

## Select Committee Agenda



### **Stronger Place Select Committee Tuesday, 24th March, 2020**

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 **Tuesday, 24th March, 2020**  
at **7.00 pm**

**G Blakemore**  
Chief Executive

**Democratic Services  
Officer:**

V Messenger Tel: (01992) 546243  
Email: [democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto: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:**

**6:00 pm**

#### **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:

“The Chairman would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be broadcast live to the internet (or filmed) and will be capable of repeated viewing (or another use by such third parties).

If you are seated in the lower public seating area it is likely that the recording cameras will capture your image and this will result in the possibility that your image will become part of the broadcast.

This may infringe your human and data protection rights and if you wish to avoid this you should move to the upper public gallery.”

#### **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**3. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

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

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To declare interests in any item on the agenda.

**5. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 3 - 10)**

To agree the notes of the meeting of the Select Committee held on 9 December 2019.

**6. TERMS OF REFERENCE & WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 11 - 14)**

(Chairman/Lead Officer) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has agreed the Terms of Reference and work programme for this select committee. Members are invited at each meeting to review both documents.

**7. NURTURING GROWTH - DELIVERING AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

To receive a verbal update.

**8. NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD MASTERPLAN (Pages 15 - 16)**

To note the attached report and a verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

**9. GROUP COMPANY STRUCTURE - EPPING TOWN CENTRE SITES (Pages 17 - 20)**

To consider the attached report.

**10. LOCAL PLAN AND AIR QUALITY**

To receive a verbal update.

**11. UPDATE ON ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENTS AND TREE PLANTING INITIATIVES (Pages 21 - 24)**

To consider the attached report.

**12. DATES OF THE NEXT MEETING**

To note that the next meeting of the Select Committee will be held at 7.00pm on 22 June 2020.

**EPHING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NOTES OF A MEETING OF STRONGER PLACE SELECT COMMITTEE  
HELD ON MONDAY, 9 DECEMBER 2019  
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES  
AT 7.00 - 7.45 PM**

<b>Members Present:</b>	D Sunger (Chairman), S Heather (Vice-Chairman), L Burrows, I Hadley, H Kauffman, C McCredie, J McIvor, R Morgan, S Heap and D Wixley
<b>Other members present:</b>	None.
<b>Apologies for Absence:</b>	J Jennings and S Neville
<b>Officers Present</b>	S Jevans (Interim Strategic Director), A Blom-Cooper (Interim Assistant Director (Planning Policy)), D Fenton (Service Manager (Housing Management & Home Ownership)), J Nolan (Service Director (Commercial & Regulatory Services)), N Richardson (Service Director (Planning Services)), J Warwick (Service Manager (Contracts)), V Messenger (Democratic Services Officer) and S Mitchell (PR Website Editor)

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## **21. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

The Chairman made a short address to remind all present that the meeting would be broadcast on the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

## **22. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

The following substitutions were reported:

That Councillor D Wixley was substituting for Councillor J Jennings; and

That Councillor S Heap was substituting for Councillor S Neville.

## **23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- (a) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Conduct, Councillor C McCredie declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 7, Work Programme (item 3 - St John's Road Development), by virtue of being a member of Epping Town Council.

## **24. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the notes of the last meeting of the Stronger Place Select Committee held on 17 September 2019 be agreed as a correct record.

## **25. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Select Committee noted its Terms of Reference.

**26. WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20**

Strategic Director, S Jevans, advised that older people's services would be included in the Select Committee's current work programme going forward, especially as there was a report on this agenda and an ongoing review of these services.

The Chairman also asked if climate emergency could be added to the work programme as a climate change officer would be appointed by the Council in the near future to try and make Epping Forest District carbon neutral by 2030.

Councillor C McCredie asked when councillors would be given information on the plans to show what would be happening on the St John's Road site? The Strategic Director replied that an overview report would be going to Cabinet in January 2020 and a progress report would be coming to this Select Committee at the next meeting in March 2020.

