

CHELMSFORD ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Supporting Parish and Town Councils in the District of Chelmsford

Chair: Joe Parsad

Association Clerk: Louise Flavell email: clerk.chelmsfordalc@gmail.com

MEMBERS MEETING

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON: 1st July 2026 at 7.00pm, held at Little Baddow Memorial Hall, North Hill, Little Baddow CM3 4TA

Chair of the Meeting: Joe Parsad (Rettendon)

Present: Cllr Steve Davis (Runwell), Cllr Anton Shelupanov (Roxwell), Cllr Alan Martin (Great Waltham), Cllr Angie Faulds (Broomfield), Cllr Sue Young (Great Baddow), Cllr Rob Jeremy (Essex County Council), Cllr Paul Clark (Essex County Council), Cllr John Bedding (East Hanningfield), Cllr Guy Brazendale (Springfield), Cllr Paul Chandler (Rettendon), Cllr Mia Barnett (South Woodham Ferrers), Cllr Peter Elkington (Boreham), Cllr Martin Dean (Chelmer Village), Cllr Cedric Calmeyer (Sandon), Cllr Martin Cross (Sandon), Cllr Alan Roche (Little Baddow), Cllr Melanie Williamson (Chelmsford Garden Community) and Cllr Margaret Bleet (Broomfield)

In Attendance: Nick Eveleigh, Chief Executive Officer – Chelmsford City Council

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and agreed for Cllr Mandy Hessing (Danbury), Cllr Veronica Sadowsky (Great Baddow), Cllr I Nicholls (Writtle) and Cllr Karen Jones (West Hanningfield)

2. Minutes of Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd April 2026 were noted and agreed. Proposed by Cllr Joe Parsad and seconded by Cllr Melanie Williamson.

3. Presentation by Nick Eveleigh, Chelmsford City Council

A presentation and questions followed a presentation by Nick Eveleigh. The notes of this are attached to these minutes. The presentation to be shared with Members.

4. Matters for Information

5. Date of next Members Meeting

CALC Members Meeting and AGM: 21st October 2026, 6.30pm
South Hanningfield Village Hall

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 8.30pm.

Signed..... Date:.....

Nick Everleigh gave a presentation on the Local Government Review. He first of all talked about the mayoral election which will be in 2028. He said that ministers could change before then, but he's been talking to Alison McGovern, Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution in the United Kingdom, and she was giving him the timetable that exists at the moment. The existing authorities and responsibilities will carry on until 31st March 2028.

Essex County Council's new Reform Leader has asked for a judicial review on LGR which is about incorrect process, but not a different model. What is needed to proceed with the LGR is for a 'Structural Change Order' to be made once it's in force there is a legal duty to work together. Currently Harlow and Basildon are not working on LGR. Essex is the most complicated LGR in the country. The number of councillors in the New Mid-Essex authority which is Chelmsford, Maldon and Brentwood is different to the current position. There will be 43 councillors in Chelmsford, 17 in Malden and 19 in Brentwood – the 144 councillors altogether currently will go down to 79. Each councillor will double the number of residents that they are currently working with.

In the autumn the 'Structural Change Order' will go before Parliament and between January and March, at some point, it will come into force. If people are not co-operating by then the government will send in their own people to carry on the work.

From May 2027 the 79 councillors will be part of the one-year shadow authority. They will have no real power except for four statutory officers. However, they can veto spending of current authorities e.g. over 1 million has to be ratified by the Shadow Authority so they will need to work well together. The Mid-Essex area will have the following Officers: The Chief Executive from Essex, Nicole Wood, will be the Shadow Chief Executive. Jonathan Stephens from Brentwood and Nick Everleigh who is the Returning Officer.

In May 2027, there will be Parish Council elections as well as the new councillor elections. In May 2032 there will be Parish, Mayoral and all council elections.

What about parishes?

- As there are less councillors overall the public may demand more of Parish councils.
- There will be new relationships with the new authorities and potential for evolving.
- Somerset gave responsibilities to parishes for many services in 2025, Chelmsford City are not going to offload assets.
- However each Parish will soon get a list of their landholdings and photographs, then we will be ready for discussion, probably by the autumn, but we will not be shipping assets over to Parish Councils.

