

Select Committee Agenda



Stronger Place Select Committee Thursday, 4th July, 2019

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Stronger Place Select Committee**, which will be held at:

Council Chamber - Civic Offices, High Street, Epping
on **Thursday, 4th July, 2019**
at **7.00 pm**

Georgina Blakemore
Chief Executive

**Democratic Services
Officer**

V Messenger
Email: democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Members:

Councillors D Sunger (Chairman), S Heather (Vice-Chairman), L Burrows, I Hadley, J Jennings, S Jones, H Kauffman, C McCredie, J McIvor, R Morgan and S Neville

SUBSTITUTE NOMINATION DEADLINE: 6PM

WEBCASTING NOTICE

Please note: this meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site - at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during this webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy and copies made available to those that request it.

Therefore by entering the Chamber and using the lower public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for web casting and/or training purposes. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured they should sit in the upper council chamber public gallery area

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact the Public Relations Manager on 01992 564039.

1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

This meeting is to be webcast. Members are reminded of the need to activate their microphones before speaking.

The Chairman will read the following announcement:

“This meeting will be webcast live to the Internet and will be archived for later viewing. Copies of recordings may be made available on request.

By entering the chamber’s lower seating area you are consenting to becoming part of the webcast.

If you wish to avoid being filmed you should move to the public gallery or speak to the webcasting officer”.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

To report the appointment of any Substitute members for the meeting.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To declare interests in any items on the agenda.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 5 - 8)

(Chairman/Lead Officer) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has agreed the terms of reference of the Select Committee. This is attached along with an ongoing work programme. Members are invited at each meeting to review both documents.

6. NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD MASTERPLAN - PRESENTATION

To receive a presentation from J Nolan, Service Director (Commercial and Regulatory).

7. ST JOHNS ROAD DEVELOPMENT - PRESENTATION

To receive a presentation from J Nolan, Service Director (Commercial and Regulatory).

8. DRAFT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY - PRESENTATION (Pages 9 - 32)

To receive a presentation from J Houston, Specialist Manager (Strategic Partnerships). For information: Nurturing Growth, a discussion paper to launch work on a new strategy to support economic development in the district 2019 to 2025 (see attached).

9. LOCAL PLAN DELIVERY - PRESENTATION

To receive a presentation from S Jevans, Interim Strategic Director.

10. DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (Pages 33 - 48)

To consider the draft Statement (attached).

11. COUNCIL HOUSEBUILDING PROGRAMME - PRESENTATION

To receive a presentation from P Pledger, Service Director (Housing and Property).

12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

To note that future meetings of the Select Committee will be held at 7.00pm on:

- 17 September 2019;
- 9 December 2019; and
- 24 March 2020.

With the agreement of the Chairman, the meeting of the Select Committee that was due to be held on 10 December 2019 will now be held on 9 December 2019, to avoid a clash with the annual Chairman's Christmas Carol Concert.

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STRONGER PLACE SELECT COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE 2019/20

Core Areas of Responsibility

- (1) To provide scrutiny for the following corporate projects:
 - Local Plan Delivery;
 - St. Johns Road;
 - North Weald (including masterplanning);
 - Council Housebuilding; and
 - Economic growth, skills and employment;
- (2) To have overview of the performance of the Waste Management Contract and Leisure Management Contract and provide scrutiny of services that are not performing to standard and develop proposals for their improvement; and
- (3) To have overview of the green agenda helping to inform policy and future proofing the place.

Scrutiny Role of the Select Committee

- (1) To engage in policy review and development, with a focus on improvement and how this can be best achieved;
- (2) To develop a work programme each year that effectively scrutinises the areas of responsibility outlined above;
- (3) To consider any matter referred by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet or a Portfolio Holder and to make recommendations as appropriate;
- (4) To consider the effect of Government actions or initiatives that affect the Select Committees areas of responsibility and the impact on customers, residents, businesses and visitors to our district, and to respond to consultation activities as appropriate;
- (5) To establish working groups and task and finish panels to undertake any activity within these terms of reference;
- (6) To undertake pre-scrutiny through the review of specific proposals of the Council and its partner organisations or other local service providers to help develop policy;
- (7) To monitor and review relevant projects and associated closure and benefits reports; and
- (8) To engage with the community and encourage community engagement.

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**Stronger Place Select Committee
Work Programme 2019/20
Chairman: Councillor D Sunger**

No.	Item	Deadline	Progress and Comments	Programme of Meetings
1.	Economic Strategy	Draft strategy to June meeting		4 July 2019
2.	North Weald Airfield Masterplan	Appointment of masterplanners – decision scrutiny – June Interim report – pre- cabinet scrutiny – September Final report – post cabinet scrutiny - March		17 September 2019 9 December 2019 24 March 2020
3.	St Johns Road development	Project report in September		
4.	Waste Contract	December. Performance and amendments.		
5.	Green agenda – energy, sustainable transport	tbc		
6.	Service reviews as a result of performance concerns	ongoing		
7.	Council Housebuilding	December. Progress and issues.		
8.	Local Plan	Awaiting completion of Examination in Public. Annual report on housing issues arising from the Local Plan (including Private Sector Housing, Council Housing and Assisted Living Accommodation)		

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Nurturing Growth

A discussion paper to launch work on a new strategy to support economic development in the district 2019 to 2025

May 2019



Foreword



Our district is a prosperous place with an economy that is resilient and strong. However, we are constantly looking to maximise opportunities that will benefit our residents, support our long-established businesses and nurture the ones that are yet to come.

The economy is developing and evolving in the UK. New industries, businesses and technologies are reshaping the skills we need, the employment on offer and how we access and use services. This, in turn, has an impact on our approach to protecting the environment and giving our young and not so young workers the opportunities they need to prosper. The district's strength lies in its beautiful green and unique heritage coupled with its connections to London and the opportunities presented by economic growth in neighbouring districts. This however also brings many challenges not least the lack of available land for growth, given that we are over 90% Green Belt and our residents wish to protect this wherever possible. The Epping Forest District's Local Plan is necessarily a balance between the requirement from Government to deliver the identified and evidenced need for 10,800 new jobs and 11,400 homes by 2033, and the need to protect the greenness of our district and the forest. We must also factor in Brexit and the challenges that may bring.

This strategy puts forward proposals to deliver a long-term vision and plan to future proof our economic success, enable entrepreneurs to become established, businesses to grow, and our residents to prosper. For instance this includes ideas around a new integrated transport strategy to help address challenges in and around the district.

This is not just a plan for the council, but a plan for the place that is Epping Forest District. One that business, education and public services can all get behind, so we can pool our learning, resources and knowledge and make our district truly a great place to live, work, study and do business. To do this we need your input, helping us to focus on the things that will deliver value by making the best use of our limited resources.

Cllr Sam Kane
Economic Development Portfolio Holder
Epping Forest District Council

Introduction

This document has been produced to encourage debate and discussion on how we can best support the development of the local economy.

