



CABINET
Thursday, 21st January, 2021

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Cabinet**, which will be held at:

Virtual Meeting on Zoom
on **Thursday, 21st January, 2021**
at **7.00 pm** .

G. Blakemore
Chief Executive

Democratic Services
Officer

A. Hendry (Democratic Services)
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Members:

Councillors C Whitbread (Leader of the Council & Leader of the Conservative Group) (Chairman), , N Avey, N Bedford, A Patel, J Philip, S Kane and H Whitbread

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS TO ATTEND

WEBCASTING/FILMING NOTICE (VIRTUAL MEETINGS)

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.

Therefore by participating in this virtual meeting, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured they should ensure that their video setting throughout the virtual meeting is turned off and set to audio only.

In the event that technical difficulties interrupt the virtual meeting that cannot be overcome, the Chairman may need to adjourn the meeting.

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

1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

1. This virtual meeting is to be webcast. Members are reminded of the need to unmute before speaking.

2. The Chairman will read the following announcement:

“I 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).

Please also be aware that if technical difficulties interrupt the meeting that cannot be overcome, I may need to adjourn the meeting.”

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To be announced at the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To declare interests in any item on this agenda.

4. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 24)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 3rd December 2020.

5. REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

To receive oral reports from Portfolio Holders on current issues concerning their Portfolios, which are not covered elsewhere on this agenda.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE CABINET

To receive any questions submitted by members of the public and any requests to address the Cabinet.

(a) Public Questions

To answer questions asked by members of the public after notice in accordance with the provisions contained within Part 4 of the Constitution (Council Rules, Rule Q3) on any matter in relation to which the Cabinet has powers or duties or which affects the District.

(b) Requests to Address the Cabinet

Any member of the public or a representative of another organisation may address the Cabinet on any agenda item (except those dealt with in private session as exempt or confidential business) due to be considered at the meeting, in accordance with the provisions contained within Article 7 of the Constitution (The Executive, Paragraphs 27 and 28).

7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

To consider any matters of concern to the Cabinet arising from the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function and to identify any matters that the Cabinet would like the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to examine as part of its work programme.

8. COUNCIL HOUSEBUILDING CABINET COMMITTEE - 08 DECEMBER 2020 (Pages 25 - 34)

(Housing and Community Services Portfolio Holder) to consider the attached minutes from the meeting of the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee, held on 08 December 2020, and any recommendations therein.

9. HIGHWAYS RANGER SERVICE - UPDATE (Pages 35 - 58)

Environment & Technical Services – (C-054-2020-21) - to provide an update on the Highways Ranger Service.

10. BAKERS AND COTTIS LANE DEVELOPMENT SITES (Pages 59 - 86)

Finance and Economic Development – (C-055-2020-21) - to provide an update on progress of key regeneration sites.

11. ONGAR TOWN CENTRE (Pages 87 - 146)

Finance and Economic Development – (C-56-2020-21) – To note the second of the studies focussed on Chipping Ongar and its high street and the detailed report produced by Studio 3 attached to this report.

12. DIGITAL GATEWAY FOR PLACE (Pages 147 - 164)

Finance and Economic Development (C-057-2020-21) – update on the development of a digital platform for the district that will create a single online point of access for a wide range of information and services.

13. TREE PLANTING STRATEGY (Pages 165 - 174)

Planning and Sustainability – (C058-2020-21) - update on work being done to move forward a joined up and proactive strategy that aims to increase tree and hedgerow planting throughout the Epping Forest District.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, together with paragraphs 6 and 24 of the Council Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution requires that

the permission of the Chairman be obtained, after prior notice to the Chief Executive, before urgent business not specified in the agenda (including a supplementary agenda of which the statutory period of notice has been given) may be transacted.

In accordance with Operational Standing Order 6 (non-executive bodies), any item raised by a non-member shall require the support of a member of the Committee concerned and the Chairman of that Committee. Two weeks' notice of non-urgent items is required.

15. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Exclusion

To consider whether, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press should be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below on grounds that they will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the following paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) or are confidential under Section 100(A)(2):

Agenda Item No	Subject	Exempt Information Paragraph Number
10	Bakers and Cottis Lane Development Sites Appendix B	3

The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, which came into effect on 1 March 2006, requires the Council to consider whether maintaining the exemption listed above outweighs the potential public interest in disclosing the information. Any member who considers that this test should be applied to any currently exempted matter on this agenda should contact the proper officer at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Background Papers

Article 17 of the Constitution (Access to Information) define background papers as being documents relating to the subject matter of the report which in the Proper Officer's opinion:

- (a) disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based; and
- (b) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report and does not include published works or those which disclose exempt or confidential information and in respect of executive reports, the advice of any political advisor.

The Council will make available for public inspection one copy of each of the documents on the list of background papers for four years after the date of the meeting. Inspection of background papers can be arranged by contacting either the Responsible Officer or the Democratic Services Officer for the particular item.

EPHING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL CABINET MINUTES

Committee:	Cabinet	Date:	3 December 2020
Place:	Virtual Meeting on Zoom	Time:	7.00 - 9.46 pm
Members Present:	C Whitbread (Chairman), N Avey, N Bedford, A Patel, J Philip, S Kane and H Whitbread		
Other Councillors:	R Baldwin, R Brookes, L Burrows, S Heap, H Kauffman, A Lion, C McCredie, S Murray, C C Pond, C P Pond, M Sartin, B Vaz, J H Whitehouse, J M Whitehouse and D Wixley		
Apologies:			
Officers Present:	G Blakemore (Chief Executive), N Dawe (Chief Operating Officer), N Boateng (Service Manager (Legal) & Monitoring Officer), T Carne (Corporate Communications Team Manager), Q Durrani (Service Director (Contracts & Technical Services / Commercial & Regulatory)), D Fenton (Service Director (Housing Revenue Account)), J Gould (Service Director (Community & Wellbeing)), A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer), S Jevans (Strategic Director), S Kits (Lead Corporate Communications Officer - People), K Lee (Interim Asset & Property Manager), J Leither (Democratic Services Officer), S McNamara (Procurement and Contract Development Manager), K Pabani (Chief Estates Officer), A Small (Strategic Director Corporate and 151 Officer), L Wade (Service Director (Strategy, Delivery & Performance)), J Warwick (Service Manager (Contracts)) and S Lloyd-Jones (Sustainable Transport Officer)		

93. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Leader of Council made a short address to remind everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the internet, and would be capable of repeated viewing, which could infringe their human and data protection rights.

94. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(1) Pursuant to the Council's Member Code of Conduct, Councillor S Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 15 – Civic Accommodation and Community Hub, by virtue of being a trustee of Citizens Advice. The Councillor had determined that his interest was non-prejudicial and that he would stay in the meeting for the consideration of the item.

(2) Pursuant to the Council's Member Code of Conduct, Councillor Jon Whitehouse declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 11 – St John the Baptist Church – Development Opportunity, by virtue of living close to the site. The Councillor had determined that although his interest was non-prejudicial he would not participate in the meeting for the consideration of the item.

95. REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

There were no verbal reports made by Members of the Cabinet on current issues affecting their areas of responsibility.

96. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE CABINET**Public Questions**

1. Mr R Morreale sent in the following question for the Planning and Sustainability Portfolio Holder. Mr Morreale was unable to attend the meeting so his question was read out by the Portfolio Holder.

Question:

“Part of The Local Plan of Epping Forest DC is designed to form the plan to create The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.

The Planning Inspector looking at Harlow District Council’s Local Plan was advised in the spring of 2019 that if it’s Plan was implemented in full, in excess of 1600 (14%) more homes would be built than what was required of the Council. Within weeks the council received more Planning Applications from developers looking to build on brownfield sites, taking this figure to over 2000 homes.

Since the beginning of 2020 Harlow Council have continued to receive new Planning Applications to build homes on Brownfield sites taking the number of homes in excess of those required to over 3000. In addition a number of Permitted Developments have seen former offices converted to flats, taking this number even higher.

The recent publication from the Office of National Statistics of projected new households should throw doubt on the need to build so many houses in the area.

My question is:

In view of the above, can you explain why Epping Forest DC has not taken the opportunity to advise the Planning Inspector that it will amend its proposed Local Plan by removing a number of sites, particularly those to the south and south west of Harlow, thus saving the Green Belt from being built on?”

The Portfolio Holders response was:

“As members will be aware the planning Inspector wrote to the Council following the publication of the ONS household projections 2018 on 16 July 2020 seeking clarification as to whether the Plan’s housing requirement remained sound and whether a meaningful change in the housing situation had occurred.

In order to respond to this the Council together with the Strategic Housing Market Area partners: Harlow, East Herts and Uttlesford District Councils commissioned ORS to prepare some additional evidence. On 4 September 2020 the Council wrote back to the Inspector to advise that while the 2018 based projections demonstrate some variation from the 2014-based population projections, it does not represent a meaningful change in the housing situation from the one which informed the emerging Local Plan. The Inspector has now consulted on this matter and the responses are available on the Council’s website . She will be considering this information before determining whether or not any modifications to the housing

requirement or the Plan are required. Once agreed with the Inspector the Main Modifications to the emerging Local Plan will be the subject of a 6 week statutory consultation.

By way of background the Inspector considered the appropriateness of the housing number through the examination hearings. The Plan was examined under the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework and used 2014-based projections. In her advice note of 2 August 2019 (EB98) the Inspector agreed that the requirement for the District should be as set out in the Local Plan Submission Version 2017."

2. A second questioner, Mr G Mitchell sent in the following questions for the Commercial and Regulatory Services Portfolio Holder. Mr Mitchell was unable to attend the meeting so his question was read out by the Portfolio Holder.

Question 1:

"With the proposed move of North Weald airfield (and other council owned assets) from district council ownership to a wholly public owned limited company, what are the benefits to people of the district in moving the asset(s) from the council's direct ownership to that of a limited company?"

The Portfolio Holders response was:

"There are no proposals to move North Weald airfield to Qualis, the Council's wholly owned company, at this time. There is only an intention to look at the options. We would expect the benefits to be explored as part of that exercise, but until this exercise has been undertaken this question is premature."

Question 2:

"Is this committee aware of or is the council in any of its plans considering selling a stake in Qualis to private shareholders? I ask this in relation to how the proposed redevelopment of Epping town centre will be funded?"

The Portfolio Holders response was:

"There are no proposals or plans to sell any shares in Qualis to anyone else. The Council has the first option on providing the finance required to complete the regeneration of these sites, but Qualis has the right to raise finance in the commercial markets if the Council chooses not to exercise this right. The Council will choose whether to provide the finance based upon an analysis of the risk profile."

97. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee reported that the following items of business had been considered at its meeting held on 19 November 2020:

(a) a presentation was received from officers of the UK Innovation Corridor; attending was John McGill, Director of the Innovation Corridor, and Dr Ann Limb, Chairman of the Innovation Corridor. They gave an overview of the work of their organisation to the Committee;

(b) the call-in on the restrictive covenants for Epping Forest College was also considered and the Committee decided to refer it back to the Cabinet for their further consideration;

(c) a progress report on the accommodation programme was also received as well as the Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring report for 2020/2021.

(d) the Committee also agreed that the Local High Street Task and Finish Panel be reconsidered at their February meeting as to whether it should be reconvened in the light of the impact Covid was having on our High Streets.

Councillor Murray expressed his concerns that Scrutiny was still dominated by just one group in terms of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen; and that, in reference to the accommodation project, it was important that our staff had good access to office space as not all staff had ideal circumstances to work from home. This was an issue of staff morale and career development.

Councillor Sartin said they also had an update on the People's Strategy and were told about 'Perkbox' and the wellbeing strategy.

98. RESPONSE TO CALL-IN ON THE "RELEASE OF RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS - EPPING FOREST COLLEGE" REPORT

Councillor Patel the Portfolio Holder for Commercial and Regulatory Services introduced the call-in on Release of Restrictive Covenants – Epping Forest College, that had been referred back to the Cabinet from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

This had been thoroughly debated at that Committee. He noted that following this he had agreed to ask our legal officers to approach solicitors from the college to see if they could accommodate Councillor Chris Pond's request regarding the open land. Our legal officer has now spoken to the college who had responded that the college had sold the majority of the old playing field site and any such discussion on keeping the site unbuilt would have to be dealt with at the planning negotiations. As we were not the landowner this was best handled at the planning stage. Also, EFDC had no way of enforcing that the land stay as open land through a deed with the college as they no longer own the land. Given this and advice received he recommended that the decision taken at the September Cabinet meeting be upheld.

Councillor Chris Pond said that we had not sufficiently safeguarded that land and that we had some leverage now to do so. It was not appropriate to leave it to the planning process some years down the line. The Local Plan was not cast iron on this, it was merely an aspiration.

Councillor Murray endorsed Councillor Pond's point. He went on to say that the residents of Loughton had little trust in the whole process; the college had just taken and taken, we had lost the sport hall and Luctons' field. What we get in return was not guaranteed. He was still not convinced that we could solve the pressure on Primary Schools by extending existing ones, but ECC takes a different view on this.

Councillor Patel noted that we were in a stronger position a couple of years ago, now we were in a weaker one. This could be taken to a tribunal and he had been advised that the Council would lose the case.

Councillor Bedford agreed with Councillor Patel, as a third party now owns the land, we are now in their hands. Councillor Philip noted that there was a long and detailed history on this; Councillor Patel has done as much as he could. We do have a Local Plan (with the Inspector) that covers this area and we only have until 2033 to complete everything that was in our Local Plan. There was a requirement to keep land open in that particular site in the Plan, but we cannot commit to anything as we would be fettering the planning process. This was the best we could do at this stage.

Councillor Chris Pond remarked that indeed it was not in our gift to do this, but the college's. As he had said before, we can designate Jessel Green as a field in trust. Could that be considered.

Councillor Patel replied that he was not sure that it was in his gift to do so.

Decision:

That the Cabinet reaffirmed their decision taken at their meeting held on 14 September 2020 on the release of the restrictive covenants for Epping Forest College.

99. PURCHASE OF STREET PROPERTIES

The Housing and Community Services Portfolio Holder introduced the report on the purchase of street properties.

The report set out the details of the recommendation that the unallocated right to buy receipts were used to part fund a street purchase programme. Whenever possible right to buy receipts (RTB) were used to fund the Council House Building programme. If following this, there were unallocated receipts, there were several options which could be utilised. A new policy on the utilisation of RTB receipts would first go to the Stronger Communities Select Committee and then be presented to Cabinet in the New Year. One of the options for disposing of RTB receipts was to purchase street properties. Although the return would not be as good as a sizeable new build scheme, when managed carefully and with the appropriate knowledge a street purchase scheme could add value to the HRA business plan.

Subject to some final budget adjustments, officers expect to be able to purchase up to 28 properties. The total spend amounts to £10m. It should be noted that this sat within the HRA.

The previous street property scheme provided a combined IRR return of 3.46%.

Councillor Philip just wanted to confirm that the gap from our RTB receipts and the cost of the buying of the properties would come from the HRA and not the general fund.

Councillor Bedford asked if we could take advantage of the reduced stamp duty if we progressed this at a faster rate to get it through the system. He was told that yes, they were looking to complete all purchases by the 31st March, unless the government changed it. Councillor Bedford then asked how much it would save us. He was told that could be estimated and put in the minutes.

Councillor Chris Pond asked what parameters were used in buying these houses. Councillor H Whitbread said that there would be a mixture of properties in sizes, and houses and flats, depending on needs.

Councillor Wixley asked how the properties were to be selected and from what areas. He was told that they would be from across the district and would be a mixture of properties.

Decision:

- (1) The Cabinet agreed a street purchase programme which would consist of up to 28 properties; and
- (2) Agreed to appoint Metaplan to undertake the purchases on behalf of the Council.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

There was a requirement that all the Councils 1-4-1 Receipts from Right to Buy (RTB) sales were spent within three years of receipt. Any receipts which were not allocated were passed back to the Government, with interest. The proposal to use the outstanding receipts would bring about much needed affordable housing and add value to the HRA business plan.

Other Options for Action:

Not to purchase these properties and pass on the Receipts to Government with interest. This would not be in the best interest of the Council given the local housing need. Also, the strain put on the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) due to the loss of stock, under RTB would worsen.

100. RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOWING REVIEW OF SERVICE CHARGES

The Housing and Community Services Portfolio Holder, Councillor H Whitbread, introduced the report on Service Charges.

The Council charge for additional services, to tenants living in blocks of flats based on a CPI increase yearly. An example of these services were the cleaning of blocks and communal utility costs such as electricity for lighting. EFDC's charging approach follows the government guidance to separate service charge from rents which took place in 2003. This approach has become challenging for most organisations over the years as some costs have risen above the rate of CPI. A recent analysis of cost against income was as follows:

Income - £590,662.40

Income expected based on costs - £1,265,905.77

Short fall against current charges - £675,243.30

Councils were now subject to rent regulations via the Regulator for Social Housing. The Regulations clearly state that social housing providers need to charge for services in a fair and consistent way which can be accounted for. This translates to charging the actual cost for the services broken down to each individual property. From a legal standpoint this protected us from challenge regarding fair and accurate

charging. Service charges were subject to housing payment support for tenants who were in receipt of benefit. Although it was difficult to be 100% accurate our data indicates that approximately 70% are currently receiving housing payment support, thus the new charges will be covered by the benefit. It should be noted that the income and expenditure of service charges comes under the Housing Revenue Account.

Officers undertook a large-scale review. The costs of services provided had now been established and applied to each individual property.

It was proposed that the increase would be implemented using an incremental approach over 3 years. This would seem fairer, particularly during these unprecedented times.

Councillor Bedford noted that we needed these increases and that they were long overdue.

Councillor Heap asked if it mattered that we were undercharging. He was told that the Council had to manage its HRA as best as it could. This would bring in more money and therefore improve our estates.

Councillor Jon Whitehouse noted that the tenants had been consulted, but had the leaseholders been consulted. He was told that the leaseholders were already paying the increased charges and although the increases did add up, they were covered by housing benefits.

Councillor Murray said that the methodology behind this seemed all right. He was concerned about the £3.50 increase at this time for people just above the benefits line. Did we know how many tenants would be faced with this large increase a week. Councillor H Whitbread noted that some people would be saving money with this review. As for how many people this affected, she asked Ms Fenton to answer. Ms Fenton said that we were now regulated by the Social Housing Regulator and now had to have fair and transparent charges, at the moment we did not; another reason for undertaking this review. It was about 25% of residents who would be paying this larger amount, and around 200 tenants would be seeing a decrease in their payments.

Councillor Rose Brookes asked why this had not been done before. She was told that they had now taken a close look at our charges, that, and the social housing regulator prompted to ensure that we had the fairest possible regime.