Following the presentation planning issues, which had been shared with Nick already and more came up from various people in the room. Nick said that the City Council will be happy to give training re: decisions because some Parish Councils were

saying they didn't understand the decisions and they seem to vary a lot from what their own advice had been, what their objections were.

Nick offered Parish forums with Jeremy Potter and Claire Stuckey.

The local plan has been submitted. it will have two inspectors the review will come out in the autumn, if it is agreed, and the LP published in 2027. The target is 1210 houses built per annum with the local plan and more if the local plan is not agreed. City Council assets Stephen Robinson had previously said maybe there would be some movement there, but for strategic assets they are not going. There are also nonstrategic assets and lettable assets, which Could be leased out. This is all up in the air at the moment.

The Parks and Green Spaces Policy is in place and when there is mid-Essex there will be a new common approach. The first decision of the new Mid-Essex Authority will be on council tax which will need to be harmonised but that might mean going to go up or down because at the moment they're all very different.

There is a cap of spend on 1 million, we asked if it applies to selling asset disposals, over 1 million of sale of assets can be vetoed by the shadow authority or the Secretary of State.

A question was asked about the existence of three Town Halls. Nick responded saying that the new unitary will decide; we may need; County Hall could be hosted by 1 authority or by all five and they could carry on using it.

The next question was about Parks and Open Spaces, which are currently leased by Parish councils. Nick says there are no plans to sell them off.

Martin from Chelmer Village asked about the Shadow Council can current councillors apply. The reply is yes, you could be on all four; the shadow, the old and so on.

On planning we cannot express a view if we cannot input our data. There are concerns about accessing the portal causing major anxiety. Nick says there are problems with the portal. It does require investment, Jeremy Potter and Clare Stuckey are the contacts. Martin Cross of Standon said there's a poor connection on the planning portal. Pre- Covid there was training but a poor uptake but Nick said we will look at training now, most people in the room need training on the planning portal.

The planning department is not understaffed as some of us assumed Cllr. Rosendale from Springfield said, 'Are Brentwood and Chelmsford systems going to be brought together?' Nick said we don't know yet - planners have been frustrated for a long time. with the system at Chelmsford Council which is a national system. In the new unitary we want to consolidate to the same platform.

Anton from Roxwell said that there is a large industrial development proposed across his and other parishes. Should we postpone huge decisions until the unitary? Nick replied anything before the 31st of March 2028 the City Council will decide which is current advice.

Andrew Wright from Garden City Parish Council said that regarding assets and transfers they were planned to be a single stewardship body, they were put together to be Steward to the land. The land belongs to City Council and three other organisations. If they want a fun run for instance they need 4 permissions. They are meeting Paul Brooks soon and asked what the definition of strategic open space is. Nick says it is in the policy, and he will send it on. Andrew said 'How can we do what we are set up to do if we cannot take on strategic space? What is the point of Chelmsford Garden City Parish Council? Maybe there is poor communication, then another issue is planning decisions some people are saying they're inconsistent.

There are special conditions on our homes, we had two identical houses but two different decisions. Nick says please send examples to Jeremy. Andrew responds that so much effort went into the original planning of the homes at Chelmsford Garden City, why not keep up those standards now, for example, greenery has gone to be replaced by block paving.

Melanie from CGCPC mentioned that in the new elections we may have more political candidates than before, as so many elections will be on the same day. Nick stated that we will need to keep the shadow councillors busy as for eleven months there will be no staff, 79 members and just the three officers. This is a great opportunity for them to learn about functions and for parishes to talk to them and engage them.

We need all authorities to agree how we will operate practically; it will be hard to refer every transaction to the shadow authority.

Cllr Davies of Runwell asked about slippage of time before the elections. He was concerned that candidates will not have time to prepare, Nick responded that once the 'Structural Change Order' is made everything has to happen. The shortest time will be March to May. Short notice elections have happened before successfully.