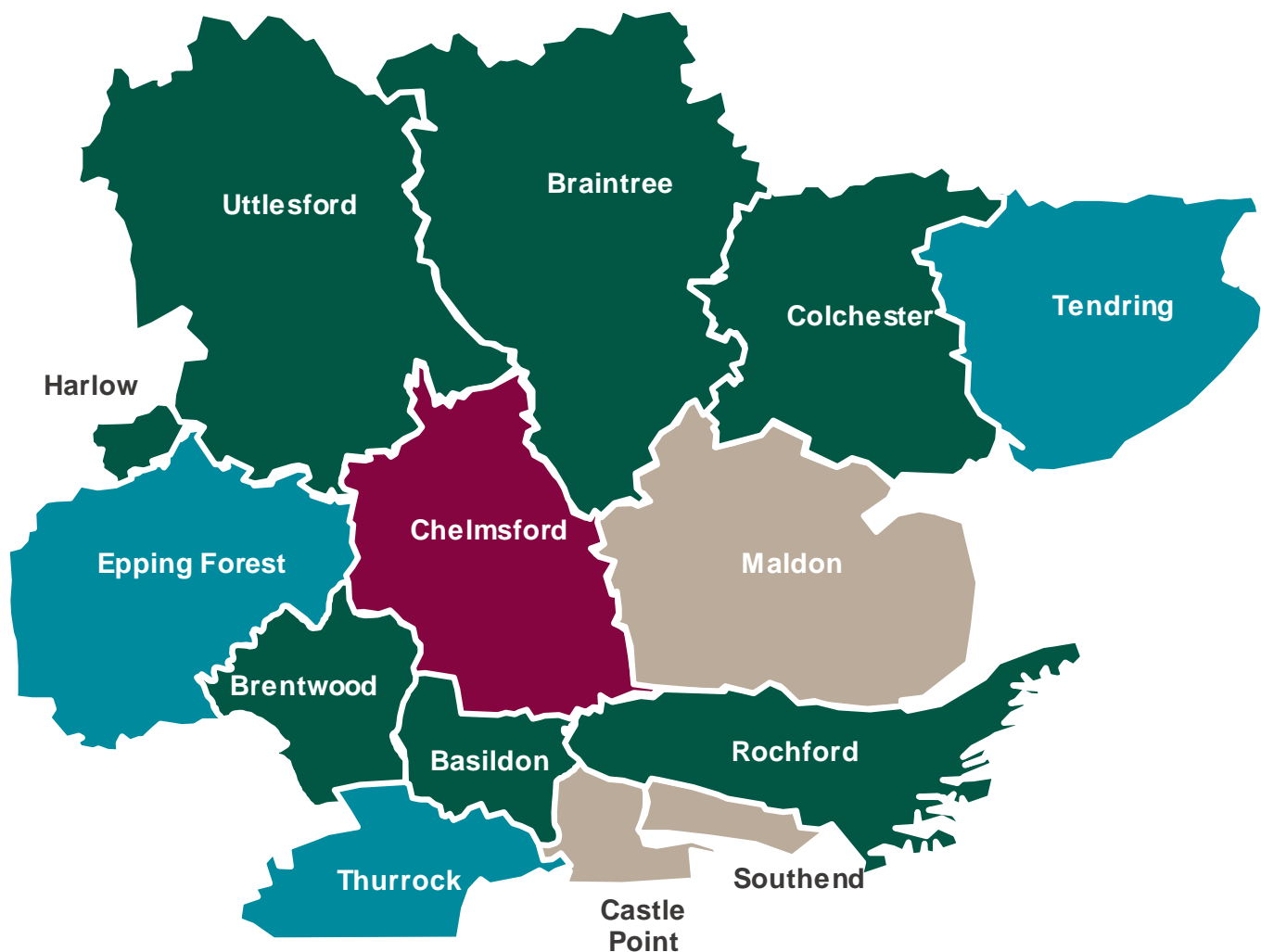


Local Planning Authority Update | Essex

Covid-19 and current working arrangements

May 2020

No information provided
Holding meetings via telephone
Holding meetings virtually
Providing written responses
All meetings cancelled / postponed



The following provides latest available information on how Local Planning Authorities are responding in the face of the current public health situation. It is based on information obtained from discussions with officers of the respective Councils, and from information published by Councils, and is intended to provide an accurate position as at 7 May 2020. The map above relates to Local Planning Authorities' approach to engaging with applicants / prospective applicants at this time.