**Agreed:**

That the following items be added to the Select Committee's work programme:

- (1) Older people's services; and
- (2) Climate emergency.

**27. OLDER PEOPLE'S SERVICES - REVIEW**

The report, introduced by the Strategic Director, covered the proposed high-level strategic review of the Council's older people's services including the Council's older people assets and the careline offer. It outlined the three areas recommended for review:

- to make best use of Council stock;
- to deliver needs-led support services that would provide value for money; and
- to take advantage of smart technology to enable older people to continue to live as independently as possible for longer.

The Council's older people's services would come back to scrutiny to review following an additional and more detailed report to Cabinet outlining the resultant recommendations.

Councillor D Wixley asked if the scope of the report covered care homes because he was interested to know which ones the Council had responsibility for and which ones came under Essex County Council. There was one home in particular he was referring to in Loughton that came under Essex County Council but it had Epping Forest District Council residents living there. He asked if more information could be provided on the different types of care homes and if a comprehensive report on this could be published in the Council Bulletin.

The Strategic Director replied that this report was on the Council's own sheltered housing but she would come back to Councillor D Wixley on this wider enquiry.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report on the proposed high-level strategic review of the older people's services be noted;
- (2) That subsequent to the completion of the review, an additional and more detailed report to Cabinet be made to outline the resultant recommendations; and
- (3) That the Strategic Director look into the wider issue of the different types of care homes in the District and to publish a comprehensive report in the Council Bulletin for information.

**28. CLIMATE EMERGENCY**

The Service Director (Commercial & Regulatory), J Nolan, referred to the Council's decision to declare a climate emergency at its meeting on 19 September 2019. The recruitment of a new climate change officer was being proposed, initially for two years, to address changes the Council would need to make for Epping Forest District to be carbon neutral by 2030. The Council would be engaging with young people and appoint an ambassador from the Epping Forest Youth Council. Cabinet approval would be sought on a draft plan for wider engagement with key stakeholders including the Youth Council.

The Service Director (Planning), N Richardson, advised that the Interim Assistant Director (Planning Policy), A Blom-Cooper, was drafting an action plan and once agreed, regular update reports would be issued. There were also a number of other Essex local authorities preparing similar plans and therefore, there might be the opportunity for some sharing.

Councillor I Hadley asked what experience the new climate change officer would need to have. The Service Director (Planning) replied that job candidates were likely to require a combination of air quality and planning background expertise. He informed members that Colchester Borough Council had received some 27 applicants for an air quality officer position there.

Councillor D Wixley asked about a tree planting strategy as he was a tree warden, had an interest in trees and had recently heard that Essex County Council intended to plant some 375,000 trees in Essex. He did not know if this was just on Essex County Council land or trees would be sent out to other local authorities. He referred to Councillor N Avey's forthcoming report to Council that 120 trees were to be planted in the Epping Forest District, which did not seem a particularly high number. He was aware that the Portfolio Holder, Councillor N Bedford, was trying to resurrect the 'green arc'. He suggested that green spaces on the Limes Farm estate (Chigwell) and Jessel Green (Loughton) could benefit from tree planting.

The Service Director (Commercial & Regulatory) replied that the climate change officer's work would be divided into three main areas – enforcement, active planning and management of the Council's estate regarding energy efficiency and its open land. He agreed that Councillor N Bedford had a keen interest in this area.

Councillor S Heap asked how assertive could the climate change officer be, i.e. was the position more involved with monitoring or would the officer be able to recommend the Council update relevant policies etc. The Service Director (Commercial & Regulatory) replied it would be very challenging for Epping Forest to become carbon

neutral by 2030 and an action plan would need to be developed that would meet Cabinet's approval. The Council would ultimately be measured on results.

The Chairman asked if a job description for the climate change post could be circulated to members before going to advert. The Service Director (Commercial & Regulatory) agreed that a proposed job description could be circulated for comment.

