

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference:** C-051-2023/24

**Date of meeting:** 18 March 2024



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio:** Planning & Sustainability – Cllr. Bedford

**Subject:** North Weald Bassett Masterplan Strategic Masterplan (*Residential*)

**Responsible Officer:** Nigel Richardson/Richard Schunemann (01992 564 110).

**Democratic Services  
Officer:** V Messenger  
([democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk))

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) To note the process undertaken and the outputs from the public consultation on the Draft North Weald Bassett Strategic Masterplan Framework undertaken between November 2023 and January 2024.
- (2) To agree that the North Weald Bassett Strategic Masterplan Framework be formally endorsed in order for it to be taken into account as an important material consideration in the determination of future planning applications, and to inform pre-application advice, assessing planning and any other development management and implementation related purposes relating to the site.
- (3) To agree that the Planning Services Director, in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder, be authorised to make minor amendments to the North Weald Bassett Strategic Masterplan Framework, including any document accessibility requirements, prior to publication.

### **Executive Summary:**

The development of the North Weald Bassett (NWB) Strategic Masterplan Framework (SMF) responds to the adopted Epping Forest District Local Plan 2011-2033 and Policy P6 'North Weald Bassett'. The NWB Masterplan Area forms one of the allocated Strategic Masterplan sites where the need for an SMF is identified. Following the requirements in policies SP2 and P6, a strategic masterplan has been developed for the allocated strategic area.

Since 2018 the land promoter Vistry Group (previously known as Countryside PLC) have been engaging with a number of local communities in North Weald, such as the Parish Council, the North Weald Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, the Memorial Playing Fields Trust, St Andrews Primary School and the local community in general.

Land ownership is split between five sub allocations, but the site promoter representing an interest in largest allocation (NWB.R3 Land South of Vicarage Lane) is Vistry Group, who have progressed the development of the masterplan. Vistry Group and its predecessor company Countryside have been engaging with EFDC and ECC officers since 2018 in the development of the NWB SMF in accordance with the Strategic Masterplanning Briefing

Note, which was agreed by the Council's Cabinet in October 2018. The Briefing Note sets out the detailed approach to SMF development to support the requirement of Policy P6 which states:

*Planning applications for sites NWB.R1, NWB.R2, NWB.R3, NWB.R4, NWB.R5 and NWB.T1 should be accompanied by a Strategic Masterplan for the North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area which demonstrates that the development requirements set out in this Policy have been accommodated and which has been endorsed by the Council. The endorsed Strategic Masterplan will be taken into account as an important material consideration in the determination of any planning applications.*

The Strategic Masterplan Framework has been subject to extensive review and scrutiny by the professional applicant team engaged in drafting the SMF, the Council, as Local Planning Authority, as well as Essex County Council and the masterplan proposals have been reviewed by the Quality Review Panel on three occasions (June 2019, August 2021 and September 2023).

The formal public consultation on the Draft North Weald Bassett SMF finished on the 16th January 2024. Since then the SMF has been reviewed and amended to incorporate and respond to, where necessary and appropriate, the consultation responses. Key points raised during the consultation, and response to these, are outlined in the report below, and set out in more detail in the Consultation Report (Appendix B).

Following this review and amendments to the SMF, officers are of the view that meaningful public consultation has been undertaken, and the Strategic Masterplan Framework can now be formally endorsed to support high quality development proposals to come forward.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

The Masterplan has undergone extensive scrutiny and where necessary and appropriate changes have been undertaken in accordance with the masterplanning process set out in the Council's Strategic Masterplanning Briefing Note which was endorsed by the Council's Cabinet in October 2018. This has included review of the emerging Strategic Masterplan by EFDC's Quality Review Panel (QRP) and following receipt of responses to the first and second stages of public consultation. The Strategic Masterplan is considered to be capable of endorsement as an important material consideration in the determination of any planning applications and will be taken into account as such. It will also be used to inform the provision of pre-application advice and other development related purposes.

To ensure that members are kept fully up to date on the progress of Masterplans and Concept Frameworks and other major proposals being promoted within the District.

To comply with the Council's general obligations as a local planning authority and the requirements set out in national planning guidance.

