

What is the Preferred Options consultation?

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 including new homes, employment opportunities new schools, healthcare provision and upgraded transport infrastructure. The review will mean that the Local Plan will now run until 2041.

Why do we have to review the adopted Local Plan?

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 review at?

- **Issues and Options – Previous stage - Completed**

This was the first stage of consultation which took place in August to October 2022. Many people and organisations commented and all these representations have been carefully considered alongside an updated evidence base, national planning policy, new local priorities, and monitoring data. We have published all the comments on our [consultation portal](#).

- **Preferred Options – Current stage**

This consultation is the second formal stage in the preparation of the review plan, and a further opportunity for residents, businesses, developers, and other interested parties to get involved. The consultation runs for a period of six weeks from 10am on Wednesday 8 May 2024 to 4pm on Wednesday 19 June 2024.

- **Pre-Submission – Future stage**

This future 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.

- **Adoption – Future stage**

We anticipate adopting the new Local Plan in 2025/26. It will then be used to determine planning applications across the City Council's area.

What does the Preferred Options Local Plan cover?

We think that many parts of the adopted Local Plan and its policies are still up to date and generally performing well, so require no or only partial changes. Other parts, however, need updating alongside additional new policies that are required to reflect the latest national planning policy requirements, the Council's new ambitions and aspirations and to meet new development growth to 2041. The Preferred Options document is a full draft local plan. It includes:

- Updated draft Strategic Priorities
- A new draft Vision
- Numbers for future development requirements, including homes and employment land and a preferred strategy for locating additional future growth to 2041
- New and updated site allocation policies
- Updated strategic and development management policies
- An updated plan monitoring framework
- A new draft Policies Map which illustrates sites for development or protection.

We are inviting comments on the plan so residents can influence it and ensure that it is fit for purpose to meet local needs. We are not reopening any debates about the principle of already adopted allocated sites.

What parts of the Adopted Local Plan are proposed for change?

As the Council is undertaking a plan review, the Preferred Options Consultation Document is an edited and updated version of the existing adopted Chelmsford Local Plan 2020. The consultation document is a full draft plan and presented as a 'clean' version. A tracked change version has been produced so it is clear which parts are proposed for change. This is available via www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review.

New policies are shown in the order they will appear in the plan and will be renumbered in the next version of the plan.

How much development is proposed and where in the Preferred Options Local Plan?

The Preferred Options plan follows the approach in the adopted Local Plan by continuing to focus new housing and employment growth to the most sustainable locations in three Growth Areas - 1 Central and Urban Chelmsford, 2 North Chelmsford and 3 South and East Chelmsford.

The existing site allocations in the adopted plan which are not yet built are carried forward in the Preferred Options plan. Many of these sites are now coming forward, with masterplans being approved and planning applications decided or in progress. Some sites have also started building.

We have calculated that our annual housing requirement is 1,000 homes per year from 2022, when we started reviewing the Local Plan, until 2041. This equates to 19,000 homes. Over this whole period we allocate sites to accommodate about 20% more in total. That is because we know from historic housing supply in Chelmsford, not all sites will come forward or will be delayed for development for various reasons.

To meet additional housing growth needs to 2041 it is estimated that we need to allocate new sites for around 3,862 new homes. Provision is also made for a further 1,500 new homes beyond 2041. The Preferred Options Local Plan also plans to meet future employment needs by providing additional employment allocations for around 107,646sqm. These figures have been informed by an updated evidence base and data, including the Strategic Housing Needs Assessment (August 2023) and Employment Land Review (December 2023).

We are not considering growth in the Green Belt or Green Wedge.

How have we used the previous Issues and Options consultation comments?

The Council undertook initial public consultation on an Issues and Options document in 2022. All the responses have been carefully considered and used to progress the Preferred Options alongside an updated plan evidence base, national planning policy, new local priorities, and monitoring data.

The 'You Said We Did' feedback report provides a summary of how the Preferred Options plan has been informed by the Issues and Options consultation responses. This is available at www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review.

What is the Preferred Options Integrated Impact Assessment?

The adopted Local Plan was developed alongside a comprehensive Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) process. For this review process, the Council is including other aspects of sustainable development in an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA), which covers the following:

- Sustainability Appraisal
- Strategic Environmental Assessment
- Habitats Regulations Assessment
- Health Impact Assessment
- Equality Impact Assessment.

The IIA assesses the Preferred Options against a range of social, environmental and economic indicators and helps to identify all the likely significant effects. It 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 emerging policies, plans and allocations in the Local Plan are promoting sustainable development. We are consulting on the Preferred Options IIA at the same time as the Preferred Options document.

Where to view and comment on the Preferred Options documents?

View and comment online

You can view and comment on the consultation documents on the City Council's Consultation Portal at: www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planningpolicyconsult. This is our preferred method to comment.