Councillor J McIvor remarked that it was sensible for the Council to work with other local authorities on this and could we lead the way and invite other officers and host meetings. The Service Manager (Planning) replied that Uttlesford was leading the way on climate change along with Colchester Borough Council but the Council would liaise with other local authorities.

Councillor H Kauffman asked if the new climate change officer could deliver 'easy wins' that would help improve air quality in the District provided that a budget was in place to achieve this. He had been in contact with Councillor N Avey to request the Council stepped up its provision of electric charge points in Council-owned car parks. This was expensive to do but budgetary power behind these basic initiatives was required.

The Service Manager (Contracts) replied the Council would be installing electric vehicle charging points at its leisure centres in Waltham Abbey and Loughton, and was also looking at the feasibility of other Council-owned car parks. However, there would be additional costs in car parks where there was currently no power provision and he would be working with the new climate change officer on this project. The Service Director (Planning) added that Planning (Development Management) did issue planning conditions to install electric vehicle charging points.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the proposed recruitment of a new climate change officer be noted;
- (2) That the proposed job description for the climate change officer post be circulated to members before going to advert by the Service Director (Commercial & Regulatory); and
- (3) That an action plan be developed to deliver the Council's resolution to declare a climate emergency and its pledge to do everything within its power to make the Epping Forest District carbon neutral by 2030.

**29. WASTE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT - CURRENT PERFORMANCE**

The Service Manager (Contracts) reported that the Council's waste management contract was performing well. Performance was monitored by two key performance indicators - M8 showed a reduction in household waste and M9 an increase in recycling. The Waste Management Task and Finish Panel's next meeting was on 16 December and was due to conclude by the end of January 2020. Recommendations made by the Panel would go to Cabinet but if a service change was required, the proposals would be handled by the Innovation Forum and the Waste Management Partnership Board.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report on the current performance of the waste management contract be noted.

**30. LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT - CURRENT PERFORMANCE**

The Service Manager (Contracts) reported that the Council's leisure management contract was performing very well across all four sites in an upward trend. Swimming and gym membership at Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre had slowed recently but overall memberships were well in excess of forecasts. Loughton Leisure Centre had also continued to grow since the recent enhancement works.

Councillor H Kauffman said he was impressed with the Council's leisure facilities and used the Loughton centre but asked if the Council was doing enough to promote its leisure activities and was there a marketing budget to push leisure services.

The Service Manager (Contracts) replied that the Council itself did not have a budget for this but Places Leisure had dedicated marketing resources and ran campaigns. Ongar was an older facility, recently affected by maintenance issues and did seem to be struggling, but Places Leisure had undertaken a recent drive to improve memberships, which had been successful. However, he would take these comments back to Places Leisure to find out more information.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report on the current performance of the leisure management contract be noted; and
- (2) That the Service Manager (Contracts) apprise Places Leisure of the Select Committee's comments to optimise its promotion of leisure activities available within the District.

**31. EPPING FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN & EPPING FOREST SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION**

The Interim Assistant Director (Planning Policy) explained that this report had gone to Cabinet on 31 October 2019, which had agreed the governance arrangements for the implementation of the Local Plan and that the Implementation Team would provide regular updates. As part of the Independent Examination of the Local Plan, the Council had agreed Statements of Common Ground with all the site promoters of the following strategic sites in North Weald Bassett, Waltham Abbey North, South Epping, West Ongar and South Nazeing. Statements of Common Ground with all the main site promoters were also signed for the Garden Town allocations at Latton Priory, Water Lane and East of Harlow.

Councillor D Wixley asked what CEG stood for in paragraph 9 of the report, to which the Interim Assistant Director (Planning Policy) replied that they were the promoters of the Latton Priory site.

**RESOLVED:**

That the progress of the masterplans and concept frameworks, including the use of planning performance agreements and the progress of other proposals at pre-application and application stage, be noted.

**32. NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD - MASTERPLAN**

The Service Director (Commercial & Regulatory) referred to the early update report provided and that Turner and Townsend had been the consultants appointed under delegated authority by the Chief Executive. The Council was entering into a planning performance agreement. Adhering to the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, the Council was identifying key stakeholders and work was also progressing on site surveys.

