

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, Chelmsford Policy Board considered a report on 14 March 2024. The report set out the background to the Preferred Options document, including the evidence that has been used, feedback received to the Issues and Options consultation stage, and how we will consult. Chelmsford Policy Board agreed to prepare the document for consultation to take place in May and June 2024. You can [view the Chelmsford Policy Board report](#). We will offer a variety of opportunities to engage with the consultation and there will be different ways to submit your comments.

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

The Policy Board meeting also considered a 'You Said We Did' Feedback Report. This report summarises the Issues and Options Local Plan consultation undertaken, 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.

[You can also read our article on Chelmsford City Life.](#)

Why do we have to review the adopted Local Plan?

The Government requires all councils to review their Local Plan every five years. This will ensure that it remains up to date and continues to meet changing needs of our current and future residents.

As we adopted the Local Plan in May 2020, we must review it by May 2025 and that needs to start now, in order to ensure we properly involve the community.

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. Many people and organisations commented and all these 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](#).

- **Preferred Options – Current stage**

We are preparing for this stage of consultation (Spring 2022).

- **Pre-Submission – Future stage**

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 Preferred Options document cover?

We think that many parts of the adopted Local Plan and its policies are still up to date and generally performing well, so may 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 includes:

- Updated draft Strategic Priorities
- A new draft Vision
- Numbers for future development requirements, including homes and jobs
- A preferred strategy for locating additional future growth to 2041
- Some updates to development management policies.

What is the 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 issues and options 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 emerging policies, plans and allocations in the Local Plan are promoting sustainable development. We will be consulting on this at the same time as the Preferred Options document.

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

There are also evidence base documents which were used 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. Although they do not form part of this consultation 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.

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