

Welcome

Thank you for visiting today

What is the Local Plan

Our Local Plan shapes future growth and development of Chelmsford City Council's area. It sets out a positive vision, identifies where and how new development should take place in the future as well as areas and land uses that will be protected.

Why are we reviewing the adopted Chelmsford Local Plan?

We adopted our current Local Plan in May 2020. We need to review the plan at least every five years, to see if we need to update it. This is to make sure it remains up to date and meets the changing needs of our current and future residents.

This consultation is called the Issues and Options. It is our first stage towards updating the adopted Local Plan and is a starting point for us to engage with our communities.

We need to make sure that we are planning for new housing, jobs and infrastructure to meet local needs until 2041. If the Local Plan becomes out of date, the Council could have very little influence over the location of new development and supporting infrastructure.

What is included in the consultation?

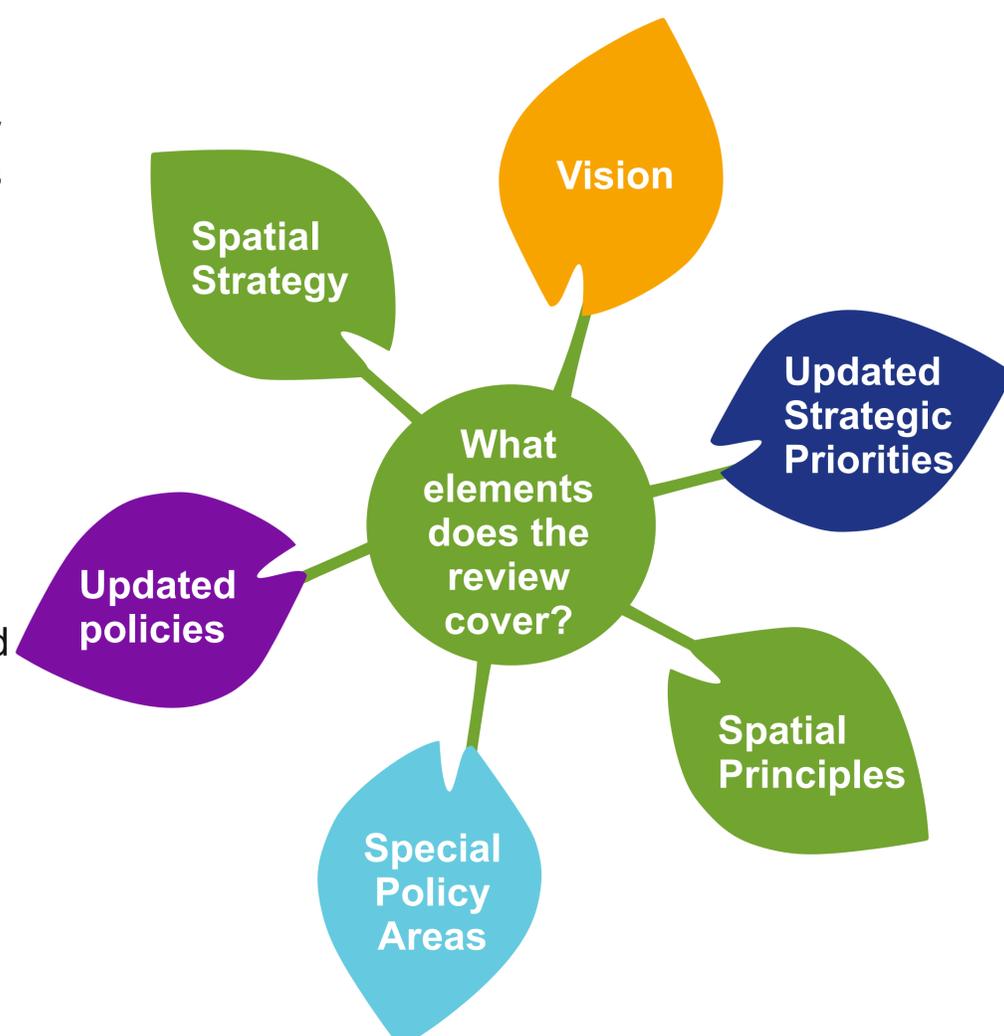
We want to make sure we cover the right issues and that all the suitable options for accommodating change are considered. The main areas we are consulting on are:

- Updated draft Strategic Priorities
- New draft Vision
- The approach to future development numbers, including homes and jobs

- Spatial Strategy Approaches for accommodating additional future growth to 2041
- The approach to reviewing our planning policies.

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 will 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.

As such, the review process is expected to result in changes to the adopted Local Plan – but we are not working on a completely new plan. Also, the review will not reopen any debates about sites already allocated in the Local Plan.





Key Challenges and Opportunities

There are a number of key challenges and opportunities for the Local Plan to address over the period to 2041. These cover requirements of national planning policy and regulations that we must meet, as well as local issues that we need to respond to.