Councillor J McIvor asked about the stakeholder consultation. The Service Director (Commercial & Regulatory) replied that initially this would be a phased consultation, which would involve the commercial tenants on North Weald Airfield and the parish council. The Council would be consulting thoroughly, including with residents, and have discussions with the other masterplanners on the site to ensure both masterplans complemented each other.

**RESOLVED:**

That the progress report on the North Weald Airfield masterplanning process be noted.

**33. LOCAL AIR QUALITY - VEHICLE EMISSIONS**

The Service Director (Commercial & Regulatory) explained that the report detailed the role and responsibilities of the Council to do with enforcement of legislation in respect of air quality and pollution from vehicle emissions, which was requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 July 2019. Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) placed a statutory duty on local authorities to assess their districts and identify areas with high air pollution. Measuring certain chemicals (nitrogen oxides) would give an indication of where the hotspots were, and Bell Common, Epping, was the only area in the District where levels exceeded the current standards. The Council was required by DEFRA to declare an air quality management area (AQMA) and put in place an air quality action plan that was submitted to DEFRA to improve the air quality. The other area was in relation to the examination of the Local Plan and the impact of air quality on Epping Forest.

There was also the enforcement of idling vehicles by authorised Council officers who could issue fixed penalty notices (FPN). Officers would inform the driver to turn the engine off before issuing a FPN and as all drivers had complied with this instruction no FPNs had been issued so far. Epping Station had a problem with idling vehicles but as this was situated on private land Council officers could not issue FPNs. The Council did try to educate the public and supported National Clean Air Day, which was publicised in the District and large topical banners were displayed especially around schools, Epping Station and Bell Common. The Portfolio Holder had attended Epping Primary School with the Public Health Team as part of that education programme.

Councillor D Wixley referred to areas where additional monitoring had been set up, but asked if this could include the heavy build-up of traffic in Rectory Lane/Chigwell Lane/ Oakwood Hill in Loughton, which had increased since Epping Forest Retail Park had opened. There was also high pollution at the junction of Roding Road from Alderton Hill down to the traffic lights with Oakwood Hill/Valley Hill in Loughton, Loughton High Road and also around Loughton Station.



The Service Director (Commercial & Regulatory) asked if Councillor Wixley could email these locations to him to investigate further. However, he explained that a build-up of traffic at certain places might not necessarily mean the Council would want to declare an AQMA because it also had to take into consideration people (human receptors) in close proximity to the sites.

Councillor D Wixley referred to the National Clean Air Day and asked if a day was long enough and whether it should last week.

The Service Director (Commercial & Regulatory) said Clean Air Day was a nationally recognised day but there was no reason for the Council not to have additional initiatives throughout the year.

Councillor S Heap urged the Council to push beyond DEFRA recommendations and take other receptors into consideration. Also on monitoring pollution, were these done at different times of the day to reflect different levels of traffic?

The Service Director (Commercial & Regulatory) replied the Council was required to monitor people receptors but putting resources into other receptors would probably not be very productive. In respect of monitoring, this was done using passive diffusion tubes which operated 24 hours a day over a period of weeks.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the position with regard to the enforcement of current legislation relating to air quality be noted;
- (2) That Councillor D Wixley forward to the Service Director (Commercial & Regulatory) the Loughton locations where there was heavy traffic to investigate further in relation to possible monitoring; and
- (3) That additional initiatives to promote better air quality/less pollution could be undertaken by the Council's Public Health Team.

**34. COUNCIL HOUSEBUILDING PROGRAMME - PROGRESS**

The Service Manager (Housing Management & Home Ownership), D Fenton, reported on the progress made over the last twelve months. A total of 91 new homes for affordable rent had been completed with 16 units still in progress from Phases 1 – 3 of the programme. On progress achieved across Phase 4 of the Council housebuilding programme, a further 72 units would be delivered over four packages. All four of the packages had planning approval consent. Package 1 consisted of 14 properties in Loughton (Bushfields, Chequers Road and Chester Road), Ongar (Queensway) and High Ongar (Millfield). Subject to completion of the contract and approval by the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee, works should be able to start on site in the new year.