Our economy is vibrant and diverse, based in a region that is successful and thriving and located between the two international economic powerhouses of London and Cambridge.

This report acknowledges the need to retain and build on our strengths as a successful home for small and medium size enterprises, placing less reliance on the public purse than other areas. Importantly, it also looks at how we might work to future proof our current prosperity and economic success and how that success might translate to the future given the likely impact of changes that are happening all around us.

The vision, priorities and actions are ideas at the moment. We want your input and vision to enable us to develop these ideas and initiatives and release the opportunities they represent. This will enable us to focus on key areas to concentrate our efforts and achieve the best results.



Other Key Plans

This strategy cannot exist in isolation. Other statutory plans and strategies define national, regional and local priorities and the Epping Forest District economic strategy must take these into account. This is especially relevant if we are looking to secure financial support from government and others to help fund some of our work.

These other key plans include the government's new national industrial strategy, the strategy of our Local Economic Partnership (SELEP), our neighbouring LEPs in Hertfordshire and London, those of Essex County Council and perhaps of greatest relevance locally, our own Epping Forest District Local Plan.

Our Local Plan sets out, after exhaustive local consultation and research, the strategy for meeting the district's needs up to 2033. It outlines the future distribution of housing growth and sets out the locations for new employment space and thus jobs. It further sets out policies to maintain and enhance the vibrancy and vitality of our town centres, to support a sustainable transport and road infrastructure network and deliver the necessary infrastructure to support growth including schools, health and community facilities.

A key challenge contained in many of these plans is the need to raise the levels of productivity or GVA of the employment of the district. Importantly, this work on our local needs has been carried out in conjunction with councils and other partners responsible for our neighbouring areas. This economic strategy will not revisit these decisions, but will look to how we can develop our economy within this wider context, taking account of the strategies agreed in these accompanying documents. In many of these documents, land use is featured as an important facet of a growing economy. However this isn't the only factor in delivering a strong and robust economy for local people.



Draft Economic Vision

We have already had some discussions with key partners and have come up with this overarching vision for the strategy. **Is this the right vision, is it challenging enough or too challenging, is there anything missing?**

“A place where we create prosperity that everyone can share, becoming the best place to live and do business in Essex.

A place that is connected like no other.

A place of innovation and ambition, where we make the most of our proximity to London and limited development land to:

- **support local entrepreneurs**
- **keep taxes low**
- **invest in our residents’ skills**
- **... while protecting our green and unique heritage.”**

Key Priorities

To be effective we must target limited resources to where they will bring greatest value to the local economy.

The following seven key priorities are designed to provide long-term guidance to our work. These priorities will be underpinned by three-year delivery plans which will set out in detail what we will do to deliver them, and a set of indicators which we will use to measure our performance. **Are these the right priorities for you, are there too many, is anything that will bring greater benefit missing?**

Delivering 21st century infrastructure making this the best place in our region to do business

Securing further investment from the public and private sector in enhancements to our road, rail, tube, digital 5G networks and employment sites.

Vibrant, diverse and resilient high streets

Maintaining and developing the offer from, and footfall on, our high streets, to meet the challenges of online retailing and the expectations of shoppers and residents.

Exploiting opportunities and developments outside the district

Making sure workers and businesses access jobs, contracts and investment from growth in London, Stansted, Harlow, Cambridge and beyond.

Building partnerships that deliver

Working more closely with government, Local Enterprise Partnerships, neighbouring councils and research and innovation bodies to coordinate activity and better support cross border and cross sector working.

Meeting the skills challenge together

Giving all our residents and local businesses access to first rate education, skills and training opportunities throughout life, to support their ability to access the best jobs, and respond effectively through up-skilling to changing employment opportunities both within and outside the district.

A place for entrepreneurs and businesses to thrive

Finding new spaces and new opportunities and approaches to support business start-ups through intensifying the use of existing industrial, retail and employment land.

Helping rural areas thrive

Ensuring our rural communities are sustainable in the long-term and are able to share fully in the district's growth and prosperity through the sensitive introduction of new opportunities in agriculture and tourism.



Where are we now?

Epping Forest District Local Plan is currently undergoing independent examination and is forecast for adoption in late 2019. This plan will shape how the district develops until 2033 with investment from the public and private sector. More detail can be found at: www.efdclocalplan.org/

Our local economy is in a good place and has performed well, even through the economic downturn from 2008. We have a wide variety of businesses working across a range of different economic sectors and this spread has made the area less prone to the impact of downturns in any one particular sector, or general contraction as experienced in areas such as the public sector.

A significant number of local people commute out of the district to jobs offering higher income, often in sectors that aren't available locally. These salaries allow residents to afford the relatively high costs of housing, especially in the commuting areas in the south of the district. Figures produced by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership confirm that our district has some of the least affordable housing of all the areas it covers.

While our local economy is generally strong and performs well against most indicators of performance, unlike many other places, it's strength is intrinsically linked to the success and growth of surrounding economies - most notably that of London and the London Stansted Cambridge Corridor. This proximity, however, also makes the Epping Forest District the ideal new home for higher-value jobs being forced to relocate by overheating economies in London and Cambridge where land availability and property costs are causing businesses and investors to seek suitable alternative locations for expansion.

Despite the opportunities our district offers, traditional challenges such as the pull of the London economy and the lack of major available sites for economic growth, continue to have a negative impact. And these are being joined by new challenges including the changing face of employment driven by digital technology, which also brings opportunity with the potential to attract and grow new knowledge-based roles that are redefining our future.

This strategy is concerned with meeting local people's expectations around future proofing and improving, where possible, the district's economic performance whilst at the same time protecting what we have already built by, for example, retaining business accommodation where it is vulnerable to conversion to residential.



Key Aspects of the District Economy

This section takes a more detailed look at some of the sectors and issues that research and discussion with partners and stakeholders has indicated should be specifically addressed in this strategy.

High Streets and Town Centres

Our district's retail offer differs from many as, rather than having one main urban area, it is made up of a range of market towns, each bringing their own special charm and character.

Our high streets performance is relatively strong with a good range of shops and services and little by the way of vacancies and empty properties in comparison with other areas of the UK.

Residents enjoy the mix of independent outlets and national chains but, as the district does not host any major out of town shopping centres, this brings competition from the London retail offer, major shopping centres in Harlow and Chelmsford and the Brookfield Centre in Broxbourne all of which are within relatively easy reach.

Online retailing and the changing face of high streets are having a very real impact on the ability of our local traders to maintain, let alone grow, their share of our local population's retail expenditure. With many of our most affluent residents drawn to London and the upward pressure on rents, driven by the competition independent retailers face from national chains, our high streets continue to be an area for attention and support.

There are many steps the council, together with local partners, could take to address these challenges. Some are set out below.