Key challenges that we have identified include:

- Meeting Chelmsford's new housing and employment requirements to 2041
- How can we address the climate and ecological emergency?
- What can we do to address the affordable housing crisis?
- How will economic change impact employment opportunities including recovery from Covid-19?
- The future role of City/town centre retail areas including changes in how people shop, and changes to the Use Classes Order, including Permitted Development
- The role of Special Policy Areas (SPA) for large institutions that lie outside the built-up areas, where ordinarily policy would constrain new development
- The need to build stronger communities with community infrastructure, improved health and wellbeing
- How do we protect and increase biodiversity (net gain)?
- Ensuring that development provides great places and spaces
- How can sustainable and active travel be incorporated further into the Local Plan?

Key opportunities that we have identified include:

- Chelmsford is ranked as one of the least deprived local authorities in England, however there are pockets of deprivation in the urban area of Chelmsford
- Essex is forecast to experience significant new growth and change over the coming decades
- A strong and growing economy and employment base, with opportunities for sector development, innovation, and new technologies
- Good connectivity by road and rail with a new Chelmsford North East bypass and rail station opening in North East Chelmsford in the mid-2020s
- A high-quality environment with a growing multifunctional green infrastructure offer including new country parks, play areas, green spaces and greening the built environment
- A growing network of cycleways and an extensive Green Wedge network providing opportunities to increase active and sustainable transport
- New development will contribute through S106 contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy payments towards new and improved services, facilities and infrastructure in the area
- Tackling the climate and ecological emergency can support the development of green jobs, reduce flood risk and create new habitats
- Planned new community facilities and services, including schools, early years and childcare and shops can improve social integration.



Chelmsford was the first town granted **City status** in Essex

The population of Chelmsford has increased by 7.8% from around 168,300 in 2011 to **181,500 in 2021**

Chelmsford is at the **heart of Essex**, being centrally located within the County and adjoined by seven neighbouring local authorities



Vision (Chelmsford in the future)

The Local Plan Vision is a high-level guiding statement that sets out what is important for a place and how change will be managed in the future. It is a core part of a Local Plan and all the policies in the Plan will together deliver the Vision.

How we are reviewing the Vision

We have reviewed the Local Plan Vision to reflect the new local priorities within Our Chelmsford, Our Plan, which is the Council's updated Corporate Plan. We have also considered other national and local priorities and Chelmsford's challenges and opportunities. It has also been simplified, shortened and purposefully aligned to the Council's new corporate plan, to make it easier to use.

The Vision is also designed to contribute to creating sustainable development and provides a good foundation for the review of the remainder of the adopted Local Plan.

The proposed updated Vision is:

Guiding Chelmsford's growth towards a greener, fairer and more connected community.

Our Strategic Priorities

Our Strategic Priorities are the key priorities that the Local Plan is based on. It is very important that we consider these issues which might have a wider impact, not only within but also outside the Council's area. They look at what Chelmsford is like today, how things are changing, the issues that need to be addressed, and what opportunities may be created in future. These priorities set the overall policy direction for all the strategic policies, site allocations and development management policies in the Local Plan.

We are proposing some new priorities to help us act on the climate change and ecological emergency, and others have been updated to reflect new opportunities. We have also grouped the priorities to make sure the links between them are clear and that they can act together to achieve the best outcomes.

Priorities for climate



Addressing the Climate and Ecological Emergency (NEW priority)



Promoting smart, active travel and sustainable transport (NEW priority)



Protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, and support an increase in biodiversity and ecological networks

Priorities for growth



Ensuring sustainable patterns of development and protecting the Green Belt



Meeting the needs for new homes



Fostering growth and investment and providing new jobs

Priorities for place



Creating well designed and attractive places, and promoting the health and social wellbeing of communities



Delivering new and improved infrastructure to support growth



Encouraging resilience in retail, leisure, commercial and cultural development



How much growth are we planning for?

The adopted Local Plan has allocated sites for development which are now coming forward, with Masterplans being approved and planning applications decided or in progress.

In reviewing the Local Plan, we need to work out how many more houses and jobs we need to plan for until 2041. Using a formula set by the Government, called the standard method, we can work out a minimum figure for the number of houses needed. Then we add a buffer to make sure we can be flexible if some sites do not come forward, to meet the housing needs of specific groups, and to significantly boost the supply of different sizes and types of homes in the Council's area.

We estimate this to be an additional 7,966 homes by 2041.

The Local Plan will also need to meet future employment needs, and it may mean allocating some additional sites for employment development. We are carrying out a study of employment needs to make sure we can update our policies to support the economy in terms of providing sites for new jobs if required.

Spatial Principles

Our aim is to get the right type of development in the right places to meet the growing needs of local people and businesses while protecting our environment. We will consider a number of things to guide development to the most sustainable locations. We call these the Spatial Principles.

We want to update these through the review of the Local Plan. They are similar to what we have adopted in the Local Plan, with some changes to wording to make sure they are up to date.