### **Other Options for Action:**

To not endorse the North Weald Bassett Strategic Masterplan Framework as an important material consideration in the determination of planning applications. This could result in a delay in delivering a high-quality neighbourhood and homes in the District.

## **Report:**

### **Introduction**

1. The NWB Masterplan Area is located North of the existing North Weald Bassett village, east of the North Weald Bassett Airfield and South of Vicarage Lane and West of the A414. The site is located within the North Weald Bassett Parish and it is within the administrative area of EFDC.
2. The site is allocated as part of the adopted Epping Forest District Local Plan 2011-2033 and Policy P6 'North Weald Bassett'.
3. The masterplan area is made up of five separate site allocations which reflect separate site ownerships as follows:
  - NWB.R1/T1 Land West of Tylers Green,
  - NWB.R2 Land at Tylers Farm,
  - NWB.R3 Land South of Vicarage Lane,
  - NWB.R4 Land at Chase Farm and
  - NWB.R5 Land at The Acorns, Chase Farm
4. The largest of these sites is NWB.R3 (promoted by Vistry). NWB.T1 identifies the dual allocation of site NWB.R1 as the location identified for the traveller pitches.
5. The SMF addresses surface water flooding, the preservation or enhancement of the special architectural or historic interest of the Grade II Listed Buildings at Bluemans Farm/Tyler's Farmhouse and their settings, the need to upgrade/widen the existing Vicarage Lane West access in order to ensure a safe access point which has sufficient capacity for the development it serves;
6. To ensure a comprehensive and cohesive approach is taken to the planning and delivery of development and infrastructure on site, the Local Plan requires a strategic masterplan to be produced for the NWB site (and for other strategic allocations). The Strategic Masterplanning Briefing Note 2018 was agreed by the Council's Cabinet in October 2018. This document sets out the requirement for the endorsement of Strategic Masterplans and Concept Frameworks as allocated in the Adopted Local Plan. This requirement is set out in Policy SP2 Place Shaping and in the place specific policy relating to NWB (Policy P6). The strategic masterplan for North Weald Bassett needs to adhere to the place-shaping and development principles set out under Policy SP2 (place-shaping) and the site-specific considerations identified.

### **Strategic Masterplanning and Engagement process**

7. In accordance with best practice the Local Plan contains a requirement that a Strategic Masterplan for North Weald Bassett Masterplan Area is produced. This is in order to ensure that proposed development on the site is brought forward in a comprehensive and co-ordinated manner in order to achieve high quality and sustainable development which incorporates the place making principles of the Local Plan. This includes meeting the Council's expectations in terms of the quality, scale and nature of development to be delivered, providing sustainable transport opportunities and other

supporting infrastructure and services, responding to the environmental context, and responding appropriately to the outputs from community engagement.

8. The preparation of the Strategic Masterplan was supported by a wide range of technical work including, environmental issues, biodiversity, transport, heritage, sustainability considerations and place-making.
9. The site promoters for North Weald Bassett, Vistry Group, have been engaging with EFDC officers since 2018 in the development of the North Weald Bassett SMF following the Strategic Masterplanning Briefing Note, which was agreed by the Council's Cabinet in October 2018. This document sets out the requirement for the endorsement of Strategic Masterplans and Concept Frameworks as allocated in the EFDC Adopted Local Plan
10. The Strategic Masterplan Framework has been subject to extensive review and scrutiny by the professional applicant team engaged in drafting the SMF, the Council, as Local Planning Authority, Essex County Council and other statutory consultees including the HGGT.
11. The North Weald Bassett site promoter team have been engaging with the local communities of Epping Forest District and since 2018. A consultation report which notes this background, as well as reporting on the recent formal public consultation, can be found at Appendix B.
12. During 2018-2023 several meetings and workshops (as described in the endorsed Masterplanning Briefing Note 2018) have been held between key stakeholders including EFDC, the main site promoters (Vistry) and ECC (Highway and Infrastructure).
13. The Site promoter has undertaken intensive engagement throughout the project:
  - In September 2018 the Site promoter engaged with the North Weald Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) to introduce the project and run a workshop to test preliminary ideas.
  - In February 2019 the Site Promoter engaged with the Parish Council and the NPSG to present in a workshop the progress in relation to spatial ideas, public transport and public space.
  - In November 2019 the Site Promoter engaged the NPSG and the governors of St Andrews Primary School to discuss matters of landscape design and the provision of educational facilities.
  - In January 2020 the Site promoter engaged with the NPSG to cover issues of traffic and highways and commuter services to Epping Tube Station.
  - In 2021 the Site promoter held a meeting with the Trustees of the Queen's Hall Charity to ensure the any proposed facilities did not compete with the memorial Playing Fields and Queen's Hall but instead to compliment them.
  - In the summer 2023 the land promoters carried out informal public consultation for which around 3600 leaflets were distributed to local homes. 176 official responses were received where most of the concerns where about connectivity, education, healthcare, and flooding.
  - Between 2022 and 2023 the site promoters and officers from EFDC and ECC took part in the following Topic Based Meetings:
    - Urban Design Principles
    - Education facilities and needs

