

What is happening?

We are reviewing our adopted Local Plan.

We adopted our current [Local Plan](#) in May 2020. It guides growth and development across Chelmsford City Council's area to 2036. We need to review the plan at least every five years, to see if we need to update it. We need to consider new national policy and changing local circumstances, and make sure we meet the needs of our current and future residents. The review will mean that the Local Plan will now run until 2041.

As part of this, we are taking a report to the Council's Chelmsford Policy Board on 16 January 2025. The report sets out the background to the Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Local Plan, including the evidence that has been used, how feedback received to Preferred Options consultation stage has been used, and how we will consult. The Policy Board meeting will also consider a 'You Said We Did' Feedback Report and Integrated Impact Assessment document. We will also seek approval to consult on our Draft Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This sets out how we will seek planning obligations, such as financial contributions towards important site improvements, when considering planning applications.

You can:

- [View the Chelmsford Policy Board report](#)
- [Read our article on Chelmsford City Life](#)
- [Find out how to attend and speak at the meeting](#)

Why do we have to review the adopted Local Plan?

We adopted our current Local Plan in May 2020 and good progress is being made with implementing it. Government requirements mean we must provide more homes, so we need to review the plan at least every five years to ensure that it remains up to date and continues to meet our needs for development growth to 2041.

The Government is clear that housing growth is fundamental to revitalising the economy and the thrust of national planning guidance (NPPF) is to 'boost significantly the supply of housing'. The need for housing is not just a national issue, but a local one too.

Without an up-to-date Local Plan, the Council could have very little influence over the location of new development and the provision of infrastructure. Sites could be promoted for development in locations that the Council and its communities want to protect, and which are not considered sustainable. Not having an up-to-date Local Plan would create uncertainty and make it harder to secure appropriate sites for new infrastructure such as schools and health facilities.

What Stage is the Local Plan at?

- **Issues and Options – Previous stage**

This was the first stage of consultation which took place in August to October 2022.

- **Preferred Options – Previous stage**

This was the second stage of consultation which took place in May to June 2024.

Many people and organisations commented on the Issues and Options and Preferred Options consultations. All representations have been carefully considered alongside updated evidence, national planning policy, new local priorities, and monitoring data. We have published all the comments on our [consultation portal](#).

- **Pre-Submission – Current stage**

This will be the third round of public consultation on the final draft Local Plan before we submit it for examination by a government-appointed independent Planning Inspector. The consultation will focus on legal compliance and consistency with national planning policy.

- **Submission – Future stage**

This is the formal Submission of the Local Plan. All Plan documents, evidence, and all comments received at Pre-Submission stage are submitted to the Planning Inspector for an Independent Examination.

What does the Pre-Submission Local Plan cover?

The Pre-Submission Local Plan includes:

- Updated and new Strategic Priorities and Policies
- Updated plan Vision
- Numbers for future development requirements, including homes and jobs
- A strategy for locating additional future growth to 2041 including new and updated site allocations
- Updated Policies Map.

How has the plan changed since the Preferred Options Local Plan consultation?

Numerous changes have been made from the Preferred Options Local Plan to the Pre-Submission Local Plan. Some of the plan changes relate to suggestions arising in the preferred options consultation responses. Others address recent evidence base work, respond to new information or have been made for clarification and consistency. Most changes made are considered relatively minor in nature and as such the Pre-Submission Local Plan essentially remains substantially the same in principle to the Preferred Options Consultation Document.

Is Hammonds Farm still a site allocation in the Pre-Submission Local Plan?

Yes, Hammonds Farm (SGS16a) and Junction 18 A12 Employment Area (SGS16b) remain site allocations in the plan. However, the site allocation policies have been refined and strengthened, where appropriate, to help address community and stakeholder concerns raised and any suggestions made for their improvement. This includes changes to the Policy Map to allocate land within the site to ensure important landscape and heritage features are protected.

The Council acknowledges that significant levels of opposition were received to these sites during the Preferred Options Local Plan consultation. However, it is important to note that the Council makes decisions on evidence and sound planning judgments, rather than solely basing them on the number of objections made.

What is the 'You Said We Did' Feedback Report?

This report summarises the Preferred Options Local Plan consultation undertaken in May to June 2024. It also summarises the representation received, the main issues raised and provides a summary of how the Preferred Options Local Plan has been informed by the representations and the evidence base.

What is the Integrated Impact Assessment?

The Integrated Impact Assessment assesses the Pre-Submission Local Plan against a range of social, environmental and economic indicators and helps to identify all the likely significant effects. The IIA advises on ways in which any adverse effects could be avoided, reduced or mitigated or how any positive effects could be maximised. This helps to ensure that the policies, plans and allocations in the Local Plan are promoting sustainable development. We will be consulting on this at the same time as the Pre-Submission Local Plan.

What is the evidence base?

National policy requires the Council to ensure that its Local Plan is based on appropriate up-to-date evidence about economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of Chelmsford. The evidence base comprises studies and working with key stakeholders and groups across the City area.

These evidence base documents are available online via www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review.

There are also evidence base documents which were used to support the adopted Local Plan which are still relevant. These evidence base documents are available to view at: <https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-local-plan/adopted-local-plan/evidence-base/>

How can I be kept up to date on progress?

We have a specially designed consultation portal for Local Plan and other planning policy consultations. If you register, you can:

- read and save consultation documents
- make your comments online
- receive alerts on future consultations

You can [find out more about how to use the consultation portal](#).

You can also [sign up to the Chelmsford City Life mailing list](#), to receive news updates.

How can I make my comments?

If Policy Board agrees to publish the Pre-Submission Local Plan on 16 January 2025, we anticipate running the consultation from 4th February for six weeks.

Please note the documents published for Chelmsford Policy Board are not the final consultation documents and therefore the Council cannot accept comments/representations ahead of the consultation opening in February.

The consultation will be a bit different to the previous two consultation stages in that the Government asks you to consider whether the Pre-Submission document is legally compliant and consistent with national policy, known as the 'Test of Soundness'. There will be specific consultation questions based on a model Government representation form available from 4th February 2025.

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