Proposed Spatial Principles

- a) Locate development at well-connected and sustainable locations
- b) Protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development
- c) Promote the use of suitable previously developed land for development
- d) Continue and enhance the renewal and vitality of Chelmsford City Centre and its Urban Area
- e) Focus development at the higher order settlements outside the Green Belt and respect the development pattern and hierarchy of other settlements
- f) Respect the character and appearance of landscapes and the built environment, and preserve or enhance the historic environment and biodiversity
- g) Locate development to avoid or manage flood risk and reduce carbon emissions
- h) Ensure development is served by necessary infrastructure and encourage innovation
- i) Locate development to utilise existing and planned infrastructure effectively
- j) Ensure development is deliverable



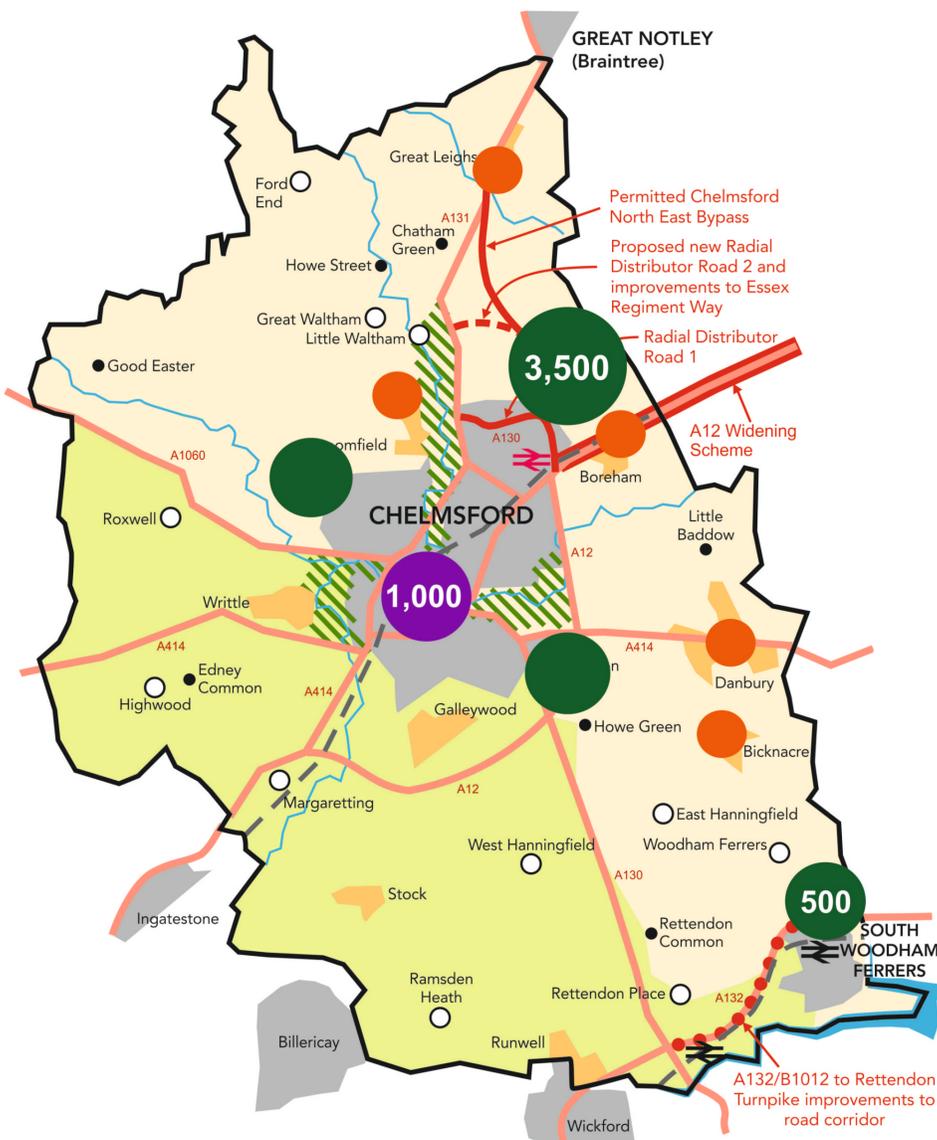
Where could growth be located?

There are several ways that growth can be accommodated, and therefore where sites are allocated. We consider an area's population, proximity to facilities, wellbeing of residents, land availability, what you tell us during the consultation, and lots of evidence on important matters.

We are looking at different approaches to see how the growth we need can be accommodated. The five approaches (referenced A to E) set out the same amount of growth but use different types of location. We do not identify any preferred options or specific development sites. We have shown an indicative number of homes for each location, which will be refined and informed by the results of the consultation and the evidence.