Potential Actions

- 
- Ensure the delivery of the St John's Road area in Epping as a key town centre regeneration scheme.
 - Keep business rates as low as possible
 - Retain existing provision for car parking and maintain costs to competitive levels
 - Looking at introducing a new £50,000 annual High Street Fund Competition to boost local action in town centres
 - Actively pursue external investment funds to invest locally
 - Deliver free WI-FI and improved mobile connectivity in all town centres to support footfall
 - Provide greater support to town centre partnerships

Is this a priority? Are these the right things to do, are there any other steps we should consider to improve things on our High streets?



6 Simon Campion Court
01992 570555

The Wardrobe

estate agents and property consultants
Stevenette
01992 563090

CAMPION COURT
DUNN
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Key Aspects of the District Economy

Tourism and Visitor economy

Our district has an enviable breadth of heritage and natural infrastructure including nationally recognised green spaces and a wide range of activities and attractions. From the Epping Ongar Heritage Railway to the Olympic white-water centre on our doorstep, historic Waltham Abbey to the oldest wooden church in the world, our mix of things to do, combined with great places to eat, drink and relax, make our towns and villages, and the places in-between, a great destination for visitors and a great place to live. With London on our doorstep and an expanding Stansted airport to the north, this area has major tourism opportunities.

Businesses have told us this is an economic sector where we can use our green assets to create jobs and income whilst valuing and protecting their future, using the income generated and funding sourced, to invest in their future security for the enjoyment of all.

The national tourism economy has outstripped general economic growth levels over recent years. In the district this pattern of growth has been mirrored, and while it is now slowing down in other areas of the country it continues to grow locally at a significant rate. The latest figures show this sector of the Epping Forest District's economy grew by 7% taking the overall value to more than £220 million, increasing local opportunities for employment, particularly in entry level jobs.

Potential Actions

- Work to retain and expand visitor accommodation both in the area or nearby
- Develop greater coordination and joint work with neighbouring councils and key infrastructure providers such as TFL, Stansted airport and Greater Anglia rail network
- Agree a long term branding and marketing plan with partners for our tourism offer
- Develop rural accommodation in pubs and disused buildings
- Ensure rural broadband connectivity, coverage and speeds
- Conduct a feasibility study into improved connectivity between the Epping Ongar Heritage Railway and visitors arriving at Epping Station



Is this a priority? Are these the right things to do, are there any other steps we should consider to grow this sector of the local economy?

Key Aspects of the District Economy

Infrastructure and Transport

With the M25, the M11, mainline railway and extensive London Underground connections (more than many London boroughs), plus access to Stansted and Heathrow airports, the district is well served for primary travel routes.

However, capacity constraints mean the district itself can become gridlocked, especially if there is a failure on any of these major connections. As this inevitably leads to business disruption, it places more reliance on the use of private transport with the resulting impact on our rural infrastructure and an upsurge in pollution. Crossrail 1 and 2 has the ability draw traffic away from the current routes and create additional capacity, and four tracking of the London Liverpool Street line can also provide a range of better travel options for commuters. Given the high and growing number of local commuters, swelled by those from outside accessing the tube in our district, there is real local concern about capacity on existing local links. The need for a robust long-term transport infrastructure investment plan is more central to prosperity in the Epping Forest District than perhaps any other place in the South East.

Epping Forest District Local Plan sets out policies to support a sustainable transport and road infrastructure network and the Plan is accompanied by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan to include the infrastructure requirements that are necessary to support new development. The District Council however, has limited control over the provision and management of transport connections. It is important for the district that residents can effectively access, and therefore take advantage of, the new growth and employment opportunities at Harlow, Stansted, London and beyond.

In addition to public transport, new cycle networks and walking trails would encourage sustainable travel to work plus benefit visitors from London and beyond to sustainably access local attractions. Travel within the district has been a traditional source of concern, particularly connecting the more rural locations and this has caused access to employment problems and restricted residents ability to participate fully in the life of the community. It is therefore no surprise that the district has particularly high levels of car ownership reflecting the only practical solution to this need.

Employment sites can also be considered as a key element of the district's infrastructure. We know that there is a strong demand for employment space locally but we also face challenges in increasing and enhancing the existing supply. Within this context, the district is targeted to deliver an extra 10,800 jobs over the Local Plan period to 2033. Whilst not all of these jobs will require employment premises, the Local Plan sets out the allocation of 23 ha of new employment sites and supports the protection and enhancement of existing employment sites. Key to the future growth of the district's economy will be the provision of high quality office and industrial space to support the high start-up dynamic locally, to provide grow-on space for expanding businesses and to attract new investors.

Potential Actions

- Support Essex County Council to deliver the new M11 Junction 7a at the earliest opportunity and work with partners to deliver improvements on Junction 7
- Work closely with TFL/London Underground to retain investment and increase capacity on the Central line, ensuring district representation on decision making bodies. Also support, with partners the four tracking option on the London Liverpool Street line
- Support the growth of Stansted airport and develop new links for local businesses in the supply chain of this growing regional employment hub and greater opportunities for employment of local people.
- Expand cycle networks in district
- Work with partners to ensure an integrated sustainable transport corridor for Harlow and Gilston Garden Town is delivered and explore opportunities for a wider integrated transport strategy for the surrounding boroughs and districts
- Lobby government, SELEP and other agencies to support our infrastructure needs
- Promote Epping Forest District as a location for business
- Support the delivery of new employment site allocations to derive the greatest employment dividend and to deliver employment space that is high quality and flexible, responds to demand and supports the grow-on of local businesses as well as offering opportunity for inward investment



On the platform at one of the district's London Underground stations

- Resist change of use of employment sites and look for opportunities to intensify and strengthen existing employment sites
- Work collaboratively with partners to develop opportunities to access external funding to leverage private sector investment to deliver jobs on existing or potential new employment sites

Is this a priority? Are these the right things to do, are there any other steps we should consider to address these issues?

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www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/museum



- 2min Meridian Line
- 3min Car Parks
- 3min Market Square
- 5min Abbey Church & Gardens

This House was built in 1818, by John Ash
in 1820 MARGARET DE BRILLON at the
request of Epping Forest District Council.

Key Aspects of the District Economy

Partnerships That Deliver for Epping Forest District

The district is dependent upon the areas it is connected to for its prosperity, perhaps to a greater extent than many other places, including other locations bordering London. Residents commute out of the district, accessing employment opportunities not available locally (typically securing higher paid London jobs) whilst a smaller number of workers from neighbouring districts and London commute in to fill roles in local jobs providing a much-needed impetus to the local economy. Many local services companies also depend on serving London as well as nationally.

Although vital to our economic wellbeing, the district has no direct control over the institutions and organisations that provide the infrastructure and employment, or skills and investment, that maintains and grows the key ingredients to our prosperity and wellbeing. The South East Local Enterprise Partnership, central government, colleges and universities and large and small businesses are the dynamo of local growth.

To monitor and influence these organisations and ensure they are contributing effectively to the prosperity of our district, requires that we have mechanisms to exert influence over their plans and strategies and work in partnership to keep them informed about our area's strengths and opportunities.

