

Sustainability Appraisal of the Issues and Options Consultation Document

Chelmsford City Council needs to make sure that the new Chelmsford Local Plan contributes to the sustainable development of Chelmsford's communities, economy and the environment. To meet this requirement, and to ensure sustainability is integrated into the Local Plan, independent consultants Amec Foster Wheeler have carried out a Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Document.

What is Sustainability Appraisal?

Sustainability Appraisal is a process that identifies, describes and appraises the likely significant social, economic and environmental effects of the Chelmsford Local Plan. Where negative effects are identified, measures will be proposed to avoid, minimise or mitigate such effects. Where any positive effects are identified, measures will be considered that could enhance such effects.

Sustainability Appraisal is not a one-off exercise. It is ongoing and will help the Council make important decisions about how Chelmsford should change in the future.

What are the Issues and Options?

The Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Document has included options relating to:

- ▶ **How many homes?** Three housing target projections have been considered: 657 dwellings per year (Option 1); 775 dwellings per year (Option 2); and 930 dwellings per year (Option 3).
- ▶ **How many jobs?** Two employment target projections have been considered: 727 jobs per year (Option 1); and 887 jobs per year (Option 2).
- ▶ **Where should development be located?** Three spatial options have been considered: Urban Focus (Option 1); Urban Focus and Growth on Key Transport Corridors (Option 2); and Urban Focus and Growth in Key Villages (Option 3).

The Sustainability Appraisal has considered the effects of the Issues and Options Consultation Document on:

- ▶ biodiversity and geodiversity;
- ▶ housing;
- ▶ the economy, skills and employment;
- ▶ sustainable living and revitalisation;
- ▶ health and wellbeing;
- ▶ transport;
- ▶ land use and soils;
- ▶ water;
- ▶ flood risk and coastal erosion;
- ▶ air quality;
- ▶ climate change;
- ▶ waste and the use of natural resources;
- ▶ the historic environment; and
- ▶ landscape and townscape.



What are the Findings?

Housing Target Projections

The Sustainability Appraisal found that all housing target projections are similar in terms of their likely sustainability effects. Significant positive effects have been identified in respect of housing in particular but negative effects are expected on biodiversity, air quality, water, flood risk, climate change and waste and resource use. Significant negative effects have been identified in respect of land use for all projections due to the loss of greenfield land.

The findings of the appraisal indicate that Option 2 (a housing target of 775 dwellings per year) and Option 3 (930 dwellings per year) are the best performing options as they would meet Chelmsford's housing needs, although Option 3 would result in a housing target that exceeds this requirement and would therefore be expected to deliver the greatest benefits in terms of housing delivery and economic growth. However, as this option would deliver more housing, negative environmental effects could be greater than Options 1 and 2. The level of housing delivery proposed under Option 1 (657 dwellings per annum) would fall short of meeting Chelmsford's housing need.

Significant Sustainability Effects - Housing

Dwellings p/a	Housing	Economy	Land Use	Landscape
657	●		●	
775	●		●	
930	●	●	●	●

Key:

- Significant positive effect
- Significant negative effect

Employment Target Projections

The Sustainability Appraisal found that both employment target projections are similar in terms of their likely effects on sustainability.

Significant positive effects have been identified in respect of the economy.

No significant negative effects were identified although there is the potential for adverse environmental effects.

Significant Sustainability Effects - Employment



Key:

Significant positive effect

The findings of the appraisal highlight that Option 2 would deliver the greatest economic benefits of the two options due to the higher number of jobs that would be delivered. However, adverse environmental effects could also be greater than Option 1 due to the land and natural resources required.

Spatial Options

The performance of the three spatial options is very similar. This is because all three options would focus the majority of future growth in more sustainable locations next to the existing built-up areas of Chelmsford and South Woodham Ferrers. This will help to ensure that new development is accessible, delivers urban renaissance and supports the City's economic growth.

Under Options 1 and 2, these benefits would be maximised and as a result, they are considered to be the best performing spatial options in terms of sustainability. Option 3, meanwhile, would result in residential development being more spread out across Chelmsford. This would reduce positive effects associated with focusing development within and adjacent to urban areas and would be likely to increase the need to travel. It may also increase the potential for significant negative effects on the character of settlements and landscape.

Spatial Approach	Significant Sustainability Effects - Spatial Options					
	Housing	Economy	Sustainable Living	Health & Wellbeing	Transport	Land Use
Urban Focus	Significant positive effect	Significant positive effect	Significant positive effect	Significant positive effect	Significant positive effect	Significant negative effect
Urban Focus and Growth on Key Transport Corridors	Significant positive effect	Significant positive effect	Significant positive effect	Significant positive effect	Significant positive effect	Significant negative effect
Urban Focus and Growth in Key Villages	Significant positive effect	Significant positive effect	Significant positive effect	Significant positive effect		Significant negative effect

Key:

Significant positive effect

Significant negative effect

What are the Next Steps?

The Sustainability Appraisal Report is being issued for consultation alongside the Issues and Options Consultation Document. The consultation will run from **8.45am on 19th November 2015 to 4.45pm on 21st January 2016**.

You can view and comment on the consultation documents at <http://consult.chelmsford.gov.uk/portal>. You can also read the consultation documents during normal opening hours at the City Council's Customer Service Centres and in local libraries. There will also be opportunities to meet Council officers face-to-face at a series of public drop-in exhibitions to be held during the consultation period.

The findings of the Sustainability Appraisal will help the Council decide which is its preferred option in terms of the level and location of future development. Consultation on the preferred options is due to take place in Summer 2016. The Preferred Options Consultation Document will be subject to further Sustainability Appraisal.

Comments can also be sent to:

By email: planning.policy@chelmsford.gov.uk

By post: Planning Policy, Chelmsford City Council, PO Box 7544, Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1XP.

A specially designed response form is available online at www.chelmsford.gov.uk/new-local-plan or on request by telephoning: **(01245) 606330**.

How do I Find out More?

For further information about the preparation of the Local Plan, the Issues and Options Consultation Document and the Sustainability Appraisal please visit Chelmsford City Council's website:

www.chelmsford.gov.uk/new-local-plan.

Alternatively, please telephone: **(01245) 606330** or email: planning.policy@chelmsford.gov.uk