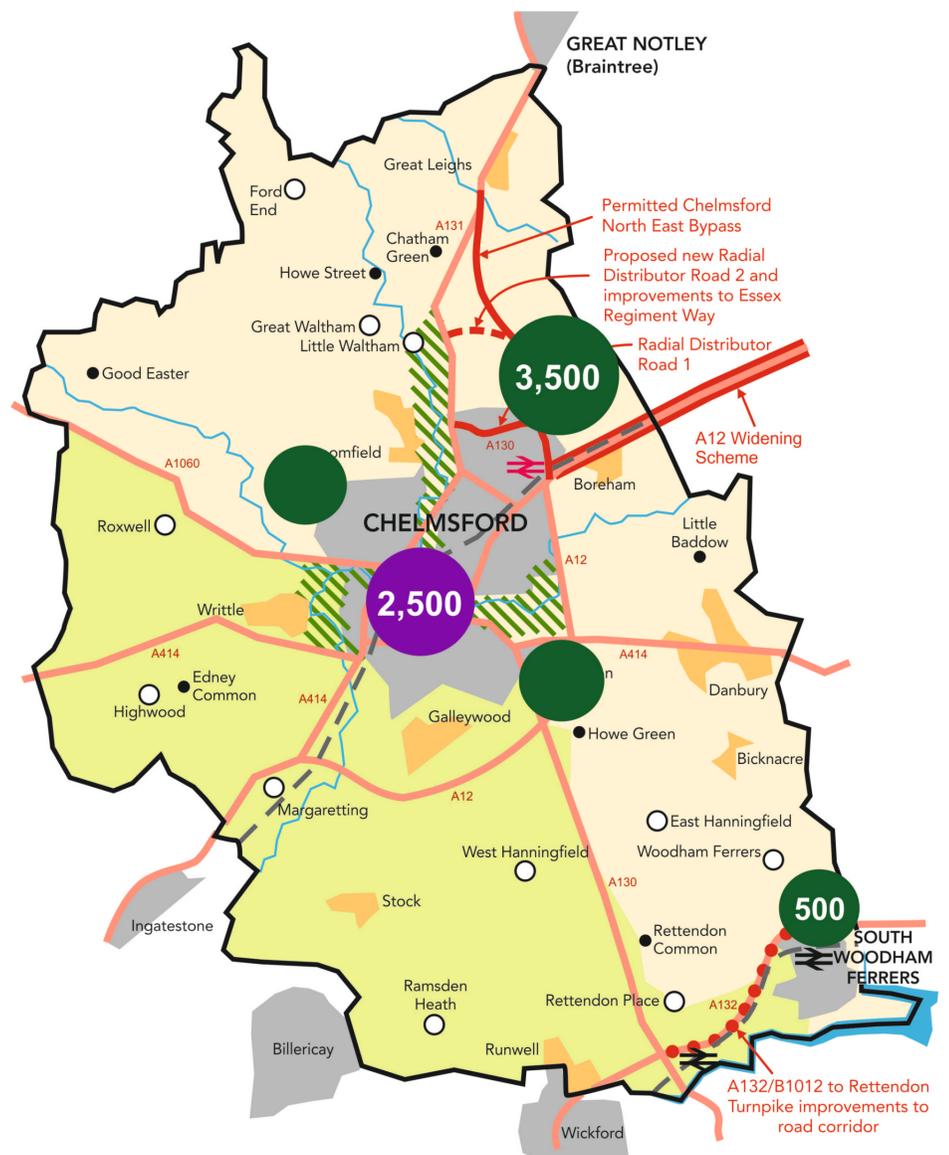
None of these include areas in the Green Belt, which is not being considered for new development allocations.

The feedback we receive during the consultation will be key to deciding which approach to follow, which might not be one of the five listed, but a combination of the most sustainable and deliverable elements.



Approach A – Growing the existing strategy -

This continues the approach already being used in the adopted Local Plan, with new allocations on previously developed land (1,000) and at larger villages (1,500 in total across one or more of the settlements of Bicknacre, Boreham, Broomfield, Danbury or Great Leighs) and expanding allocated sites (1,500 in total across West and East Chelmsford, 500 at South Woodham Ferrers and 3,500 at Chelmsford Garden Community).