LOCAL AUTHORITY	CURRENT SITUATION
Basildon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– The first virtual Planning Committee took place on 5th May.– Under the Council's delegated procedures, the Planning Chairman is informed who is dealing with matters earlier than normally has occurred, to assist officers in making decision in statutory timescales– All face-to-face meetings are cancelled. Officers are still carrying out site visits where appropriate.– Pre-application meetings are being held through virtual means where possible and Microsoft teams is the preferred platform. Alternatively, meetings can be held over the phone. Written responses are still being provided.– The Council are seeking to determine the large majority of decisions where possible. It is possible major / complex applications may be delayed.– The progress of the new Local Plan has not been impacted by the current situation.
Braintree	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– The Council's first virtual Planning Committee will be held 12th May 2020, where the use of technology will be trialled.– Meetings are being held over video call, if this is not suitable then the Council are still offering written advice for services such as pre-apps. The Council's preferred platform is Microsoft Teams.– Decisions that don't require a Committee meeting or site visit are being made as usual.– The progression of the emerging Local Plan has not been impacted by current circumstances.
Brentwood	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– All Planning Committees and meetings are suspended for the foreseeable future. The council is making arrangements for these to be conducted in different formats and updates will be posted on the Council's website in due course.– Where possible decisions are being made on applications, however where necessary applicants may be consulted on a formal extension of time by the case officer.– The Council continue to offer the pre-application service via online methods or over the phone, and encourage applicants to use this service even more in the current circumstances as it permits the identification of possible limitations in advance.– The Local Plan is still working towards the same timescale: The Brentwood Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination on 14 February 2020.
Castle Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Planning applications are still being processed but meetings and site visits are not taking place. The Council requests for electronic means of submission and communication to take place.– It remains the Council's intention to submit the Local Plan for examination in Public in summer 2020.
Chelmsford	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– All meetings are postponed until further notice. Only written advice is being provided for pre-application requests at this time, follow-up phone calls are available at the Officer's discretion.– Committees are postponed until further notice; ongoing discussions are occurring regarding virtual Planning Committees. The Council hope to be able to conduct Committees virtually in the near future.– They anticipate decisions will still be made on time, and officers are still working remotely to ensure this is the case. However, this only applies to decisions being made under delegated powers, due to all Committees being postponed for the foreseeable future.– In light of current circumstances, the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council to consider the adoption of the Local Plan (scheduled for 31st March 2020) had been postponed. The Full Council meeting to adopt the Local Plan is now anticipated to take place on Wednesday 27th May.

Colchester

- Pre-app meetings are being held through virtual means using Microsoft Teams. Written feedback is still being provided.
- Virtual Planning Committees have not yet taken place; they are however being considered for the future. Currently, decisions are being delegated to the Planning and Housing Manager following consultation with the Planning Committee chair and spokespersons.
- For meetings where site visits are required if these can take place then they will go ahead, if not then the council are asking for photographs from the applicant and using these to aid a written response.
- For decision making it is still business as usual and the Council are working to provide decisions within the standard timescales.
- The progression of the emerging Local Plan has not been impacted by current circumstances.

Epping Forest

- Meetings are still occurring and the means in which they are conducted is at the Officer's discretion, dependent on the complexity of the application being considered.
- Upon request for information the Council stated they are dealing with applications 'faster than ever'.
- Committees are suspended for the time being whilst discussions are occurring internally regarding how they can be conducted in the future.
- Work is still being undertaken to progress the emerging Local Plan and there has been no impact as yet.