Following the change in methodology in February 2019, as a result of work carried out by Internal Audit, officers would be reviewing other potential Council controlled sites within Phases 5 – 6. The aim of this exercise would be to either build-out or raise capital to purchase larger sites.

Councillor D Heap asked about two properties in Hornbeam Road, Buckhurst Hill, regarding compensation to the owner on right of easement, to which the Service

Manager (Housing Management & Home Ownership) replied this matter was currently being dealt with.

Councillor R Morgan asked about Phases 5 – 6 regarding the review of other potential sites, who would this be reported to and would the Parish Council be notified if sites were sold? The Service Manager (Housing Management & Home Ownership) replied that this would be reported to the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee and the Council would be consulting with parish councils. There were some 40 sites that had already been identified but some of those sites would not be suitable for housebuilding or sale. A surveyor would be reviewing all the sites and a report on the options available for these sites would be received by the Manager (Housing Management & Home Ownership) shortly.

**RESOLVED:**

That the current progress with regard to Phases 4 – 6 of the Council housebuilding programme be noted.

**35. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Select Committee would be held on 24 March 2020 at 7.00pm.

## **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	July 2019	<b>COMPLETED</b> Draft strategy to July meeting	4 July 2019 17 September 2019 9 December 2019 24 March 2020
		September 2019	<b>COMPLETED</b> Update/progress report	
		March 2020	Final strategy (to include progress on the Local High Streets Task and Finish Panel)	
2.	North Weald Airfield Masterplan	September 2019	<b>COMPLETED</b> Update (following appointment of consultant masterplanner)	
		December 2019	<b>COMPLETED</b> Progress/update report – to scrutinise	
		March 2020	Progress/update report	
3.	St Johns Road development	September 2019	<b>COMPLETED</b> Project report	
		March 2020	Progress/update report	
4.	Waste Management Contract	December 2019	<b>COMPLETED</b> Performance and amendments	
5.	Leisure Management Contract	December 2019	<b>COMPLETED</b> Performance and amendments	
6.	Local Plan and air quality	March 2020 TBC	Regular update/progress report Annual report on housing issues arising from the Local Plan (including Private Sector Housing, Council Housing and Assisted Living Accommodation)	
7.	Green agenda	March 2020	Update on sustainable travel – to be developed by the Sustainable Transport Officer	
		March 2020	Update on tree planting initiatives (report)	
8.	Climate emergency	June 2020 ongoing	Update on the progress in recruitment to the new posts Review the high-level summary of the action plan	
9.	Older people's services	December 2019	<b>COMPLETED</b> Housing & Property Services scope of review	
		June 2020 ongoing	Recommendations from the service reviews	
10.	Council Housebuilding	December 2019	<b>COMPLETED</b> Progress and issues	
		June 2020	Progress and issues	

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## SCRUTINY



### **Report to Stronger Place Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 24 March 2020**

**Portfolio:** Commercial and Regulatory (Councillor A Patel)

**Subject:** Update on the progress of the North Weald Masterplanning process

**Officer contact for further information:** J Nolan (01992 564083)

**Democratic Services Officer:** (01992 564265)

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

**To note the progress of the North Weald Airfield Masterplanning process.**

#### **Report:**

##### **North Weald Masterplan**

Turner and Townsend, our Masterplanning consultants are continuing to undertake surveys and investigations which will form the basis of our plan. As is common with this type of exercise the situation changes frequently and a verbal update will be presented at the meeting.

##### **Reason for decision:**

No decision, for noting only

##### **Options considered and rejected:**

For noting only

##### **Consultation undertaken:**

For noting only

##### **Resource implications:**

For noting only

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

Governance of this project is assured by the regular reporting of progress to this committee, Leadership team and the Masterplan programme group. The final report will be reported to Cabinet in 2020.