Approach B – Concentrating growth in urban areas -

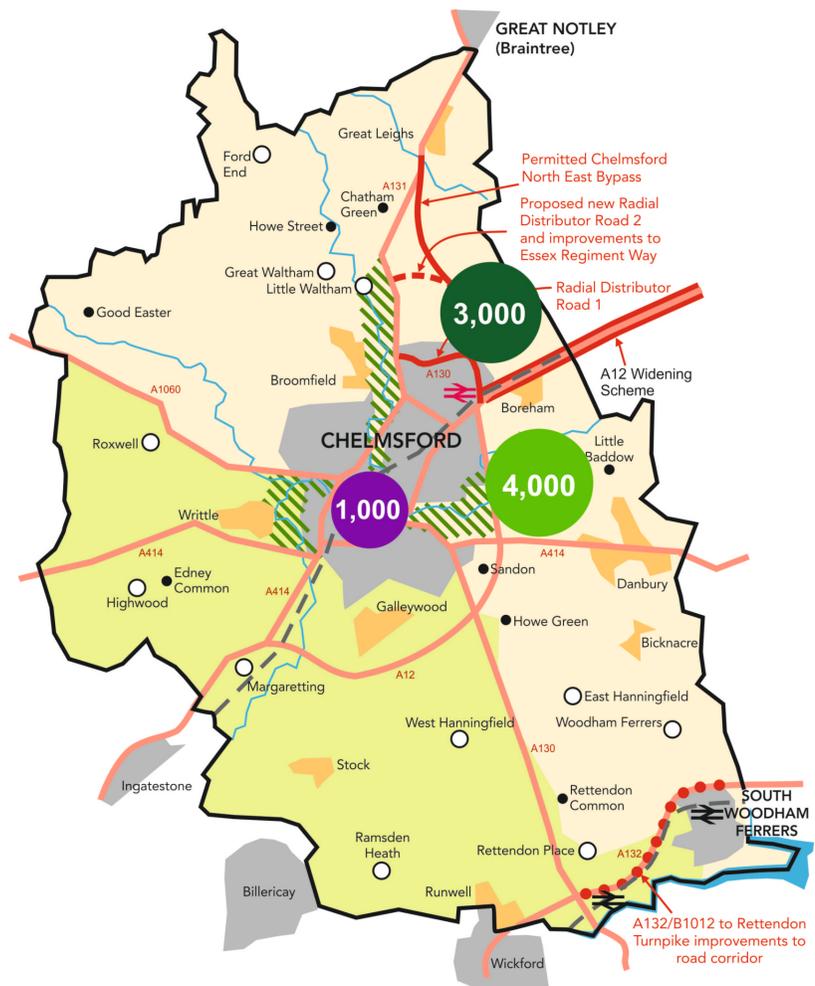
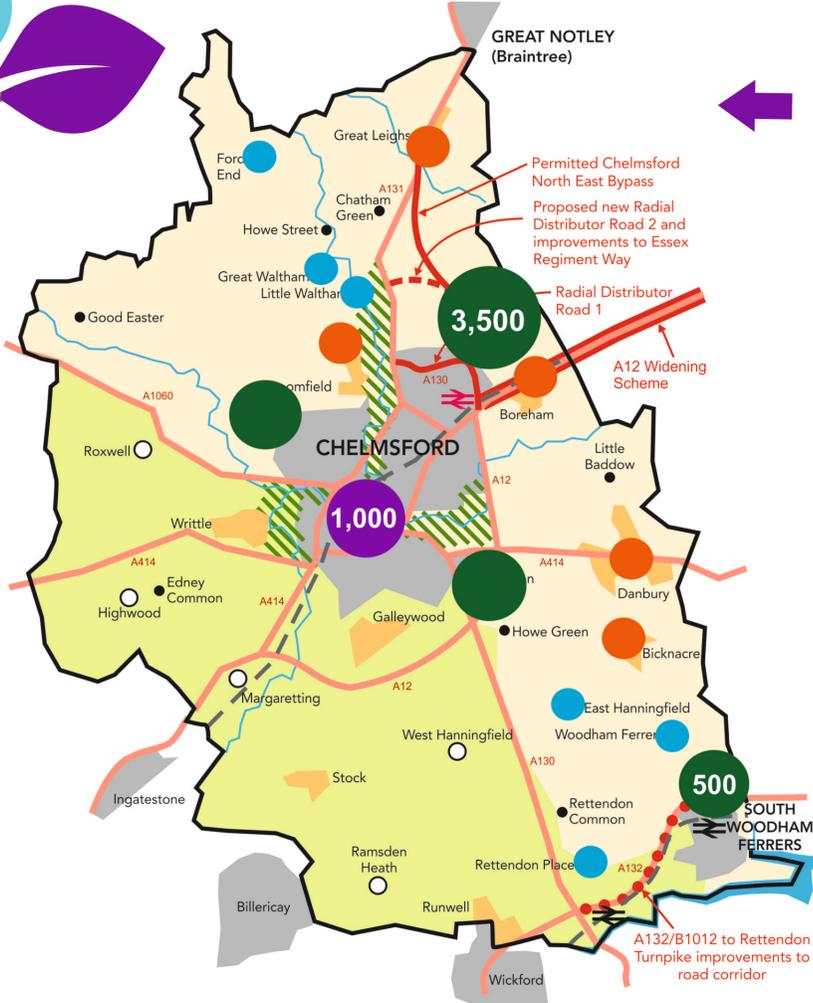
This continues the approach already being used in the adopted Local Plan, but maximises development in the City Centre and urban area (2,500) and expands allocated sites (1,500 in total across West and East Chelmsford, 500 at South Woodham Ferrers and 3,500 at Chelmsford Garden Community).

Where could growth be located?