Potential Actions

- Establish an Economic Partnership for the District, in collaboration with the private sector, bringing together key businesses, infrastructure providers, local councils and research, skills and teaching bodies, to coordinate and fund initiatives locally
- Work positively with partners to ensure that opportunities for economic growth are realised in the development and delivery of Harlow and Gilston Garden Town
- Work closely with the London Stansted Cambridge Consortium to promote the area as a business investment zone for businesses to the north and south of the district and build employment and supply-chain business opportunities at Stansted Airport
- Maintain effective representation on the South East Local Enterprise Partnership and effective engagement with Herts Local Enterprise Partnership
- Establish cross-sector partnership between East Herts and West Essex to lead, co-ordinate and promote the local economy.

Is this a priority? Are these the right things to do, are there any other steps we should consider ?

Key Aspects of the District Economy

Skills and Employment

Epping Forest District has a mixed skills base scoring highly for professional skills but is also home to residents with relatively low skills. It has a low level of NEETS (not in employment, education or training).

Those with professional, management or high-end technical skills tend to work out of the district with Westminster and the City of London the top destinations, followed by Tower Hamlets and Camden. These are areas where a wider range of jobs and higher salaries can be easily accessed. The top point of departure for those working in the district is Harlow followed by Uttlesford. There is a workflow imbalance with a higher number of workers commuting out of the district than those coming in. There is an increase in the numbers of people working from home either full time or as part of a flexible work pattern. This is one aspect of the changing face of employment due to digital connectivity. This highlights the growing importance of digital skills that are key to gaining employment in the new digital industries, to utilising the new digital enhancements in existing industries and fundamental to accessing products and services that will increasingly be delivered digitally.

The biggest employment areas in the district are the construction, finance & insurance, digital & creative, care, advanced manufacturing and logistics sectors. Of those, construction is by far the biggest with the most employees and the most individual businesses. It also has one of the highest vacancy levels alongside finance & insurance. However the construction sector is evolving with new models of building emerging which are changing the skills sets required. This evolving skills requirement is a feature of most sectors across the district. The district has a relatively low level of public sector jobs.

The backbone of the local economy are micro and small businesses with the vast majority falling into this category. A breakdown on the balance of employment in the district is contained below. (2016 figures)

- 20% of those in employment are self employed. 55.9% are employees.
- Of the businesses in the district:
- 92% are micro (0-9 employees)
- 6.6% are small (10 to 49 employees)
- 1.1% are medium (50 to 249 employees)
- 0.2% are large (250+ employees)

Potential Actions

- Work to support the launch and delivery of forthcoming T Qualifications by building stronger links between education and training providers and local businesses
- Work with local businesses and skills and training providers to ensure the right skills are available in the district at all levels
- Create a skills charter to ensure local stakeholders understand the needs of local businesses and agree to offer opportunities and supportive trading conditions to promote business security and growth
- Work with Public Health England, and Stansted to secure employment opportunities for local people within these major local employers
- Work with the NHS to bridge the gap between skills provision and employment needs
- Work with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to help the economically inactive into work
- Work with developers and future occupiers of new employment sites to maximise employment, skills and training opportunities for local people

Is this a priority? Are these the right things to do, are there any other steps we should consider to grow this sector of the local economy?





Key Aspects of the District Economy

Growing Our Food Sector

For over one hundred years Epping Forest District has been at the heart of the country's intensive growing/glasshouse industry.

This makes the area unique and it remains a key strength of the local economy with food security becoming an important aspect of government policy. An estimated 2,000 local jobs are connected to the sector, which produces a potential till value of over £1 billion per year and supplies almost all the major supermarkets in the UK. As well as serving the food market, plants grown under glass are fast becoming an important new development in the search for ingredients in the pharmaceutical industry. The glasshouse industry is one of the few whose business operations are compatible with the Green Belt and is supported through the policies in the Local Plan.

Local growers (of which there are almost 100) range from small family concerns to very large businesses that are ranked in the top 100 in Essex. The district produces most of the cucumbers and peppers grown in the UK as well as significant amounts of other fresh produce such as tomatoes. Whilst over time the acreage of the glasshouses has diminished, productivity, through new technology, has significantly increased. The industry is now setting new standards for productivity and innovation, plus new varieties and improvements in packaging, and has seen a resurgence of investment and expansion over recent years. Food from our glasshouses is produced without subsidy, and at a profit. Although margins have been driven down for many years these have been offset by efficiency savings and investment in new glasshouses, which are larger, taller and feature increased automation.

UK consumers increased preference for safe and local UK produce is driving increased demand. With potential issues around tariffs impacting on the price of non-UK produce, there is significant demand for expansion of UK's growing capacity. This is matched by the wish of the growers to expand in the traditional areas of production such as the Lee Valley. However opportunistic values make land difficult to acquire to enable expansion and workforce issues are also inhibiting growth locally.

Potential Actions

- Set up a Strategic Food Board for the Southeast with central government to devise a new integrated policy, including planning and skills and workforce, to enable and financially support glasshouse growth
- Implement the policies in the Local Plan to support the food sector
- Build closer links between research institutions and the industry to further expand innovation and efficiency. reduce carbon impact and build food knowledge to rival Holland
- Work with neighbouring councils to find sites for expansion of the glasshouse industry, around the traditional areas

Is this a priority? Are these the right things to do, are there any other steps we should consider to grow this sector of the local economy?

Key Aspects of the District Economy

A place for entrepreneurs and business start ups

Epping Forest District is characterised by micro and small businesses. There is a strong entrepreneurial spirit and these start-ups have an above average success rate in the number getting past the difficult early years of operation. This is a key feature of our economy and one which we want to encourage and support. These small businesses make up the majority of employment across a district that has very few medium and large employers.

For many years the need for start-up space has been met primarily by the market. A range of serviced and supported office/ business accommodation has been established locally across the district including modern and innovative centres such as those at Crate Loughton, M25 Business Centre, The Pixel Building or Ongar Business Centre, to service this need.

In other places, where the small business market isn't so strong, these types of developments have required significant public-sector investment to support their establishment. Those in the Epping Forest District are working well but additional capacity to meet demand, and most especially grown-on space, is at a premium as site acquisition often must compete with, and loses out to, residential values or other more traditional usage.

While small businesses are at the core of our economy they often require additional support to grow to their full potential. It is therefore equally important to ensure that policies and plans are in place to sustain the variety and vibrancy of the local offer across all the sectors in which our businesses operate.

Potential Actions

- Ensure local small businesses are more able to access major and minor contracts from the public sector
- Implement a Small Business Charter that encourages and commits large firms in the region to give local small businesses a chance to bid for contracts and agrees prompt payment to support cash flow
- Ensure planning policy implementation looks at opportunities for serviced small businesses hubs in the delivery of allocated employment sites, regeneration of designated employment sites where appropriate; or in masterplans for strategic sites
- Ensure the roll out of superfast broadband and speed improvements respect the needs of small business and clusters
- Work with external partners to ensure local businesses get their fair share of government and other agencies grant funding and advice and support services
- Ensure small businesses and business start-ups are fully represented on the new District Economic Board
- Resist change of use and look for opportunities to intensify and strengthen existing employment sites.

