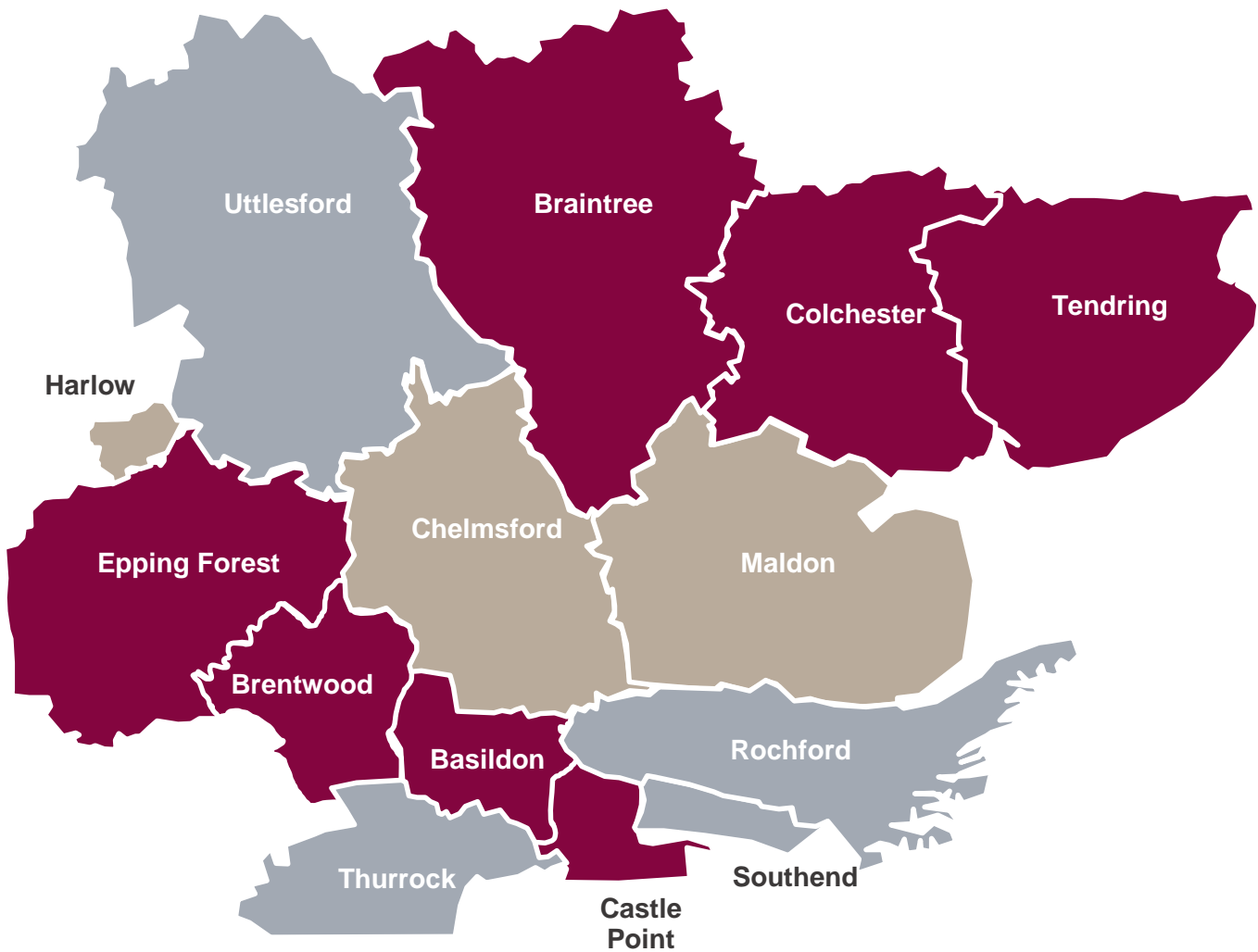


Local Plan Tracker | Essex

May 2021

Initial Stages
Regulation 18 – Public consultation
Regulation 19 – Publication of submission local plan
Regulation 22 – Submitted to Secretary of state
Regulation 24 – Examination
Approved / adopted