Harlow

- The Council has not undertaken a virtual Planning Committee meeting as yet, but they do anticipate this will occur in the future. For now, delegated powers have been increased to allow the decision of more types of applications: The Head of Service can make decisions for Committee applications in consultation with the Chair of Committee.
- The current Committee process is to allow 3 written representations for and against the proposal (instead of speeches). The Committee then has 7 days to debate and ask questions and vote on the proposal. This has only happened for one Committee and will be replaced by a virtual meeting next month.
- Decisions are still being made within the statutory timescale.
- Pre-application meetings are being held via virtual means, the Council's preferred method is Zoom but they are happy to use alternative methods if preferred. Written feedback is still provided.
- The consultation period to comment on the modifications to the emerging Local Plan put forward by the Inspectorate has been extended by one month. The new deadline is 27th May 2020.

Maldon

- At an extraordinary full council meeting on 17th March 2020, members agreed that all Council, Committee and Sub-committee, Working-Group and alike meetings are cancelled for the time being. A review of these measures will be undertaken after 8 weeks or following government guidance.
- In the interim, any Director is authorised to determine the business that would otherwise have been determined by the Council, Committees and Sub-Committees. Alternatively, applicants can defer the application until Committees are running normally again.
- The Local Development Plan was adopted in 2017, there are no reviews scheduled to take place in the near future.

**Rochford**

- Committees are taking place remotely.
- Meetings are still going ahead and these can be organised to take place over the phone or through virtual means.
- Currently, Rochford Council are reviewing the way their pre-application service is delivered. Consequently, pre-application meetings are only being provided for major applications.
- For decision making it is business as usual, all officers are working remotely and they anticipate to determine decisions in the same time. However, they recommend talking to specific case officer's regarding individual applications.
- There is no update on the Local Plan.

Southend

- The next Development Control Committee meeting is scheduled for 18th May 2020 which will be conducted virtually through Microsoft Teams.
- Decision making is also likely to be delayed for the time being as officers are experiencing issues with remote working.
- There is no update on the Local Plan.

Tendring

- Meetings will either be postponed or held over the phone where possible.
- Planning Committee will not take place in its usual format, alternative arrangements are being considered and an update will be posted once that is decided.
- Decision-making services are expected to continue, and the Council is aiming to provide decisions in the same manner and timescale.
- The progression of the emerging Local Plan has not been impacted by current circumstances.

Thurrock

- Meetings will be held as normal, with officers working remotely. The means used will be at the officer's discretion but this is likely to be either over the phone or through virtual platforms.
- All Planning Committees are cancelled for the foreseeable future.
- Decisions will continue to be issued in a timely manner where possible.
- There is no update regarding the Local Plan.

Uttlesford

- Pre-application meetings are being conducted through virtual means, the Council's preferred platform is Zoom. Written advice is also still being provided.
- The first virtual Committee meeting was scheduled for 6th May, there after Committees will be held on a fortnightly basis.
- Applications are still being decided under delegated powers. Where site notices are required, the Council are asking applicants to erect the notice themselves and send photo evidence of this to the Council.
- Decisions are still being made within the statutory timescale, albeit some with an agreed extension of time.
- The Council were due to discuss and make a decision on the progress of the emerging Local Plan at the end of March, this meeting has been deferred to 31st April. However, the Council state that work is still ongoing.

NATIONAL PLANNING ENQUIRIES

John McLarty
Head of Planning
020 7318 4775
john.mclarty@struttandparker.com

PLANNING ENQUIRIES

James Firth
Head of Chelmsford Planning
01245 254610
james.firth@struttandparker.com

DEVELOPMENT ENQUIRIES

James Marner
Director, Chelmsford Development
01245 254649
james.marner@struttandparker.com



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