- Public Transportation, movement and highways
- Natural Environment, Green & Blue Infrastructure
- Social Infrastructure
- Sustainability
- Heritage
- Local Centre
- Planning & Engagement Strategy
- Housing Needs
- Infrastructure Delivery

14. The site has previously undertaken three reviews by the QRP, the first in June 2019, with a second review in August 2021 and a third one in September 2023.
15. The Masterplan has been developed in a comprehensive manner and it includes the whole allocation area spanning across different land ownerships. The site promoters and design team have provided the council with satisfactory options to ensure that the masterplan can be delivered around this landholding.

### **Quality Review Panel (2019, 2021, 2023)**

16. The masterplan has been to three Quality Review Panel's (QRPs), a key aspect of quality assurance and independent critical friend advice, from an expert panel of built environment practitioners.

#### Summary of comments from first QRP (June 2019):

- Calls for a comprehensive approach that transcends ownership boundaries and integrates the development with the existing settlement.
- Stresses the need for seamless pedestrian and cycle connections between the new and old areas.
- Highlights the crucial role of the Airfield Masterplan in providing employment opportunities and contributing to a holistic vision.
- Emphasizes the need for critical mass in housing to support amenities and sustainable travel.
- Encourages exploration of diverse housing typologies and uses to create a vibrant community.
- Recommends measures to ensure the new settlement feels self-sufficient and attractive to residents beyond the Airfield employees.
- Suggests identifying key nodes like the school and church to serve as focal points for the combined settlement.
- Recommends a detailed open space strategy that considers function, character, and biodiversity enhancement.
- Commends the existing principles but recommends further development, particularly on design quality, community clusters, and open space strategy.

- Encourages the use of sustainability and energy modelling to inform layout and building design.

#### Summary of comments from second QRP (August 2021):

- While the report presents a promising vision, it is not fully addressing concerns raised in 2019.
- The masterplan needs to set higher standards for greenfield development, focusing on environmental sustainability through net-zero carbon homes, water management, and exceeding biodiversity targets.
- The plan needs to better connect the new development with the existing village and North Weald Airfield Masterplan, considering future connections and a range of housing options to cater to different needs.
- The report lacks specifics on key aspects like density, landscape design, and community facilities. Further detailed analysis and review are necessary before approving the masterplan.

#### Summary of comments from third QRP (September 2023):

- The masterplan has developed significantly since the previous review.
- Integration: The masterplan should prioritize connectivity and a cohesive character area.
- Sustainability: The sustainability strategy needs further development but has moved forwards since the previous review. Now it needs to aim for Passivhaus or Zero Carbon standards. Best practices and the Council's sustainability checklist should be applied.
- Layout: The current layout could benefit from increased density in specific areas to ensure true sustainability and optimal land use.
- Public Realm: More details are needed for public spaces like play areas, ensuring proper integration with housing and avoiding isolated locations. Play for all ages, green corridors, and accessibility for walking and cycling should be prioritized.
- Transportation and Access: The panel understand work is in progress with regards to public transport links.