LOCAL AUTHORITY CURRENT POSITION

Basildon

- The new Local Plan was submitted for examination on 28 March 2019 – Inspector Paul Griffiths has been appointed by the Secretary of State to examine the plan.
- The submitted Local Plan acknowledges that it does not meet housing need in full.
- Examination hearing sessions have yet to be timetabled.
- DEFRA wrote to Basildon Borough Council and Essex County Council regarding air quality concerns at A127 junctions within the Borough. Air quality and transport work is being undertaken, with Basildon Borough Council having written to the Planning Inspectorate Service to request a delay to the start of the examination on 28 June 2019.
- The Planning Inspectorate responded to Basildon Borough Council via email on 5 July 2019, indicating they are content with deferring the EiP to allow for additional works to be undertaken.
- Following a lengthy hiatus, and the submission of additional evidence by the Council in response to the Ministerial Direction received from DEFRA in June 2019, due to concerns surrounding air quality, the Inspector resumed the examination as of 15 December 2020. Alongside this, the Inspector has issued his initial questions for the Council. These include those relating to housing need and the approach to its provision; the Duty to Cooperate; and provision for Gypsies and Travellers, and Travelling Show-People.
- Basildon Borough Council responded to the Inspector's initial questions in February 2021. The Inspector responded to those submissions in April 2021, and we understand the details of the response will be published in May.
- The evidence base for the Local Plan has been updated in a number of key areas since the submission of the Plan, including the Basildon Town Centre Regeneration Strategy; Transportation; Housing Delivery; Infrastructure; Air Quality and Viability.
- We await the Inspector's response to the updated evidence and consequential modifications to the Plan to follow.
- Several applications for major residential development have been submitted for sites around Basildon Town Centre, proposing development that has the potential to improve the Borough's five-year housing supply.
- In addition to the Council's own Local Plan, Basildon Borough Council is working with other authorities within South Essex to produce a Joint Strategic Plan. This is addressed further within this update under separate heading.

Braintree

- The new Local Plan comprises two parts: Section 1 being prepared jointly with Colchester and Tendring (the North Essex Authorities) and addressing strategic issues such as total housing requirements and garden communities; and Section 2 being prepared by the individual authority and including site-specific allocations.
- Braintree District Councils adopted the Section 1 Local Plan on 22 February 2021. This Local Plan addresses strategic matters such as the District's housing requirement, but does not allocate specific sites at the local level, nor provide detailed development management policies – these are matters for the Section 2 Local Plan.
- Jameson Bridgwater PGDipTP MRTPI and Anne Jordan BA (Hons) MRTPI have been appointed to examine the Section 2 Local Plan.
- Publication of the Inspectors' Matters, Issues and Questions is anticipated in May 2021, with the commencement of hearing sessions to follow in July 2021.
- It is considered likely that main modifications will be required to the submitted Section 2 Local Plan, with consultation on these potentially in late 2021.
- Adoption of the Section 2 Local Plan is not anticipated until 2022.

Brentwood

- The Brentwood Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination on 14 February 2020. Yvonne Wright BSc(Hons) DIPT&CP MSc MRTPI and Mike Worden BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI have been appointed to conduct the examination to determine whether the Local Plan is sound.
- Stage 1 Hearing sessions were held between 1 December and 4 December 2020 relating to strategic matters including Duty to Cooperate and legal compliance; spatial strategy; housing need; affordable housing; employment needs; and Green Belt.
- As part of the first phase of hearing sessions, allegations were made that the Council has failed to meet the Duty to Cooperate in preparing its Local Plan. This included strong objections by neighbouring Thurrock Council in relation to this issue. The Inspectors indicated they would provide a view on whether they consider the Duty to Cooperate has been met ahead of the Stage 2 hearing sessions in February 2021. Whilst views have not been expressly confirmed, given that Stage 2 hearing sessions went ahead, it can be inferred the Inspectors feel the Duty to Cooperate has been met.
- Stage 2 hearing sessions were held between 2 February and 11 March 2021.
- Through such hearing sessions, the Council agreed a number of main modifications are required to the submitted plan. In addition, the Inspectors have requested the preparation of further evidence.
- Perhaps most notably, following issues raised by Highways England shortly before hearing sessions on such matters were due to take place, the Council has prepared a timetable for the preparation of additional work on transport and highways matters. This additional work is intended to culminate in a revised Statement of Common Ground in place between the Council and Highway England by early June. It is anticipated further hearing sessions may be required following this.
- Main modifications will be required to the submitted plan.
- It is anticipated that the plan may be capable of adoption before the end of 2021, subject to the outcome of the further engagement with Highways England.
- In addition to the Council's own Local Plan, Brentwood Borough Council is working with other authorities within South Essex to produce a Joint Strategic Plan. This is addressed further within this update under separate heading.

