

## **Report to Governance Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 5 July 2016**

**Subject:** Consultation Register 2015/16 and 2016/17

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**Committee Secretary:** Mark Jenkins (01992 56 4607)

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### **Recommendation/Decisions Required:**

**That the Consultation Register for 2016/17 setting out those issues on which public consultation is to be undertaken during the municipal year and those consultation exercises completed during 2015/2016 be noted.**

### **Public Consultation Register**

1. A list of consultation (planned and carried out) by the Council, is published on the website and brought to the attention of the Governance Select Committee, in order to meet the general duty and best practice guidelines.
2. All consultation and engagement exercises undertaken by and on behalf of the Council are required to comply with the provisions of the Council's Public Consultation and Engagement Strategy and Policy.
3. As part of the Public Consultation and Engagement Strategy, a Consultation Register has been included in the Council's annual business planning process since 2006/07. It sets out the issues on which we will be consulting residents and customers during the year.
4. The Consultation Register incorporates the results of consultation exercises undertaken during the preceding 12 months. It summarises the purpose, the start and finish dates, the directorate carrying out the surveys and where the results were published.

The Consultation Register shows the overall objectives for each exercise yet to be undertaken and the methods and groups to consult. This is in order to focus consultation and engagement on priorities and operational issues faced in the coming year.

### **Not included in the Register**

5. It was recognised that in establishing this approach, that the need for some consultation exercises would arise subsequent to the publication of the Register. Regular ongoing satisfaction surveys such as housing report cards, or consultation carried out in relation to planning applications, are not included with the Consultation Register or any estate management consultation (eg, tree regeneration or facilities

proposals in a specific estate). The Council's publishes a list of planned consultation exercises on its website.

Appendix 1 to this report shows the Consultation Register for 2015/16 and items planned for consultation in 2016/17.

## Community Engagement and Involvement

6. The Council carries out a wide range of community engagement and involvement activities. There are nineteen surveys listed in Appendix 1. Nine are statutory surveys and ten are at the discretion of the service.

Some of the surveys carried out by the Council in the last 12 months were:

- The Homelessness Strategy Survey.
- The revised licence conditions for holiday sites.
- Waltham Abbey and Epping Upland Neighbourhood Plans.

Of the consultations carried out and planned, eight surveys have/had an interactive/online element, two were focus groups and workshops etc., four were paper based postal surveys and two used various methods and two were meetings. One survey was cancelled due to resource issues.

## Local Plan

7. The Council's most important and largest consultation for this coming year is the 'Draft Plan – Preferred Approach'

Two major phases of engagement have already taken place on the new Local Plan, as follows:

- **'Visioning'** (late 2010/early 2011) - The Council ran a 'community visioning' consultation, asking residents, businesses questions about what their priorities were for the district over the next 20 years. For example:
  - Where new houses and jobs should be located (in terms of patterns of distribution e.g. close to transport links, near Harlow etc, and not in terms of actual sites).
  - What planning issues needed to be addressed in their local area (e.g. more affordable housing, reduced traffic congestion etc.).
- **Issues and Options 'Community Choices'** (July-October 2012) – The Council ran the Issues and Options consultation, called 'Community Choices'. It was more comprehensive than the visioning stage, asking for opinions on many topics including housing, jobs, Green Belt, town centres, green spaces, and potential sites for housing and/or economic development in the towns and large villages in the district.
- The Council has also consulted on two other documents: the **Scoping Report for Sustainability Appraisal 2012** (which considered how the various options in the Community Choices consultation document might affect the environment, the economy and society) and the **Statement of Community Involvement** (which set

out how we were to engage with the public and interested parties in all planning related matters) which was adopted in 2013.

**Evidence Base** - technical evidence in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Policy Guidance has been gathered including:

- Housing need – Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2015).
- Green Belt – Green Belt Review Stage 1 completed in 2015.
- Landscape – Landscape Character Assessment/Settlement Edge Landscape Sensitivity Study 2010.
- Flood Risk – Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 update 2015.
- Stage 1 Assessment of the Viability of Affordable Housing, Community Infrastructure Levy and Local Plan (2015).
- Employment – Joint Economic Report (2015) and the Detailed EFDC Economic Report 2015.
- Gypsy and Traveller/Travelling Showpeople’s needs – Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2014.
- Potential sites for future development – Call for Sites and Strategic Land Availability Assessment 2012.
- Climate Change – Carbon Reduction and Renewable Energy Assessment 2013.
- North Weald Airfield – North Weald Masterplanning Study 2014.
- Built Heritage – Heritage Asset Review 2012.
- Leisure – Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment 2012.