Decision:

- (1) The Cabinet approved the recommendation to increase service charges using an incremental approach. This followed the review regarding the level of service charges across the district and the requirement to introduce a fair and consistent approach to service charges for tenants living in blocks.
- (2) The Cabinet agreed to limit the increase in year 1 to no more than 40% (maximum £3.50 per week) and 70% in year 2.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The development of a fair and accurate charging regime for service charges supports the overall aspirations of the Councils Corporate Plan – Stronger Communities, Stronger Council.

Other Options for Action:

Not to develop a fair and accurate charging regime. This would leave us potentially in breach of the newly published Rent Regulations and at risk of legal challenge around fair charging. Furthermore, if not addressed will add pressure to the HRA.

101. NEW HOUSING MANAGEMENT CHARGES

The Housing and Community Services Portfolio Holder introduced the report on Housing Management Charges.

It was noted that EFDC owned approximately 12,000 assets including properties and garages. In addition to these, the Council owned other assets such as parcels of land, pathways, un-adopted roads, alleyways and grassed areas on residential estates.

A review of the staffing structure was carried out during the latter period of 2019, a decision was made to split the housing management team into 3 separate teams. The reason for this was to enable specialisms which would lead to improved services for residents. In addition, the Council would then be in a position to review charges for non-statutory requests. This report set out the review of services which did not currently attract a charge.

There was a cost to the District Council to carry out non-statutory tasks and these costs were not currently recovered. It was good practice to have a clear charging process agreed for these requests, so not putting pressure on the HRA account. Furthermore, any income can be regenerated to improve service provision for our communities.

A desk top review was carried out with comparable Councils to ensure we were charging a fair and reasonable charge.

Councillor Philip commented that it made a lot of sense, to balance some of the costs we incurred by doing this and ensuring that the people who benefited from these activities were the ones paying for it.

Councillor Chris Pond asked why was the permission to create front garden parking a very exact price of £75.09p, and what is the policy on parking on verges in front of houses. He was told that the charges had been benchmarked and assessed against other similar charges. As for people parking on grass verges, they should not be parking there, and we would take action where possible. As for parking in your front garden, we did have a specific policy, and could attach the policy to the minutes.

Councillor Wixley noted that we no longer created extra parking on Council land, hence more parking on verges. Also, what about skip licence fees, they were parked for some time and would tend to kill off the grass underneath. The Portfolio Holder took his point about the mess made on verges. Residents had to apply for a licence to park a skip, which helped us regulate the situation and could follow up on any damage caused. Councillor Murray asked if reinstatement for any damage caused by a skip was part of the licence conditions. He was told officers would investigate this.

Councillor Murray went on to ask if there was any discretion on loss of Fobs with tenants with special needs. He was told that on officers would use their discretion when dealing with the loss of fobs in exceptional circumstances.

Decision:

The Cabinet approved the proposed administration fees for carrying out non statutory requests from tenants, leaseholders and homeowners.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

This report sets out the proposal to introduce reasonable administration costs to cover tasks carried out which are non-statutory requests. It should be noted that housing management changes sits under the Housing Revenue Account.

Other Options for Action:

Not to have a clearly stated charging system.

102. ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH - DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Housing and Community Services Portfolio Holder introduced the report on the development opportunities for the St John's the Baptist Church.

The cabinet noted that the Council had been approached by representatives of the Church to enquire as to whether there would be any appetite to undertake a joint project to develop a community hall and accommodation. The Church was keen to ringfence any residential accommodation for Key Workers. Furthermore, the community hall would be utilized by the Church and other local groups. The full details were subject to negotiation, however, a brief report had been prepared by our consultant (Metaplan). This indicated that subject to a mix of affordable and shared ownership housing, the project would provide a healthy return for the Council over the period of the Business Plan. In addition, a much-needed community resource would be created.

Funding for the project would come from the HRA account. A grant will also be sort from Homes England.

Councillor Avey was happy to support the proposal and to sort out this part of Epping and the St John's road area. The most exciting thing about this was getting a new community hall which was needed in Epping.

Councillor Philip said that looking at the finance it made sense to go with option 'c', even though the levels of the returns were tight and we would have to be very careful we did not have any significant cost overruns on it. The idea was a good idea, he liked the idea of shared ownership and key worker housing.

Decision:

1. The Cabinet approved the progression to full planning and gave approval to commit the capital required (£3,692,023) to build out the proposed scheme. This would form part of phase 5 of the council house building programme; and

2. That Cabinet noted the beginning of Phase 5, which would be funded from the HRA account.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The development of affordable housing supports the overall aspirations of the Councils Corporate Plan – Stronger Place, Stronger Communities.

The opportunity to partner with St John The Baptist Church provides both financial and community partnership benefits for the Council.

Other Options for Action:

Not to progress to full feasibility in which case the Church would contract with a private developer.

103. COVID 19 DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS - LOCAL BUSINESS SUPPLIERS / PROCUREMENT STRATEGY AND RULES

The Environmental and Technical Services Portfolio Holder, Councillor N Avey, introduced the report on the rules and strategy for local business suppliers.

The current Procurement Strategy was required to be renewed from January 2021, and as such an updated version was required. The strategy had been updated to reflect how Procurement could support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Objectives and Covid-19 recovery plan.

The Procurement Rules had been in effect since April 2018 and required an update to support the Council's new Procurement Strategy, and to ensure that the rules were aligned with the Strategy and help the Council to achieve its objectives. The Council was making changes to its approach to procurement, to recognise the broader economic and well-being impact of existing local businesses and attract new businesses to the District. The new procurement strategy and rules required a minimum of two local suppliers to be invited to tender wherever possible and a commitment to make faster payments to local suppliers (21 days instead of the mandatory 30).

The new procurement strategy included the use of Social Value, to enable bidders to be explicit in the provision of local job opportunities, apprenticeships and community benefits as part of their tender. A Sustainability-focused evaluation criteria had also been developed when assessing tenders to maximise the benefit to the District and its local businesses and communities.

Training and guidance were being developed to help contracting officers in procuring and managing contracts. This would include templates, checklists, examples of good practice and suggested structures for supplier meetings to ensure they were performing to the agreed standards set out when the contract was entered into, and that the Council got maximum value and benefit.

Councillor Philip welcomed the report as it made a lot of sense. Encouraging businesses in the district had to be the right thing to do.

Councillor Jon Whitehouse asked about the relationship on procuring from local companies and the use of framework agreements. A lot of local companies did not join framework agreements. How did we get sufficient local companies if they were not part of our framework? And, was Qualis classed as one of these companies or was it classed as an in-house service. He was told that big companies would apply but we would prefer to use local sub-contractors. We were members of bigger frameworks and also a national one. Using frameworks saved a lot of time. The benefits were that the timescales were quicker. There was a section in the rules about not using a framework for local suppliers.

As for the use of Qualis and were they identified as an in-house service? The meeting was advised that if Qualis was undertaking commercial activities then it was outside of public sector procurement rules. Officers would be looking for best value and Qualis being a subsidiary but independent company we would not automatically go with them unless it was advantageous to us.

Councillor Patel asked what provision or considerations were made from a health perspective, such as encouraging a business to become dementia friendly. He was told that would be down to individual contracts; something that we would want to consider at the contract phase. Councillor Patel asked what assurances could be given about this criteria. He was told this came down to the training of contract officers and their increased awareness of social value.

Councillor Heap asked when the 21 day payment was from; was it from when the invoice was received. He suggested that a benefit multiplier could be used to assess the social value of the money spent locally. He was told that yes it was when the invoice was received. It was the intention to keep the money spend local. Officers would investigate using a benefit multiplier.

Decision:

- (1) The Cabinet agreed the updated Procurement Strategy for 2021–26 which supported the Council objectives under Covid-19 Development Projects to become effective from 01 January 2021; and
- (2) Agreed the updated Procurement Rules, that would come into effect from 01 January 2021.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To update the current Procurement Strategy and accompanying Procurement Rules in line with current best practice and use the opportunity to incorporate Covid-19 Development Project aims.

Other Options for Action:

To let the Strategy expire and not replace it, this would mean there was no high-level strategic direction to the Council's purchasing and would drastically reduce the likelihood of achieving value for money and providing good quality services to our residents.

To leave the Procurement Rules as they were, this would not be a viable option as the rules would not be in alignment with our Corporate Objectives and Covid-19 recovery plan, thus making the achievement of those objectives much more difficult.

104. COVID 19 - DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS - TRAVEL LOCAL DEMAND RESPONSIVE TRANSPORT (DRT) TRIAL

The Environmental and Technical Services Portfolio Holder, Councillor N Avey introduced the report on the Travel Local Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) trial.

Earlier in the year the Council agreed to part fund operation of Bus Route 87 service with Essex County Council when the commercial operator Arriva was unable to operate it as a commercially viable option. This was initially done on a six month basis from 1 April 2020, however due to the impact of Covid-19 this was extended by another three months up to 31 December 2020. Covid-19 had compounded the commercial viability of this service as fewer people were using the bus, however, it remains popular within the Loughton area and between Epping Station and Staple Tye and Central Harlow.

It was proposed that instead of extending the subsidy the money could be better utilised in trialling a 'hybrid' Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service with Epping Forest Community Transport (EFCT). This was a pre booked peak hours service where passengers could check the route, availability and decide to book a seat if they so wished. Off peak, a traditional timetabled service would run, with acceptance of concessionary passes (but subject to Covid-19 vehicle occupation rules).

Due to the uncertainty over demand and the costs associated in setting up a DRT it was necessary to have a budget to carry out a trial. If successful it could be self-financing and could serve as a baseline for introduction in other parts of the District. For avoidance of doubt any passengers wishing to use the new service will be charged the same fares as the current operator Arriva.

Councillor Philip welcomed the report saying it was an important mode of transport and was looking forward to adding more services.

Councillor H Whitbread said that this was good idea that would benefit local people. She asked how this service would be advertised to ensure its maximum usage. She was told that if agreed officers would start aggressive advertising, run a PR campaign and also put up notices in the bus shelters etc. It would be key to publicise it to staff and to use social media.

Councillor Patel commented that there was potential to expand the service and link all bus routes together, linking the High Streets. This would be a way forward after the trial.

Councillor S Kane asked how success was being measured on this trial and when would we start assessing that. Q Durrani (Service Director) said that they would be monitoring it from day 1 and would report back in quarter 4, in March 2021. Officers have spoken to the Hospitals who would be using the service as well as our own staff. There will be a digital booking service. But it will also have to be Covid secure.

Councillor Chris Pond said it was a good trial initiative. There would be difficulties to mesh it with other services. He noted that a lot of the peak time service passengers would be school children. There was room for some confusion and particularly for OAPs for when their passes would be available to use. Also, could the service serve the Newham Council Campsite at Debden Green and would it cover the Langston Road Retail Park. Mr Durrani commented that the old Counties Service would not serve the retail park so our service could pick this up.

Councillor Janet Whitehouse asked what the capacity of the bus would be and how often would the bus run. She was told that because of Covid it would be a maximum of 7 passengers, and it would be an hourly service, but would also be demand responsive. If needed a second vehicle could be put on. Councillor Bedford noted that now hospital staff would be vaccinated, we could increase the number that used the service from the hospital. Officers would also investigate if one bus could just be for hospital staff.

Decision:

(1) The Cabinet agreed that continued subsidy payments to Essex County Council for operation of Bus 87 was not sustainable and as agreed by Cabinet on 19 October the outcome of Travel Local initiative of Covid 19 Recovery projects be progressed further;

(2) The Cabinet agreed allocation of £26,574 from the Sustainable Travel Projects for a three month trial of a Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) bus service to be operated by Epping Forest Community Transport (EFCT) and to include as much of the current Route 87 as was feasible; and

(3) A further report be presented to Cabinet with the outcomes of the DRT trial and opportunities to extend the DRT service to other parts of the District to improve connectivity.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To seek funding for a trial DRT service which could be self-financing in future.

Other Options for Action:

It was not sustainable to continue to subsidise the non-commercially viable Bus Route 87 and the Council could stop this subsidy which may cause some reputational risk to the Council by disconnecting parts of the District from Harlow and the Princess Alexandra Hospital.

105. ASBESTOS POLICY

The Housing and Community Services Portfolio Holder, Councillor H Whitbread introduced the report on the Council's asbestos policy.

The Cabinet noted that on 21st September 2020 consultation was undertaken with the Councils Leadership and Senior Management Teams and Corporate Health and Safety Officers who considered a draft Asbestos Policy 2020 on asbestos containing material located in Council owned and managed properties.

Following consultation, Epping Forests Tenant and Leaseholder Panel at its 14th October 2020 meeting considered the draft Asbestos Policy 2020 and recommended its endorsement to Cabinet.

Its adoption was a key decision as the Asbestos Policy 2020 sets out the lines of responsibility, principles and guidelines that the Council would apply in the management, removal and disposal of asbestos containing material.

Decision:

- (1) The Cabinet agreed that following consultation with the Councils Leadership and Senior Management Teams and Corporate Health and Safety Officers and endorsement by the Tenant and Leaseholder Panel, the Councils Asbestos Policy 2020 be adopted;
- (2) The aims of the Policy Statement, to effectively manage all asbestos containing materials in Council owned and managed properties in such a manner as to minimise the risk of any person being exposed to asbestos fibres be approved; and
- (3) That, the targets of the Asbestos Management Plan and the Asbestos Register detailed in the Asbestos Policy 2020 be approved.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

An approved Asbestos Policy 2020 would provide detailed arrangements and procedures that the Council would use to ensure compliance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, identifying the lines of responsibility around a robust framework of measures minimising the risk around asbestos and asbestos containing material in Council owned and managed properties.

Other Options for Action:

Not to follow the recommendations of the Tenant and Leaseholder Federation and not endorse the Asbestos Policy 2020.

106. CIVIC ACCOMMODATION AND COMMUNITY HUB

Councillor C Whitbread introduced the report updating the Cabinet on the Council's Community Hub.

The impact of Covid-19 and the associated need to swiftly mobilise a local support hub back in March, provided a clear illustration of the value and benefit of partnership working in the Epping Forest district. The 'Covid response - Epping Forest Community Hub,' whilst hosted by the District Council, relied heavily on the involvement and support of the voluntary community sector (VSC) and, specifically, Voluntary Action Epping Forest. Clinically extremely vulnerable residents who were required to shield continued to be able to access a range of collaboratively delivered services including; shopping, prescription collection, befriending and signposting to specialist support. Through partnership working the Council had been able to draw on invaluable wider resources, not least from a pool of dedicated local volunteers and mutual aid groups, therefore increasing capacity and enabling responsive, friendly and accessible support to be delivered to those most in need.

Officers had been having conversations with VAEF and Citizens Advice and other partners to help us target services where they were most needed, so residents got a more holistic service. They were looking at having 'themed days' at the hub maybe linking housing, homelessness and employment. Working in a hub type environment would enable the type of intervention at the outset. The Civic would be at the heart of the Hub approach and then to expand on into different areas of the district.

Councillor H Whitbread said that this was an exciting project, she had been impressed by the new space which would be good for the public to use. Satellite hubs would also be very important.

Councillor Murray was pleased with the report but noted that the bulk of the population was not in Epping and was pleased about the satellite concept.

Councillor Patel was pleased with the report as it set the model of what a community hub should be. ECC should take note.

Councillor Janet Whitehouse asked if organisations would move into our offices or would they just have an information desk there. She was told that it would be different for each organisation. Some organisations would move into the hub and give up their current premises. It would also allow officers to refer to other authorities set in the same building. It would grow organically.

Councillor Chris Pond said it was good to make better use of the Civic Offices and he hoped that Epping Library would be accommodated there.

Councillor Jon Whitehouse was pleased to see this join up how residents could access services, both virtually and physically.

Decision:

- (1) Cabinet considered the opportunities for establishing a community hub and were happy with the progress made; and
- (2) In the context of establishing a community hub, Cabinet understood the current discussions in relation to partnership working.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

Establishing a vision for a community hub as defined by the council, partners and community will ensure services were designed based on the collective need.

Other Options for Action:

To establish the building as a space where partners are co-located, with no additional opportunity for benefits from establishing a community hub.

To offer the space to commercial tenants which would generate income.

To remove or reduce grants with partners which at this stage would disrupt the direction of travel for reframing the relationship and establishment of the community hub.

107. QUALIS GROUP BUSINESS PLAN

The Commercial and Regulatory Services Portfolio Holder, Councillor Patel introduced the Qualis Business Plan for 2020-21.

The Business Plan set out the detailed activities for Qualis in the forthcoming year and, once agreed by the Council, Qualis could deliver these activities without further recourse to the Council.

Approval of the Business Plan represented the Council's main mechanism for annually influencing and controlling the activities of Qualis.

The Business Plan presented here was the first full Business Plan produced by Qualis and reflected the ongoing development and positioning of the company. For this reason, and because the final Board had only recently been appointed, Qualis had produced a single year Business Plan for 2020/21. A 4 year Business Plan would be developed and presented to the Council as the new Board of Qualis planned the future strategy for the Group.

Councillor Philip noted the expected future returns from Qualis to the Council for the next year. Covid had had an affect and would also affect the budget. But without having this in place the council would be struggling more for the next and coming years. He welcomed the report and welcomed seeing the four year business plan that would allow us to factor it into our medium term financial strategy.

Councillor Murray asked how the acquisitions, as reported in the business plan, would work. Councillor Patel replied that the Council had enabled Qualis to purchase properties on the open market to enable them to generate an income stream. It was not for us to determine what they purchased. Councillor C Whitbread noted that they also had to go through due diligence before they purchased anything. They were investment purchases for good yields and positive returns.

Councillor Murray noted paragraph 6 of the report need cabinet approval about the transfer of future services; but he would like scrutiny to have a look at the case as well before the service was transferred to Qualis. Councillor C Whitbread agreed that was a good point and he would like to investigate further and feedback at the next Council. Councillor Patel said it seemed a sensible approach.

Councillor Wixley noting paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2 of the report expressed his concern over the Pyrles Lane development of 80 dwellings (as opposed to the 36 originally proposed). The site was backed onto by a number of residences in his ward. This was a sensitive site and he asked for consideration for the near-by residents. Councillor C Whitbread said that Qualis would give due regard to local residents when putting forward planning applications. Councillor Patel said they would have to abide by the planning process, and it was in their interest to work with ward members and local residents.

Councillor Chris Pond asked if the Portfolio Holder had made an estimate of the effect of on the business plan by the statement made last week by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the question of the misapplication of Public Works Loans Board loans for the purpose of ensuring yields. Councillor Patel said that this was at a very early stage from when the announcement was made. He has had a meeting with the relevant officers, and they will be looking at this as they moved forward. We were still awaiting more details. Councillor Philip added that there was not enough information to know what it would mean and to remain compliant with it; but Qualis could still raise funds outside the Council.

Councillor Jon Whitehouse said that he would like to have a full report earlier. He also considered that members did have an interest and what Qualis acquired as it was our resident's capital being invested. It came as a surprise to him that Qualis was investing outside the district as he remembers at a Cabinet Finance committee

meeting where members were not keen on doing that. Finally, he was pleased to see that there was a bit more clarity that the district council was to buy back the new sports centre from Qualis and presumably enter into a management agreement.