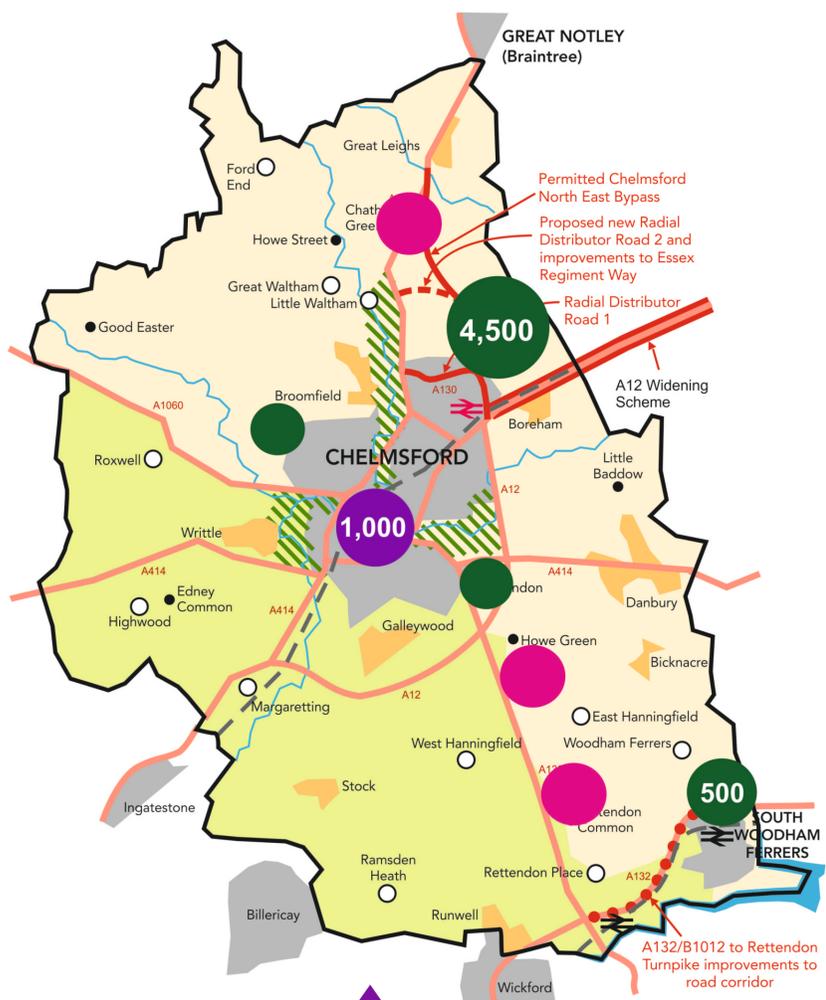
Approach C – Exploring a wider strategy -

This continues the approach already being used in the adopted Local Plan, with new allocations on previously developed land (1,000) and at larger villages (1,000 in total across one or more settlements of Bicknacre, Boreham, Broomfield, Danbury or Great Leighs), and expanding allocated sites (1,500 in total across West and East Chelmsford, 500 at South Woodham Ferrers and 3,500 at Chelmsford Garden Community). In addition, it proposes some development at smaller villages (500 in total across one or more settlement of East Hanningfield, Ford End, Gt Waltham, Lt Waltham, Rettendon Place and Woodham Ferrers).



Approach E – Exploring a new settlement -

This continues the approach already being used in the adopted Local Plan, with new allocations on previously developed land (1,000) and expanding the Chelmsford Garden Community (3,000). In addition, it proposes a large new settlement/garden community (4,000 at Hammonds Farm, east of A12/north of A414).



Approach D – Exploring growth along transport corridors -

This continues the approach already being used in the adopted Local Plan, with new allocations on previously developed land (1,000), expanding allocated sites (500 in total across West and East Chelmsford, and 500 at South Woodham Ferrers), and maximising growth at Chelmsford Garden Community (4,500). In addition, it proposes some growth along main transport corridors (1,500 in total across one or more settlement of Chatham Green, Howe Green and Rettendon Common).

Sustainable development

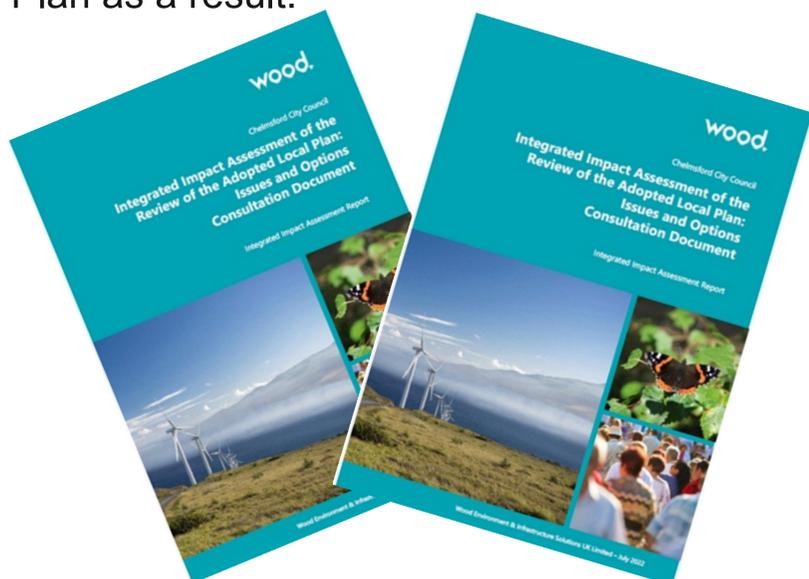
It's very important to make sure the Local Plan is focused on the most sustainable way of meeting the area's needs.

