Parish)	Homes	Houses	Flats	Places
All Saints	75	0	66	3
Moulsham and Central	1514	40	878	43
Marconi	390	10	330	16
St. Andrews	197	0	171	8
Waterhouse Farm	310	68	154	13
<i>Chelmsford Urban Area</i>	2486	118	1599	83
Broomfield	200	176	0	16
Chignal - Chelmsford Rural West	100	88	0	8

	Total			
Growth Area	Capacity	Qualifying	Qualifying	EYCC
(by Ward/Parish)	Homes	Houses	Flats	Places
Writtle	905	797	0	72
Great Baddow East	360	303	2	27
Little Baddow, Danbury and Sandon	174	140	27	14
Growth Area 1 - Central and Urban Chelmsford	4225	1622	1628	219
Chelmsford Garden Community	6250*	5500	0	495
Great and Little Leighs	1253	938	0	84
Boreham	82	0	0	0
Broomfield and The Walthams	75	61	0	6
Growth Area 2 - North Chelmsford	7660	6499	0	585
East Chelmsford Garden Community (Hammonds Farm)	4500**	3960	0	356
South Woodham-Elmwood and Woodville Ward	1220	1074	0	97
Bicknacre and East and West Hanningfield Ward	686	560	0	50
Rettendon and Runwell	350	308	0	28
Danbury	101	91	0	8
Growth Area 3 - South and East Chelmsford	6857	5993	0	539
Growth Area 1,2 and 3	18742	14113	1628	1343

* Chelmsford Garden Community has been tested with its full allocation, including that to be delivered beyond the plan period of 2041.

** East Chelmsford Garden Community (Hammonds Farm) has been tested with its full allocation, including that to be delivered beyond the plan period of 2041.

The Qualifying houses and flats generate the demand for around **1, 343 additional early years and childcare places**. This assessment identifies the site locations where new early years and childcare nurseries will be required, either as part of a new secondary school, co-located with a primary school or as stand-alone nurseries. The demand is generally generated by the Strategic Site allocations themselves, but in some circumstances a new nursery will serve the demand generated by proposed cumulative demand in the locality.

Growth Area 1 - Central and Urban Chelmsford

ECC consider that there will be sufficient capacity to accommodate the demand generated by the identified growth in the Chelmsford Urban Area, namely around 83 places. This is largely because new nurseries have opened by private providers, along with the allocated site at Lockside (Policy SGS 1a – Site CW1c).

The remainder of the growth amounting to some 136 places will be accommodated through requirements identified in the adopted Local Plan and approved masterplans on sites carried over in this Plan, namely at West Chelmsford (Policy SGS 2 - as part of a co-located new primary school) and at East Chelmsford (Policy SGS 3b), adjacent to the Sandon Park and Ride, as a 56 place stand-alone facility.

Growth Area 2 - North Chelmsford

ECC consider that the 585 places generated in this Growth Area will be accommodated through the Strategic Growth Sites carried over from the adopted Local Plan which have been subject to approved masterplans, granted planning permission or presently awaiting the determination of planning applications. North Broomfield (Policy SGS 8) has been granted planning permission and will provide a 56 place stand-alone nursery. Great Leighs (Policy SGS 7a) will provide for a new co-located 56 place nursery alongside the new primary school and will help satisfy the demand from additional sites around Great Leighs. Chelmsford Garden Community (Policy SGS 6) will generate the need for 495 places and will provide 8 early years and childcare nurseries, one at the all-through secondary school, three co-located with new primary schools and four 56 place stand-alone nurseries. A more detailed assessment has been undertaken regarding the dwelling mix and demographic population, as part of the outline planning applications, which has informed the requirements for this policy, rather than the overall assumptions of this assessment.

Growth Area 3 - South and East Chelmsford

ECC consider that the 539 places generated in this Growth Area will be accommodated through the Strategic Growth Site at North of South Woodham Ferrers (SGS 10) carried over from the adopted Local Plan, with an approved masterplan and resolution to grant planning permission subject to a S106 Agreement, the new East Chelmsford Garden Community (Hammonds Farm) (Policy SGS 16a) and two facilities to support new allocations at Rettendon Place, East Hanningfield and Bicknacre.

Land North of South Woodham Ferrers development will generate significant demand for places, but this is forecast to be balanced by falling numbers in the base population. Should a new school be required, land has been allocated and will include a co-located 56 place nursery plus an additional 56 place stand-alone nursery. If the new primary school no longer becomes necessary the site will still be required to provide two 56 place stand-alone nurseries.

The new East Chelmsford Garden Community (SGS16a) will generate some 356 places, which will be accommodated on land as part of the new secondary school, two co-located with new primary schools and three 56 place stand-alone nurseries. These will be required to be identified as part of future masterplanning of the site.

An allocation at Rettendon Place (SGS20) will generate the demand for around 28 places and will be required to provide either an expansion to the existing Little Darwins nursery, adjacent to Rettendon Primary School or a new 30 place stand-alone early years and childcare nursery to be determined through the masterplanning of the site.

Some 686 homes are planned around East Hanningfield and Bicknacre generating the need for around 50 places. A new 56 place stand-alone early years and childcare nursery will be required to cover the demand arising in both East Hanningfield and Bicknacre, which is treated as a single area for EYCC. The ECC preferred location for this nursery is (SGS11c) Barbrook Way, Bicknacre given that all the existing nurseries are full and it is a larger settlement, which may generate additional demand, not yet identified. The developer will be required to provide the land and a proportionate contribution with the other sites in East Hanningfield/Bicknacre being required to make a proportionate contribution.