Councillor C Whitbread said that ideally, he would like in the future to see the business plan go to a select committee first.

Councillor Heap asked about the acquisitions mentioned in the report, did they employ someone to seek these out and was it commissioned based, if so, how much did it cost. We did not agree to speculation outside the district when it was set up. This money should have been invested in the District. Councillor C Whitbread disagreed and said that we needed to be in a position where we were getting a good return for our investments and not all investments in our district would give us a good return. It could be argued that local investments would help protect jobs. However, these were all good investments that had gone through due diligence. S Jevans added that the Council agreed an asset management strategy back in February about the approach to investments outside the district. Qualis has a Risk and Investment Committee who consider in great detail each opportunity and we then engaged with commercial estate agents on a fixed fee.

A written answer would be given as to the amount of the fees paid.

Decision:

The Cabinet recommend that Council agree the one year Qualis Business Plan.

Reason for Proposed Decision:

Under the terms of the Shareholder agreement between Qualis and the Council, Qualis is required each year to bring forward an annual and a 4 year Business Plan for agreement.

Other Options for Action:

No other options were available.

108. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was noted that there was no other urgent business for consideration by the Cabinet.

109. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below as they would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Act indicated, and the exemption was considered to outweigh the potential public interest in disclosing the information:

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Paragraph Number</u>
19	Strategic Options for Waste Management	3

110. STRATEGIC OPTIONS FOR WASTE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

The Environment and Technical Services Portfolio Holder introduced the report on the strategic options for the Waste Management Contract.

It was noted that the Council had entered into a 20-year contract with Biffa Municipal Limited for street cleansing and waste and recycling services in November 2014. The contract had a 10-year break clause and the Council and Biffa need to agree if there was to be another 10-year extension from November 2024. Informal feedback from Biffa indicated that there were certain elements of the contract that they would like to review as part of the extension. Such a major decision required formal contractual negotiations between the Council and Biffa to enable both parties to assess financial and operational implications.

Ricardo Energy & Environment were commissioned to carry out a high-level review of the current Biffa contract and advise on service costs relative to market and options available to the Council. The review had identified a number of positives as well as risks.

Before the Council opens formal negotiations with Biffa more information was needed on the options available. These included the qualitative performance of the contract, market trends in relation to recycling challenges, procurement and alternative service delivery options. It was therefore recommended that Ricardo be engaged to expand on the work they had done and provide technical advice to the Council in negotiations with Biffa.

Decision:

(1) The Cabinet noted that the Council's current street cleansing and waste and recycling collections contract with Biffa Municipal Limited which started in November 2014 was working very well delivering significant financial and operational benefits and that there was an option to extend the contract by another 10 years in November 2024 subject to both parties agreeing;

(2) The Cabinet noted the high-level desk top review of the current street cleansing and waste and recycling collections contract with Biffa by Ricardo Energy & Environment Limited;

(3) The Cabinet agreed that in light of the initial findings of the high-level review and to seek best outcomes for our residents the following strategy be adopted to enable a decision on next steps at the end of the first 10 years of the Biffa contract:

a) Carry out a more detailed performance assessment of the current Biffa contract and consider the suite of service delivery options available to the Council.

b) Identify and explore financial and operational risks in the current Biffa contract including contract price indexation, decreasing income from sale of recycling materials, risk share of recycling prices, material processing fees, lack of Council owned depot, procurement options including the ability to offer Biffa an extension.

- c) Explore opportunities and alternative delivery models like bringing the service back in house or delivering through a subsidiary company as well as service improvement and innovation, assessment of waste and recycling depot as a strategic asset and opportunities it may offer for synergies with other operational services. And to
 - d) Commence negotiations with Biffa and assess their willingness for an extension
- (3) The Cabinet agreed to engage Ricardo Energy & Environment Limited to carry out the next phase of detailed assessment and analysis work in accordance with section 2.7 (a) of the Procurement Rules; and
- (4) The Cabinet agreed to allocate £25,000 from the Sustainable Travel Projects to enable this assessment work and to report back to Cabinet on the findings.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To enable a decision on the next 10-year extension of the street cleansing and waste and recycling services contract with Biffa from November 2024. The early start was to have adequate time for a procurement exercise if an agreement on extension cannot be reached.

Other Options for Action:

It was possible to commence negotiations with Biffa for the further 10-year extension of the contract without knowing the full knowledge of market factors however this could result in agreeing an extension which may not be in the best interest of the Council.

The scope of Ricardo's work could be limited to Biffa contract extension only and no consideration given to other options available to the Council.

As part of the next phase feasibility of collocating the depot with a neighbouring local authority will be assessed.

CHAIRMAN

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EPHING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Council Housebuilding Cabinet **Date:** Tuesday, 8 December 2020
Committee

Place: Virtual Meeting on Zoom **Time:** 5.00 - 5.51 pm

Members Present: H Whitbread (Chairman), N Avey, N Bedford, A Patel and J Philip

Other Councillors: S Murray, S Neville and D Wixley

Apologies: No apologies

Officers Present: D Fenton (Service Director (Housing Revenue Account)), J Cosgrave (Interim Development Housing Manager), J Leither (Democratic Services Officer) and G Woodhall (Team Manager - Democratic & Electoral Services)

20. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman made a short address to remind everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the internet, and would be capable of repeated viewing, which could infringe their human and data protection rights.

21. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Cabinet Committee noted there were no substitute members.

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct.

23. MINUTES

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee meeting held on 08 September 2020 be taken as read and would be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

24. COUNCIL HOUSE BUILDING PROGRESS REPORT - PHASES 3-5

Deborah Fenton, Service Manager, Housing Management and Home Ownership, presented a report recommending that the Council House Building Progress report Phases 3 to 5 be noted.

She advised that the report set out the progress that had been made across phases 3 to 5 of the House building programme and that were either completed, on-site or were currently being procured.

Phase 3**Queens Road, North Weald: HR116**

10 x 3 Bed Houses & 2 x 2 Bed Houses

Scheme	Contractor	Site Start	Contract Period	Original Comp. Date
Queens Road	Storm Bld.	07:01:19	83 Wks	07:08:20
Ant. Comp.	Variation	Contract Sum	Ant. Final Acc.	Variation
30:09:20	6 Wks	£2,470,493	£2,914,732	£444,239 (18%)

The completion date was originally August 2020 however due to the Government Restrictions in place relating to Covid-19 and the consequential effect on the supply chain, there have been two Extensions of Time (EOT) awards. The first for 5 weeks and the second 23 weeks and 2 days. This took the site completion through to 28/02/21 however, it was currently anticipated that (based upon the contractor's latest programme) all 12 units would achieve completion simultaneously on 21.01.21.

The anticipated final account was £2,914,732 this was £444,239 over contract value relating mainly to contamination removal, the under provision for utilities and Covid-19 delays. The contractor Storm Limited, are claiming £99,000 for preliminaries based on the awarded EOTs. Contractually, this was being resisted.

Phase 4

The sites in Phase 4 were progressing albeit slowly due to the Government restrictions in place relating to Covid-19 and the associated supply chain disruption this has particularly impacted on a number of areas limiting progress and materials e.g. fencing materials.

Phase 4.1 – Contracted with TSG Ltd

			SoS	Weeks	Handover
Chequers Road (A) - Loughton	HR 124	3 x 3B units	31:07:20	56	20:08:21
Bushfields - Loughton	HR 122	2 x 2B units	13:07:20	56	16:08:21
Chester Road - Loughton	HR 130	3 x 2B units	07:09:20	56	25:10:21
Queensway - Ongar	HR 140	4 x 1B units	02:11:20	53	13:11:21
Millfield - Ongar	HR 138	2 x 1B units	30:11:20	53	30:11:21
Total		14 units			

The start on site activity has now occurred on Chequers Rd (A), Bushfields, Chester Road and Queensway with Millfield to follow shortly.

Pick Hill, Waltham Abbey HR145 : 2 x units

A Tender Report for the previously envisaged group of 4.3 sites (which included the Single Unit Sites) were carried out, however the tender report was redrafted, given the single unit sites were held pending confirmation of their planning status (this had also enabled a review to be made as to what other options could be best pursued this resulted in an amended report being prepared for the Portfolio Holders approval recommending that Pick Hill was included within the 4.1 group of sites.

An advanced traffic assessment study had been carried out along Pick Hill which concluded that no abnormal provisions were required with regard to construction traffic movement.

Once confirmation of approval was received contracts would be issued for signing.

Phase 4.2 – Contracted with Indecom Ltd

			SoS	Handover
Hornbeam Close (B) - Buckhurst Hill	HR 136	3 x units	25:01:21	04:02:22
Hornbeam House - Buckhurst Hill	HR 137	2 x units	25:01:21	04:02:22
Bourne House - Buckhurst Hill	HR 135	2 x units	25:01:21	04:02:22
Etheridge Road - Debden	HR 127	3 x units	11:01:21	21:01:22
Denny Avenue - Waltham Abbey	HR 144	3 x units	11:01:21	21:01:22
Beechfield Walk - Waltham Abbey	HR 147	5 x units	11:01:21	21:01:22
Kirby Close - Loughton	HR 120	4 x units	11:01:21	21:01:22
Total		22 units		

The Phase 4.2 sites were tendered in two groups. Contracts had been signed and the contractor, Indecom, took possession of the sites for insurance and Health & Safety purposes on 2 November 2020. They were currently completing their due diligence under their JCT Design & Build Contract confirming the above SoS dates and the anticipated dates for handover.

Phase 4.3

Phase 4.3 comprised of 15 units and were awaiting consent, with contract signing anticipated to be in January/February 2021, possession to take place in March 2021 with a start on site anticipated to be in July/August 2021.

Pentlow Way - Buckhurst Hill	HR139	7 x units
Woollard Street - Waltham Abbey	HR149	8 x units
Total		15 units

Phase 4.4

Phase 4.4 comprised of 28 units (an additional 12 units) were awaiting consent.

Ladyfields - Loughton	16 x units
Chequers Road (B) - Loughton: And possibly (held in SAC)	8 x units
Lower Alderton Hall Lane - Loughton:	2 x units
Thatchers Close - Loughton:	1 x unit
Stonyshotts - Waltham Abbey:	1 x unit
Total	28 units

Once approved, Ladyfields and Chequers Road (B), will be issued for tender in January/February 2021, returned by April 2021 for reporting in May 2021 and approval in June 2021. It was anticipated that contracts would be signed in July 2021 and possession achieved by August 2021. The contractor will carry out their Design and Build due diligence and discharge their pre-commencement conditions by December 2021 to start on site in January 2022.

Lower Alderton Hall Drive and Thatchers Close, Loughton

Both of these sites were awaiting planning consent and have been delayed by the Local Plan and SAC issues. It was anticipated that these sites may be released by mid-2021.

Stonyshotts, Waltham Abbey

The consent would be reviewed for either resubmission as previously consented, potentially redesigned to deliver 2 x 1 Bed units and considered as a test site for delivery of EFDC's first Self Build or Custom-built property as it would potentially require a 'Planning Passport' type approach and will require significant internal consultation.

Bromefield Court - Waltham Abbey	HR143	1 x unit
Shingle Court - Waltham Abbey	HR147	1 x unit
Wrangle Court - Waltham Abbey	HR161	1 x unit

These sites have been reviewed and it was considered that c50+ could be delivered in the Winters Way area whilst offering the opportunity to address the existing parking stress and deliver landscaping/play area improvements.

It was believed a much broader neighbourhood wide area review could be beneficial to all stakeholders. An approach had been made to local council representatives in line with a 'New Approach' agreed for reviewing future Phase 5 sites and it was hoped that the local representatives would see this as a positive option to addressing and improving the local environment.

Whitehills Road, Loughton

Given the change in planning advice it was intended to resubmit for planning consent with the aim of selling this site at auction as previously proposed.

Phase 5

In line with the principals of the 'New Approach' for Phase 5, several sites are now being progressed these are:

Phase 5.1**St Peters Avenue, Shelly, Ongar**

There was a potential for 32 + units. Following a review of the area's potential, it was believed some 30+ units could be delivered within the wider area.

Phase 5.2**Marlescroft Way, Loughton**

There was a potential for 24 + units. An initial assessment was being carried out with regard to the flood risk and arboriculture to consider the sites potential constraints prior to carrying out an initial sketch scheme.

Hyde Mead & Pound Close, Nazeing

There was a potential for 10 + units. An initial assessment was being carried on the area to the rear of No 43 with regard to the flood risk and arboriculture to consider the sites potential constraints prior to carrying out an initial sketch scheme. Given the close proximity to Pound Close, which was previously refused, it was intended to revisit this site with the aim of seeking support to a resubmission if the previous objections can be overcome.

Hornbeam Close (A), Buckhurst Hill

There was a potential for 8 + units. This garage site was one of four garage sites in the area that were considered for development. The application of this site was withdrawn in anticipation of it being refused. However, it was proposed to revisit this as there may be an opportunity to address in some way the considerable parking stress in the area and potentially deliver some landscaping improvements.

Oakley Court, Hillyfields

There was a potential for 4/12 + units. No 33 & 35 have been vacant for some time due to structure damage to the properties and No37 was in private ownership. It had been hoped (and may still be possible) to acquire No37 to afford a more comprehensive development but the owner has indicated he would prefer the two adjoining properties to be redeveloped.

Therefore, it was intended to carry out a sketch scheme and feasibility study to redevelop just the area of the two vacant units and to assess what could be achieved if No37 was acquired.

Pyrles Lane (A) & (B)

There was a potential for 6+ units. These are sites near to each other. Site (B) was previously submitted and refused however if support could be achieved for both these sites their development may facilitate enabling works that could potentially address in some way the parking stress in the area and deliver some landscaping improvements.

Other sites to be reviewed:**Beechfield Walk (B), Waltham Abbey**

There was a potential for 3 + units. This site was in a poor state of repair and was attracting anti-social behaviour. Residents were being contacted and informed of the impending Start on Site at Beechfield Walk (A) and the intention to seek development on site (B).

Winters Way, Waltham Abbey

There was a potential for 50 + units. Broomfield Court, Shingle Court and Wrangley Court are located off Winters Way and when reviewed it became apparent that some 50+ units could potentially be delivered and thereby go some considerable way towards addressing the existing parking stress in the area together with landscaping and play area improvements. It was very much hoped that with Local Councillor engagement these much-needed affordable housing and neighbourhood improvements could be delivered.

Barrington Close, Debden

There was a potential for 20 + units. This area was once a community hall/garden to the sheltered housing scheme which had been restructured leaving the hall/garden area surplus to requirement. This site could offer the opportunity to deliver some much needed 2, 3 and 4 Bed units in an area with a high number of 1 Bed units.

St John The Baptist Church, High Street

There was a potential for 10 + units. This site was located between St John's Church and the adjoining Library and was in the ownership of the 'The Incumbent of the Benefice of Epping District in the County of Essex in the Diocese of Chelmsford and his Successors'. It was currently awaiting a pre-app meeting following which, if acceptable, the site would be assessed, and a feasibility study carried out for presentation to the Council House Building Cabinet Committee.

Councillor J Philip asked if the start dates in Phase 4.2 were correct as Hornbeam Close (B), Buckhurst Hill was 25 January 2021 but the other 6 site start dates were 11 and 25 January 2020.

J Cosgrave replied that in terms of Phase 4.1, which was approved at the December 2019 Council Housebuilding Committee meeting, the intention at that time was to enter into contracts by February/March 2020 at which point Covid-19 happened and the delay was a consequence of that and the contractors ability to do the design and build element which had a severe impact on the start on site in respect of Phase 4.1.

The tender report was produced in line with the anticipated programme for Phase 4.2 in March 2020 but did not get to a Council Housebuilding Committee for approval until June 2020 due to the delay of the Committees recommencing virtually. The start dates should all be 11 and 25 January 2021 but there was a delay of c4 months associated with getting the tender approved.

D Fenton added that there was sometimes a delay with a tender being received and a meeting being two or three months later.

Councillor H Whitbread advised that if this was the case and Members had no objections then an extraordinary meeting could always be convened to fit in with approving tenders.

Councillor A Patel asked when some sites were waiting for planning permissions they were being used for anti-social behaviour, there was a particular site in Buckhurst Hill and could you update the Committee on what steps were taken to alleviate the problems and what would be done to stop this occurring on all the other sites that were or had been vacated.

J Cosgrave stated in respect to the previous approach with the garage sites many of the sites in Phases 4.1 and 4.2 had planning consent in 2016/17 and as part of that original process, garage doors were removed to enact what was believed to be the planning consent at that time. Since then the Planning team has considered that was not an appropriate process as it entailed a 3 part process by removing the garage doors the sites then needed to have a contamination survey carried out and then the garages were then partially demolished leaving the rear walls in place because these often formed boundaries with adjoining properties. Going forward we were looking at as soon as the garages are vacated and the contamination report has been carried out, the sites will be demolished immediately and will be sealed off and secured to avoid this continuous anti-social behaviour and fly tipping.

D Fenton added that the sites would have hoarding erected with signage showing the good work the Council were doing, providing new properties in areas where people wanted to live.

Councillor A Patel asked about sites that have not been given planning permission due to parking stress and had noted that the Council are looking to bring forward

those sites again so what work had been done to alleviate the parking stress in those areas.

J Cosgrave replied that for the same observation some of the sites in Phase 5 had been chosen as the issues with parking stress was a national issue, given the age of these developments and the time when they were designed and carried out. We are now engaging with the Local Town and Parish Councils and trying to finding parking stress solutions and also with any landscaping and environmental issues.

Councillor A Patel asked how the consultation with local residents will take place.

J Cosgrave replied that he would give an example of how consultation with local residents had taken place. Phase 5, Shelley in Ongar there was currently a development, Queensway, that has just commenced in terms of development for four units. Previously when we reviewed the potential development site for Phase 5, one of the starting points was to revisit and review some of the sites previously assessed and to also take a view as to what worked and what didn't work. A pattern started to form as to what Officers were asking to be granted and what Members were willing to grant and these issues needed to be addressed within the application that was sought.

Shelley was one of the first sites in phase 5 to be addressed, previously a feasibility study was carried out by Pellings which identified a potential 7 units on the site and when the site was revisited it was identified that there was scope for 30 units or more on that site. Certain historical issues needed to be confronted and addressed one being the road network system where the road narrowed in parts and on street parking was a problem also there were a number of flats in the area that were controlled by EFDC that did not have sufficient parking arrangements and therefore residents were resorting to parking on the carriageway. A way to alleviate some of these parking problems was to have driveways but the cost from Essex County Council was around £2,500 plus VAT. This would be cost prohibitive to a great many residents and a meeting with ECC needed to take place to understand why these charges were so high and if anything could be done to bring them down.