This covers a number of aspects, which we are reviewing through an independent Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA). This assesses social, economic and environmental effects of the review of the Local Plan, alongside health and equality impacts. We will be asking some separate questions about this as part of the consultation.

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 us to ensure that any changes to the policies and allocations in the Local Plan are promoting sustainable development. The IIA covers the following:

- ✔ Sustainability Appraisal (SA)
- ✔ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
- ✔ Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)
- ✔ Health Impact Assessment (HIA)
- ✔ Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA).

This will be repeated at each stage of the Local Plan review. We will publish a report to accompany each consultation showing the assessment, the outcomes of previous consultation stages, how comments have been taken into consideration, and any changes which are proposed to the review of the Plan as a result.



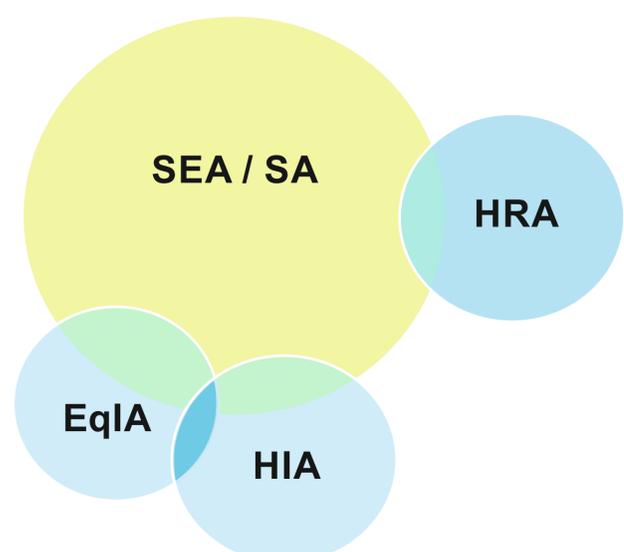
Other evidence

Local Plans are not developed in isolation, they must be based on evidence. We will be updating some existing evidence base studies and producing some new ones to inform the review of the Local Plan. These include:

- ✔ Strategic Housing Needs Assessment
- ✔ Employment Needs Study
- ✔ Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)
- ✔ Retail and Leisure Needs Study
- ✔ Village/Settlement Audits
- ✔ Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- ✔ Viability Assessment
- ✔ Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- ✔ Water Cycle Study
- ✔ Transport studies and highways modelling
- ✔ Heritage Impact Assessment
- ✔ Open Space Assessment.

These will all be published on our website as they are produced so you can see what we have based our decisions on. As the review progresses, we will also summarise key evidence into 'topic papers' which will give an overview of what the evidence is saying.

Overlap between the different forms of assessment





How to comment

This is your opportunity to feed into the review process at an early stage and help to shape the plan and the future of your area.

You can view the consultation documents on our specially designed consultation portal

www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planningpolicyconsult

The consultation documents are:

- Issues and Options Consultation Document 2022 (with questions included)
- Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) of the Review of the Adopted Local Plan

Our preferred means of receiving comments is through the consultation portal. This ensures that your comments are recorded accurately and are processed quickly. This system also allows you to download the consultation documents and sign up for alerts to future consultation events.

You can also make comments:

- By email to planning.policy@chelmsford.gov.uk
- By post to Spatial Planning Services, Chelmsford City Council, Civic Centre, Duke Street, Chelmsford, CM1 1JE.

There will be opportunities to meet with planning staff face-to-face at public drop-in exhibitions or to attend a webinar during the consultation period.

We have also published a summary newsletter.

You can find out more on our website

www.chelmsford.gov.uk/lp-review

The consultation on the Issues and Options document runs for ten weeks from 10am on Thursday 11 August to 4pm on Thursday 20 October 2022.