Castle Point

- The current adopted Local Plan is considerably out-of-date, having been adopted back in 1998.
- The Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan. The Council submitted the Castle Point Local Plan 2018-2033 to the Secretary of State on 2 October 2020 for examination. The Planning Inspectorate wrote to the Council on 26 November 2020 to inform the Council of a change of Inspector to Phillip Lewis BA (Hons) MA MRTPI.
- The Inspector published his set of Initial Matters, Issues and Questions on 10 February 2021, inviting responses back no later than 8 April 2021. Hearing Sessions have now been draft timetabled for 11 May and will run until 10 June 2021.
- In addition to the Council's own Local Plan, Castle Point Borough Council is working with other authorities within South Essex to produce a Joint Strategic Plan. This is discussed further within this update under separate heading.

Chelmsford

- The new Chelmsford Local Plan was formally adopted on 27 May 2020.
- The Council have recently updated their Strategic Housing Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) evidence base, with landowners, developers and promoters providing up to date site details and information where circumstances have changed since submitted through the last Call for Sites / SHELAA process.

Colchester

- The new Local Plan comprises two parts: Section 1 being prepared jointly with Colchester and Tendring (the North Essex Authorities) and addressing strategic issues such as total housing requirements and garden communities; and Section 2 being prepared by the individual authority and including site-specific allocations.
- Colchester Borough Council adopted the Section 1 Local Plan on 1 February 2021.
- Following the adoption of the Section 1 Local Plan in February 2021, hearing sessions for Section 2 took place until 30 April 2021.
- A number of issues have arisen during the Examination of the Section 2 Local Plan, and main modifications to the submitted plan are likely to be required.
- It is considered that adoption of the Section 2 Local Plan may still be possible before the end of 2021.

Epping Forest

- The Examination hearing sessions ran until 12 June 2019. A host of issues relating to soundness and legal compliance were raised as part of the Examination.
- The Inspector issued her post-hearing advice note to the Council on 2 August 2019. This set out a number of actions for the Council if the Local Plan can be made to be sound, including a number of modifications.
- The Inspector wrote to the Council in a letter dated 16 July 2020, in light of the recent publication of the ONS 2018-based household projections requesting whether the Council consider that there has been a meaningful change in the housing situation. Specifically, the Inspector requested further information on the effect of the 2018 projections vs the 2014 based projections used in the SHMA; if there are any implications on the Plan's housing requirement having regard to the HMA; and whether the reduced projection in household growth affects the justification for Green Belt release. The Council responded on 4 September 2020, and the responses to this consultation have now been published.
- The Council has since been working on a schedule of Main Modifications (MMs) to the address the points raised in the Inspector's note. The Council has submitted the majority of outstanding material requested by the Inspector, as confirmed in a letter from the Inspector to the Council dated 2 October 2020. Within that letter the Inspector confirms a disruption to work commitments in October and November 2020, and that a revised timeframe for providing a response to the submitted material will follow in due course.
- The Inspector provided update on the EiP on 8 February 2021 updating interested parties that the majority of outstanding information requested of the Council has been received and feedback presented to the Council. Due to the volume and complexity of the documentation the process of finalising the Main Modifications Schedule has incurred delays, frustrated further by the impact of Covid-19. The Inspector assures that progress is being made and further update will be provided soon.

Harlow

- The Harlow Local Development Plan was adopted on 10 December 2020.

Maldon

- Local Development Plan approved on 25 July 2017.
- Maldon District Council are currently undertaking a review of their Local Plan. As part of this, the Council are carrying out a Call for Sites consultation which was initially scheduled to run until 21 May, but has now been extended until 7 June.
- The timetable for the review of the Local Plan is presently unclear.

Rochford

A number of evidence base documents were approved for publication at Rochford Council's Planning Policy Committee meeting held on 7 January 2021. These documents include a Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), Urban Capacity Study, Green Belt Study and a Landscape Character, Sensitivity and Capacity Study.

- The Council is considering an option of preparing a joint Section 1 Local Plan with Southend Borough Council to cover both Local Planning Authorities, addressing cross-boundary strategic issues; with Section 2 Local Plan to cover individual authorities' allocations and policies.
- The Council is also considering an additional Regulation 18 stage, given the time since the Issues and Options iteration of the Plan was consulted upon. However, a new Local Development Scheme is yet to be agreed.
- A new Local Plan timetable was expected to be published in early 2021, however this is yet to be published.
- In early 2021, the Council published additional Local Plan evidence base studies, including Green Belt Review.
- Further Regulation 18 consultation, potentially on growth options, is anticipated to take place in late summer / early autumn 2021.
- In addition to the Council's own Local Plan, Rochford District Council is working with other authorities within South Essex to produce a Joint Strategic Plan. This is addressed further within this update under separate heading.