This site will be coming back to the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee for approval to progress and these issues will be dissected, analysed and presented in detail so you can see the issues and what the cost benefit was in terms of an approach that may or may not be able to be resolved.

Decision:

- (1) That the contents of the Progress Report on Phases 3 to 5 of the Council House Building Programme be noted and presented to the Cabinet in line with the Terms of Reference of the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee.

Reason for Decision:

Set out in its Terms of Reference, the Council House Building Cabinet Committee was to monitor and report to the Council, on an annual basis, progress and expenditure concerning the Council House Building Programme. This report sets out the progress made over the last 12 months.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

This report was on the progress made over the last 12 months and was for noting purposes only. There are no other options for action.

25. TENDER APPROVAL REPORT FOR PHASE 4.3 AND VARIATIONS TO 4.1 AND 4.2

Deborah Fenton, Service Manager (Housing Revenue Account), presented a report to the Cabinet Committee, she advised that as part of the Epping Forest District Council Phase 4 Council House Building Programme, Airey Miller undertook a competitive tender process with Epping Forest Framework Contractors for the phase 4.3 sites, consisting of 8 separate developments, however 5 Single Unit Sites were later excluded pending further review.

Tenders were invited from four Contractors from the Epping Framework Alliance Contract – Council House Building Programme; Indecon Building Ltd, Neilcott Construction Ltd, Roof Ltd and TSG Building Services PLC.

- Indecon Building Ltd confirmed their intention to tender;
- TSG Building Services PLC confirmed their intention to tender;
- Roof Ltd declined the tender process due to their resource constraints after initially confirming their willingness to tender; and
- Neilcott Construction withdrew from pricing citing pre-construction resource constraints.

Tender returns were received on the 14 August 2020 as instructed within the Invitation to Tender.

Decision:

- (1) That acceptance was recommended of the tender submitted by TSG Building Services PL in the sum of £4,039,436.45 including a £53,750 provisional sum for contaminated material removal. In addition a £197,655 provisional sum for statutory connections and diversions together with the proposed construction period of 52 weeks;
- (2) That acceptance was recommended that Pick Hill was issued as a variation on Phase 4.1 and a new JCT Design and Build contract was placed, once planning was determined, for Woollard Street and Pentlow Way; and
- (3) That acceptance was recommended that a contract was placed with Keith Peattie Associates for £28,230.00 for the Clerk of Works role on the Phase 4.2 group of sites.

Reasons for Decision:

To ensure progression of the Council House Building Programme.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

Not to progress with the Council House Building Programme.

26. PURCHASE OF LAND AT MASON WAY, WALTHAM ABBEY TO BUILD UP TO 10 UNITS

Deborah Fenton, Service Manager (Housing Revenue Account), presented a report to the Cabinet Committee she advised that the report set out the opportunity to purchase discounted land which was at present land locked. This report follows on from a Portfolio Holders Report in August 2020 which sought consent to appoint Metaplan to carry out a feasibility study and provide EFDC with an options appraisal. The findings of the appraisal were favourable when proposing a mix of one and mainly 2 bed properties. This would form part of phase 5 of the Council House Building Programme. The cost of the land will come from the HRA account however the build costs (estimated at £2,347,671) will be part funded by a grant either from Homes England or from RTB receipts.

The historical context was contained in the report attached to the agenda.

Decision:

- (1) That approval be given to purchase the land at Mason Way (subject to planning approval) for the purpose of building up to 10 units for affordable rents. At a cost of £800K (land cost) and approval be given to build out the scheme (subject to planning approval) total cost £2,347,671.

Reasons for Decision:

Set out in its Terms of Reference, the Council House Building Cabinet Committee was to monitor and report to the Council on an annual basis progress and expenditure concerning the Council House Building Programme.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

Not to purchase the land, and build out, subject to planning. This would mean the council would miss out on the opportunity to provide 10 much needed units for affordable rent.

27. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Cabinet Committee noted that there were no other matters of urgent business for consideration.

28. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Cabinet Committee noted that there was no business for consideration which would necessitate the exclusion of the public and press from the virtual meeting.

CHAIRMAN

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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-054-2020/21
Date of meeting: 21st January 2021



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Environment & Technical Services – Cllr. N Avey
Subject: Highway Ranger Service Update
Responsible Officer: Mandy Thompson (01992 564076).
Democratic Services Officer: Adrian Hendry (01992 564246)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

To note the good progress of work that the Highway Rangers have made since the transfer of service from Ringway Jacobs to the Council.

Executive Summary:

The Highway Ranger services is provided by Essex Highways through each of the Local Highways Panel for district and borough Councils. Across Essex a number of authorities deliver the service in house. Epping Forest District was one of the few authorities where the service was provided by Ringway Jacobs.

Following a joint agreement, the service was transferred from Ringway Jacobs to Epping Forest District Council on 1 April 2020. Despite the onset of Covid-19 and the challenges it has presented the Council has been successful in setting up the new service. Funding for the Rangers is provided by Essex County Council. However, EFDC has allocated some additional funding to do some additional work which is over and above their core duties.

The purpose of this report is to provide a progress report to Members.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To provide an update to Members on the successful launch and ongoing work of the Epping Forest Highway Rangers

Options for Action:

To not provide an update to Members. This has been discounted as this is a new service and it is felt that Members should receive an update.

Report:

1. Essex Highways operate Highway Rangers in each local authority area. This is a small, two operatives, team that carries out low level highway repair and maintenance works. The intention is to deliver effective local repair and maintenance works in local communities.

2. The scope of the work that can be undertaken by the Highway Ranger service is

determined by the fact that it must be achievable by 2 people and a van, who carry a small selection of hand tools. Requests for Highways Rangers should be limited to work on public highways. The Rangers do not undertake excavations or works that require traffic management such as pot-hole repair which remain the responsibility of the Essex Highways.

3. Following the successful appointment to the two posts the service was fully transferred to the EFDC. The team sits within the Environmental Protection and Drainage Team and is working well; the transition of the service has been smooth, and it has bedded in well within the wider team.

5. The attached PowerPoint presentation (appendix 1) details the work carried out by the team since its implementation in September. Additional works carried out include clearing 3 offensive graffiti incidents for Safer Communities, installing a new dog waste bin for Parking team, repair of stone planters for Grounds Maintenance and some hedge work.

6. Cabinet has allocated £1,000 for repair and installation of new Finger Posts, to be share funded by Town and Parish Councils. Some finger post repairs, and renovation work has been carried out with plans to replace in 2021.

7. The team have been providing support to the restoration of both Epping and Waltham Abbey High Streets in addition to their routine work, an additional benefit to the Council of the service transferring to EFDC. Once these areas are complete other town centres will be addressed, Officers are liaising with Ongar Town Council on high street improvement works.

8. The web page report form is working well 92 online and internal reports have been received since the launch of the Service. However, not all reports are appropriate for the team, 16 requests have been rejected for reasons that have included major works for Essex Highways on fast roads and resurfacing, cutting back private hedges and the repair of a private wall.

9. Picture posts of the work of the rangers have been posted on social media and have been well received.

Resource Implications:

The Service is funded through an £80k ECC Revenue Budget and will be carried out in partnership with Essex County Council. Additional funding was agreed at February Cabinet for the set-up costs of the service.

£1000 match funding for Finger Posts has been allocated from within existing budget provision.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The responsibility for carrying out capital improvement schemes or ongoing maintenance of the public highway is that of the Essex County Council. ECC has established Local Highway Panels in each local authority which manages and recommends for consideration for approval by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport at Essex County Council.

The LHP is also responsible for the funding and works carried out by Highway Rangers.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

The nature of schemes carried out by Rangers improves and enhances highway safety,

casualty reduction and pedestrian walkway improvements. These by their nature improve safety for users and enhance the public realm.

By having the service delivered directly by EFDC the response times are quicker and the local knowledge gained by the Rangers has proven invaluable in achieving good outcomes.

Consultation Undertaken:

None

Background Papers:

Appendix 1 PowerPoint presentation

Risk Management:

The Ranger service is delivered by the Council in partnership with ECC. If the Service is not properly managed and supervised, then there is a reputational risk for the Council. This risk is mitigated by embedding the Ranger team with the Environmental Protection and Drainage Team. Adequate supervisory and management oversight of the Service is maintained, and all necessary statutory compliance and health and safety systems are put in place which are routinely monitored.

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Appendix 2. Equality Impact Assessment

1. Under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, Epping District Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, ie have due regard to:
 - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
 - advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
 - fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
2. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage/civil partnership
 - pregnancy/maternity
 - race
 - religion/belief
 - sexual orientation.
3. In addition to the above protected characteristics you should consider the cross-cutting elements of the proposed policy, namely the social, economic and environmental impact (including rurality) as part of this assessment. These cross-cutting elements are not a characteristic protected by law but are regarded as good practice to include.
4. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document should be used as a tool to test and analyse the nature and impact of either what we do or are planning to do in the future. It can be used flexibly for reviewing existing arrangements but in particular should enable identification where further consultation, engagement and data is required.
5. Use the questions in this document to record your findings. This should include the nature and extent of the impact on those likely to be affected by the proposed policy or change.
6. Where this EqIA relates to a continuing project, it must be reviewed and updated at each stage of the decision.
7. All **Cabinet, Council, and Portfolio Holder reports must be accompanied by an EqIA**. An EqIA should also be completed/reviewed at key stages of projects.
8. To assist you in completing this report, please ensure you read the guidance notes in the Equality Analysis Toolkit and refer to the following Factsheets:
 - Factsheet 1: Equality Profile of the Epping Forest District
 - Factsheet 2: Sources of information about equality protected characteristics
 - Factsheet 3: Glossary of equality related terms
 - Factsheet 4: Common misunderstandings about the Equality Duty
 - Factsheet 5: Frequently asked questions
 - Factsheet 6: Reporting equality analysis to a committee or other decision making body

Section 1: Identifying details

Your function, service area and team: **Environmental and Technical Services**

If you are submitting this EqlA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service area or team: No

Title of policy or decision: Cabinet Update Report (Highway Rangers)

Officer completing the EqlA: Tel: 4076 Email: mthompson@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Date of completing the assessment: 14/12/2020

Section 2: Policy to be analysed

2.1	<p>Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project?</p> <p><i>New Policy Update</i></p>
2.2	<p>Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision):</p> <p><i>To note commencement of a new Service under devolution arrangements with ECC</i></p> <p>What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (ie decommissioning or commissioning a service)?</p> <p><i>Wider awareness of the provision of Highway Ranger Service</i></p>
2.3	<p>Does or will the policy or decision affect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• service users – <i>yes local residents and businesses</i> <p>Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?</p> <p><i>No</i></p>
2.4	<p>Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?</p> <p><i>No</i></p>
2.5	<p>Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies and how, if applicable, does the proposed policy support corporate outcomes?</p> <p><i>No</i></p>

Section 3: Evidence/data about the user population and consultation¹

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

3.1	<p>What does the information tell you about those groups identified?</p> <p><i>Repair of minor faults on the public highway in a timely manner will improve the safety of road users,</i></p>
3.2	<p>Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision you want to implement? If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision?</p> <p><i>Due to time limitations it has not been possible to carry out a wider consultation.</i></p>
3.3	<p>If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary:</p> <p><i>There is a positive impact, no groups will be adversely affected.</i></p>

Section 4: Impact of policy or decision

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

Description of impact	Nature of impact Positive, neutral, adverse (explain why)	Extent of impact Low, medium, high (use L, M or H)
Age	Neutral	L
Disability	Neutral	L
Gender	Neutral This service will operate on the same policy and guidelines for customers of all gender	L
Gender reassignment	Neutral This service will operate on the same policy and guidelines for customers of all gender	L
Marriage/civil partnership	Neutral This service will operate on the same policy and guidelines for all customers	L
Pregnancy/maternity	Neutral	L
Race	Neutral This service will operate on the same policy and guidelines for all customers	L
Religion/belief	Neutral This service will operate on the same policy and guidelines for all customers	L
Sexual orientation	Neutral This service will operate on the same policy and guidelines for all customers	L

Section 5: Conclusion

		Tick Yes/No as appropriate	
5.1	Does the EqlA in Section 4 indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?	No	There are no adverse impacts, the impact will be positive as the Highway Ranger Service carry out low level work, pavement repairs etc which will improve the environment for the equality Groups.
			If ' YES ', use the action plan at Section 6 to describe the adverse impacts and what mitigating actions you could put in place.

Section 6: Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

What are the potential adverse impacts?	What are the mitigating actions?	Date they will be achieved.

Section 7: Sign off

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

Signature of Head of Service:

Date:

Signature of person completing the EqIA:

Date:

Advice

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

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Highway Ranger *Service*

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**Epping Forest
District Council**

Working in
partnership
with

**Essex
Highways**



Update of works completed to December 2020

FS258168793 Chigwell: Grange Crescent

Bollard damaged and repaired; positive feedback from resident who noted it had been damaged for some time.

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Chigwell Row: Road Traffic Sign Obscured

Growth around sign cut back and cleared allowing safe sight lines for 30 mph speed limit sign.



FS268075272: Loughton Oakwood Hill Estate:

Graffiti removal for Safer Communities that resulted in a cost saving as there was no contractor call-out charge,

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FS259990910: Fence on A414

Reported by Grounds Maintenance as being rotten and falling over for a number of years – now freshly renewed and replaced.



FS266886277: North Weald Wellington Road:

Obscured Road Traffic Sign cleared and safe sight lines restored for the roundabout sign.

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FS258379923 Chigwell Whitehall Close: Road traffic sign and post replaced.

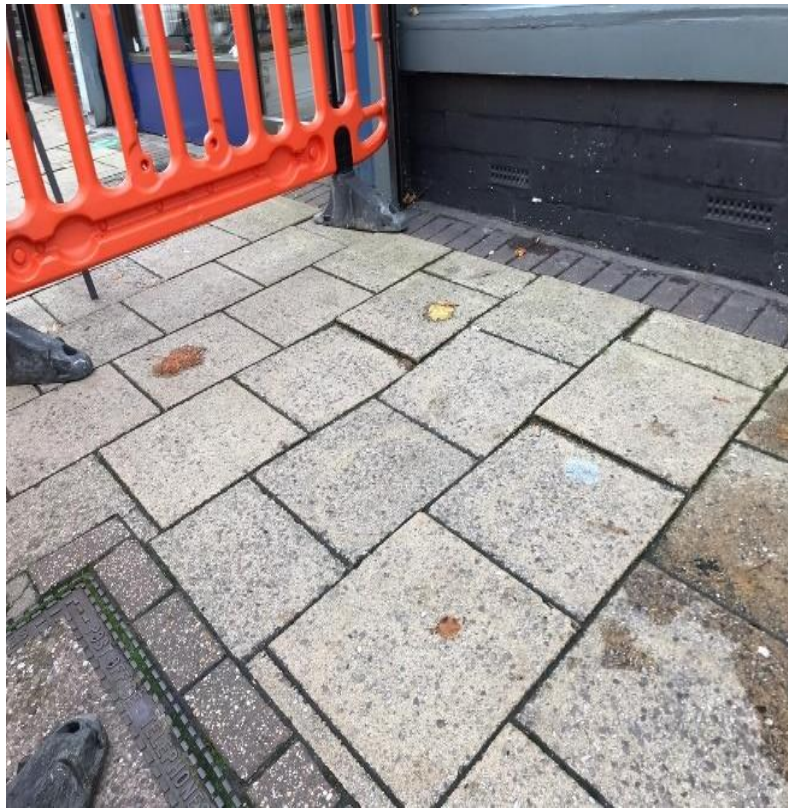
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Epping: High Street Restoration Works

Sunken paving slabs re-set outside Spokes, positive comments received as the manager advised he had noted people had fallen previously. A number of paving works have been rectified including resetting posts damaged by vehicles and resetting trip hazard slabs.

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Epping: High Street Restoration Works

Long standing trip hazard outside National Westminster, work carried out in-conjunction with partners and contractors.



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Waltham Abbey High Street Restoration Works: Sun Street

Tree pit repair work, pits were broken and untidy due to missing stones and filled in with concrete in places or trip hazards. Replacement trees have been ordered for vacant pits.

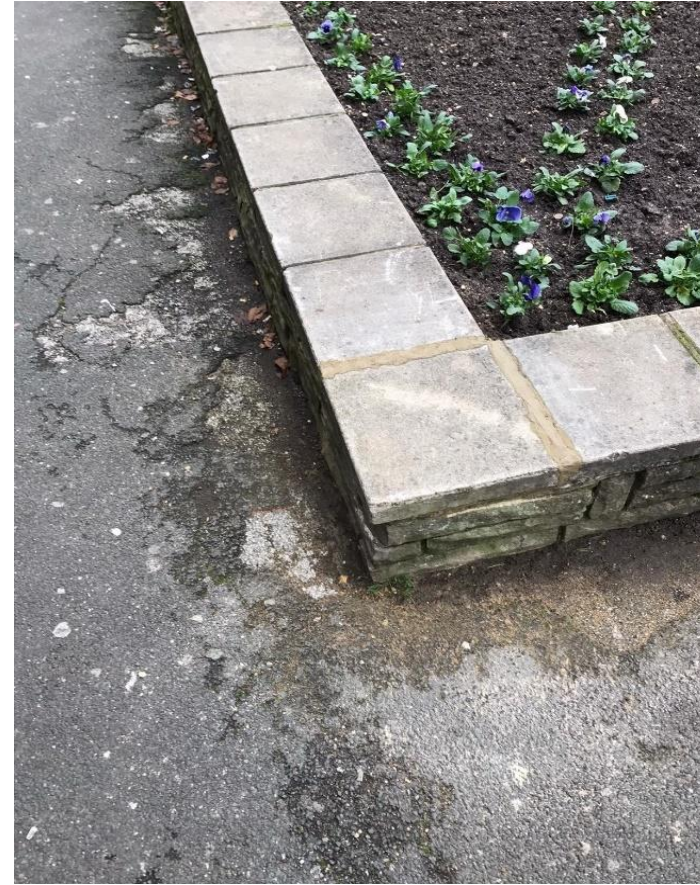
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Buckhurst Hill: Palmerston Road

Coping Stones on large stone planter reset and re-mortared for the Nursery team in Grounds Maintenance. Coping stones had broken off and loose lying on the floor but now neatly reset.

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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-055-2020/21

Date of meeting: 21 January 2021



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Finance and Economic Development – Cllr J. Philip

Subject: Bakers Lane and Cottis Development Sites – Options

Responsible Officer: Andrew Small (07548 145665).