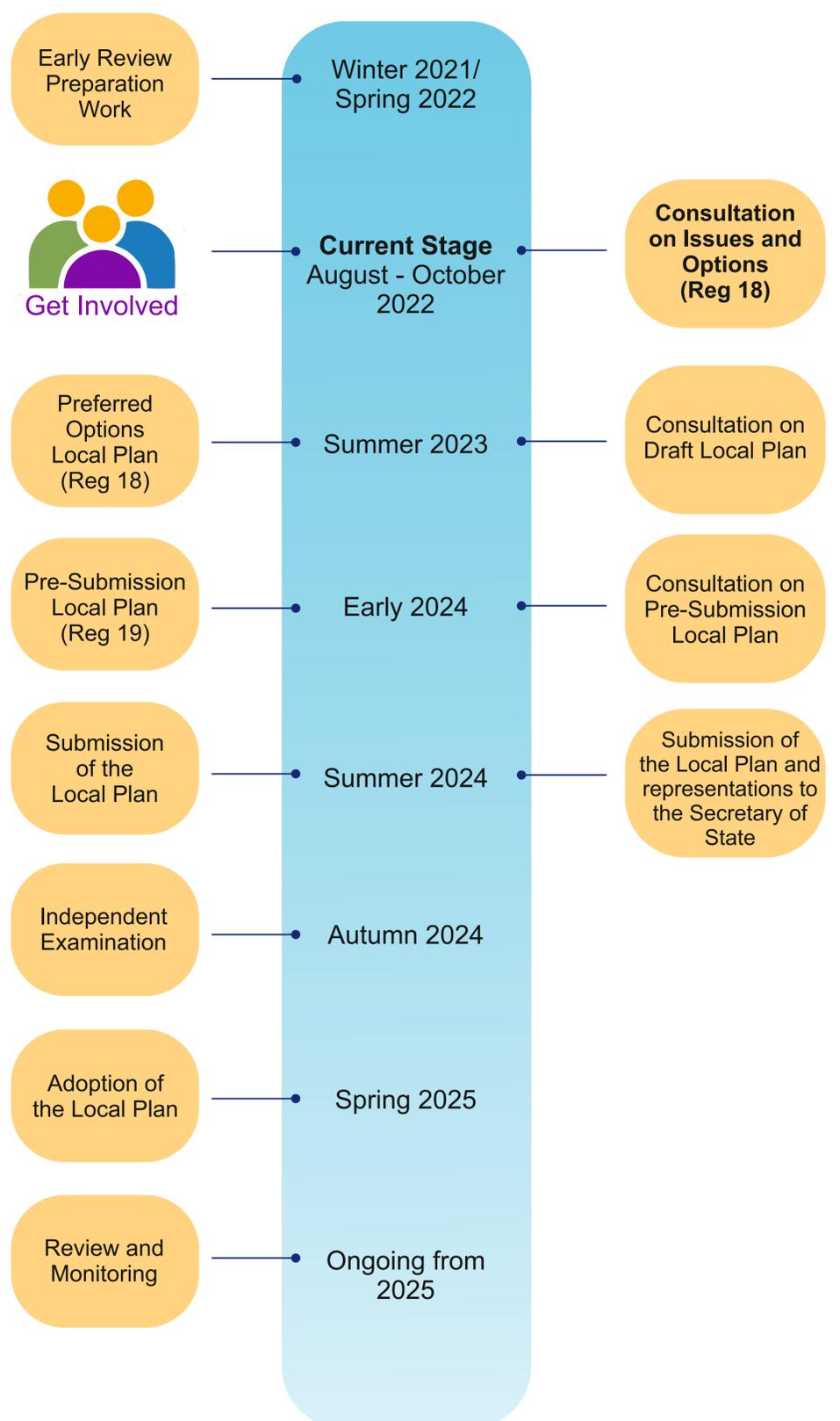
What happens next

We will consider all the comments received alongside further studies, the findings of the IIA and national planning policy to develop preferred options and specific proposals for sites and policies.

This will be set out in a Preferred Options Review Plan, which will be published for public consultation in summer 2023.

The key stages in the new Local Plan preparation are:

Timetable of Local Plan review





Frequently Asked Questions

What status does the Issues and Options Local Plan have?

In accordance with the NPPF, as this is the first stage of the Review of the Local Plan (which is early in the Plan making process) limited weight in the determination of planning applications will be given to this consultation document.

What will happen to the current Local Plan?

The current adopted Local Plan will remain in place until such time as the review is complete. At this point the review Plan will replace the current adopted Local Plan.

How can I bring land forward for development?

You can promote land to us through our Call for Sites facility. Sites submitted to us will be assessed through our Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) following the close of the Issues and Options Consultation.

More information can be found on our website at: <https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-and-local-plan/call-for-sites-shelaa-and-parish-maps/>

What does the Review mean for Neighbourhood Planning?

South Woodham Ferrers and Writtle have adopted Neighbourhood Plans which form part of the adopted Local Plan. They will be checked when the reviewed Local Plan is adopted to ensure they remain compatible.

Work will continue on the emerging Neighbourhood Plans for Boreham, Broomfield, Danbury, East Hanningfield, Little Baddow, and Sandon. They will need to reflect the current stage of the review of the Local Plan as they progress.

What has new development brought to Chelmsford?

The priorities of the adopted Local Plan, delivery of allocated sites and developer contributions are bringing new development, improvements and infrastructure to Chelmsford, including:

- Housing and commercial development
- Community facilities
- Transport infrastructure
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions.

Are there other Local Plan exhibitions?

We have rearranged in-person exhibitions at the Chelmsford Council Chamber to the following dates:

- Friday 7th October 2022, 11am to 2pm
- Saturday 8th October 2022, 10am to 1pm