Is this a priority? Are these the right things to do, are there any other steps we should consider to grow this sector of the local economy?





One of the high-tech glasshouses in Epping Forest District

Key Aspects of the District Economy

Supporting our Rural Economies and Communities

The district is over 90% Green Belt and many of our residents live in our rural areas. This does not stop these areas being economically productive. Innovation in our agricultural sectors, and our glasshouse industry is continuing to drive up productivity, while tourism is growing with additional bed capacity being put in place in many of our rural pubs and restaurants. These sectors are important job creators.

The retention of key infrastructure in rural communities such as pubs and shops remains important as does the continued investment by the council and other partners in delivering superfast digital connectivity. Access to services and employment opportunities remains a significant challenge for those wishing to live or work in the rural areas. The need for an integrated public transport system is very important.

Potential Actions

- Prepare an effective and successful bid for the governments 5G rural challenge fund to access up to £25 million to invest in and future proof rural infrastructure
- Deliver tourism initiatives with a real focus on the rural visitor economy growth, ensuring there is a specific set of activities and investments for this
- Work creatively with partners to bring redundant rural buildings to bring back into productive life
- Ensure that the integrated transport strategy has a core focus of effectively serving rural areas with sustainable access and choices
- Deliver all the commitments in this strategy to ensure that the needs of rural economies are reflected and a focus is maintained in the delivery of real outcomes

Is this a priority? Are these the right things to do, are there any other steps we should consider to grow this sector of the local economy?

Conclusion

This draft strategy is the first stage of our work.

It is based on research we have commissioned to give insight into the local economy and its opportunities and challenges. It has been produced to encourage discussion on the focus for economic work in the district over the longer term and to identify key priorities for action and investment, defining what long term economic success should look like.

This is the first opportunity for businesses, residents and other partners and stakeholders to give their views.

Please take some time to give us your views on what's important. If we have missed something that you believe is essential, let us know, if we have suggested something that you don't believe will work, explain to us why. And if you have your own suggestions for things you believe we should be doing to support and grow our economy, this is your opportunity to let us know.

Please email your comments to Duncan Haslam (Economic Development Assistant) at dhaslam@eppingforestdc.gov.uk. If you have any questions about the document or would like a more detailed discussion, please contact John Houston on 01992 564 094.

The last date for sending any comments back to us is the 27th May 2019.

Thank you for your interest and support your comments will help us ensure we develop programmes and plans that nurture economic growth and prosperity.

Epping Forest District Council

Statement of Community Involvement

Consultation Draft

June 2019

Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been produced by Epping Forest District Council in its role as Local Planning Authority. It explains the processes that the District Council goes through in producing or reviewing planning policy and in determining planning applications.
- 1.2 It sets out how the communities in the District and interested parties can engage in the planning process and make their views known. It explains how their views are taken into account in the planning process and the feedback that those who engage should expect from the Council.
- 1.3 The duties to engage the community in planning matters and to prepare the SCI arise from the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (section 18) as amended by the Planning Act 2008, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017.

Contacting us

- 1.4 Should you have any questions about this SCI or wish to be added to the Local Plan consultation database please contact the Planning Policy Team on 01992 564517 or via email to Ldfconsult@eppingforestdc.gov.uk. You can also contact us via Planning Reception in the Civic Offices, 323, High Street, Epping, Essex CM16 4BZ is staffed between 9am and 1pm Monday to Friday. You may find the information you are seeking on the Councils website at www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk.

Our Communities

- 1.5 Our Communities include all of the individuals, groups and organisations that live, work or operate within the District. Different groups that make up our communities have different needs and expectations, and their own desires, capabilities and capacity to get involved. The Council seeks to maximise the opportunities for everyone in the communities in the District who want to engage with planning to do so.

General Consultation Principles

- 1.6 This SCI is produced in the context of the Councils' "Public Consultation and Engagement Policy and Strategy" 2012 (*insert link*) which provides additional detail regarding the Councils approach to public engagement. It includes the commitment that the Council aims to make the most effective use of consultation by:
 - Setting out the Council's commitment to consulting residents and others on issues that affect service provision;
 - Adopting a co-ordinated, strategic approach to consultation that avoids duplication and ensures that results are acted upon wherever possible;
 - Ensuring that engagement is both inclusive and representative;
 - Consulting with our partners where appropriate and taking account of their consultation exercises; and
 - Regularly reviewing our approach to consultation activities so that we learn from and improve them.

Planning Policy

- 1.7 This section sets out how the Council will engage the public in any review of policies and future policy making. The minimum requirements for public engagement in planning policy making are set out in legislation. The Council will always meet these requirements and seek to go beyond them where suitable.
- 1.8 The Local Plan and any made Neighbourhood Plans form the statutory policy framework within which all decisions on planning applications are made. The Local Plan sets out the principal policies and proposals for land use and development in the District, contains overall vision and objectives, the development strategy for the District, allocates sites for development and presents a suite of policies used in decisions on planning applications. The Local Plan, once adopted must be reviewed to establish whether it requires updating, every five years.
- 1.9 Supplementary Planning Documents that form guidance based on the Local Plan policies may be produced from time to time.

Who we will notify, consult and involve in plan making

- 1.10 In respect of plan making, the Council is required to engage with some groups to meet the regulations. These are set out below:
- 1.11 **Duty to Co-operate Bodies** - The Localism Act 2011 places a 'duty to co-operate' on local planning authorities and neighbouring authorities and various public bodies for any strategic cross boundary issues. These bodies play a key role in delivering local aspirations, and cooperation between them and local planning authorities is vital in order to make

Local Plans as effective as possible. These bodies include:

- The Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Natural England
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Homes England
- Clinical Commissioning Group
- National Health Service
- Office of Rail Regulation
- Highways England
- Adjoining District Councils
- Essex County Council
- South East Local Enterprise Partnership

1.12 **Specific consultation bodies** – are agencies that must be consulted if they are affected by the proposals because they have an interest in the matter. These include organisations such as the Environment Agency and Thames Water.

1.13 **General consultation bodies** – these include local community or amenity groups, residents' associations, businesses, developers, landowners and other agencies.

1.14 **Residents and others with an interest** – those who live, or carry out business in the area.

1.15 The Duty to Co-operate bodies, specific and general consultation bodies are contacted formally by letter or email. Members of the public or other interested parties who have registered to be on the Local Plan Consultation database are also notified of any consultation. Members of the public are informed via general publicity in the local newspaper, social media or the Council website.