#### **Engagement Findings and Summary**

17. The North Weald Basset SMF team has been committed to effective engagement to ensure that local views and priorities are reflected in the draft strategic masterplan and the hybrid planning application.
18. Wide ranging and in-depth local engagement has therefore been undertaken between 2018 and 2023 to inform and shape the masterplan and hybrid planning application to reflect local priorities. Engagement with key local stakeholders since 2018 to understand detailed local issues has helped to evolve the masterplan to a stage where it could be consulted upon with the wider community earlier this year. Engagement across this

period has included meetings, presentations, workshops, exhibitions, mailings and online consultation with a range of stakeholders including:

- North Weald Bassett Parish Council
- Local EFDC councillors
- North Weald Bassett Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
- St Andrew's Primary School
- Queen's Hall Charity
- Other local groups and organisations
- Site neighbours
- Wider community across the Parish

#### 19. Neighbourhood Planning Group

A series of meetings, site walks and workshops were held between 2018 and 2020 with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. These sessions coupled with feedback from the Group's own widespread community consultation, which included questionnaires issued to all households in the Parish in 2018, provided in depth local knowledge of the issues relevant to the village:

- The findings from the Group's own community questionnaire consultation helped provide a foundation for discussions, highlighting issues such as traffic, anti-social behaviour, healthcare facilities, the feel of the village and access to open countryside.
- From the meetings, strengths identified included the existing walking routes to countryside to the north through the site, the strong village feel and sense of community. Weaknesses included traffic congestion and use of rat runs and the lack of social destinations for walking routes in the village.
- The emerging framework masterplan was illustrated spatially with the group, culminating in a draft annotated sketch plan being produced. This highlighted potential masterplan drivers related to pedestrian and vehicular movement, key views and the sensitive treatment of specific edges within the masterplan area.
- Opportunities included potential new community and retail facilities, a 'country park' and ways that traffic could be directed away from the village centre. Site threats identified included additional traffic in the village and new shops competing with existing shops.
- Transportation matters covered included traffic flows, a new roundabout on the A414, pedestrian safety, the future of Church Lane and public transport options, including examining the potential for a commuter service to Epping Station.

#### 20. NWB Parish Council

Meetings and presentations have been held with Parish Councillors between 2019 and 2024 to explore issues and provide updates on the progress of the masterplan.

Members and Officers of the Parish Council provided input into the material prepared for widespread public consultation in June 2023:

- Meetings since 2019 included in-person and online presentations during the evolution of the draft masterplan. Key issues raised included support for the retention of hedgerows, sensitive treatment of the masterplan boundary, maximising the potential for sports and recreation, adequate healthcare provision and parking in the village. Traffic concerns were also mentioned and underlined.
- A meeting was also held with the Parish Council Footpaths Officer to identify key routes and develop a broad footpath connectivity strategy including potential diversions.

## **21. St Andrew's Primary School**

There have been five meetings with Governors and the headteacher at St Andrew's Primary School since 2019. During discussions, a clear preference emerged to expand the existing primary school rather than provide a new school, The county Council has however clarified that their preferred position is to build a new school. Other findings from the engagement with St Andrew's Primary School were as follows:

- Detailed discussions covered issues such as pupil yield and explored feasibility options for the potential expansion of the school. A preferred option emerged which would retain and enclose the swimming pool and provide a new pedestrian access to the north of the school which would help address some existing issues.
- A letter dated 23 June 2023 was received from the Chair of Governors and Headteacher underlining the expansion of the existing primary school as their preferred option and opposing the provision of a second school as it had the potential to be socially divisive.

## **22. Queen's Hall Charity**

Meetings online and on-site have been held with the Trustees of the Queen's Hall Charity since 2020:

- One of the key issues emerging from discussions was to ensure that any new community facilities did not compete with and undermine existing sporting and social activities at Queen's Hall.
- Feasibility options were then progressed to explore the potential upgrade of Queen's Hall and improving sporting and play provision.
- Discussions are continuing with the Trustees and representatives of the Parish Council on the delivery of additional community uses in the masterplan area.