Democratic Services: Adrian Hendry (01992 564246).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

Consider the options set out within the report and;

- (1) Agree the inclusion of the Revenue and Capital implications associated with these schemes within the Cabinet’s Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plans and their Capital Programme proposals for Council, and;**
- (2) Subject to Council’s agreement of these plans, to instruct officers to enter detailed negotiations with Qualis and Places Leisure for the delivery of these proposals, with the final form of the agreements to be brought back to Cabinet at a later date for agreement.**

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. When the Council agreed to create Qualis it had several main purposes. One of these was to progress key regeneration sites within the District. These sites were grouped together a single transaction for planning purposes in order that the combined housing, leisure and environmental impacts could be mitigated across them all.
- 1.2. Key elements of this approach were a proposed Leisure Centre and a Multi-Storey Car Park in Epping, replacing the aging 1970’s sports facility in the Town which is now approaching the end of its useful life. Both the sports facility and the car park are critical, in Planning terms, to unlocking the other regeneration sites within the Town.
- 1.3. The required leisure provision associated with the housing elements of the development were to be offset by a leisure contribution in the form of a new leisure centre in Bakers Lane, Epping, replacing the existing Hemnall Street site. The Leisure Centre provision met both a requirement and an ambition set out within the Council’s strategy and policy documents (including the Corporate Plan 2018-2023, Local Plan Submission Version December 2017, Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2028, and the Built Leisure Facilities Strategy 2018).
- 1.4. To harmonise the provision of leisure offers and the approach adopted to pricing across the district, the assumption was that Epping Forest District Council would purchase the completed development and then add this to its portfolio of other leisure centres, (Loughton, Chipping Ongar and Waltham Forest), within the Places Leisure operational contract.

- 1.5. As the redevelopment of the sports centre site would result in a net deficit in parking spaces, the overall regeneration proposals require the existing surface car park in Cottis Lane to be replaced with a Multi Storey Car Park.
- 1.6. **This paper considers the options and cost implications and sets out a recommended approach, including that provision be made within the Council's future and long-term revenue and capital spending plans for the Council.**

2. Detailed Report

- 2.1. The Council, in part, created Qualis to move forward with a number of regeneration sites as part of the Asset Management Strategy developed in 2019. It was agreed that these sites would be sold to Qualis at market value and the Council would help by providing the finance to Qualis to enable them to buy the sites from the Council.
- 2.2. The sites are;

	Red Book Value
St Johns	£7,842,500
Bakers Rd	£2,180,000
Cottis lane	£3,470,000
Hemnell Street – Epping Sports Centre and Offices	£2,030,000
Condor Site	£2,050,000
Roundhills – Waltham Abbey Old Pool Site	£1,390,000
Total Value of EFDC Assets Transferred	£18,962,500

Note: Pyles Lane was originally identified as surplus to the Council's requirements but was not included in the initial transfer whilst the options for future use of the site were reconsidered.

- 2.3. Given the on-site constraints posed by each of these sites individually, it was agreed to transfer these on-bloc to Qualis in order that the Planning requirements, associated with the Epping sites in particular, could be offset holistically by viewing all sites as a single regeneration proposal.
- 2.4. For example, the net additional leisure requirements associated with the housing elements of the combined proposals would be met by providing a new larger leisure facility in Epping Town, thereby replacing the existing leisure facility.
- 2.5. As the cost of a new leisure centre would far exceed the Leisure S106 obligations associated with the development proposed by Qualis, and as the Council had an existing desire to increase the total amount of Leisure provision across the main towns within the district, the assumption was that the Council would purchase the final leisure centre from Qualis.
- 2.6. This centre would complete the portfolio of Council owned leisure centres, (Loughton, Chipping Ongar and Waltham Abbey), across the district and ensure that District was well served with modern facilities. Under the existing Leisure management contract, if

developed, the Council would in all probability ask Places Leisure to operate the centre under their existing contract.

- 2.7. The redevelopment of the existing leisure centre site at Hemnall Street and Bakers Lane will leave a car parking deficit within the Town. As availability of parking is already limited within the Town, the proposed developments will only get approval if the Car Parking lost through development is replaced.
- 2.8. By grouping the regeneration sites together, the challenges created by redeveloping one site can be mitigated through the others. The Qualis solution is therefore to redevelop the existing surface car park at Cottis Lane with a new Multi Storey Car Park, thereby replacing all lost spaces from the development of the 3 sites with the new car park at Cottis Lane.
- 2.9. To ensure no significant temporary deficit during the redevelopment phase, the Cottis Site would need to be redeveloped and completed before work could commence at Bakers Lane and Hemnall Street.
- 2.10. Qualis has already undertaken a significant public consultation exercise on their proposals and have amended their plans based on the feedback received. They are now imminently in a position to submit a planning application for the plans but require clarity from the Council on the future ownership of the sites.
- 2.11. The report explores the options available to the Council, in order to obtain best value for money, in more detail.

3. New Sports Centre at Bakers Lane

- 3.1. The combined proposal for the regeneration of the Epping Sites includes provision for an enhanced leisure facility in the Town. The solution proposed is to demolish and redevelop the existing and aging Hemnall Street site with a new modern facility at Bakers Lane.
- 3.2. The requirement goes substantially beyond the leisure commitments that a developer would be required to meet for a development of the size, and is proposed in this form to essentially meet a long held Council strategic ambition to complete the portfolio of modern Leisure Centres in the District by adding to the existing new, or refurbished facilities in Loughton, Chipping Ongar and Waltham Abbey.
- 3.3. As part of the creation of Qualis the Council had agreed to sell the Bakers Lane site to Qualis for regeneration, but at that time there were no firm plans as to which aspects of the wider regeneration proposals would take place on which site. The value attributed to Bakers lane is £2.18 million, as determined by an independent valuer.
- 3.4. The Council agreed to lend Qualis the £2.18 million that Qualis required to buy this site from the Council with the Council securing the loan on the development site. In return the Council receives interest on the loan at 4.94%, equivalent to £107,692 per annum. This transaction has yet to be completed because of issues over title, but also for reasons explained in this report.
- 3.5. Through the development of the regeneration plans, Qualis has determined that the optimum allocation of developments across sites means that the sports centre requirement needs to be located at Bakers Lane.

- 3.6. Qualis commissioned an independent professional review of the Leisure requirement for this site from 'Sports Consultancy' and this is attached as Appendix A to this report.
- 3.7. The Council has a 20-year contract with Places Leisure to operate its existing Leisure Centres. This also extends to any new centres the Council wishes to develop during the lifetime of the contract. The contract also includes provision for them to design, build and operate any new facility proposed by the Council. The Council would usually fund the construction and would either benefit from or pay the operator for the ongoing cost of operation as agreed prior to signing the contract.
- 3.8. On the assumption that the site was sold to Qualis for development, Qualis has been leading on the design work for the new sports centre. However, in recognition that the facility would be passed back to the Council and therefore in all probability added to the existing portfolio of centres managed by Places Leisure, Qualis has also been working closely with Places Leisure to agree the specifications for the centre.
- 3.9. This has allowed both parties to agree designs ahead of a submission for Planning and this has allowed in the last few weeks for the detailed designs to have a preliminary cost estimate applied for modelling purposes together with an estimate of the operational costs. These estimates are also included in Sports Consultancy review and are attached as Appendix B, (these pages have been deemed confidential because they will be used in commercial negotiations).
- 3.10. The estimated cost of construction for the leisure centre has been determined by Qualis as approximately £25 million, but this will need to be tested through procurement and/or as stipulated in the current leisure contract and the clauses relating to the provision of new and replacement leisure centres.

4. Sports Centre Design Proposals

- 4.1. Following the two-stage consultation undertaken by Qualis the proposed design for the Bakers Lane leisure centre includes a 6 lane 25m main pool, a 10m learner pool, a 4 court sports hall, a 100 station health and fitness space, 3 fitness studios and 2 squash courts. More details are contained in Appendix A within sections 4 and 5 of the Sports Consultancy document.

5. Sport Centre Build Options

- 5.1. Based on the initial costs estimates and the clearer picture emerging as to what facilities will be built, where they will be built and who will operate them, two scenarios have emerged. These are set out below

Option 1 – Qualis Design, Build and Sell

- 5.2. The first option is for Qualis to continue through the Planning process and then procure and oversee the construction of the Leisure Centre on this site as originally envisaged.
- 5.3. Under this option, the Council agrees a price for the acquisition of the completed development and enters in to contract. Qualis then design the centre, gets Planning agreement and then procures a contractor to undertake the physical build out.
- 5.4. In this scenario, Qualis accepts and underwrites the financial risk of any problems occurring during the construction process, but equally stands to gain from the developer profits from completing the development within time and within budget.

- 5.5. The advantages for this approach are set out below;
- Qualis controls the development and is better placed to challenge variations
 - Qualis benefits from the Developer profit (as would the Council, indirectly)
 - Through Qualis, the Council would have better visibility on cost
- 5.6. The disadvantages of this approach are;
- Leisure Centre and Pool construction are complex and technical builds and any snagging issues could cause delays in handover to Places Leisure
 - The proposal involves large amounts of excavation, and in this there is always higher risk
 - The sale and repurchase of the site incur Stamp Duty on both transactions
 - Via the Council's ownership of Qualis, the Council ultimately underwrites the risk
- 5.7. Option 2 – Council ask Places Leisure to Build and Operate the facility
- 5.8. Under this option the Council would retain ownership of the Bakers Lane site and then exercise the current Design Build Operate and Manage (DBOM) arrangement within the Contract with Places Leisure for them to Build the Centre and then operate it. This was the arrangement used for delivery of Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre.
- 5.9. Exercising this option would require the Council to acquire the rights to the work already undertaken by Qualis, in terms of the design work and Qualis securing the Planning permission. As this work has been carried out in conjunction with Places Leisure this work should be portable and would not need to be reperformed by them, thus not duplicating the cost.
- 5.10. The advantages of this approach are;
- The construction risk is passed to Places Leisure and the Council is protected
 - Places Leisure has specialist experience in building such facilities
 - As operator and developer, Place for Leisure will have no recourse on build issues
 - Places Leisure have preferred existing contractor relationships, thus delivering better value
 - As this work is specified in the Places Leisure contract, this is effectively pre-procured, (as is Qualis)
 - The Council avoids Stamp Duty on the sale and repurchase of the site to Qualis
- 5.11. The disadvantages of this approach are;
- The Council would not pay a developer's profit to Places Leisure but a management fee for delivering the DBOM scheme,
 - The Council would have less control over the cost of development as it is contracting with a third party.
 - The Council would retain certain risks, for example so far unknown underground contamination.

Conclusion

- 5.12. Both options have merits, but the fact that a Leisure centre is a complicated build project and that considerable excavation is required on the Bakers Lane site creates

risk. Even though Qualis would accept the risk as a contractor, the ownership model for Qualis means that the Council would still indirectly and ultimately be impacted, (through reduced dividends), if costs escalated.

- 5.13. In addition, the sale of the site and buy back of the completed facility is inefficient in tax terms.
- 5.14. Therefore, retaining the site and using the Council's pre-procured specialist contractor to undertake the development, thereby removing the Council from the development risk, presents a better overall solution for the Council.
- 5.15. There are various iterations of this approach the Council could explore, for example, retaining the site and asking both Qualis and Places Leisure to quote for the construction. This would benchmark the Places Leisure cost and ensure the cost was a reasonable estimate.
- 5.16. Equally, the Council could procure Qualis to act as its Client Agent to oversee Places Leisure's development of the cost estimates and the construction phase. This would supplement the Council's own resource with the Qualis specialist construction expertise, thus allowing the Council to better challenge costings and design approach.
- 5.17. It is therefore Recommended that the Council retain the Bakers Lane site and enters pre-construction negotiations with Places Leisure as allowed for in the existing Design, Build and Operate the Council has with them. The Council should also explore with Qualis options for benchmarking the commercial negotiations with Places Leisure, options around a client-side role and the potential costs for acquiring all design and planning work undertaken by Qualis to date.

6. Resource Implications

- 6.1. The proposed Sports Centre at Bakers Lane is currently not provided for within the Council's Capital Programme and if the proposed approach is approved then Cabinet will need to request Council to make a provision and reflect the financing and operating costs in the Medium Term Financial Plan so that negotiations can commence with Places Leisure.
- 6.2. As the Council does not have any significant capital reserves, the funding for the scheme would need to be from new borrowing. Any requirement to borrow may be mitigated by new Capital Receipts, but the consideration of this will need to form part of the capital planning process. Although not ring-fenced to specific schemes, the sale of the regeneration sites in Epping Town to Qualis at £16.8 million have yet to be committed to schemes in the capital programme and could in theory be used to reduce any borrowing repayments costs.
- 6.3. Along with the borrowing costs and the operational cost impacts of the new centre, the income loss associated with the temporary and permanent loss of Car Park income will also need to be reflected in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plans. This may be partially offset by the lending return achieved on new lending to Qualis associated with the Council providing the regeneration finance required.
- 6.4. Currently, the Leisure Centre contract with Places Leisure (ignoring the impacts of Covid19) returns a net payment to the Council each year. The cost of operating the proposed new Epping Leisure Centre has also been modelled by Sports Consultancy and it is believed that this will operate at a surplus, based upon the proposed design.

However, the amount Places Leisure may be prepared to pay the Council for the right to manage this additional site will only be known following detailed discussion with them.

- 6.5. The table below sets out the potential capital and revenue cost implications of a decision to construct a new sports facility in Epping Town, in order to help inform decision making and to aid the development of Capital and Revenue Planning.

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£	£	£	£
Epping Leisure Facility				
Capital Outlay				
Acquisition	-	12,500,000	12,500,000	-
Capital Programme Provision	-	12,500,000	12,500,000	-
Revenue Costs				
<i>Capital Financing Costs</i>				
- Minimum Revenue Provision	-	-	313,000	625,000
- Interest	-	-	187,500	375,000
<i>Loss of Car Park Income</i>				
- Bakers Lane	-	186,000	186,000	186,000
<i>Operator Charge / Subsidy</i>				
Places for Leisure (estimated)	-	-	250,000	250,000
<i>Qualis</i>				
Loss of Lender's Margin for Bakers Lane	108,000	108,000	108,000	108,000
Net Revenue Impact	108,000	294,000	544,500	1,044,000

Notes and assumptions:

- 1.) The capital costs are fully funded from new borrowing – the use of Capital Receipts, such as the £16 million sale of the development sites in Epping Town would significantly reduce the Minimum Revenue Provision required
- 2.) Interest payable is assumed at 1.5% based on current costs of borrowing
- 3.) Bakers Lane income is based on 2019/20, income was significantly less in 2020/21
- 4.) The operator payment is estimated and will not be known until negotiation conclude

- 6.6. As part of the Qualis Business Case, the Council has committed to provide the £66 million of regeneration finance required to undertake the development of these site. The terms for providing this funding have yet to be agreed, but it is expected that the margin the council will charge for this finance will cover the majority of income losses from car parking redevelopment in 2021/22.

- 6.7. The reduced income assumption from car parks income in 2021/22, due to the expected ongoing impacts of Covid19 during the first part of the year, will assist in mitigating any net cost.

- 6.8. The estimate of costs are only high level at this stage and are provided for the purposes of making provision within the Capital Programme and budget development for 2021/22. If the proposed approach is agreed then the next phase of work will be to work with Qualis and Places Leisure to refine the cost estimates and agree terms for proceeding.

7. Legal and Governance Implications

- 7.1. None at this stage

8. Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications

- 8.1. None.

9. Consultation Undertaken

- 9.1. None.

Bakers Lane Leisure Centre, Epping Feasibility Study

QUALIS COMMERCIAL

08 December 2020



THE SPORTS CONSULTANCY



THE SPORTS CONSULTANCY



Press &
Starkey

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Appendix 1: Press & Starkey Capital Cost Report

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Sports Consultancy, in partnership with Pozzoni and Press & Starkey were originally appointed by Epping Forest District Council ('the Council') in October 2018, to undertake an initial feasibility study and business case exploring the future options for Epping Sports Centre. The output of that feasibility study was a report dated March 2019 which recommended an appropriate facility mix on a site at St John's Lane, Epping.
- 1.2 The Council have since set up Qualis Commercial Limited to build out developments on council-owned land in the district. One of these developments will be the replacement facility for Epping Sports Centre on Hemnall Street.
- 1.3 As was the priority in 2018/19, the new leisure centre should be financially sustainable, while meeting the physical activity and leisure needs of the local population. Through Qualis Commercial, the Council is seeking to provide a financially viable and future proofed facility mix that will encourage a wide customer base to participate in a range of leisure activities for the life of the centre.
- 1.4 The site at St John's Lane is now being considered for alternative uses and the Bakers Lane surface car park has been identified as a new potential site for the new leisure centre. This feasibility report therefore focuses on an appraisal of the viability of a new leisure centre on the Bakers Lane site.
- 1.5 Where appropriate, we have updated the research, analysis and stakeholder consultation undertaken as part of the previous study.
- 1.6 The feasibility report presents and appraises suitable options for the new leisure centre with the primary focus on:
- a) Cost and revenue implications
 - b) Capital costs based on designs provided by Pozzoni (who are reporting to Qualis Commercial through their design partner, Corstophine & Wright).

2. CURRENT FACILITY

- 2.1 Epping Sports Centre was built in 1970 and is consequently reaching the end of its designed life. Places Leisure have invested in the facility since being awarded the leisure management contact in 2017, although the benefits in terms of driving greater usage and higher net revenue generation have failed to achieve expectations. The site remains compromised by inadequate car parking, structural failings, limited studio space and no swimming pool or café.
- 2.2 As set out in our March 2019 report, condition surveys indicated significant potential costs in maintaining the current facility. Moreover, under the terms of the management contract with Places Leisure, responsibility for the considerable cost of major repairs and asset maintenance will transfer to the Council next year (i.e. at the end of Year 5 of the contract). The current site was identified in the Council's Local Plan for the development of 43 residential dwellings.
- 2.3 The Council has previously considered two alternative sites for the new leisure centre (North Weald Airfield (CM16 6HR) and St Johns Road Epping (CM16 5JU). Qualis is now focused on the current site on Bakers Lane, as shown opposite. This is currently a pay and display surface car park with 141 spaces, owned and operated by the Council.

Figure 1 Bakers Lane Site Red Line



3. NEEDS ANALYSIS & STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Strategic Context

3.1 Section 3 of the March 2019 report set out a summary of a detailed review of the Council’s strategy and policy documents (including the Corporate Plan 2018-2023, Local Plan Submission Version December 2017, Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2028, and the Built Leisure Facilities Strategy 2018). These findings continue to remain relevant; rather than replicate them here, we would recommend referring back to the previous report for the strategic context.

Needs Analysis and Research

3.2 It is, however, worth reiterating the following research relating specifically to swimming pools, sports halls and fitness gyms, which sets the context for the recommended facility mix.

Swimming pools

3.3 There are currently 17 swimming pools spread across 11 sites across the District. Places Leisure operate the swimming pools at Loughton Leisure Centre, Ongar Leisure Centre and Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool, with the remaining sites owned and managed by a combination of private operators and education providers.

3.4 The needs assessment has identified that as a whole District, the quantity of water space is adequate to meet the current demand of residents.

3.5 However, whilst there is enough water space in the District to meet demand, not all the water space is in the right place and therefore not all the demand from Epping Forest District residents can be satisfied.