When and how we will notify, consult and involve people in plan making

- 1.16 Plan making is undertaken in broad stages with the opportunity for the community and relevant stakeholders to engage during the process. This includes the partial update of a plan following the required five yearly review. Whilst the expectation is that engagement is an ongoing process throughout plan making, there are specific periods of consultation that are held.
- 1.17 The Council updates its Local Development Scheme, which is the programme for Local Plan production and review, from time to time. The up to date version of the Local Development Scheme is kept on the Councils website.

- This stage of plan production may involve activities such as the 'Call for Sites' in which interested landowners and their agents are invited to identify their land for future development through publicity in the local press, social media and the Council website. This can occur more than once during the process of production of a plan.
- Stakeholder briefings or workshops may be held to ensure that the Council receives the relevant specialist opinions at an early stage. Dedicated briefings and workshops may be held for specific evidence base studies. Invitations to attend will depend upon the subject matter and targeted consultation may be undertaken with specific interest groups to sense check the findings, or integrate further information.

Identifying the content of the Local Plan (or review) evidence gathering and identification of issues:

- The Council researches and gathers evidence to guide the content of the Local Plan. In order to ensure that there is engagement in the preliminary stages of plan making the Council will publicise the start of production of a new Local Plan or the partial update of the current Local Plan in the local press, social media and the Council website. This publicity will invite any interested party to submit their views on the content of the local plan or partial update. The Council will publish these submissions on its website with personal contact details redacted. The Council will publish on its website how it has taken into account these submissions in establishing the content of the new Local Plan or partial update of the existing Local Plan.

- 1.18 The evidence gathering stage is informed by the findings of studies that can give rise to the need for further investigation. When a degree of understanding has been reached regarding the issues that the Local Plan should address the work proceeds to the next stage

Production of the Draft Local Plan - considering the policy options available, identifying suitable options and consulting on them.

- The Council develops its ideas and presents a draft plan (or partial review of the plan) for a formal consultation period under Regulation 18 of the Town and County Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. This will last for 6 weeks.
- At this stage the Council will undertake press and social media coverage of the draft plan, publish leaflets and contact those on its database.
- There will be the facility to respond on line, in writing, or by email on the draft proposals. Officers will be available to answer questions face to face. This could be undertaken through public exhibitions, policy 'surgeries' where people can make an appointment to discuss their interests, or by presentations to specific groups.
- The information on the draft plan will be made available in a range of formats including hard copy print and electronic version.

1.19 Following the Regulation 18 consultation period the officers process the representations received. When each consultation response is received, it is logged and the response is given a unique identification number. As part of the process of response to the Regulation 18 Draft plan the respondents will be asked if they agree to their details being saved for the next stage of consultation on the plan and if this is agreed then the contact details will be added to the Local Plan consultation database. The Council's Cabinet will consider a report on the issues raised during the consultation.

1.20 The Council will consider the issues raised, and undertake further work on the plan which may include further evidence gathering before it finalises the Local Plan for the 'publication' stage under Regulation 19.

Publication of the submission Draft Local Plan for representations

- The Council presents the draft plan (or partial review of the plan) that it intends to submit for examination for a formal representations period under Regulation 19 of the Town and County Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. This will last for 6 weeks.
- This allows respondents to make representations to explain in writing on a specific electronic form (available in a paper format if required) why they consider that the plan meets (or does not meet) the governments requirements for Local Plans and whether they seek to appear at an examination public hearing session. There will be a guidance note to help fill in the form.
- The government requires that the plan (or partial review) will be examined to assess whether it has been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements set down by government and whether it is sound. The tests of soundness that the plan or partial review will be examined against are:
- **Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs, and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;

Examination of the Local Plan

- The Council is required to submit the plan and all of the evidence upon which it is based for examination including the representations to the Regulation 19 Plan. All of this documentation will be included and updated on the Councils website.
- The examination of the plan involves the Inspector considering all of the written material submitted and holding some public hearing sessions.
- The Council will dedicate a section of the website to the Local Plan Examination where all the material and information about the examination will be posted.
- As soon as the Council knows when the public hearing sessions will be held it will publicise these on social media and on the website.
- Those who have indicated a wish to be heard at the public hearing sessions will be contacted by the independent Programme Officer responsible for the administration of the examination.

1.21 Any representations made cannot remain confidential as the examination is a public process.

1.22 Following the Regulation 19 publication period the officers process the representations received. When each response is received, it is logged, and the response is given a unique identification number. As part of the process of response to the Regulation 19 Draft plan new respondents to the plan will be asked if they agree to their details being saved by the Council and if this is agreed then the contact details will be added to the Local Plan consultation database.

1.23 Each response will be posted on the Council's website with personal contact details redacted. A summary of the main issues raised in the responses, and who was informed, will be submitted to the examiner as part of the process.

- **Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
- **Effective** – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross- boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
- **Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework
- The information on the draft plan will be made available in a range of formats including hard copy print and electronic version.

1.24 The Council will publicise the results of the examination on the website and in the local press and social media.

Supplementary Planning Documents or Guidance

1.25 Supplementary Planning Documents are produced to provide more detail in relation to an adopted local plan policy – they do not set policy. Their production also includes a formal stage of public consultation and the Council must still consider the representations made and summarise the issues raised and how they have been addressed in a public statement. However, these documents do not undergo public examination because they do not set policy.

Supplementary Planning Documents

- The Council will publicise the production of a new Supplementary Planning Document or in the local press, social media and the Council website.
- Depending upon the subject of the Supplementary Planning Document the Council may invite specific groups or organisations with specialist interest in the subject matter to engage in workshops or provide specific evidence to support production of the Supplementary Planning Document or Guidance.
- When the Council has produced its draft Supplementary Planning Document it will undertake press and social media coverage of the draft and contact those on its Local Plan database inviting representations on the draft. There will be a period of 6 weeks to make representations.
- There will be the facility to respond on line to the draft proposals. Officers will be available to answer questions by telephone.
- The representations on the Supplementary Planning Document will all be published on the Council website (with personal contact details redacted).
- A summary of the issues raised and how they are addressed will also be posted on the website.
- The Council will publicise the adoption of the Supplementary Planning Document in the local press, social media and on the Council website. It will inform those who have requested notification of adoption by email or in writing if no email address is available.

1.26 From time to time other guidance may be produced that is agreed by the Council to be a material planning consideration in making decisions on planning proposals or documents. The arrangements for consultation will broadly

follow that for Supplementary Planning Documents but may vary according to the guidance. An example of such guidance is the Spatial Vision and Design Guide for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town. (insert link)

Harlow and Gilston Garden Town

1.27 Harlow and Gilston was designated as a Garden Town in 2017 by the Ministry for Homes, Communities and Local Government. A significant amount of development is proposed in the Garden Town on sites within Epping Forest District, Harlow and East Herts Districts. The allocations are shown in the Local Plan. The three local authorities together with Essex and Hertfordshire County Councils are working together to deliver growth at the Garden Town which reflects local priorities. The individual Councils remain the decision makers for both policy documents and planning applications within their local authority area. The current governance and management arrangements for the Garden Town are available on the website at <http://www.efdclocalplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/EB1404-Harlow-and-Gilston-Town-Board-Terms-of-Reference-July-2018.pdf>

1.28 The Council has agreed the following consultation principles with Harlow and East Herts Councils which will be taken into account when consulting on policy and other documents and planning applications relating to land and sites which form part of the Garden Town. Further information regarding the details of master plans and the Quality Review Panel is contained in later sections of this Statement of Community Involvement.