## **23. Communitywide informal consultation June 2023**

The consultation was launched at the beginning of June 2023 using a variety of methods so that information was accessible to as many residents and businesses as possible such as mailshots, posters and newsletter emails. The commonly raised issues were as follows:

- A prevalent issue in the feedback appears to be a lack of knowledge of the Local Plan and housing allocation for North Weald Bassett.
- Education and healthcare provision were some of the most commonly raised issues as was the inclusion of traveller pitches.
- Many of the visitors to the exhibitions lived adjacent to the site. Many of the issues raised therefore related to boundary related issues on Queen's Road, Oak Piece and Blackhorse Lane.
- There was a wide range of feedback on what community, recreational and retail facilities should be provided. There was a good level of support for the memorial playing fields becoming the focus for formalised sport in the masterplan area.
- Addressing anti-social behaviour was a commonly raised issue when discussing recreational facilities.
- Lack of public transport provision and traffic on the A414 were commonly raised existing concerns.
- Drainage was raised fairly often given historical flooding in the village.

#### **24. Formal Public Consultation November 2023 – January 2024**

An 8-page consultation brochure and (pre-paid) postal feedback form was issued to over 3,000 addresses in North Weald Parish. A dedicated phone number and email address was also provided. The entire Parish which also includes Thornwood Common and Hastingwood was included in the consultation at the suggestion of the Parish Council. An additional insert was provided to residential addresses bounding the masterplan area, which provided further detail on the boundary treatment and invited residents to a specific exhibition session. As part of the Formal Consultation process Epping Forest in collaboration with the developer organised and took part in the following activities:

- Pre-consultation member briefing.
- Meeting with North Weald Bassett Parish Council & Neighbourhood Plan team
- Online consultation portal, providing independent website and feedback gathering tool.
- Council's website signposting to the consultation portal
- Mailshot to 3,600 local households and community and statutory stakeholders, informing them of the consultation (and providing advice on how to take part if not digitally able) – this includes homes within both Epping Forest and North Weald Parish.
- Press release
- Pop up exhibition panel hosted in Council building(s) with printed copy of SMF and paper copy questionnaires for completion/ collection.
- Questionnaire – available on the online portal and paper copies available.
- 2No. in person events taking place AT St. Andrews School with 30 attendees over the 2 days.

#### **25. Statutory Consultees**

From the Statutory Consultees and other organisations consulted, we have received feedback from the following:

- EFDC Air Quality
- Essex County Council
- Environment Agency
- Epping Forest Heritage Trust
- Historic England
- National Highways
- Natural England
- North Weald Bassett Parish Council
- Thames Water
- Hertfordshire & West Essex Integrated Care Board
- Harlow & Gilston Garden Town
- City of London (Conservators of Epping Forest)
- Landowner of sites NWB.R1 and NWB.T1

26. For details of the feedback from these stakeholders and our response to each point raised please refer to Appendic C.

27. The main concerns and issued raised during the public consultation were as follows (for full Consultation Report please refer to Appendix B):

##### **Transport and access**

- Support new roundabout access on A414.
- General queries re traffic modelling and infrastructure upgrades.
- Junction 7 motorway junction capacity and need for upgrading.
- Traffic volumes heading east to Ongar.

- Queries regarding need for additional bus services.

### **Drainage and sewerage**

- Sewage capacity – concerns with current capacity.
- Potable water pressure and connection point – report that Blackhorse Lane residents experience low water pressure.
- Surface water drainage at times of high rainfall water flows south into village (rather than north).

### **Other**

- Contamination – comments about land historically being used as a landfill for the deposit of contaminated material
- Report of buried WWII bomber straddling the site boundary.
- Fire safety – concern that there are not sufficient strategic gaps to prevent the rapid spread of fire
- In principle objection to the loss of agricultural land
- General questions about development parameters / green corridors along the boundary; and rear access to gardens

## **Strategic Masterplan Framework**

### 28. **Specific Site requirements**

The Policy specifically identifies the following requirements for the masterplan:

- a local centre including retail, community, and appropriate provision of health facilities.
- addressing surface water flooding.
- education provision including early years and primary school places.
- adequate levels of public open space to be provided on the site.
- a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace, the location of which will be determined through the Strategic Masterplanning process.
- a minimum of 1,050 homes and five traveller pitches.
- preserving or enhancing the special architectural or historic interest of the Grade II Listed Buildings at Bluemans Farm/Tyler's Farmhouse and their settings.
- new and improved Public Rights of Way and cycle linkages with the surrounding area including East to West connectivity between the two Masterplan Areas.
- careful design and layout to ensure that where sensitive land uses are proposed near the intermediate High-Pressure Gas Pipeline they accord with the requirements set out in the HSE's Land Use Planning Methodology;
- the need to upgrade/widen the existing Vicarage Lane West access in order to ensure a safe access point which has sufficient capacity for the development it serves.
- the continued protection of those trees benefitting from a Tree Preservation Order, and other identified Veteran Trees; and
- strengthening of the existing field boundary along the Western edge of the Strategic Masterplan Area to form the defensible boundary to the Green Belt.