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

For noting only

##### **Consultation Undertaken:**

As part of the process, key stakeholders will be consulted.

##### **Background Papers:**

NWMP development brief

**Impact Assessments:**

***Risk Management***

For noting only

***Equality:***

For noting only





### **Report to the Stronger Place Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 24 March 2020**

**Subject: Group Company Structure – Epping Town Centre Sites**

**Responsible Officer:** Sacha Jevans (01992 564229)

**Democratic Services:** Vivienne Messenger (01992 564265)

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

- (1) That the current progress with the Group Company Set up to be noted.**
- (2) The progress of the five Epping Town Centre sites be noted.**
- (3) The Committee review and comment on the sustainability, design and socio-economic objectives sets out in the Quality Design brief for the Epping Town Sites.**

#### **Report:**

1. Work on the Group Company set up is progressing well, and this report sets out the activity that has been undertaken since the last Overview and Scrutiny meeting in January:
  - (i) Cabinet Approval of the Shareholder Agreement;
  - (ii) Set up of the interim Group Qualis Board;
  - (iii) Progress on the Epping Sites;

#### **Cabinet Approval of the Shareholder Agreement**

The report to the February Cabinet approved the Shareholder agreement and the 'Reserved Matters'. Prior to the Cabinet a well-attended workshop was held led by the Council's legal advisors Penningtons Manches Cooper. The presentation covered the key aspects of the Shareholders Agreement including a detailed explanation of the Reserved Matters and the role of the Shareholder Representative the Section 151 Officer.

#### **Set Up of the Interim Qualis Group Board**

The report to February Cabinet also approved the set up of the interim Qualis Group Board. All the interim members have now been registered with Companies House.

The Board has held two meetings and has appointed an interim Company Secretary to support the work of the Board and to ensure effective governance. The Company Secretary has produced a programme of work which will be formalised into a detailed forward plan.

The first two Board meetings have focussed on the preparatory work being undertaken on the five Epping development sites. The March Cabinet will receive a paper to recommend the land

ownership transfer of these key sites and will provide detailed financial and development appraisal information.

### **Progress of the Epping Sites**

Qualis Commercial Ltd is progressing the detailed work required to develop full business case appraisals for each of the Epping Sites. This work includes:

- Detailed appraisals and cash flows for all 5 sites in Epping
- Sensitivity analysis testing profit and land value against changes in cost
- Budget cash flow for each site for fees to planning application
- Market report on commercial space - potential tenant demand and uses
- Market report on residential values and rental income potential

The hoarding for the St Johns site is now in place and further discussions are ongoing with the Town Council on their future location within the site.

A planning performance agreement has been agreed with EFDC planning. This agreement sets out the approach to consultation and describes the key planning milestones for the Epping Sites over the coming months. In addition to this there will be a design and quality brief which provides a site strategy for the Epping Town centre sites:

1. St John's
2. Bakers Lane Car Park
3. Cottis Lane Car Park
4. Land and part of Civic Offices
5. Epping Sports Centre – Hemnell Street

The document is currently being finalised and will set out the commitments needed to satisfy the project objectives and includes; the project vision, local objectives, design quality, sustainability objectives, engagement and a robust design process.

### **Sustainability Objectives**

The design brief will seek to achieve the following sustainability objectives:

- Qualis will seek to design our buildings in such a way to minimise material waste and avoid construction activities that have a negative environmental impact
- Incorporate features which enable buildings to be flexible in use and layout with scope for future enhancement to extend the useful life of a building
- Qualis will endeavour to eliminate sources and causes of pollution from our designs and promote the use of renewable energy sources and low/zero carbon technologies in place of fossil fuel sources to limit the waste of energy
- Consider solar gain through site layout and building design to assist with daylight and thermal efficiency
- Promote the use of natural ventilation and systems that minimise potential impact on air quality
- Promote water conservation using rainwater harvesting, grey-water systems and low water use appliances
- Buildings will be designed to minimise the embodied energy in their construction method and material, and to reduce the operational energy they subsequently require
- Promote the use of recycled materials and the reuse of existing materials
- Use BREEAM and SAP assessment methods where appropriate