3.6 Moreover, the estimated increase in population between 2017 and 2033 is projected to generate a 9.5% increase in demand for swimming pools in the weekly peak periods of weekday evenings and weekend days.

3.7 Ongar Leisure Centre was built in 1977 and is reaching the end of its design life. Swimming pool provision here requires replacement or modernisation. However, in the meantime, the Council is currently replacing the wetside plant and equipment. This should be complete imminently and is likely to extend the life of the facility, albeit to a limited extent.

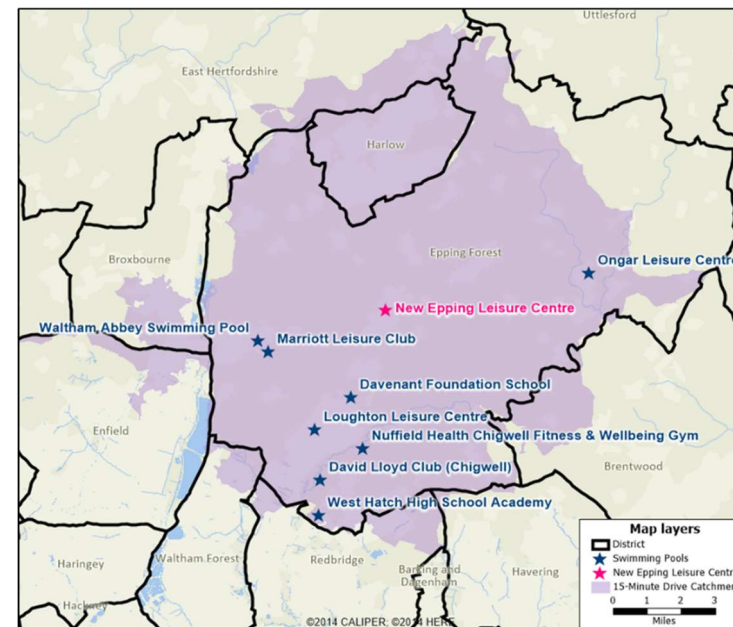
3.8 A significant amount of demand is exported outside of Epping Forest District, which equates to 10 lanes of a 25m pool, meaning that only 56% of the demand for swimming is met by facilities based in Epping Forest District.

3.9 The supply for swimming provision is projected to become a deficit by 2033. There is a need to at least maintain the existing quantity of water space to meet the projected demand for swimming up to 2033 and beyond.

3.10 Another focus should also be on improving the quality and accessibility of the existing facility stock.

3.11 Figure 2 illustrates the existing swimming pools in the District within a 15-minute drive time. As can be seen, large areas of the District are currently able to access a swimming pool within a 15-minute drive time catchment, however, of the facilities mapped only; Loughton Leisure Centre, Ongar Leisure Centre and Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre offer pay and play swimming. Davenant Foundation School and West Hatch High School Academy are available for hire by sports clubs and community associations.

Figure 2 Swimming Pools in Epping District (within 15-minutes of Bakers Lane)



3.12 During our consultation, Swim England stated that a main pool and learner pool with a movable floor would benefit the catchment of Epping (this would also help maximise usage and programming of the pool which would help support its financial sustainability). The rationalisation of current facilities should also then be explored, perhaps lending itself to community pools that become sustainable in a different way. Ongar could provide an opportunity for a community pool in few years' time.

3.13 Epping District Swimming Club expressed a preference for a pool to be included in the facility mix for the new leisure centre. The club were disappointed that no spectator seating was included at the Waltham Abbey Centre and would like to see this remedied in Epping. Timing blocks and an integrated timing system would be very beneficial for the club and if these were provided, they would consider moving their home base to Epping (a contribution for these however, would have to be made by the club if they wished to see these special features added).

3.14 The provision of a swim school (i.e. swimming lessons) would help underpin the sustainability of the leisure centre as it represents a significant revenue generator. The core swim school market is made up of 3-12 year-old children, of which there are 1,673 within a 10-minute drivetime catchment of the Bakers Lane site. Allowing for competing supply from other swimming pools beyond the catchment, we estimate a new pool in Epping would attract a swim school of around 1,030 pupils.

Sports Halls

3.15 The volume of sports hall space expressed in courts is 3.3 courts per 10,000 residents, which is far lower than the England average of 4.3. There are also only five 4-court halls, with no halls larger than this. **When all supply and demand is taken into consideration, there is a deficit of sports hall provision. There is an estimated unmet demand of 2.5 courts.**

3.16 The increase in population between 2017 and 2033 is projected to generate a 9.5% increase in demand for sports halls in weekly peak periods.

3.17 Epping Sports Centre and Ongar Leisure Centre are the only two facilities in the District that offer pay and play sports provision. The feedback from the public consultation has borne out the considerable support for a new sports

hall and **it is therefore strongly recommended that the sports hall at Epping Sports Centre be reprovided at the new centre.**

3.18 Only 50% of demand is met by Epping Forest District facilities. FPM analysis indicates that Epping District based facilities are only 58% full. Consultations indicate that there is spare capacity at both Epping Sports Centre and Ongar Leisure Centre. The quality of facility at both sites is very poor and a contributing factor to the level of spare capacity. A limited number of people wish to use the site.

3.19 Sports hall provision across the District requires significant modernisation, with existing facilities at Ongar Leisure Centre and Epping Sports Centre nearing end-of-life. It is recommended that high quality sports hall facilities are provided in the North of the District, in an area that is accessible by areas such as North Weald, Epping and Ongar, as well as the west of the District towards Harlow.

3.20 To meet the projected needs of the District's residents over the period of this strategy it is recommended that options are explored to increase the provision of pay and play facilities by 12 badminton courts. This should be pursued through a combination of the development of new facilities, alongside the increased supply of 3rd party facilities such as education facilities.

3.21 **As part of any new development it is key that gymnastics facilities are prioritised** to meet the growing needs of residents and reduce waiting lists of the two major clubs in the area.

Updated consultation with NGBs (regarding Sports Hall provision)

3.22 We have undertaken new consultation with various National Governing Bodies of sport (cricket, football, netball, badminton, and basketball) to help provide a sound evidence base to underpin the sports hall recommendations. These are set out in Table 1 on the following pages. This has identified demonstrable demand for the facility and sets out their likely needs in terms of the specification of the space (for example: lighting, flooring, storage, wall colour etc), which should be taken into consideration during the next stage of detailed design. The considerable demand from evidenced from this consultation underpins the assumptions in the operating business plan.

3. NEEDS ANALYSIS & STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION



Table 1 Summary of NGB consultation in relation to the proposed Sports Hall

NGB	1. Do you support the inclusion of a 4-court sports hall within a new Epping Sports Centre development?	2. Are there any specific issues that should be considered in the design of the space?	3. User groups that should be engaged with in the future
ECB (Essex County Cricket) Page 73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully supportive of the inclusion of a 4-court sports hall within the development. There are 16 clubs that are in need of an indoor facility. The ECB is available to advise in detail as the designs progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The sports hall will need to be designed for technical training (hardball) and match play (composite ball). Match play with a composite ball can be accommodated in most halls. Minimum standards for flooring, lighting, nets and walls are laid out in ECB TS3 guidance. Storage for equipment for such as bowling machines should be included within the designs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abridge Cricket Club Buckhurst Hill Cricket Club Coopersale Cricket Club Epping Cricket Club Epping Foresters Cricket Club Fives Cricket Club High Beach Cricket Club Loughton Cricket Club Matching Green Cricket Club Nazeing Common Cricket Club North Weald Cricket Club Ongar Cricket Club Roding Valley Cricket Club South Loughton Cricket Club Theydon Bois Cricket Club Willingale Cricket Club
Essex FA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully supportive of the inclusion of a 4-court sports hall within the development. There is a growing demand for Futsal given its player development benefits for both Futsal (as a game in its own right) as well as for development of grassroots football players. Essex FA Futsal youth provision has grown considerably in the last few seasons and more clubs/teams are utilising it as a winter training tool but also looking for space for emerging Futsal leagues to develop. Sports hall space is at a premium and as always a challenge to get hall time when competing with other indoor sports. Within Epping itself there are not many spaces suitable for Futsal that is readily available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to the FA guidance on Futsal facilities for technical specification. Storage for suitable futsal goals and weights should be considered. Goals that can be fixed into the floor with a lock (Can be removed as and when needed) should be considered. Sufficient run-off from the touchline of the court to the perimeter wall is required. Spectator viewing from outside the sports hall is preferable. If not, sufficient run-off for spectators is required. Beaulieu School in Chelmsford is a good example facility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buckhurst Hill FC Colebrook Royals FC Chigwell FC Epping Youth FC GFA Loughton Neighbouring Harlow also has quite a bit of Futsal provision. the following clubs / companies drive Futsal regularly within their grassroots programme and would be useful consultees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mazza Futsal Risden Wood Parringdon

3. NEEDS ANALYSIS & STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION



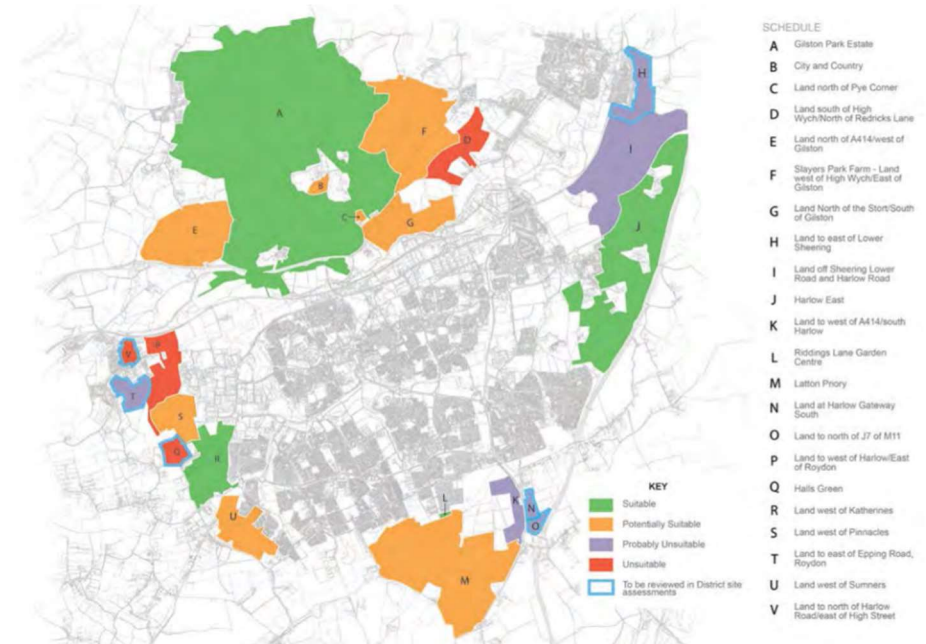
NGB	1. Do you support the inclusion of a 4-court sports hall within a new Epping Sports Centre development?	2. Are there any specific issues that should be considered in the design of the space?	3. User groups that should be engaged with in the future
Netball England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully supportive of the inclusion of a 4-court sports hall within the development. The inclusion of a Sport England compliant sports hall that includes netball court line markings is essential, particularly as it serves as the only public centre for the wider district area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend that Sport England's 'Developing the Right Sports Hall' document is used to inform the overall design of the space, and that the specifications for 'Community' level netball be met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sophie Johnson, Netball Development Community Coach who runs an England Netball Walking Netball group at the current centre.
Badminton England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully supportive of the inclusion of a 4-court sports hall within the development. Badminton England were extremely concerned at the original omission of a sports hall in an area of good badminton participation; Epping Forest has the highest rate of twice a month participation for badminton of any local authority in the Country and very high levels of annual participation showing very strong demand. The County has strong ambitions to grow junior participation and increase opportunities for talent development. The badminton facilities strategy (2019) shows a significant shortfall of quality facilities to meet demand currently, exacerbated by the development plans highlighted above and population growth in the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to Badminton England's facility guidance (2011) with particular attention to the sections on lighting and walls. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Epping Badminton Club – 35 members No Strings Badminton sessions - Monday 7:30-10 and Friday 9:30am – 12 (organised by centre) Junior Badminton – Monday 5-7pm (organised by centre)
Basketball England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 4+ or 5 court sports hall would be preferred for Basketball 		

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Health and Fitness Gyms

- 3.23 A Leisure Database Report was commissioned in order to understand and assess the potential demand for fitness provision at the proposed new Epping Leisure Centre. The overall estimated demand for the new Epping Leisure Centre is 2,350. This is the total number of members that the Leisure Database Company feel could be achieved. This includes allowance for 20% of the total to travel from outside the estimated 10-minute drivetime catchment area. It is known that 18% currently do so and this may increase slightly with the addition of swimming facilities. Pre-COVID, there were 1,650 members at Epping Sports Centre, so this estimate represents a potential increase of 700 members.
- 3.24 Applying a comfortable ratio of 23 members per fitness station indicates an appropriate size of gym to be c100 stations (c450m²).
- 3.25 Allowance has also been made for the new homes that are due to be built in Epping and North Weald Bassett, where there are no current fitness facilities. We understand there could be approximately 1,305 new homes in Epping which could house almost 2,000 new adult residents. There could also be approx. 2,700 new homes in North Weald Bassett which we estimate could house just over 4,000 new adult residents.
- 3.26 We have also taken into consideration population growth to the south of Harlow, particularly as part of the Latton Priory development. There is substantial housing development planned for Harlow and the surrounding areas within the next 10-15 years. This is outlined in The Harlow Strategic Site Assessment Report (2016)¹. The potential development includes sites to the south of Harlow, within 10-minutes' drive of the Bakers Lane site. Site 'M' showing on the map indicates the proposed area the Latton Priory development. This is designated as a 'potentially suitable' site for development so is likely to be realised.

Figure 3 Harlow Housing Development Assessment Map



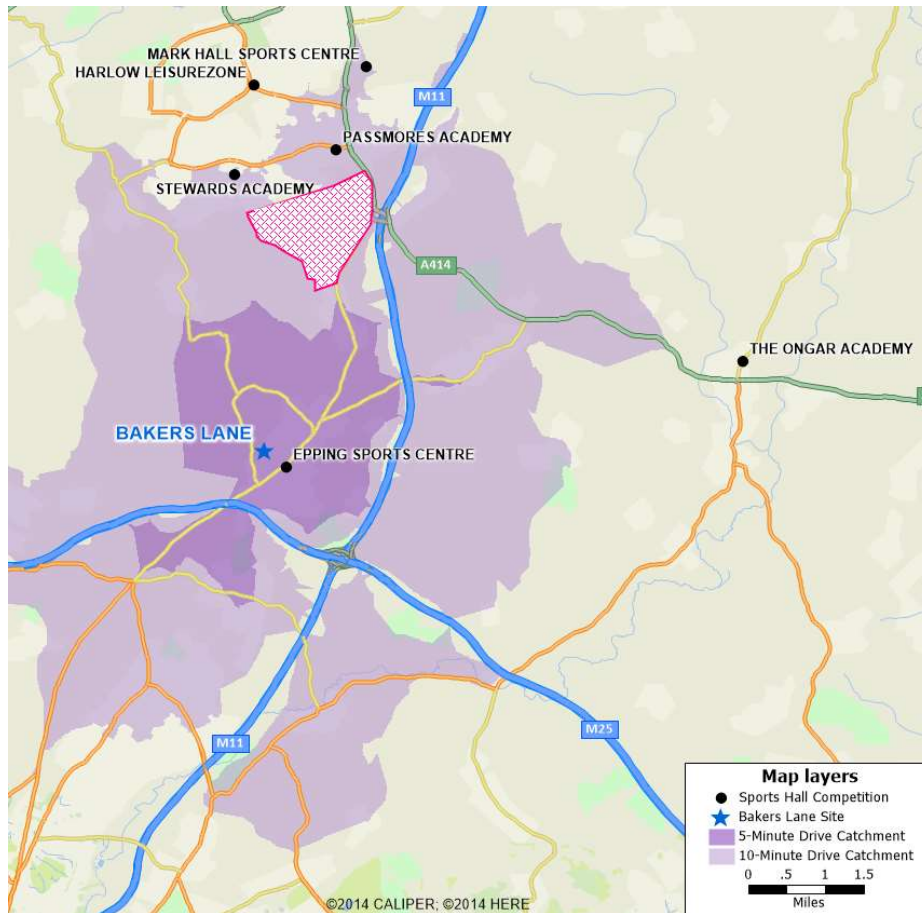
- 3.27 The Latton Priory development site is 260 hectares in size and has a potential capacity of 2,012 units. The Harlow Strategic Site Assessment Report assumes 1,050 units will be developed by 2033. This is guided by restrictions in the site and mitigation of the environmental impact. Assuming an average occupancy rate of 2.4 persons per household, this represents a population of 2,520. If the site were developed to full capacity then there could be a population of approximately 5,000 persons.
- 3.28 The development includes an aspiration to improve transport links to the M11 and north-south links within Harlow. This would improve links between Harlow and Epping and further increase the impact of this development on potential users of a new leisure centre in Epping.

¹ <https://www.efdclocalplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/EB1500-Harlow-Strategic-Site-Assessment-AECOM-2016.pdf>

3. NEEDS ANALYSIS & STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

3.29 The map below shows the Latton Priory Development (as a pink hatched area) in relation to the Bakers Lane Catchment. It is firmly within the 10-minute drive catchment.

Figure 4 Bakers Lane Catchment Mapping



Squash Courts

3.30 Epping Squash Club (located at Epping Sports Centre) would ideally like to see the new centre have four squash courts to replace the two that were lost when Epping Sports Centre was redeveloped, with membership numbers dropping from approximately 75, to 30 as a result. The Essex Junior Grand Prix Tournament can also no longer be hosted at the club.

3.31 As an absolute minimum however, two squash courts are needed in the new centre with a viewing area for spectators. The club are also keen to see a café in the new centre.

Sport England

3.32 Whilst Sport England is not a statutory consultee for the project as the Bakers Lane site does not involve plans to build on sports pitches, they would however like to be informed of the outcome of the study and provide technical support as required when the project develops. Sport England raised concerns about the lack of sports hall and squash court provision in response to the proposed facility mix for a previous iteration of the Bakers Lane scheme as part of the public consultation exercise, which they set out in an email to Puttock Brown dated 8th September 2020.

Car Parking

3.33 Whilst the Bakers Lane site is not large enough to accommodate a car park, we understand a new multi storey facility will be provided on a nearby site within comfortable walking distance. We have assumed that free parking will be available for users of the leisure centre.

4. RECOMMENDED FACILITY MIX

4. PROPOSED FACILITY MIX

4.1 The proposed facility mix is based on the research, analysis and consultation set out in the previous section. The following table compares the proposed facility mix with the existing provision at Epping Sports Centre, and that recommended for the original St John's Road scheme.

