

Background Report to Chelmsford City Council Regulation 19 Local Plan 2018

1. Chelmsford City Council published the Regulation 19 Pre Submission Local Plan under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 for a period of six weeks from 31 January 2018, and is seeking comments. Epping Forest District Council as one of the neighbouring authorities has been invited to make comments on the Regulation 19 Local Plan. The Chelmsford City Council Local Plan Pre Submission Document (Regulation 19-Publication Draft) January 2018 covers the timeline 2013-2036. It follows consultations on the Issues and Options (2016) and Preferred Options (2017). The plan contains strategic priorities, vision and spatial principles, development requirements and the spatial strategy. The plan allocates land for a variety of uses in these three growth areas and sets down a series of policies under the headings “Protecting and Securing Important Assets” and “Making High Quality Places”. In addition to a monitoring and implementation framework the plan contains a ‘Development Standards’ appendix and carries forward the North Chelmsford Area Action Plan. The latter does not form part of the consultation since it was adopted in 2011.
2. The spatial strategy seeks to make best use of previously developed land in Chelmsford Urban Area, sustainable urban extensions around Chelmsford and South Woodham Ferrers and development around Key Service Settlements outside the Green Belt in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy. The new development allocations are focussed on three growth areas of Central and Urban Chelmsford, North Chelmsford and South and East Chelmsford. ‘Special Policy Areas’ are used to support the functioning of largely institutional uses on some large sites in institutional use in the countryside. Epping Forest District boundary with Chelmsford City Council is a short portion to the east of Fyfield and High Ongar, in metropolitan Green Belt that also extends to the west of Chelmsford City. The closest settlements in Chelmsford are Roxwell, Edney Common and Writtle, all located in Green Belt, with settlement boundaries.
3. The nine strategic priorities of the plan are: Ensuring sustainable patterns of development; Meeting the needs for new homes; Fostering growth and investment and providing new jobs; Protecting and enhancing retail, leisure and commercial development; Delivering new and improved strategic infrastructure; Delivering new and improved local infrastructure; Protecting and enhancing the Natural and Historic Environment, the Green Belt and valued landscapes; and Reinforcing Chelmsford’s regional role as ‘Capital of Essex’. The vision focusses on the role of the city as the Capital of Essex and continued growth coupled with improved infrastructure and facilities, sustainable transport provision and capitalising on the areas natural and built historical environments. Strategic Policy 1 Spatial Principles sets out guiding principles to deliver the strategic priorities and underpin the spatial strategy. These principles seek to: maximise the use of previously developed land, continue to renew Chelmsford City Centre and Urban area, locate development in well connected sustainable locations, avoid or manage flood risk, protect Green Belt and valued landscapes, heritage and biodiversity, respect the current settlement hierarchy, ensure deliverable development served by the necessary infrastructure and plan for the term beyond the plan period. Further strategic policies address the presumption in favour of sustainable development, climate change and flood risk, inclusion and neighbourhood planning, conservation of the natural and historic environment and the protection of community assets.
4. The plan provides for 21,983 dwellings across the plan period and makes new allocations for 9,085 dwellings (existing commitments include some 220 dwellings on reallocated sites from existing plans). It assumes 1,400 dwellings as windfall. The overall provision is said to represent 20% more than the full objectively assessed housing need

of 18,515 dwellings (805 dpa) for the plan period. The Council calculates that the plan figure meets the Governments standard housing need methodology calculation consulted upon in September 2017 of a capped housing need of 980 dpa for the period 2016 – 2026 and extends this to 2036.

5. Chelmsford City Council is a core member of the Cooperation for Sustainable Development Board but not included in the West Essex/ East Herts Strategic Housing Market Area – the relevant Housing Market Area covers Chelmsford, Braintree, Colchester and Tendring Councils. There is therefore no expectation that Epping Forest District Council would meet any unmet need for housing including that for Gypsies and Travellers arising from Chelmsford City Council, should it arise.
6. Provision for Gypsy and Traveller pitches amounts to 9 pitches for travellers and 24 Plots for Travelling Show People. This includes a proportion of unknown households and is in line with the Essex Wide GTAA Summary Report January 2018. The approach is welcomed.
7. To accommodate an identified need for a growth averaging 725 new jobs per year to 2036 (totalling nearly 11,000) the plan makes provision for a minimum of 55,000sqm of business employment space. In addition convenience retail of 11,500sqm is provided for within the City Centre or Designated Centres within Chelmsford's Urban Area and additional convenience retail floorspace of 1,900sqm at South Woodham Ferrers.
8. Epping Forest District shares a small part of its boundary with Chelmsford City Council and the route of the A414 crosses the boundaries. The proposed allocations closest to Epping Forest District boundary are located to the west of Chelmsford. Any cross boundary transport impacts are expected to be mitigated. As it stands background growth assumptions which take into account future development within adjoining districts and beyond have been taken into account within Epping Forest District Council's Transport Modelling through the use of TEMPRO growth assumptions. This is the nationally recognised approach to understanding wider traffic growth over the plan period.
9. In response to the consultation on the Preferred Options Plan EFDC noted that Policy S12 (now Policy S11 in the pre submission version) makes provision for park and ride site (or sites) to serve the West of Chelmsford. The area of search is noted on the Policies map (January 2018) as on the A414 adjacent to an existing employment area, and in the Green Belt. EFDC requested that Chelmsford City Council keep us informed about the further scoping of this new facility, such that EFDC could be engaged in considering whether the details of this proposal may have an impact on the A414 as it passes through Epping Forest District. On reflection this is no longer considered to be likely to give rise to any significant impact on traffic in the Epping Forest District and so no longer of note.
10. The Council is therefore pleased to note that the Chelmsford City Councils Local Plan Pre submission Document (Regulation 19 Publication Draft) January 2018 is broadly consistent with the Epping Forest District Local Plan Submission Version 2017. We do not have concerns regarding the soundness of the plan. A letter is attached to be sent to Chelmsford City Council from EFDC as the formal response to the plan.