29. The SMF proposed to be endorsed is enclosed at Appendix A and is commented upon as follows:

## **Placemaking**

30. The masterplan has been developed observing EFDC's Adopted Local Plan Policy SP2 Place Shaping, where emphasis has been given to ensure generous, well connected and biodiverse rich green space provision with a sense of place/ identity. The masterplan will be well connected through a hierarchy of streets, walking paths and cycle lanes along rich green and blue infrastructure features to the local centre that will host community facilities, retail and service opportunities as well as schools and a sustainable movement hub.

## **Transport**

31. EFDC is currently working together with Essex County Council and the Land promoters of North Weald Bassett Masterplan to explore a new bus routes that will connect North Weald Bassett with the school provision at Latton Priory, further connections to Harlow Town and Epping town centre and Tube station.

## **Green Infrastructure**

32. The NWB Masterplan is a landscape-led development that will provide large areas of SANG together with Blue and Green Infrastructure features that will enhance biodiversity and the natural environment following EFDC's Adopted Local Plan Policies SP2, SP5 and SP6 as well as the EFDC Green Infrastructure Strategy which sets out SANG requirements for North Weald Bassett. The masterplan will also provide residents with a wide range of amenities ranging from a vibrant local centre provision with access to community facilities and service/retail opportunities as well as dedicated areas for play, food growing and community gardening and sports.

## **Local centre and social facilities**

33. The NWB Masterplan provides a Local Centre following EFDC's Adopted Local Plan Policy P5. The local centre and adjoining areas will provide:
- Community Centre including health care provision
  - A new primary school with early years facilities
  - Community facilities including potential for a library, café, activity studios, flexible working space
  - Mobility Hub with access to EV charging points, cycle hire, cycle repair shop, car club.
  - A new retail area off the access roundabout for a small neighbourhood Supermarket and other retail facilities.
  - Playing fields as a focal point.

## **Sustainability**

34. The NWB Masterplan will be a sustainably connected new neighbourhood with safe, direct and attractive cycle routes integrated within the network of roads, PROWS and open space which link key facilities within the site and further afield, including Epping Town and Epping Tube Station. The development of the masterplan has observed the following documents: EFDC Sustainability Guide and Checklist, EFDC Green Infrastructure Strategy. This has indicated that further work on energy, utilities and digital infrastructure needs to be provided to ensure that this is secured at masterplanning stage. Orientation and form also need to be considered at the

masterplanning level in relation to solar gain, walkability, and densities, which all attribute to holistic sustainable development. Further work on the approach to Stewardship, to ensure that it is community-led.

### **Housing Numbers and Tenure**

35. The masterplan has a capacity for a minimum of 1,050 dwellings in line with the EFDC Adopted Local Plan. While the masterplan allows the potential for increases in this number to be explored, any increase in the site capacity at the NWB site will need to be fully assessed in terms of traffic impacts and by reference to the Habitat Assessment Regulations with regards to the potential impact on air quality Epping Forest SAC.
36. Housing tenure is stated as being targeted to be in accordance with the EFDC Adopted Local Plan with a position of 40% affordable housing sought with the right type of housing to assist the delivery of the Council Social Housing List.