Consultation Principles for the Garden Town

- We will consult statutory consultees, and as appropriate, engage as proactively as possible with relevant local stakeholders and the community in and around the Garden Town, including across District boundaries. The extent of consultation will reflect the scope of a proposal or document.
- We will consult on planning applications for at least the statutory period, but for a longer timescale when appropriate.
- Developer, business or community forums and engagement may be set up/ undertaken to assist the joint working and delivery of the Garden Town.
- Masterplans, design coding and application proposals will be taken to the Garden Town Quality Review Panel (see paragraph 1.32 below)
- Documents relating to the Garden Town area may be endorsed by the Garden Town Board to indicate that they should be taken into account when shaping and informing planning proposals. However, they will need to be approved by the individual local authorities if they are to be material planning considerations in decision making.

Publicising Neighbourhood Plans

- In line with its statutory duties the Council will publish on its website:
 - The designation of a neighbourhood area including a map showing the extent.
 - Draft proposals produced by the Parish or Town Council provided they comply with the regulatory requirements and representations will be invited including details of how to respond. [Under Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012]
 - Details of the examination of the neighbourhood plan.
 - The results of the examination of the neighbourhood plan.
 - Any referendum on a neighbourhood plan and the result.
 - The making of a neighbourhood plan which is the point at which it becomes part of the Development Plan for the District.

Neighbourhood Development Plans

- 1.29 The production of Neighbourhood Development Plans is the responsibility of the Parish or Town Council in Epping Forest District. However, the District Council has some responsibilities with respect to the process.
- 1.30 Overall the Council has a responsibility to advise and assist groups undertaking all forms of neighbourhood planning. The Councils policy in this respect is set out below:

Advising and Assisting Neighbourhood Plan Groups

- In line with its statutory duties to advise and assist in neighbourhood planning the Council will either undertake these duties itself, or use the services of another organisation, to:
 - Maintain the neighbourhood planning pages of the District Council website, providing updates on the progress of designated neighbourhood planning areas and the production of any subsequent draft plans or orders;
 - Signpost to useful information and sources of funding provided by other organisations;
 - Share information on planning issues including information and published evidence relating to the Councils Local Plan;
 - Provide advice on key assessments such as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and other supporting evidence;
 - Advise on national and local plan policy which any Neighbourhood Development Plan or Order produced would need to have regard to; and
 - Work with Parish and Town Councils through the process, providing advice on the drafting of a project plan in understanding the milestones and work involved.

Planning Proposals

1.31 The engagement of the public and other bodies in the planning process depends upon the size of the proposals, and how controversial and complex the proposals are, (or are likely to be). As a minimum the statutory requirements in force at the time for engaging the public in planning proposals /applications will always be met by the Council. These vary depending upon the stage of the process so for example, whilst pre-application engagement is encouraged it is not a statutory requirement. The following explains the processes undertaken in Epping Forest District including a number of arrangements that occur before a formal application is submitted to the Council for consideration.

Master Plans and Concept Frameworks

1.32 Some developments are complex, and the Council seeks the production and endorsement of a Strategic Masterplan or Concept Framework prior to receiving a formal application for the proposal. These sites are identified in the Local Plan. Master Plans and Concept Frameworks deal with a wide range of matters relating to the development of sites including those that have multiple land owners. They are tools to co-ordinate development and ensure the right infrastructure is provided as well as the design of the development works effectively. Further detailed guidance on these processes is contained in the "Strategic Master Planning Briefing Note" and "Concept Framework Briefing Note" (*insert links*). However, the key principles regarding the expectations of the Council for these engagement activities are set out below:

Principles of Community and Stakeholder Engagement on Strategic Sites for Developers

- Appropriate effective engagement and consultation will take place with stakeholders and the local community, including Town and Parish Councils, in order to build a sense of community ownership and inform the progress of Strategic Master Plan or Concept Framework;
- The scope, nature and location of consultation and engagement events (including consultation and engagement materials) must be agreed in advance by the Council(s).
- Any consultation and engagement events will be advertised widely to ensure they reach their target audience;
- Any communication or engagement activity will be easily accessible to the community, both through how it's shared and in the way it is written. At each stage it will be made clear whether there is an opportunity to provide comments/ feedback and how these comments will be used or responded to;
- Should engagement be face to face, it will take place within close proximity of the community/stakeholders, such as in a village hall or community centre;
- Timing will be considered to ensure information is supplied with enough notice;
- Communication and engagement will be co-ordinated across Councils (where relevant) and with developers in advance of making arrangements to ensure this can be delivered effectively and does not compete with other planned engagement on the Garden Town or Strategic Masterplanning/ Concept Framework Areas.
- The Council has established a Developer Forum comprising landowners, developers and promoters of sites allocated in the Local Plan for discussion and engagement in relation to policy, guidance and the sharing of information in respect of masterplans and planning applications. A Developer Forum has also been established to cover the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.

Pre-application - Strategic Master Plans and Concept Frameworks for strategic sites

- Town and Parish Councils will be briefed prior to public engagement. Public engagement will occur at two stages of the process:
 - Prior to the finalisation of the Draft Master Plan or Concept Framework through at least one public engagement event or activity e.g. an interactive public exhibition or workshop. In this instance as a minimum the neighbours of the strategic site will be invited to engage.
 - A six-week period of consultation on the Draft Master Plan or Concept Framework that will involve at least a public exhibition and formal methods of collecting views on the Master Plan or Concept Framework through the Councils website. In this instance anyone with an interest in the District will be invited to engage via publicity in the local press, social media and the Councils web site.

The Quality Review Panel

- 1.33 A Quality Review Panel has been established by Epping Forest, Harlow and East Hertfordshire District Councils to ensure the design and delivery of high quality developments within the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town. The same Quality Review Panel will also review major schemes within Epping Forest District.
- 1.34 The District Council is committed to ensuring that development, including the realisation of strategic, masterplan and major schemes of the highest standard. It is committed to high quality design – in its broadest sense; architectural, urban and landscape design, planning, transport, environment and deliverability will all be essential elements.
- 1.35 The Council will generally expect schemes of more than 50 homes or 5,000 square metres of commercial/ other floorspace to be informed by review which will provide advice and design guidance. Other smaller complex schemes may also be appropriate for review and these include those that have been through Development Management Forum meetings.
- 1.36 The use of the Quality Review Panel is intended to be as early in the design process as possible and therefore early engagement with the panel is advised. The Council may also request a review once an application has been submitted. There are different types of review available. For more information refer “Epping Forest District Quality Review Panel Terms of Reference 2018” and “Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Quality Review Panel Terms of Reference 2018” (*insert links*).