Southend

- Consultation on Local Plan Issues and Options ran from 5 February until 2 April 2019.
- Three options for meeting the Borough's development needs were presented, including the option of a cross-boundary new settlement prepared in conjunction with a neighbouring authority.
- The Council is preparing elements of its Local Plan evidence base jointly with neighbouring Rochford District Council.
- A further Regulation 18 consultation is anticipated before the end of 2021.
- In addition to the Council's own Local Plan, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is working with other authorities within South Essex to produce a Joint Strategic Plan. This is addressed further within this update under separate heading.

Tendring

- The new Local Plan comprises two parts: Section 1 being prepared jointly with Colchester and Tendring (the North Essex Authorities) and addressing strategic issues such as total housing requirements and garden communities; and Section 2 being prepared by the individual authority and including site-specific allocations.
- Following the adoption of the Section 1 Local Plan in January 2021, hearing sessions for Section 2 took place between 23 February and 3 March 2021.
- Main modifications are required to be made to the plan, but it is considered that the Council is well-placed to adopt the Section 2 before the end of 2021.

Thurrock

- Public Consultation on the Issues and Options 2 took place between 12 December 2018 and Friday 8 March 2019.
- An update on the emerging Local Plan was presented to committee on 7th September which set out that a new Local Development Scheme will be published in October 2020. It is anticipated to propose a Regulation 18 consultation in January 2022, Regulation 19 consultation in May/June 2023, submission of the Plan in June 2023 and adoption in December 2023.
- The Council wrote to all promoters of the emerging Local Plan asking whether they would be willing to enter into a Planning Performance Agreement, in accordance with a newly published Planning Performance Guidance Note and Performance Template. The Council are still looking to engage in PPAs, but these have been delayed due to Covid-19 restrictions. It is likely the Council will commence the PPA process in September 2021.
- Stakeholder workshops as part of Design Charrettes, to inform the Local Plan, took place between January and March 2021. These covered eight growth locations: Bulphan; Chadwell; Corringham/Fobbing; Stanford le Hope; South Ockendon; Orsett; Horndon on the Hill; and East Tilbury.
- In addition to the Council's own Local Plan, Thurrock Council is working with other authorities within South Essex to produce a Joint Strategic Plan. This is addressed further within this update under separate heading.

Uttlesford

- On 20 April 2020 the Council resolved to withdraw its Local Plan, in light of the Inspectors' advice and recommendations.
- Cabinet resolved to adopt a new Local Development Scheme on 20 October 2020. The key dates are: Issues & Options consultation due September 2020 to April 2021; Preferred Options consultation due March/April 2022; Pre-submission consultation due March/April 2023; submission of the Plan is due August 2023 and adoption due July 2025.
- As part of the Issues and Options Consultation, the Council hosted a series of stakeholder engagement consultation events discussing each of the key themes / topics within the Issues and Options document.
- The Council formally consulted on a Call for Sites consultation running alongside the Issues and Options inviting submissions for new and existing sites into the Local Plan review process. The deadline was 21 April 2021.
- The next round of consultation (Regulation 18) is scheduled for March - April 2022.
- The Council aim to adopt the new Local Plan in mid-2024.

**South Essex**

- In 2018 the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) was established, comprising Basildon Borough Council, Brentwood Borough Council, Castle Point Borough Council, Rochford District Council, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, and Thurrock Borough Council.
- A Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been signed by the authorities, committing them to the preparation of a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) for South Essex.
- The SoCG also states that the authorities are exploring whether the development of new garden communities could offer a strategic solution to growth.
- The SoCG states that Local Plans for authorities will still be prepared, but will need to be reviewed at key stages to ensure alignment. As such, it is expected that the JSP will significantly influence preparation of individual South Essex authorities' Local Plans.
- Work on the JSP has identified several 'Strategic Areas of Opportunity', which are considered to have potential to accommodate growth.
- Studies published as part of the JSP's evidence base to date include:
 - o South Essex Strategic Growth Location Study (which considers options for housing growth in the sub-region).
 - o South Essex Employment Growth on space Study
 - o South Essex Gypsy and Traveller Area Assessment (GTAA)
- A South Essex Joint Strategic Plan Timetable Note was published through the Brentwood Local Plan examination, which confirms that the programme for the production of the JSP will be as follows: an issues consultation is anticipated to take place in the second half of 2021, and have an adopted Plan by the end of 2023. This timetable remains subject to review by ASELA.
- ASELA prepared a Growth and Recovery Prospectus for South Essex 2050, the aim of which was to seek Government support for proposals for growth in South Essex.
- The Councils have consulted on a Statement of Community Involvement which sets out how the authorities will engage with stakeholders in the preparation of the JSP.

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