Table 2 Recommended Facility Mix

Activity Area	Current Facility Mix	St John's Scheme	Bakers Lane Leisure Centre	Notes
Main pool	None	6 lane x 25m pool	6 lane x 25m pool	
Learner pool	None	15m x 10m with moveable floor	15m x 10m with moveable floor	
Sauna & steam room	None	Sauna/steam room/spa (poolside)	None	This is unlikely to generate much additional income and is not considered essential (bearing in mind the constraints of the site)
Spectator seating to pool hall	None	Yes	Yes	
Sports hall	4 courts	4 courts	4 courts	
Health and fitness	80 stations	120 stations	100 stations	The St John's scheme allowed for an additional comfort factor in the size of the gym to accommodate the 2,350 expected members. This has been reduced in the Bakers Lane scheme owing to the size constraints of the size
Multi activity studio	2 x small studios	2 x studios (30 persons per class)	2 x studios (30 persons per class)	
Spin studio	1 x studio	1 x studio (64sqm)	1 x studio (64sqm)	
Multi-purpose room (meeting/crèche/parties)	1 x room	1 x room (100sqm)	None	There is no need for a multi-purpose room. This was included in the St John's scheme as compensation for the loss of the town council community hall, which was due to be demolished to make way for the leisure centre.
Reception with retail area	Included	Included	Included	
Café	No	Yes	No	Coffees and snacks potentially available from the reception servery, with limited provision of café style seating.
Squash courts	x 2	x 2	x 2	
Dedicated parking spaces	41	130	None	Parking provided by new multi-storey car park on an adjacent site.

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5. INITIAL CONCEPT DESIGNS

5.1 Based on the recommended facility mix, the following images show the development of Pozzoni's leisure centre designs from concept sketch to floor plans and elevations. The centre will be arranged over 3 floors (basement, ground and first floors).

Figure 5 Sketch Plans - Basement

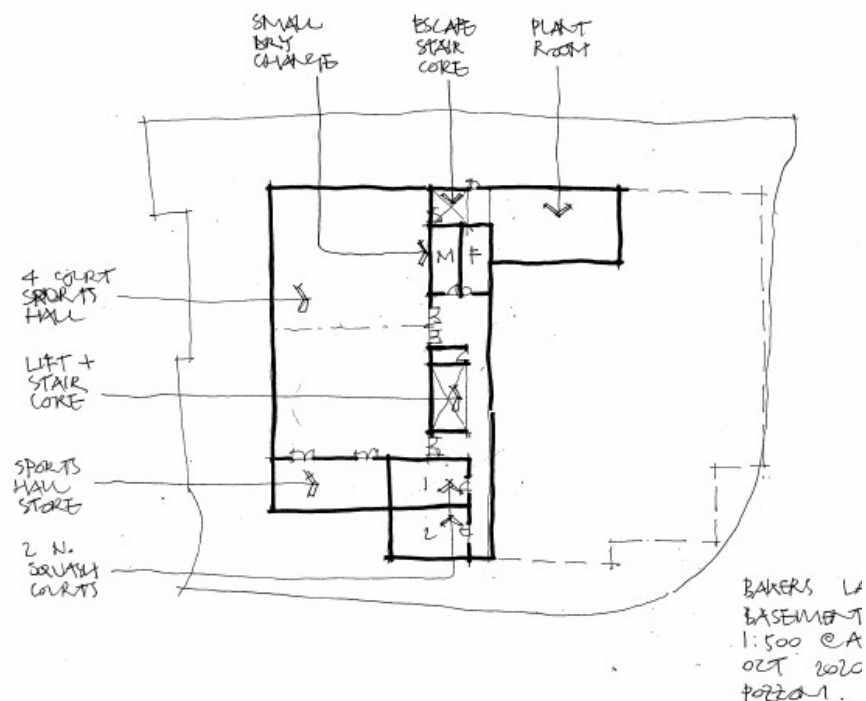


Figure 6 Sketch Plans – Ground Floor

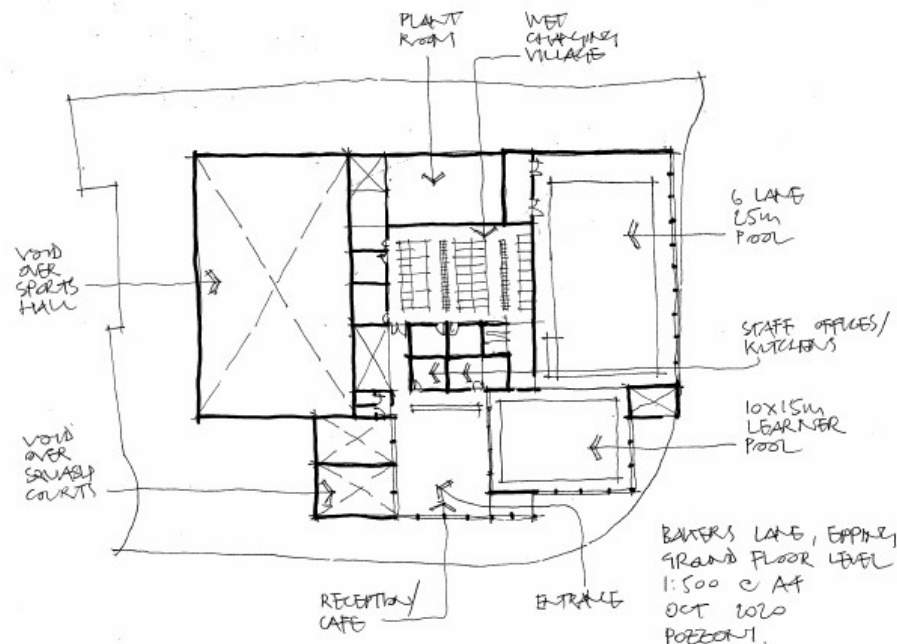


Figure 7 Sketch Plans – First Floor

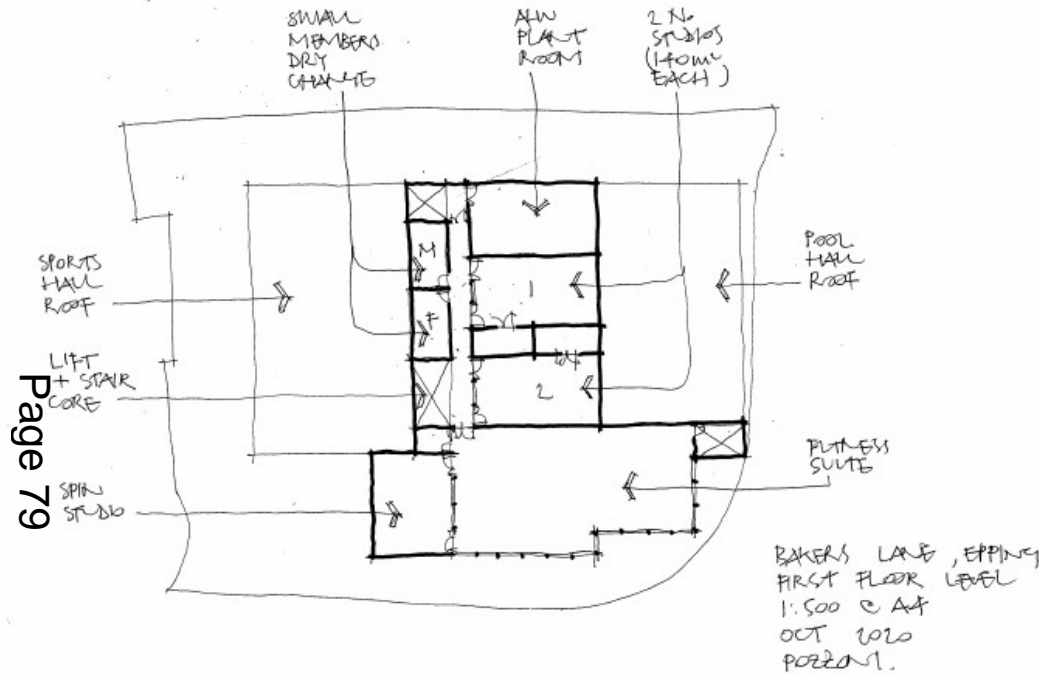


Figure 8 Basement Floor Plan



Figure 9 Ground Floor Plan

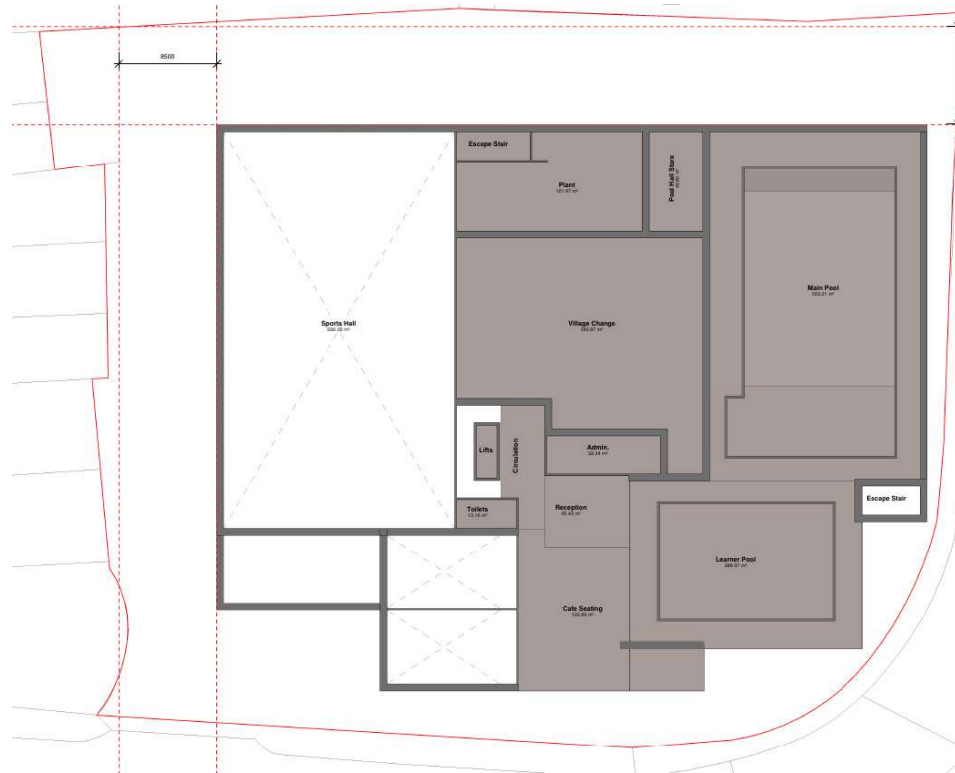


Figure 10 First Floor Plan

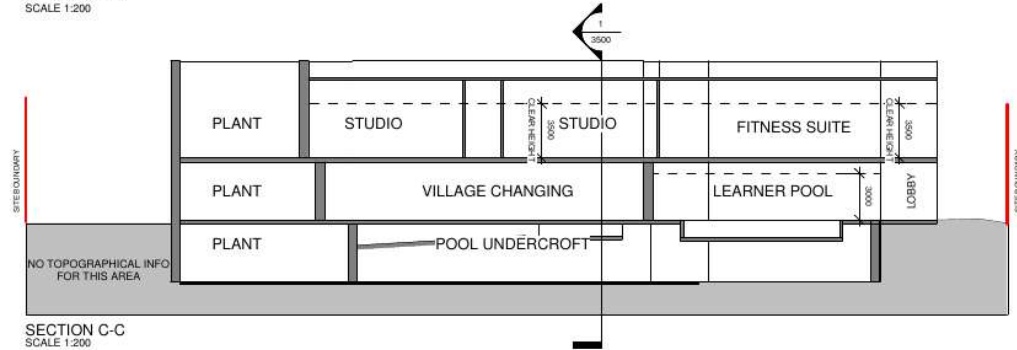
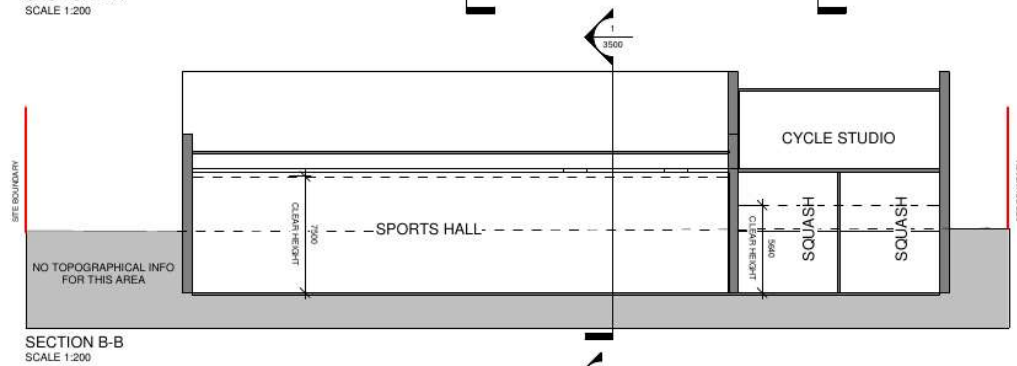
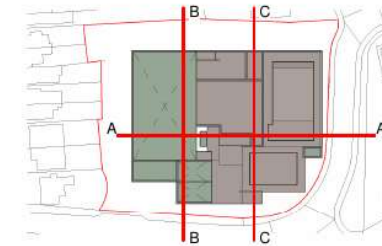
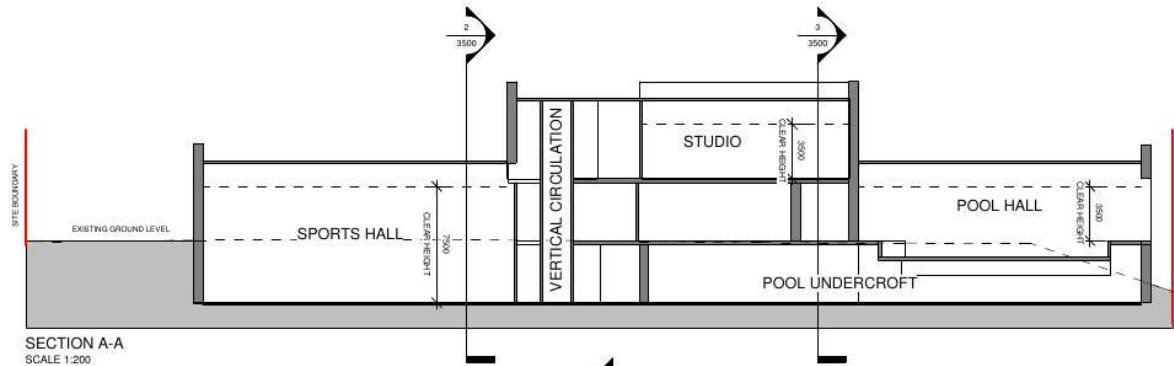


Figure 11 Bakers Lane Context Views



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Figure 12 Bakers Lane Sections



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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-056-2020-21

Date of meeting: 21st January 2021

Portfolio: Finance and Economic Development – Cllr. J Philip

Subject: Ongar Town Centre

Responsible Officer: John Houston (01992 564094).

Democratic Services: Adrian Hendry (01992 564246).



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That Cabinet considers the attached report produced by independent business consultants, Studio 3, on the economic viability of Ongar Town Centre, which includes recommendations to improve short and medium-term sustainability of businesses in the High Street.

Executive Summary:

As part of the Council's work to assist the economic recovery and sustainability of local High Streets across the district, Studio 3 Business Consultants were appointed in September, to undertake a series of independent economic reviews. The purpose of these being to identify quick wins and to consider longer-term recommendations to increase footfall to town centres; support local businesses and identify opportunities for attracting new business to the area.

The second of the studies focussed on Chipping Ongar and its high street and the detailed report produced by Studio 3 is attached to this covering report, which sets out a range of recommendations for action, including quick wins.

Following on from the first report on Waltham Abbey, the Cabinet agreed in the Cabinet on 22nd December 2020, to the appointment of a Towns Centre Manager, a role which will have a direct involvement in all high street developments including those given the go-ahead as a result of this report.

Cabinet is asked to consider the findings of the report and approve delivery of suggested recommendations.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

This report forms part of the Council's Covid Economic Recovery Programme, which has been designed to help support and improve economic viability of Town Centre's across the district. The study conducted by Studio 3, is a completely independent view of the status of the economy connected to Ongar High Street and identifies what is necessary to increase footfall; support local businesses and help sustain high street viability in the medium term.

Other Options for Action:

Cabinet could decide not to proceed with the recommendations, or, to agree to some and not others.

Report:

1. The Council's Covid Economic Recovery Programme agreed by Cabinet in July, includes a wide range of work to help support local business recovery and the future sustainability of local Town Centres. These include; Waltham Abbey, Ongar, Loughton, Buckhurst Hill and Epping. Officers have already made good progress on this work and across a number of associated projects and now seek cabinet approval to implement a range of initiatives directly related to Ongar High Street.
2. As part of the Council's Safer Spaces initiative, work was undertaken by Directors within the designated High Streets and Waltham Abbey and Ongar were assessed as requiring priority intervention. This work was followed up by the appointment of Studio 3 Business Consultants in mid- September who were commissioned to undertake work initially in Waltham Abbey, which was followed by a similar detailed assessment and production of a Regeneration Study and Proposals, for Ongar High Street and the surrounding town centre.
3. The final study contains details of the efficacy of current town management; the retail and business 'offer' and viability; appearance of the town; access and transport and the consultation undertaken with local residents and businesses. It additionally provides a list of recommended actions to help economic sustainability of the town centre and to improve and enhance resident and general visitor satisfaction.
4. Within the initial assessments undertaken, there are a number of quick wins identified and include; ongoing sweep/clean and litter bins emptying, regular clearance of accumulated rubbish around the recycling bins in Budworth Hall car park and other parts of the town centre, cleaning/redecoration/repair of all street furniture – lamp posts, bollards, railings, planters, litter bins, benches etc, replacement of broken bollards, replace/re-lay broken and uneven paving, town centre parking to become first hour free, tidy green spaces and planters and weed kill high street as necessary, regular parking enforcement to combat overstays, double parking, parking on the pavement.
5. The other significant recommendation in the report, suggests the benefits of establishing a Town Team in Ongar, to enable two-way dialogue to be sought from the towns' residents and businesses, with input encouraged from organisations such as educational establishments, religious groups, social groups (e.g. Scouts etc) together with members of the town council and tourism & visitor groups. It is suggested that the library could be used to establish a Community Hub base to be utilised by groups such as the Town Team.
6. Work has now commenced on a similar appraisal and study for Loughton Town and Broadway Centres by Studio 3 and the remaining town centres will be addressed over the next few months.
7. This report therefore seeks Cabinet approval to proceed with the recommended actions relating to Ongar High Street.

Resource Implications:

The bulk of the recommendations included in the report are to be funded from within existing resources as outlined in the previous report to Cabinet 22nd December 2020.