- Where applicable we shall use specialist consultants and contractors to develop building solutions which minimise the impact on the environment
- Give consideration to alternative proposals/designs for the site, where appropriate
- Incorporate crime reducing features into the design where possible
- Promote the implementation of a sustainable travel plan (e.g. safe pedestrian access and movement, provision of on-site cycle facilities and accessibility to public transport)
- Buildings will be designed to make best use of local conditions through microclimate analysis on all sites
- Buildings will be designed to be thermal bridge free and consider air-tight building strategies
- Schemes will be designed with greening and planting to try and achieve a bio-diversity net gain

## **Design**

In September 2019 Epping Forest District Council declared a Climate Emergency and pledged to do everything within the Council's power to make Epping Forest District Council area Carbon Neutral by 2030. Sustainability focuses on meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. A sustainability approach for developments needs to be considered holistically, encompassing environmental, social and economic sustainability measures and processes. When responding to development opportunities on the five Epping Town Centre sites, consistent with policy, it is necessary to respect the historic environment and designated and non-designated heritage assets. Therefore, all developments need to conserve and enhance the character, appearance and function of heritage assets and their settings and respect the significance of the historic environment. Consistent with the LPSV, sustainable construction is expected to meet the performance set by appropriate standards including, Passivhaus, Home Quality Mark and BREEAM UK New Construction standards. As such, our developments should give rise to minimal environmental impact with respect to its energy use, water use, waste and transport as well as providing for green infrastructure and healthy environments for all users.

## **Socio-Economic Sustainability**

- Schemes will be designed to encourage and incorporate positive social value outcomes and encourage relationship networks that will benefit the owners, users and occupiers of any development
- We will map out who is affected by, or affects the work that is being undertaken on these projects
- We will encourage all stakeholders in the community to take stewardship and ownership of any new development and encourage and ensure the local community have a greater influence over policies and decisions affecting their lives
- Promote individuals and groups to take part in the projects improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged to do so
- Design to ensure there is the opportunity for developments to have flexibility in use and to have 'meanwhile' use during the course of, and on completion of developments
- Encourage healthy lifestyles and wellbeing
- Encourage a sustainable and healthy economy

## **Engagement**

The Design and Quality brief will set out the suggested proposals for how engagement will be undertaken through the different planning stages. The final draft of this document will be completed in March.

**Resource Implications:**

The work associated with Qualis is within the approved working capital loan and is set out in the 2020/21 budget and medium-term financial strategy.

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

Any professional consultancy services will be procured in line with the Council procurement rules. The Civic Offices site has a draft allocation of housing within the Local Plan to be bought forward in the early years. There is a Governance Board in place and regular reports of progress back to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny.

**Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

The developments and will be safer by design and energy efficient.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

Full consultation will be undertaken on each site through the planning application process.

**Background Papers:**

None

**Risk Management:**

The risk map is reviewed by the Interim Qualis Group Board and is also monitored by the Council Corporate Risk Management Group.



## SCRUTINY



Epping Forest District Council

## **Report to Stronger Place Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 24 March 2020**

**Portfolio: Contracts & Technical Services (Councillor N Avey)**

**Subject: Update on Environmental Enhancements and Tree Planting Initiatives**

**Officer contact for further information:** Qasim (Kim) Durrani (01992 564055)

**Democratic Services Officer:** V Messenger (01992 564265)

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

- 1. To note the baseline data on Council managed green infrastructure and the potential for future environmental enhancement and tree planting; and**
- 2. To agree that opportunities for future tree planting initiatives be explored through the Green Infrastructure Strategy that is in preparation.**

### **Report:**

#### Environmental Enhancements:

1. The Council has over the years invested in the enhancement and improvement of its local environment and biodiversity. This has resulted in a wealth of amenity and wildlife sites that are managed by the Council. There are 222 wildlife sites in the District out of which 31 % are managed by the Council, the rest are in third party ownership. The Council manages 9 local nature reserves which offer a wealth of habitat, there are approximately 45 allotments in the District with a total area of 40 hectares in addition there are 70 listed amenity greenspaces across the District.