If you have not used this system before or have any difficulties logging in, please see our guidance notes at: www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-portal-guide or call us on (01245) 606330.

View in person

Paper copies can be viewed at the City Council Customer Service Centre, Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1JE Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm (Please note we are closed on bank holidays).

Comment via email

Comments may be submitted by email: planning.policy@chelmsford.gov.uk
Please include your name and postal address in your message.

A specially designed response form can be downloaded at www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review or made available on request by telephoning (01245) 606330 or emailing planning.policy@chelmsford.gov.uk.

Paper comments

You can submit your comments by post or deliver them in person in the following ways:
Post: Spatial Planning Services, Chelmsford City Council, Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1JE

By hand: Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm - Customer Service Centre, Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1JE (outside of these hours you can use the post box outside the Customer Service Centre).

If you do not have access to a computer, you can request paper copies. A charge will be made to cover printing and postage costs.

If you have difficulties making representations by e-mail or post due to a disability, please call us (01245) 606330.

Where and when are the Local Plan exhibitions?

The Civic Centre drop-in public exhibitions will be staffed and provide an opportunity to meet a planning officer face-to-face. The other exhibitions in High Chelmer and South Woodham Ferrers will not be staffed – see details below.

Please check our website for any changes to the timetable before making a special trip.

Location	Date	Time
Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1JE	Thursday 16 May	6pm - 8pm
Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1JE	Friday 17 May	1pm - 3pm
Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1JE	Saturday 18 May	10am - 12pm

Location	Date	Time
High Chelmer Shopping Centre, 15a Exchange Way, Chelmsford, CM1 1XB	Monday 20 May to Friday 24 May	(unstaffed) 7am-6.30pm
South Woodham Ferrers Town Council offices, Champions Manor Hall, Hullbridge Road, South Woodham Ferrers, CM3 5LJ	Thursday 30 May Friday 31 May Monday 3 June to Friday 7 June Monday 10 June Tuesday 11 June	(unstaffed) 9am – 4pm
Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1JE	Thursday 13 June	6pm - 8pm
Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1JE	Friday 14 June	1pm - 3pm
Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1JE	Saturday 15 June	10am - 12pm (with British Sign Language interpreter available)

You can also visit our online exhibition which covers the key consultation topics via www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review.

What status does the Preferred Options Local Plan have?

The Preferred Options Local Plan is a consultation document. It will be of limited weight in the determination of planning applications as it is still at an early stage of the plan making process.

What is the Preferred Options evidence base?

National policy requires the Council to ensure that Local Plans are 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 across the City area.

The Preferred Options Local Plan has been informed by a wide range of evidence base documents. These include:

- Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)
- Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)
- Strategic Housing Needs Assessment
- Viability Assessment
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessments
- Heritage Assessments
- Parish Audit
- Water Cycle Studies
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessments, and
- Employment Land Review

Evidence base used to inform the Preferred Options plan is available at www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review.

Information on how the Preferred Options plan has been informed by the updated plan evidence is set out in a 'You Said We Did' Feedback Report also available at www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review.

Further evidence will be reviewed and updated as we progress through the next stage of the Review of the Local Plan.

We used a number of evidence base documents to support the adopted Local Plan. Many of these are still relevant or will be updated during the course of the review of the Local Plan and can be viewed at [evidence base for the Adopted Local Plan](#).

What happens after the Preferred Options consultation?

We will consider all responses received and use them to inform the next stage of the process, the Pre-Submission Local Plan. The Council will acknowledge receipt of comments although it will not enter into individual correspondence.

Responses will be published on the Council's Consultation Portal in accordance with the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulations.

How can I be kept up to date on progress with the Local Plan review?

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.

What are the Neighbourhood Plan consultations?

We are also consulting on two Neighbourhood Plans. These have been developed by Broomfield and Danbury Parish Councils, and cover a wide range of issues such as landscape, transport, recreation, heritage, building design, and business. When they are adopted, both Neighbourhood Plans will become part of the Local Plan and will be used for planning decision making.

You can view and comment on the Neighbourhood Plans on the [consultation portal](#):

4. Broomfield Neighbourhood Plan – click on this event to view and comment
5. Danbury Neighbourhood Plan – click on this event to view and comment.

[You can also read more](#) about the Neighbourhood Plans.

Has a planning application been submitted for the proposed Hammonds Farm development and are 10,000 objections required to stop the development?

The City Council is consulting on the potential allocation of development sites within the Preferred Options Local Plan, including Site 16a - East of Chelmsford Garden Community (Hammonds Farm). No planning applications have been submitted for the Hammonds Farm proposals.

It is not the number of objections received that govern the consideration of future development allocations in the Local Plan, rather the issues being raised and the evidence that supports them.

Planning Policy Team 3 June 2024

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