More information is available online at - <http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/index.php/help/file-store/category/105-evidence-base>.

Work on evidence base studies is still ongoing.

The ‘Draft Plan – Preferred Approach’ stage of formal consultation will commence in autumn 2016. This will set out the sites and policies that the Council think are most appropriate taking into account previous consultation responses and the Evidence Base. It will be a six week statutory consultation, and is open to anyone who is interested, which is likely to include people who live, work and/or do business in the area.

Public Relations consultants ‘Remarkable’ have been commissioned by the Council to help develop the communications strategy for the consultation on the ‘Draft Plan – Preferred Approach’.

Information on the various stages working towards the new Local Plan can be found online at <http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/index.php/contact-us/consultation/planning-our-future>.

## **Internal Consultation**

8. Human Resources have carried out further employee ‘Pulse’ consultation to compare and measure staff attitudes with previous survey results. Staff consultation included a ‘Smoking and Vaping’ survey.

## Cost

9. All consultation has a cost whether in officer time, postage or information materials. The majority of the Council's public consultation was carried out in-house, and costs were kept low and within current budgets and accounted for postage and materials only.

A total cost of consultation within the current Register is £114,450. Of this cost, £97,000 was held over from the previous year's planned expenditure for the Local Plan.

## Transformation

10. A range of desk-based research and small-scale survey work is being carried out as part of the Transformation agenda. The Council is currently consulting its own members and staff as well as service users and Essex County Council on the Service Level Agreement, which provides District Council Information Services via ECC libraries. The Communications Transformation Project Group is also carrying out consultation to test public recognition of services provided by Epping Forest District Council and other organisations such as ECC and Essex Police as it seeks to understand the link between communications and customer satisfaction. A third internal staff survey at the formative stage is being developed to measure staff readiness to undergo change. Further internal consultation with staff looked at catering and vending machine locations.

## Tenant Participation

11. Tenant participation is also important in terms of consultation, especially in areas where tenants and residents need to feel engaged or involved in their neighbourhoods or where new services may be provided, eg, Hillhouse Community Planning Weekend. A proposal has been made for a new development at Hillhouse, which would include a health centre, a swimming pool and an independent living scheme for housing people over 55. This site will take up half of two playing fields.

**Budget provision/Personnel/Land:** £114,450

**Community Plan/BVPP reference:** MT03 and MT05 - Medium Term Aims 2011 to 2015

**Relevant statutory powers:** Consultation is governed by statute and remains under The General Duty of Best Value provided for under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999, as amended by s137 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

**Background papers:** Public Consultation Policy and Strategy

**Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:** None

**Key Decision reference:** None

**Appendix 1**  
**Epping Forest District Council Public Consultation Register 2015 to 2016 and 2016 to 2017**

Planned - Registered	Subject Matter/Issues or Title	Start and Finish Dates (estimated)	Who is commissioning Survey	Overview/Objectives and How will the results be used?	Method and Target Group/s/Cost	Decisions on the results and where can they be viewed?
0415/SD	Proposed Revised Standard Site Licence Conditions for Holiday Sites in Epping Forest District	Feb to April 2015	Director of Communities	The Council is responsible for the licensing of holiday camping and touring sites in its district. A review of the existing site licence conditions has not occurred for many years and it is now considered appropriate to introduce revised standard conditions that are relevant, fair and in line with modern times, for all our sites.	The Private Sector Housing Team asked for comments from holiday park site owners and users.  Cost – no additional cost to EFDC.	We amended the conditions to reflect the agreed changes from the consultation. The amended draft conditions were re-circulated to all the site operators and other interested parties for further consultation and no adverse comments were received. The Standard Licence Conditions for Holiday Caravan and Camping Sites in Epping Forest was agreed by Cabinet and adopted by the Council on 11 June 2015.
P0615/RW	Consultation on Homelessness Strategy 2015/16 to 2017/18	June 2015 to Aug 2015	Director of Communities	Homelessness Strategy is a strategic document considering the homeless service provided by the Council.	The consultation took place with key partners, agencies and was carried out by Housing, Communities Directorate.  Estimated cost £50.	The Homelessness Strategy 2015-18 has been approved and adopted by the Housing Portfolio Holder and the Strategy is published on the Council's website.
0715/PG	Crime and Disorder Public Perception Survey	July to Sep 2015	Director of Communities	This is a public perception survey of crime and disorder issues in the district.  The findings will go towards weighting and determining strategic priorities for the Community Safety Partnership to address during the year. This will then be analysed in the Statutory Annual Partnership Strategic Assessment. The Annual Partnership Plan will be developed around the issues of greatest concern.	General public, residents and businesses within the District.  Estimated cost £300.	This consultation did not go as planned. Essex Police have migrated to the Athena data recording system, which experienced reliability issues during implementation.  Therefore, it was not possible to carry out a meaningful analysis of the data and overlay public perception at this time. The survey will be done at a later date.
0715/GN	Employee Pulse Survey	July and Aug 2015	Management Board	The Council wishes to engage with staff, seeking their views and encouraging their participation.	A consultation with all Council staff. Focus groups and workshops for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff.</li> <li>• Leadership Team - 1 July</li> <li>• JCC - 13 July.</li> </ul>	A report went to the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) Meeting 13 July.