2. There are two large public parks and gardens: Abbey Gardens and Roding Valley Recreational Area. These are managed in partnership with town and parish Councils. Across the Epping Forest District there is circa 4,000 hectares of natural and semi natural greenspace.

3. The District has 3596 Veteran Trees (trees over 300 years old). There are a further 1,233 trees that are classed as 'notable'. This means they have veteran features but aren't old enough to be classed as veteran yet. In addition, the Council manages around 15,000 public realm trees, these are tree on open spaces and public highway but does not include woodland.

#### Tree Planting Initiatives:

4. During 2019/20 approximately 119 semi-mature trees were planted on amenity land and public highway. These consisted of 38 Whips (2 years old) in Chigwell Row Recreational Area and 2 semi mature Oaks (10-12 years) in Tree Top Meadow, Buckingham Road, Epping.

5. From March 2020 continuing through winter to 2021 a tree planting project is being arranged with the Woodland Trust at Loughton Recreation Ground. A further 160 trees could be planted in Thornwood Nature Reserve along the 82m fence line forming a visual barrier.

6. The delivery of the Local Plan offers a great opportunity to link aspirations for tree planting and biodiversity improvements both within the new developments as well as the wider area. Cabinet is due to consider a report at its meeting on 26 March 2020 with a recommendation to consult on a Green Infrastructure Strategy.

7. The Council has in the past produced tree planting policies and strategies and it is recommended that forthcoming Green Infrastructure Strategy consider and incorporate these. Such a strategy should include, at the least:

- The ability to utilise Tree Wardens to lead on planting in school playing fields or along fence lines;
- Encourage partnership working to identify open spaces suitable for tree planting;
- Maximise funding opportunities to increase tree planting number and species type within the district;
- Essex Forest Project: The Essex Forest Project has an aim of planting 375,000 trees by 2025 including flood alleviation tree planting schemes; and
- Green Arc: An initiative to boost green infrastructure and tree planting initiatives around the aim of 'A million trees'. The focus for activity is the top right-hand quadrant of the capital and surrounding districts area. This is where London meets the countryside (from Thames Chase through to the Lee Valley area). This area is rich in connected green space. The aspiration of the initiative is to establish a new cross border/cross sector platform to lead, champion and co-ordinate initiatives in this area. It will also focus on fundraising and external bids.

**Reason for decision:**

To update the Committee as per Work Programme and bring to Members attention the extent of existing green infrastructure and opportunities to enhance and expand further.

**Options considered and rejected:**

It is possible to ignore existing tree planting initiatives however this will not enable a recognition of the work done so far and we will not have a baseline to start a programme of enhancement and improvement works.

To not develop a District wide tree strategy and carry on as we have done so far. This has been discounted to take full advantage of the opportunities available from proposed development growth in the District.

**Consultation undertaken:**

Local Implementation Team

**Resource implications:**

None at this stage. Once a tree strategy is developed budget allocations approved by Council for Climate Change will be allocated for any works identified.

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

For any tree planting in master planning sites or larger development Planning Performance Agreements will be utilised to integrate blue and green infrastructure. Elsewhere other mechanisms will be used to seek developer contributions and/or agree long term management arrangements.

**Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:**

The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and trees offer a good opportunity to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and help mitigate the negative impact on climate change. On average a tree can absorb as much as 21 kilograms of carbon dioxide per year. This means it will sequester approximately 1 ton of carbon dioxide by the time it reaches 40 years old.

**Background Papers:**

None.

**Risk Management:**

To mitigate against the impact of climate trees have a very important role to play, however, this cannot be the only factor.

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