Developer contributions

Where there are no vacancies a developer contribution will be sought to expand existing facilities, where feasible. All costings should be quoted as Indexed Linked, with the year and financial quarter stated. The cost of each project and, thereby, any appropriate developer contribution must be considered on a case-by-case basis.

By way of guidance, the provision of new, stand-alone facilities will cost around £24,416 per child place whilst expansion projects will cost £20,450 (DfE Scorecard, first Quarter 2025).

For example:

- The cost of a new primary school co-located with a 56 place nursery is £10,254,720 plus £1,367,296 to total £11,622,016.
- 56 place stand-alone early years and childcare nursery is 56 x £24,416 = £1,367,296
- 30 place stand-alone early years and childcare nursery is 30 x £24,416 = £732,480

Early Years and Childcare Land Allocations

Growth Area	Location/Site	Education Land* and EYCC requirement (Policy Wording)
Growth Area 1 - Central and Urban Chelmsford	Chelmsford Urban Area Lockside, Navigation Road (Policy SGS 1a – Site CW1c)	New 56 place stand-alone early years and childcare nursery (Use Class E(f) on 0.13 hectares of suitable land allocated for education and childcare use
	West Chelmsford (Policy SGS 2)	A new primary school (Use Class F1(a)) with co-located early years and childcare nursery (Use Class E(f)) on 2.1 hectares of suitable land allocated for education and childcare use
	East Chelmsford (Policy SGS 3b)	New 56 place stand-alone early years and childcare nursery (Use Class E(f)) on 0.13 hectares of suitable land allocated for education and childcare use

Growth Area	Location/Site	Education Land* and EYCC requirement (Policy Wording)
Growth Area 2 - North Chelmsford	Great Leighs - Moulsham Hall (Policy SGS 7a)	A new primary school (Use Class F1(a)) with co-located early years and childcare nursery (Use Class E(f)) on 2.1 hectares of suitable land allocated for education and childcare use
	Chelmsford Garden Community (Policy SGS 6)	<p>A new all-through school (Use Class F1(a)), including secondary, primary and early years, on 12.15 hectares of suitable land allocated for education and early years and childcare use (Use Class E(f))</p> <p>Three further new primary schools (Use Class F1(a)) each with a co-located early years and childcare nursery (Use Class E(f)) with one site of 2.4 hectares and two of 2.1 hectares of suitable land allocated for education and childcare use</p> <p>Four new 56 place stand-alone early years and childcare nurseries (Use Class E(f)) on 0.13 hectares of suitable land allocated for education and childcare use</p>
	North Broomfield (Policy SGS 8) – With Permission	New 56 place stand-alone early years and childcare nursery (Use Class E(f)) on 0.13 hectares of suitable land allocated for education and childcare use.
Growth Area 3 - South and East Chelmsford	East Chelmsford Garden Community - Hammonds Farm (Policy SGS 16a)	<p>A new secondary school (Use Class F1(a)) on 10.1 hectares co-located with primary school (Use Class F1(a)) and early years and childcare nursery (Use Class E(f)) on 2.1 hectares of suitable land allocated for education and childcare use</p> <p>Two new primary schools (Use Class F1(a)) with co-located early years and childcare nursery (Use Class E(f)) each on 2.1 hectares of</p>

Growth Area	Location/Site	Education Land* and EYCC requirement (Policy Wording)
		<p>suitable land allocated for education and childcare use</p> <p>Three new 56 place stand-alone early years and childcare nurseries (Use Class E(f) each on 0.13 hectares of suitable land allocated for education and childcare use</p>
	Land North of South Woodham Ferrers (Policy SGS 10)	<p>Potential co-location of a new primary school (Use Class F1(a)) with an early years and childcare nursery (Use Class E(f)) on 2.1 ha of suitable land, and one stand-alone early years and childcare nursery (Use Class E(f)) on 0.13 hectares of suitable land; or two new stand-alone early years and childcare nurseries (Use Class E(f)) each on 0.13 hectares of suitable land allocated for education and childcare use. The developer(s) will be expected to provide the land and a proportionate financial contribution to the physical scheme</p>
	Land to East and North of Rettendon Place (Policy SGS 20)	<p>An expansion of the existing nursery or the provision of a new 30 place stand-alone early years and childcare nursery (Use Class E(f)) on 0.11 hectares of suitable land allocated for education and childcare use.</p>
	Land west of Barbrook Way, Bicknacre (Policy SGS 11c)	<p>A new 56 place stand-alone early years and childcare nursery (Use Class E(f)) on 0.13 hectares of suitable land allocated for education and childcare use.</p>

* Where relevant, Education requirements are included as EYCC should be co-located with these. The calculation for education requirements can be found in the Chelmsford City Council Housing Scenario Test – Primary and Secondary Education (ECC September 2025).

Key Points

- The impact of the development set out in the scenario, on early years and childcare provision, can be mitigated through the allocation of the land for early years and childcare, either co-located with primary and secondary school use (set out above), a stand-alone nursery and planning obligations (set out the ECC [Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions \(Revised 2024\)](#)).
- Any site required to provide a new early years and childcare nursery will be expected to provide the 'land' and a proportionate financial contribution based on the ECC Developers' Guide.
- Any new provision should not be shared use, be based on the ground floor and have suitable access to it's own outdoor area.
- Further assessment will be undertaken to support individual planning applications once the detailed housing mix has been determined by the developer.
- ECC will need to closely monitor capacity given the implications arising from the new access to childcare, as its full implications are not yet fully known. The update to the ECC [Developers' Guide to Infrastructure Contributions \(Revised 2024\)](#) will review the child yields presently incorporated in order to ensure land is allocated and developer contributions secured to accommodate an additional demand.

Prepared by Essex County Council on behalf of Chelmsford City Council September 2025