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					Cost – no additional cost to EFDC.	
0815/SM	Review of Financial Regulations	Aug to Sep 2015	Director of Resources	To gain knowledge of other authorities financial regulations and business practices in order to assist us with our internal review.	Essex Local Authorities Neighbouring London Boroughs, Audit Commission Family Group.  Cost – no additional cost to EFDC.	Responses were received from six authorities who showed no clear pattern in the setting of procurement rules.
0815/LW	Epping Upland Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Area Consultation	Aug to Sep 2015	Director of Neighbourhoods	The Council received an application for the designation of a Neighbourhood Area Plan from Epping Upland Parish Council.	The Council invited comments on the proposed Neighbourhood Area Plan for a period of four weeks.  Cost – no additional cost to EFDC.	The designation was agreed with one small exception.  The results can be found in the Local Neighbourhood Area Plans section on the Council's website.
0915/IW	Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2016/17	Sep to Oct 2015	Director of Resources	We wanted to know our residents opinion on the Local Council Tax Support scheme proposals and other budgetary factors.	The responses were collected via the Essex County Council website.  Cost – no additional cost to EFDC.	Cabinet 3 December 2015. The scheme was amended to reduce the maximum liability percentage for people of working age from 80% to 75%. A minimum income floor for self-employed people of working age, is to be introduced into the scheme and the proposed Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2016/17, was agreed and adopted. <a href="http://haako/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AllId=52198">http://haako/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AllId=52198</a>
1015/SW	Epping Forest Youth Conference 2015	October 2015	Director of Communities	Youth Councillors consulted with their peers on relevant issues and engaged young people in local politics.  This gave them an opportunity to voice their opinions including the European Union.	A conference was held in the Council Chamber and was attended by 90 pupils from year 7 to 11, representing eight secondary schools in the District.  Cost – no additional cost to EFDC	The results can be found in The Youth Conference Report, 'Make your Mark'.

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1115/QD	Review of the Waste Management Service Public Comments	Nov to Dec 2015	Director of Neighbourhoods	A review of the waste management contract and the issues surrounding the mobilisation and four day collections services across the District.	A meeting took place on 17 December 2015 and was advertised on the website.  Cost – no additional cost to EFDC	This report was reviewed at the Neighbourhoods Select Committee for corrective actions. A further report was made to Cabinet in 2016. Related information and links: <a href="http://haako/documents/s66683/Scoping%20Report.pdf">http://haako/documents/s66683/Scoping%20Report.pdf</a>
1115/WG	Staff Smoking and Vaping Survey	Nov 2015	Director of Resources	To inform future policy.	An online interactive survey was sent to all employees at all sites.  Cost £200	The results were fed back to Management Board, November 2015.
0116/LW	Waltham Abbey Town Council Neighbourhood Area Plan	Jan to Feb 2016	Director of Neighbourhoods	Waltham Abbey Town Council applied for the designation of a Neighbourhood Area Plan. The proposed area follows the parish boundary. The Council invited representations on the proposed Neighbourhood Plan Area.	Comments were sent by email to <a href="mailto:ldfconsult@eppingforestdc.gov.uk">ldfconsult@eppingforestdc.gov.uk</a> or by post to Planning Policy. The consultation commenced on 12 January 2016 and ran for four weeks.  Cost – no additional cost to EFDC	The designation was agreed for the whole Waltham Abbey Neighbourhood Area Plan.  The results can be found at the Local Neighbourhood Area Plans on the Council's website.
0116/JC	Impact of an Ageing Population on the Services of Epping Forest District Council	March 2016	Director of Communities	A series of informal consultation focus groups were held with people aged 65-90's, to ascertain what they believe will be their service needs and aspirations as they reach their very old age.	A series of informal consultation focus groups.  Cost. £100	The results of the report will be presented to Cabinet in June 2016 and published on the Council's website.
0216/SD	Proposed Standards for Nursery Worker Accommodation	Feb to April 2016	Director of Communities	Proposed Standard Conditions for the Stationing of Caravans used to Accommodate Workers on Nursery Sites were drafted in order to ensure that the accommodation is safe for people to live in.	The draft documents were posted to all site operators of nursery sites in the District in February. We asked for the enclosed questionnaire and any other feedback to be returned to us by 7 April 2016.  Cost – no additional cost to EFDC	The consultation period has been extended and the results are pending the completion and analysis of the results.