Other Pre-application matters

Pre-application stage

- Some proposals involve discussion with the Council officers prior to a formal application being submitted either because the developer wants to understand whether the proposals are likely to receive a positive response from the Council or because they are complex and require a lot of details to be resolved before a formal application can be made. In some instances, as previously noted, a masterplan or concept framework is produced by the developer in discussion with the Council.
- The Pre-application service provided by the Council is subject to a fee. It includes consultation with relevant key consultees. In addition, specialist advice regarding matters including listed buildings, landscape and SuDS is provided. Advice on archaeology, highway access/ traffic issues, on major developments is provided separately by Essex County Council or coordinated through a Planning Performance Agreement – see below. The Environment Agency provides separate advice on flooding related issues.
- There is also the ability for applicants to enter into planning performance agreements in respect of their proposals – agreeing a timetable to the determination of a large and complex application which includes pre-application consultations. These planning performance agreements are expected in masterplan areas and on other strategic sites identified in the Local Plan. (For more information please refer to the most recent Council’s “ Development Management Pre-Application Advice Charges” documentation).

- Early public engagement on proposals is encouraged and at pre-application stage this is the responsibility of the developer. However, the Council will assist with practical matters such as making space available for meetings as part of the pre-application service. For this purpose, the Council holds **Development Management Forum** meetings, chaired by a senior officer, to facilitate discussion on large scale or contentious proposals. These are usually held at pre-application stage and engage the elected members of the Council and members of the public in discussion on the planning issues relating to proposals. Developers should liaise with the Council to arrange a forum. It is the responsibility of the developer to arrange for leaflets to be distributed to publicise the timing and location of the pre-application discussions at Development Management Forum meetings.
- Following Development Management Forum meetings, it is the expectation that developers will use the Quality Review Panel prior to making a formal application.

The formal Planning Application Stage

- 1.37 The methods that will be used to publicise planning applications once they have been formally submitted to the Council for consideration are as follows.

The Application Stage

- Advertisements will be posted in local papers in the case of applications for development where the application is accompanied by an environmental statement; listed building consent or affecting the setting of a listed building; conservation area consent or affecting the setting of a conservation area; departures from the Local Plan; major developments and those affecting public rights of way. In addition, site notices will be posted at or close to these sites to inform passers-by.
- All other types of development will be publicised with either a site notice or a neighbour notification.
- Neighbours to the development site will be notified by letter including those not living within the District boundary. As a minimum the Council will notify all the properties that share a boundary with the site of the planning application.
- Weekly lists of planning applications submitted will be posted on the Council website.

- 1.38 The Council will also notify statutory bodies including Town and Parish Councils and infrastructure providers on certain planning applications.

- 1.39 Planning applications can be viewed at the Council Offices or via the Councils website. Neighbours are given 21 days to comment. Written representations can be made -on the Councils website, and by email or by post addressed to the relevant planning officer at the Civic Offices. They should be accompanied by full contact details.

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1.40 Details on how to make comments on applications are included in the publication “Making your Views Known – how to comment on planning applications” and in respect of speaking at committees refer to the publication “Your Voice Your Choice – a guide to the Council’s Planning Committees”. In addition, the Council website contains more details on these matters. (insert links)

make further comments in the case of appeals relating to non- householder applications. More information regarding these processes are found on the Planning Portal website. (insert link).

1.41 The decision on a planning application is made either by an Area Committee or by officers under delegated powers. Some applications are decided at District Development Committee when they have been referred by an Area Committee or are considered to be a major development of District or wider importance than the Area committee locality.

The Post Application Stage

- The decisions on applications are recorded in the Committee minutes if determined by committee and published on the Website on the application file.

1.42 The Council should normally determine applications within 8 weeks of accepting them as valid. For major developments this period is 13 weeks however, if the applicant agrees with the Council in writing this period can be extended. If the Council has failed to determine the application within the relevant timeframe an appeal against non-determination can be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate.

The applicant can appeal the decision. For household applications this has to be within 12 weeks of the decision and for other applications the time limit is 6 months. Third parties do not have the right to appeal.

1.43 The appeal process is undertaken by one of three methods: written representations; a public hearing; or a public inquiry. If an appeal has been lodged anyone who has formally commented on the application will be notified. However, they will only be invited to

Outside the full planning application process

Prior approvals and permission in principle

- In addition to development that does not require a planning permission some development with respect to change of use is allowed subject to a prior approval process under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) order (2015).
- The Council will consult adjoining neighbours as required by the regulations for all prior approvals. Up to date guidance on prior approvals can be found on the planning portal website. www.planningportal.gov.uk
- The Council is required to prepare and maintain a Brownfield Land Register under The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations (2017) and the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order (2017). Sites entered on to Part 2 of the register will be granted permission in principle. This will set the fundamental principles of development (use, location, amount of development) for the brownfield site giving applicants more certainty. A developer cannot proceed with development however, until they have also obtained technical details consent. This assesses the detailed design, ensures appropriate mitigation of impacts and secures any necessary contributions to essential infrastructure. Both the permission in principle and technical details consent stages must be determined in accordance with the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework and other material considerations. The Council will meet the statutory requirements for consultation including contacting parish and town councils under the Neighbourhood Planning Act (2017) in relation to permission in principle.

Neighbourhood Development Orders

- 1.44 The production of Neighbourhood Development Orders is the responsibility of the Parish or Town Council in Epping Forest District. However, the District Council has some responsibilities with respect to the process. Overall the Council has a responsibility to advise and assist groups undertaking neighbourhood planning. The Councils policy in this respect is found above under 'Neighbourhood Development Plans '.

Publicising Neighbourhood Development Orders

- In line with its statutory duties the Council will publish on its website:
 - The designation of the area for neighbourhood development order including a map showing the extent.
 - The draft neighbourhood development order provided by the Parish or Town Council provided it complies with the regulatory requirements will be publicised and representations invited including details of how to respond. [Under Regulation 23 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012]
 - Details of the examination of the neighbourhood development order.
 - The results of the examination of the neighbourhood development order.
 - Any referendum on a neighbourhood development order and the result.
 - The making of a neighbourhood development order which is the point at which it grants planning permission for the developments specified.

Community Right to Build Orders

- 1.45 A community right to build order is a particular type of neighbourhood development order that grants specific development on a specified site.

Publicising Community Right to Build Orders

- In line with its statutory duties the Council will publish on its website:
 - The draft community right to build order provided by the Parish or Town Council or Community Organisation provided it complies with the regulatory requirements will be publicised and representations invited including details of how to respond. [Under Regulation 23 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012]
 - Details of the examination of the community right to build order
 - The results of the examination of the community right to build order.
 - Any referendum on a community right to build order and the result.
 - The making of a community right to build order which is the point at which it grants permission for the development specified.

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