### **Conclusion**

37. The development of the NWB Masterplan has been progressed in consultation with officers from EFDC and ECC. Officers are confident that at this stage of the Masterplanning process the Strategic Masterplan Framework fulfils the intentions of the EFDC Adopted Local Plan and Strategic Masterplanning Briefing Note (2018) in enabling meaningful public consultation, and would lead to high quality development, supporting the following EFDC Adopted Local Plan strategic policies:
  - Policy SP1 – Spatial Development Strategy 2011-2033
  - Policy SP2 – Place Shaping
  - Policy SP6 – The Natural Environment, Landscape Character and Green and Blue Infrastructure
  - Policy H1 – Housing Mix and Accommodation Types
  - Policy H2 – Affordable Homes
  - Policy H4 – Traveller Site Development
  - Policy P6 – North Weald Bassett
38. Further guidance documents observed:
  - EFDC Green Infrastructure Strategy
  - EFDC Statement of Community Involvement
  - EFDC Endorsed Strategic Masterplanning Briefing Note
  - EFDC Infrastructure Delivery Plan

### **Resource Implications:**

The successful delivery of the strategic sites within Epping Forest District will require considerable commitment of officer time from EFDC. The noting of the contents of this report do not give rise to additional resource implications.

### **Legal and Governance Implications:**

The work on Strategic Masterplans has been developed in accordance with Government policy (NPPF and NPPG) and Planning Law

### **Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

The Local Plan contains a policy designed to promote the notion of making good places to live, work and visit. This will include safer by design principles, sustainable development, the provision of alternatives to the car, energy efficiency and environmental considerations as well as sustainable drainage systems and quality green infrastructure. Strategic Masterplans and Concept Framework Plans will be the mechanism for these place-making measures to be delivered in identified Masterplan Areas.

### **Consultation / Scrutiny Undertaken:**

The Site promoter has undertaken intensive engagement throughout the project:

- In September 2018 the Site promoter engaged with the North Weald Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) to introduce the project and run a workshop to test preliminary ideas.
- In February 2020 the Site Promoter engaged with the Parish Council and the NPSG to present in a workshop the progress in relation to spatial ideas, public transport and public space.
- In November 2019 the Site Promoter engaged the NPSG and the governors of St Andrews Primary School to discuss matters of landscape design and the provision of educational facilities.
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- In the summer 2023 the land promoters carried out informal public consultation for which around 3600 leaflets were distributed to local homes. 176 official responses were received where most of the concerns were about connectivity, education, healthcare, and flooding.
- Between 2022 and 2023 the site promoters and officers from EFDC and ECC took part in the following Topic Based Meetings:
  - Urban Design Principles
  - Education facilities and needs
  - Public Transportation, movement and highways
  - Natural Environment, Green & Blue Infrastructure
  - Social Infrastructure
  - Sustainability
  - Heritage
  - Local Centre
  - Planning & Engagement Strategy
  - Housing Needs
  - Infrastructure Delivery

The site has previously undertaken three reviews by the QRP, the first in June 2019, with a second review in August 2021 and a third one in September 2023.

### **Background Papers:**

Cabinet Report – 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Appendix A: Final Draft North Weald Bassett Strategic Masterplan Framework

Appendix B: Consultation Report

Appendix C: Statutory and Other Written Consultee Responses

### **Risk Management:**

If the Council was not to take a pro-active stance on the delivery of Masterplans and major applications arising from the Local Plan, there is a real risk of development occurring of a type that does not extract maximum value for the provision of social infrastructure and poor quality development may occur.

### **Equality:**

#### **Equality Impact Assessment**

1. Under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, Epping District Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, ie have due regard to:
  - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
  - advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
  - fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
2. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:
  - age
  - disability
  - gender
  - gender reassignment
  - marriage/civil partnership
  - pregnancy/maternity
  - race
  - religion/belief
  - sexual orientation.
3. In addition to the above protected characteristics you should consider the cross-cutting elements of the proposed policy, namely the social, economic and environmental impact (including rurality) as part of this assessment. These cross-cutting elements are not a characteristic protected by law but are regarded as good practice to include.
4. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document should be used as a tool to test and analyse the nature and impact of either what we do or are planning to do in the future. It can be used flexibly for reviewing existing arrangements but in particular should enable identification where further consultation, engagement and data is required.
5. Use the questions in this document to record your findings. This should include the nature and extent of the impact on those likely to be affected by the proposed policy or change.
6. Where this EqIA relates to a continuing project, it must be reviewed and updated at each stage of the decision.