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0316/BK	Hillhouse Community Planning Weekend Tenant Participation	March 2016	Director of Communities	A new development has been proposed at Hillhouse which would include a health centre, a swimming pool and an independent living scheme for housing people over 55 to take up half of two playing fields.	The event took place on the 18 and 19 March 2016 at Hillhouse Primary School, Ninefields, Waltham Abbey. The costs formed part of the overall Hillhouse Master planning exercise.  The Council's contribution to the overall cost was £17,000.	The Masterplan for Hillhouse is soon to be produced, which takes account of the consultation responses.  It will be available from EFDC's website from July 2016.
<b>Planned consultation for following 12 months</b>						
June 2016	Employee Pulse Survey	June to July 2016	Director of Resources	As part of the Council's 'Transformation' project, Human Resources plan to use a management tool survey to determine council staff readiness for change.	An online (interactive) questionnaire will be sent via an email link to all Council staff.  At no additional cost to EFDC	The results will be reported to Management Board in the Autumn.
June 2016	Information Service Level Agreement Epping Forest District Council and Essex County Council	June 2016	Director of Governance	This consultation is to examine if the current service level agreement should continue or end on 31 March 2017.	Consultation and Analysis. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statistical analysis of users (residents) via monthly returns.</li> <li>• User Feedback (non-recycling sack).</li> <li>• Councillors, (County, District and Parish/Town Council) consulted via email and the Members Bulletin.</li> <li>• District Council Officers consulted via the internal staff newsletter - District Lines.</li> <li>• Essex County Council Library Service to be consulted via the Group Manager.</li> <li>• Service Users</li> <li>• Councillors</li> <li>• Council Staff</li> <li>• Essex County Council Staff</li> </ul>	To form background information for Councillors during 2017/18 budget setting process.



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					Cost £100	
July 2016	Service Recognition Survey	July to Sept 2016	Director of Governance	To establish levels of public understanding linked to satisfaction. To assist the Transformation process by improving our understanding of our residents views and implementing changes to our services as a result.	A service recognition survey is being prepared as a 'quiz' and is to be used at public events such as the North Weald Air Fete (Community Day).  Estimated cost £100	The consultation analysis will be used to inform the Transformation Communications project.
R1214/CB	Draft Plan - Preferred Approach	Start date at end of October 2016  (End date not yet confirmed)	Director of Neighbourhoods	The Local Plan sets out the growth strategy for the District over the next 20 years. An initial consultation held in 2012, identified possible options. The 'Draft Plan – Preferred Approach' is the next stage and will set out the sites and policies that the Council think are most appropriate taking into account previous consultation responses and evidence base.	This is a statutory consultation and will be open to anyone who is interested and will include people who live, work and/or do business in the area. People will be able to respond through the internet, by email, and by post.  Cost –£97,000 was held over from the previous year's budget to cover the expenditure for this consultation.	The consultation results will be reported to the elected Councillors at a public meeting (Cabinet) once the responses have been gathered and analysed.
December 2016	Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2017/18	Dec 2016	Director of Resources	To consult on any proposed changes to the 2016/17 Local Tax Support Scheme.	The responses were collected via the Essex County Council website.  Cost – no additional cost to EFDC.	To be reported to the elected Councillors at a public meeting (Cabinet) once the responses have been gathered and analysed.