

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee: Cabinet**

**Date 1 November 2018**

**Subject: Planning and Governance Portfolio**

**Portfolio Holder: Councillor J. Philip**

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**Recommending:**

**That the report of the Planning and Governance Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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## **1. Local Plan**

Following the Court Order of Rt Hon Mr Justice Sales on 20 September 2018 which refused permission to appeal to the Court of Appeal, the Council submitted the Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination on 21 September 2018. An Inspector, Louise Phillips, has been appointed to carry out the independent examination of the plan. She will determine whether it has been prepared in accordance with the relevant legal requirements and that it is 'sound' i.e. positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy. We are waiting to hear from the Inspector about hearing dates but we understand that these are likely to commence in January 2019.

## **2. Implementation of the Local Plan**

The Implementation Manager, Lydia Grainger, joined the Council on 1 October 2018. A report went to Cabinet on 18 October 2018 to agree the governance arrangements for Local Plan Implementation. That report set out the proposed amendments to existing governance processes and procedures to enable the masterplanning and Planning Performance Agreement processes to be undertaken efficiently and effectively. This set out proposed arrangements for the preparation, consultation, endorsement and approval of the Strategic Masterplans and Concept Frameworks in the District; the proposed governance arrangements for documentation associated with the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town and appropriate delegated responsibility to nominated officers to act as a signatory on Planning Performance Agreements. It also provided an update to members on the current progress on the masterplans.

## **3. Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation and proposed mitigation strategy**

Since the last meeting a report has been considered by the Cabinet on 18 October 2018 setting out an interim approach to managing recreational pressures on the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation. The proposal is to seek contributions from net increases in new residential units within 3km of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation arising from the granting of planning permissions and prior approval consents under permitted development rights. Further work is being undertaken to address the air quality impacts and it is anticipated that this will be available shortly.

## **4. Neighbourhood Planning**

Following the exploratory meeting held by the Examiner of the Chigwell Neighbourhood Plan on 5 September 2018 the Council has received the examiner's note following the exploratory meeting dated 28 September 2018 which sets out the way in which the examiner proposes to

deal with the examination. He has indicated that he will be recommending in his final report that the Neighbourhood Plan does not proceed to referendum. The final report is awaited.

## **5. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town**

Work continues apace on the Garden Town. The outcome of the capacity bid submitted to MHCLG to seek further funding to support the work is still awaited. The Council's representatives on the Board are currently Cllr Whitbread, Bedford and Philip. The terms of reference of the Board have been reviewed and interviews for an Independent Chair are scheduled for 19 October 2018.

The Board is expected to agree the spatial vision and design charter at its next meeting on 12 November 2018 following the recent community engagement. A draft transport strategy will be the subject of consultation in the next month or so.

## **6. Development Management**

### **Building Control**

The budget for Building Control for August 2018 is £41,410 and the annual budget for 2018/19 is £500,000.

BC's actual income for August 2018 (Period 5) is £35,340. To date in the first five months BC has exceeded budget twice and the actual to budget shortfall is £11,123; an average of just over £2,000 per month.

This means that it is possible that BC's income may end the financial year at £475,000 however it is expected that BC may be able to recover during the remainder of 2018/19 and achieve an overall income in the region of £480,000 to £490,000. This is supported by the three year summary of the last seven months of preceding financial years 2015/18 of the final seven months at an average of £269,287 per year compared to the current budget (final seven months) £269,440, which could possibly show the end of the financial year ending at £488,000.

Building Control's Income is directly linked to staff availability to follow up work and the recent loss of an experienced surveyor with substantial experience combined with zero response to two separate vacancy advertising exercises is indicative of the difficulties in growing BC Income in competitive and challenging marketplace conditions.

### **Development Control**

Development Control continues to make extensive strides in planning income generation in 2018/19.

The first five months of 2018/19 show that DC Planning Application Income reached £653,257. This compares with budget of £438,040 an increase of £215,217 over budget. In addition the average monthly income for 2017/18 was £70,549 and to date the average monthly income for the first five months of 2018/19 is £130,651.

DC's Planning Application income for 2018/19 is expected to continue to increase to reach an expected turnover of £1,295,217 which if achieved will be a record £448,632 over DC Income of £846,585 for 2017/18.

DC Pre-Application Income continues to perform well against budget recording £47,294 as compared with the budget of £45,270.

This means that based on current trends it is possible that DC Income will achieve a high £1.4 to £1.5 million for 2018/19.

Workload of planning applications and pre-planning applications remains high, putting a strain on resources. There are a few vacancies but despite advertising it is proving difficult to fill them, but this is an issue Essex wide. Use of planning agency staff however, has helped to plug the gaps while jobs are advertised and await appointment.