7. All **Cabinet, Council, and Portfolio Holder reports must be accompanied by an EqlA**. An EqlA should also be completed/reviewed at key stages of projects.
8. To assist you in completing this report, please ensure you read the guidance notes in the Equality Analysis Toolkit and refer to the following Factsheets:
  - Factsheet 1: Equality Profile of the Epping Forest District
  - Factsheet 2: Sources of information about equality protected characteristics
  - Factsheet 3: Glossary of equality related terms
  - Factsheet 4: Common misunderstandings about the Equality Duty
  - Factsheet 5: Frequently asked questions
  - Factsheet 6: Reporting equality analysis to a committee or other decision making body

<b>Section 1: Identifying details</b>	
Your function, service area and team: Planning Service	
If you are submitting this EqlA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service area or team: N/A	
Title of policy or decision: Progress of Strategic Masterplans & Planning Performance Agreements	
Officer completing the EqlA: Rick Schunemann Email: rschunemann@eppingforestdc.gov.uk	
Date of completing the assessment: 26/09/2023	

<b>Section 2: Policy to be analysed</b>	
2.1	Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project? No
2.2	Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision): The report is to seek approval from cabinet members to take the North Weald Bassett Strategic Masterplan Framework for official 8 week public consultation.  What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (ie decommissioning or commissioning a service)? To brief members of the masterplanning process for the North Weald Bassett strategic allocation and to gain approval to go to official 8-week public consultation.

2.3	<p>Does or will the policy or decision affect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• service users</li> <li>• employees</li> <li>• the wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities?</li> </ul> <p>Not directly but supports the development identified within the Adopted Local Plan</p> <p>Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate? No</p>
2.4	<p>Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources? No, the report is for information only</p>
2.5	<p>Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies and how, if applicable, does the proposed policy support corporate outcomes? It is associated to Adopted Local Plan policies SP2 and P6. Approval for consultation should not have any adverse effect on other Policies</p>

### Section 3: Evidence/data about the user population and consultation<sup>1</sup>

As a minimum you must consider what is known about the population likely to be affected which will support your understanding of the impact of the policy, eg service uptake/usage, customer satisfaction surveys, staffing data, performance data, research information (national, regional and local data sources).

3.1

What does the information tell you about those groups identified? N/A

3.2

Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision you want to implement? If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision?

The groups mentioned in 2.3 have been consulted previously and we will seek updated views and if necessary the view will inform changes to the North Weald Bassett SMF.

3.3

If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary:

Informal public consultation on North Weald Bassett has taken place in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2023. This will be the first time the project team is seeking approval from Cabinet to go to formal 8-week public consultation. Should approval be gained at this Cabinet meeting, public consultation would take place from the second week of November 2023 and run for six weeks.

**Section 4: Impact of policy or decision**

Use this section to assess any potential impact on equality groups based on what you now know.

<b>Description of impact</b>	<b>Nature of impact</b> Positive, neutral, adverse (explain why)	<b>Extent of impact</b> Low, medium, high (use L, M or H)
Age	None	N/A
Disability	None	N/A
Gender	None	N/A
Gender reassignment	None	N/A
Marriage/civil partnership	None	N/A
Pregnancy/maternity	None	N/A
Race	None	N/A
Religion/belief	None	N/A
Sexual orientation	None	N/A

## Section 5: Conclusion

		Tick Yes/No as appropriate	
5.1	Does the EqIA in Section 4 indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	If ' <b>YES</b> ', use the action plan at <b>Section 6</b> to describe the adverse impacts and what mitigating actions you could put in place.



**Section 7: Sign off**

**I confirm that this initial analysis has been completed appropriately.  
(A typed signature is sufficient.)**

Signature of Head of Service: Nigel Richardson

Date: 31/01/24

Signature of person completing the EqlA: Rick Schunemann

Date: 31/01/24

**Advice**

Keep your director informed of all equality & diversity issues. We recommend that you forward a copy of every EqlA you undertake to the director responsible for the service area. Retain a copy of this EqlA for your records. If this EqlA relates to a continuing project, ensure this document is kept under review and updated, eg after a consultation has been undertaken.

Appendix A: Final Draft North Weald Bassett Strategic Masterplan Framework  
Appendix B: Formal Consultation Report  
Appendix C: Statutory and Other Written Consultee Responses  
Appendix D: Quality Review Panel September 2023