

MINUTES
of the
CHELMSFORD POLICY BOARD
held on 18 May 2026 at 7pm

Present:

Councillor C. Adutwim (Chair)

Councillors J. Armstrong, H. Ayres, D. Eley, S. Goldman, J. Jeapes, B. Massey, M. O'Brien,
A. Sosin, J. Sosin, A. Thorpe-Apps and S. Young

Also in attendance:

Cllrs V. Canning, R. Lee and R. Moore

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Davey, Fuller and Manley. Cllrs Ayres, Goldman and J Sosin were substitutes.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that they must disclose any interests they knew they had 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 became aware of the interest. If the interest was a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest they were also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting. Any declarations are recorded in the relevant minute below.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 19th March 2026 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. Public Questions

[Two public questions had been submitted for Item 5, which can be viewed here.](#) The first question asked about if a specific, costed, funded and legally secured replacement infrastructure package now existed for Hammonds Farm, to mitigate impacts on the local road network. The second question was regarding, Site 19 – Land West of Patching Hall Lane and whether concerns raised by residents and the Parish Council had been adequately addressed in the document being put forward for approval. The questions were responded to during the consideration of Item 5 below.

5. Chelmsford Local Plan – Submission to Secretary of State for independent examination

The Board were asked to consider the submission of the Chelmsford Local Plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination. The Board were asked for their approval to

recommend to the Council's Cabinet, that approval be sought from Full Council to submit the Plan and to approve the necessary delegations for the submission and examination process. The Board were reminded of the steps taken to reach the submission stage, including extensive consultations and the start of the review process in the Winter of 2021. The Board were informed that the document consisted of both the Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Local Plan and the additional sites and consequential changes contained within the Focused Consultation Additional Sites (Regulation 19) Document and that they would be incorporated together into one Local Plan for adoption, if found sound at the Examination stage. The Board noted that the Local Plan contained an updated Vision, Strategic Priorities, Spatial Principles and Policies to meet development needs in the period to 2041 and beyond, along with the Council's updated strategy and planning policies to help address climate change and the conservation and enhancement of the natural, historic and built environment. The Board were also reminded that the plan was being submitted under the transitional arrangements set out in the December 2024 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and therefore had to be submitted by 12th June 2026. It was noted that if adopted, it would then supersede the current Chelmsford Local Plan (2020-2036) and enable the Council to meet its statutory duty to maintain an up to date Local Plan under Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

The Board were informed that the Local Plan meets the necessary legal and procedural requirements and is considered to be capable of being found sound, due to it being based on a robust and comprehensive evidence base, effective co-operation and extensive consultation, providing a strong overarching framework for development up until 2041 and beyond. The Board were also informed that following the Regulation 19 consultation responses, a number of minor changes had been proposed as detailed in Appendix 4, however it had not been considered necessary to make major changes to the Local Plan. The Board noted that if they were content, it would then be considered by the Council's Cabinet on 21st May with approval then by Full Council on 2nd June, ahead of formal submission on 5th June, followed by examination hearings expected later in 2026, with adoption anticipated late 2026/ early 2027.

In response to the public questions, officers noted that;

- Alternative arrangements to the A12 DCO continue to be explored with National Highways and Essex County Council to assist with mitigating the impact of development in the area. It was noted that good progress had been made with the planning applications for the North East Chelmsford Garden Community which would assist with securing the necessary mitigation in relation to Junction 19 of the A12. Further improvements to Junction 19 are expected to be undertaken in a phased manner, with necessary improvements being required which relate to the impact Local Plan sites have on that junction. National Highways are content that the Local Plan modelling indicates that Local Plan developments would have minimal impact on J17, 18 and 19 of the A12, and that the additional modelling required at Masterplan/Planning Application stage will agree the detail of any further mitigation required, but it is not needed at this stage as part of the Local Plan modelling. This is the same for other local highway mitigation measures as. National Highways and Essex County Council are content that with the necessary mitigation being in place to support sites, this will ensure that severe impacts on the Strategic Highway network are avoided. All sites, including Hammonds Farm, are therefore considered to be deliverable.
- The Council's response to comments regarding site 19 was of sufficient detail and it was noted that public comments in full would be sent to the Planning Inspector, who would consider them and decide if they required further conversations at the examination stage. It was felt that the locations and distributions detailed in the Local Plan were robust and conformed with relevant priorities.

In response to questions from the Board, officers noted that;

- Due to certain processes and requirements, it is not possible to submit a full composite Local Plan at this stage, but a composite document of the two consultation documents had been produced for reference to aid the Examination process.
- The appended modifications were minor and no new sites or policies had been proposed, and with the exception of one site which has been built out, no sites or policies were proposed to be deleted. It was noted that the examination process was designed to iron out any remaining issues that the inspector felt necessary.
- Extensive discussions had been taking place with National Highways, since the removal of the A12 DCO widening scheme and they were satisfied that mitigation measures could be put in place where needed. It was also noted that the detail of specific improvements would be set out at the Masterplanning and planning application stages, with detailed site specific modelling to determine what would be required in terms of mitigations at the time.
- In addition to the large strategic sites, smaller and medium sized greenfield and brownfield sites had also been proposed and that the option of a North West bypass had previously undergone some feasibility work which highlighted delivery would not be possible without significant external funding.
- The Local Plan includes a suite of policies and designations, including the Green Belt, Green Wedge, and Rural Area beyond the Green Belt, which highlight the importance of agricultural areas and promote agricultural and rural diversification.
- Policies had to comply with wider NPPF requirements and it was also important to note statements of common ground have been secured with all relevant partners.

Members of the Board thanked officers for their continued hard work in producing the Local Plan.

RESOLVED that;

1. the Board notes the Council responses in the Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Document and Focused Consultation Additional Sites (Regulation 19) Document 'You Said, We Did' Feedback Reports set out in the Regulation 22 Consultation Statement in Appendix 3.
2. the Board recommend to the Council's Cabinet that approval be sought from Full Council to submit the Chelmsford Local Plan attached at Appendices 1 and 2 to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination in accordance with Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).
3. the Board recommend to the Council's Cabinet that approval be sought from Full Council to ask that the person appointed to carry out the Independent Examination recommends modifications to the Chelmsford Local Plan as part of the Examination process, in accordance with Section 20(7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).
4. the Board recommend to the Council's Cabinet that approval be sought from Full Council for the Assistant Director – Planning and Place Shaping to be authorised, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member, to prepare all necessary documentation to support the submission of the Local Plan for Independent Examination.

5. the Board recommend to the Council's Cabinet that approval be sought from Full Council for the Assistant Director – Planning and Place Shaping, relevant Council Officers and consultants to be authorised, to act on behalf of the Council at the Independent Examination in respect of the Chelmsford Local Plan including submitting written statements and making oral representations at the Hearing Sessions.
6. the Board agree to a special meeting being called during the Independent Examination process, to approve any Schedule of Main Modifications recommended by the Local Plan Inspector to be published for public consultation.

(7.03pm to 8.29pm)

6. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 8.29pm

Chair