Legal and Governance Implications:

All work undertaken in town centres will be coordinated and approved with respective Town and Parish Clerks and Councils and reported to FDC's Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet Committees.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

It is anticipated that work proposed for Ongar Town Centre, will improve public safety and wellbeing, through initiatives such as better parking management, rectification of street furniture in and around the high street, and improvement to cleanliness and green spaces will enhance the appearance and welcome of this historic and well-loved centre.

Consultation Undertaken:

Ongoing consultation has taken place with EFDC Officers and local stakeholders, including Ongar Council, Ward Members, businesses, retailers and residents.

Background Papers:

Initial study produced by Studio 3 Business Consultants, including a report on Ongar Regeneration by the Town Council in November 2020, is included with this report.

Risk Management:

None identified.

Equality Impact:

This is attached but throughout the project it is intended to review all implications using the Authorities new research approach to evaluating decisions and the impact of such decisions.

Equality Impact Assessment

1. Under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, Epping District Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, ie have due regard to:
 - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
 - advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
 - fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
2. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage/civil partnership
 - pregnancy/maternity
 - race
 - religion/belief
 - sexual orientation.
3. In addition to the above protected characteristics you should consider the cross-cutting elements of the proposed policy, namely the social, economic and environmental impact (including rurality) as part of this assessment. These cross-cutting elements are not a characteristic protected by law but are regarded as good practice to include.
4. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document should be used as a tool to test and analyse the nature and impact of either what we do or are planning to do in the future. It can be used flexibly for reviewing existing arrangements but in particular should enable identification where further consultation, engagement and data is required.
5. Use the questions in this document to record your findings. This should include the nature and extent of the impact on those likely to be affected by the proposed policy or change.
6. Where this EqIA relates to a continuing project, it must be reviewed and updated at each stage of the decision.
7. All **Cabinet, Council, and Portfolio Holder reports must be accompanied by an EqIA**. An EqIA should also be completed/reviewed at key stages of projects.
8. To assist you in completing this report, please ensure you read the guidance notes in the Equality Analysis Toolkit and refer to the following Factsheets:
 - Factsheet 1: Equality Profile of the Epping Forest District
 - Factsheet 2: Sources of information about equality protected characteristics
 - Factsheet 3: Glossary of equality related terms
 - Factsheet 4: Common misunderstandings about the Equality Duty
 - Factsheet 5: Frequently asked questions
 - Factsheet 6: Reporting equality analysis to a committee or other decision making body

Section 1: Identifying details
Your function, service area and team: Economic Development
If you are submitting this EqIA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service area or team: N/A
Title of policy or decision: Economic Regeneration of Waltham Abbey Town Centre
Officer completing the EqIA: John Houston Tel: Ext 4094 Email: jhouston@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
Date of completing the assessment: 19/11/20

Section 2: Policy to be analysed	
2.1	Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project? New
2.2	Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision): The main aims of the decision and recommendations is to enable action to be taken to improve the viability and long -term sustainability of Sun Street in Waltham Abbey. What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (ie decommissioning or commissioning a service)? To increase residents' footfall and visitors to Sun Street, to create a vibrant and successful town centre
2.3	Does or will the policy or decision affect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • service users • employees • the wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities? <p>The decision affects members of the public, local businesses and retailers, in an area that is identified as being disadvantaged and with families living in poverty.</p> <p>Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?</p> <p>The decision will help to encourage businesses to operate in new and different ways, in order to attract new customers and improve the aesthetics of Sun Street and the surrounding area.</p>
2.4	Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources? Funding required to progress proposals is already earmarked within the Economic Development budget as a DDF item for Local high Streets Regeneration.

2.5	Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies and how, if applicable, does the proposed policy support corporate outcomes?
-----	---

Section 3: Evidence/data about the user population and consultation¹

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

3.1	<p>What does the information tell you about those groups identified?</p> <p>Data tells us that health inequalities and low income are issues affecting residents living in Waltham Abbey and that education achievement is lower than other places in the district and Essex. There are also considerable numbers of key workers living in Waltham Abbey , who have limited income and access to local services.</p>
3.2	<p>Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision you want to implement? If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision?</p> <p>Open consultation has been undertaken with people shopping in Waltham Abbey and with local businesses and retailers and an online consultation is in place until end of December.</p>
3.3	<p>If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary:</p> <p>As above</p>

Section 4: Impact of policy or decision

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

Description of impact	Nature of impact Positive, neutral, adverse (explain why)	Extent of impact Low, medium, high (use L, M or H)
Age	Positive – As the decision will help to improve local amenities and develop a better sense of place for the community.	med
Disability	Positive – Works to improve the walkway through Sun Street, will reduce potential for trip hazards and better signage and lighting will help people with poor eyesight feel safer.	med
Gender	Neutral	
Gender reassignment	Neutral	
Marriage/civil partnership	Neutral	
Pregnancy/maternity	Positive – for reasons above	med
Race	Neutral	
Religion/belief	Neutral -Although more people may be encouraged to visit Waltham Abbey Church	
Sexual orientation	Neutral	

Section 5: Conclusion

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

Section 6: Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

What are the potential adverse impacts?	What are the mitigating actions?	Date they will be achieved.

Section 7: Sign off

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

Signature of Head of Service: Julie Chandler

Date: 19/11/20

Signature of person completing the EqIA: John Houston

Date: 19/11/20

Advice

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

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Ongar

Regeneration Study and Proposals

“The most successful high streets and town centres will need to change to reflect the communities they serve by transforming themselves into community hubs, playing to their strengths of offering human interaction and a unique sense of place and community”

HM Government response to an enquiry into High Streets and Town Centres in 2030 (presented to Parliament in 2019)



Prepared by: Paul Messenger
Studio 3 Ltd
Email: pm@studio-3.co.uk

Date: 30 December 2020

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Foreword

Epping Forest District Council are reviewing a number of their town centres with the objective of regenerating them and making them a better and more attractive place to live, work, visit and play. There have been numerous projects over the years to generally improve the amenities, however the UK as a whole is now in the midst of a new era which will undoubtedly change high streets up and down the country. Covid 19 has unexpectedly changed the way we live and also as a result, our relationship with our local high street and/or town centre. More people are now shopping locally and more people are working from home, which in turn is encouraging them to use their local amenities on a more regular basis. The Grimsey Review advises that high streets need to be re-invented as unique community hubs, designed around health, education, culture, housing, leisure and arts and crafts, along with retail shops. If towns can get it right, consumers should emerge from the pandemic with a stronger sense of community and a desire to support their local town centre. Strong high streets can build communities, keep crime at bay and foster civic pride and togetherness.

A YouGov poll revealed that only 9% of Britons want life to return to “normal” after the coronavirus outbreak is over. The positive from the above is that this is a great time to engage with our local communities and reinvent our town centres while the focus is on them and before things automatically revert to the “old” normal.

The Grimsey Review goes on to advise that for town centres and high streets to thrive and rediscover their community purpose we need to see:

Localism - A massive shift in power to local communities and a renewed focus on localism. Local people must be empowered to redesign their own high streets and have a say on the businesses, services and amenities that occupy it.

Leadership - Local leaders should be valued and recognised. Candidates for leadership roles should be selected for having a broad range of dynamic and collaborative skills in order to get the best out of communities. Local leaders who embrace change and are brave enough to imagine a new world have a better chance of succeeding.

Fewer cars, more green spaces - fewer streets and a huge expansion of green space, parks and town squares. Our towns must no longer be designed around the car as people learn to appreciate the benefit of open spaces.

Other important takeaways from the Grimsey Review that should be considered is the fact that there is a growing view among young adults that businesses need to be accountable to more than their bottom line and for the wellbeing of people and communities. It goes on to confirm that 72% of millennials (aged 24 to 38) would rather spend their money on an experience or an event than buying things and that this is reflected in the shift towards leisure, arts, culture and dining on the high streets. Deloitte’s 2019 Millennial Survey showed that millennials will patronise and support companies that align with their values and make a positive impact on society. Generation Z’s (aged 5 to 23) are also socially focussed with their opinions on companies formed by their ethics, practices and social impact.

The Grimsey Review confirms that town and high street plans should put sustainability and the environment at the heart of everything; should base their development on quality of life and experiences and not blind mass consumerism; should recognise and reward great local leadership; and allow local communities to develop their places to compete for people to live, work, visit and play.

Introduction

Chipping Ongar is a market town within Epping Forest district of Essex. It has a population of circa 6,600 people and an average house price of circa £555,000 (source: Zoopla). A considerable amount of residential development has taken place in Ongar in recent times and there is considerable development still to be completed. Ongar lies on its own almost equidistance from Harlow, Brentwood and Epping. In addition to the community in the Ongar area, Ongar also serves as a local centre for the extended population of the villages and hamlets in the surrounding area - for those not wishing to travel the distance or requiring the wider range of shops and services of the larger adjoining towns.

There is very little business and/or industry in and around Ongar and it could be suggested that the majority of employment within the town is around the minimum wage level. The majority of the working population of Ongar commutes outside of Ongar in a number of different directions including Brentwood, Harlow and Epping and also further afield to Chelmsford and London. With transport links being limited and no train services the majority of travel and commutes are carried out by car.

Overall, Ongar is a lovely town comprising a beautiful high street lined with attractive listed buildings. It has a historic church and what remains of a Motte and Bailey castle dating back to 11th/12th century. In nearby Greensted lies what is believed to be the oldest wooden church in the world dating back to the 6th century and the area is surrounded by the rolling Essex countryside.

Having said that the town appears to have been overlooked and has fallen slightly into decline as a result. A number of the buildings require some love and attention and the High Street and town centre have a number of maintenance issues which need addressing. The High Street is fairly spread out and has a current retail vacancy rate of circa 14% - fractionally above the national average. There are a good range of shops, however it is not felt that these are meeting the needs of a growing local community and that as a result people are tending to shop at the larger adjoining towns. In addition, the town centre does little to make itself appealing to or provide for the large number of visitors which come to Ongar each year.

Ongar is a great little town with lots of potential to re-establish itself and flourish. Action needs to be taken though to maintain the towns historic roots whilst at the same time keeping it relevant for the 21st century and the needs and requirements of its growing community. Ongar already has a fantastic community spirit, a wide range of clubs and associations and a growing community who would love to make use of the wide range of amenities, shops, services and attractions that Ongar could provide. The Town and District Council, together with numerous local people and businesses who have a genuine interest, energy and enthusiasm towards the town could make Chipping Ongar a place in which you're proud to be a part of, keen to visit and pleased to be seen in.

1. Quick Wins

There are a number of matters which could be addressed quickly and cheaply and could make considerable improvements to the town centre:

- *To sweep/clean High Street on an ongoing basis and ensure that litter bins are emptied and litter is cleared from the street/pavement.*
- *Arrange for the regular clearance of all accumulated rubbish around the recycling bins in Budworth Hall car park and also other parts of the town centre.*
- *Arrange for the cleaning/redecoration/repair of all street furniture – lamp posts, bollards, railings, planters, litter bins, benches etc.*
- *Replace broken/previously removed bollards*
- *Replace/re-lay broken and uneven paving*
- *Town centre parking should be changed to first hour free. I note that for Covid 19 the parking has been reduced to 20p for the first 2.5 hours – which is fine if you've got 20p, however if you use pay by phone, normal charges apply.*
- *Tidy green spaces and planters and weed kill high street as necessary*
- *Arrange for regular parking enforcement to combat overstays, double parking, parking on the pavement*

2. Town Management

2.1 Town Centre Leadership

Town centre regeneration is about localism and local leadership and the way to make this work is to provide local leadership with its finger on the pulse and with a connection to the local community. Therefore and accepting that this project is being driven by Epping Forest District Council, it is suggested that buy in, action and leadership should be provided by Ongar Town Council, with the support of a Town(s) Centre Manager appointed by the District Council.

All Town Councillors are local and as a result should be able to bring the local community and businesses together and develop a strong visionary plan to reinforce the distinctive heritage of the town, assist in making the town centre a real community hub and make Ongar a far more attractive town for locals and visitors alike. The role of an independent Town Centre Manager will be critical to provide professional expertise and an unbiased view on what is needed locally.

Recommendations:

- 1) *Engage with Ongar Town Council (OTC)***
- 2) *Obtain OTC commitment to the scheme and to providing leadership and support***
- 3) *Work with OTC to establish and action a realistic plan***

2.2 Town(s) Centre Manager

It is suggested that the Council commits to the appointment of a Town Centre Manager initially on a two-year fixed term basis. The manager would act as a single point of contact to receive ideas, thoughts and views from local stakeholders and as such, would be known and trusted by businesses, retailers and residents alike. They would work with the Town Council to ensure that standards are adhered to and that the town is as vibrant and attractive to local people and visitors as possible. A review of the post would be undertaken after 12 months to assess progress against the Town Centre action plan and the success of interventions and extended if necessary.

NB. As a part of their regeneration, Stockton-on-Tees council has pulled together a multi-disciplinary team of market management, street licensing, civil enforcement and business support to manage their town centre. Stockton is a much larger town than Ongar, however the principles of hands on organisation and management are much the same.

Recommendations:

- 4) *Write Job profile and agree responsibilities for Town Centre Manager post***
- 5) *Post to be part of EFDC Economic team within Strategic Planning Directorate***
- 6) *Town Team establishment to be priority***

2.3 Establishment of a Town Team

To achieve the required changes, considerable two-way dialogue needs to be sought from the towns' residents and businesses. Buy-in from the community is important to ensure that there is a need or requirement for any proposed changes and that as a result these are carried out with the support of the town. Ongar already has a Town Forum and it is thought that this could be used as a catalyst for pulling together a formal Town Team.

It is important that the Town Team is made up of a cross section of the community including residents, businesses and retailers. A fair representation of age, sex and race should be included and input should be encouraged from organisations such as educational establishments, religious groups, social groups (e.g. Scouts etc) together with members of the town council and tourism & visitor groups.

The library could be used to establish a Community Hub base and a place where public opinions could be shared and discussed and a centre of community well-being for the town.

Recommendations:

- 7) Decide with OTC the make up of a Town Team and what it will be called.***
- 8) If utilising current Town Forum, engage with and obtain commitment and support from Chairman and Town Forum as a whole.***
- 9) Arrange initial meeting to establish parameters and put in place plan for town team development and action.***

2.4 Attracting New Businesses and Brands

In conjunction with the Town Team, work could be done to identify key brands, businesses and/or other organisations to attract to the town and then steps taken to secure them.

Recommendations:

- 10) Put in place programme to encourage new businesses.***
- 11) Target prospective businesses.***
- 12) Communicate requirements to commercial agents.***

3. Town Offer

3.1 Town layout

My view is that to keep the town centre viable and increase footfall it is important that in addition to retail and a range of food & beverage outlets, the town centre also houses a number of other services. This would include a market, doctors surgeries, dentists, healthcare outlets, solicitors, accountants, other essential services required by the community and also a Community Hub base. Also perhaps, another supermarket. It is important however that these are situated actually in the town centre, to encourage more movement and footfall. The Post Office is now becoming more important in town centres, particularly as the banks are withdrawing. They provide the obvious postal facilities, but also banking options and a range of other services. It appears that Ongar has a part time Post Office which may or may not be open, resulting in people going elsewhere. Efforts should be made with the Ongar PO provider to extend their services and make them more reliable.

A number of parties have suggested the removal of the (free) parking on the High Street in the centre of the retail section and that this be replaced with an increased size pedestrian/pavement area for use by the town and its retailers to give the town more of a Mediterranean feel and encourage outside eating, drinking, trading and socialising. My view at the current time is that this would decrease the footfall in the town centre further and discourage trade from the town. Having said this, if the town is regenerated and provides an attractive retail offer to both locals and visitors alike then this may be a consideration for the future, but the town will need to reinvent itself as more of a destination.

The addition of the medical centre in Shelley and also the rumour of the possibility of a Tesco supermarket at the Shelley end of town does not and will not assist the footfall in the town centre. People using these facilities will not need to visit the centre of the town or avail themselves of the facilities available. Careful consideration should be given to the addition of these types of initiatives and wherever possible use of the town centre should be encouraged and supported.

3.2 Retail

The retail offer in Chipping Ongar is spread across approximately half a mile of the southern part of the High Street. The majority of the shops are situated in the middle of this stretch around the site of Ongar Castle with a lesser number towards the northern and southern ends.

There is a good range of shops offering a fairly wide selection of goods, services and facilities. The High Street has a circa 14% vacancy rate, which is slightly higher than the current national average, with a number of the units having been vacant for some time.

Comments received in connection with the retail offer include:

- Town requires an increased range of shops with more boutiques, antiques, curiosity/gift shops
- Sainsbury's is inadequate for the size of the town
- The Post Office is unreliable – people would rather travel to the sub post office in High Ongar rather than use the Post Office in Londis in Ongar
- No Banks
- More cashpoints required
- We need brands like Costa, McDonalds etc
- The shops are quiet and need more footfall
- Some restaurants are too expensive – more mid-ranged required

Talking to a local estate agent, it would appear that retail units in Ongar turnover fairly quickly and also that a number of the units have been empty for some time. My view is that if the town centre can be made more attractive and draw in a wider section of the community, together with an increased tourist/visitor economy then the retail offer should automatically increase and diversify. I think that EFDC could also assist retailers by introducing them to a range of services to encourage them to diversify and perhaps consider the addition of online, web and social media to their business.

Although Chipping Ongar is fairly residential another varying element of high streets is the progression of the weekend and evening economies. We now live in a seven day a week world with extended working hours. Businesses need to adjust to the needs and requirements of their customers and this may now include opening longer/different hours, opening on Sundays etc. The town centre manager could discuss these matters with retailers and see if there is any scope for taking these considerations further with a view to increasing footfall and also, subsequently, trade.

Although it is hard to shape the type of tenants within the high street, perhaps through consultation and ongoing contact with the retailers, the existing businesses could be developed to offer innovative and distinctive food and also experiential and community-based services.

The good news is that at the current time people are tending to shop nearer to home and using their local town centres as opposed to going to the larger out of town shopping centres. Retailers should take advantage of this and go that extra mile to ensure a clean, safe and welcoming environment offering a comprehensive range of products and services. If customers can see the benefit of shopping local and enjoy it, they are less likely to change their habits when the pandemic is brought under control.

Recommendations:

- 13) Approach Ongar Post Office operator and discuss opening hours and availability. Consider taking up with the Post Office directly.***
- 14) Town Centre Manager to work with retailers to increase the attractiveness and draw of shops with a view to increasing the viability of the High Street.***
- 15) Ongar Town Council to ensure a clean, safe and welcoming environment***

3.3 Chipping Ongar Market

The Grimsey Review highlighted the importance of markets and their positive effect on residents. In a report by the Institute of Place Management (2015) it explained why markets are economically, socially and politically critical for town centres. The report also confirmed that markets can generate footfall increases of circa 25% and have been shown to increase retail sales with market visitors spending money in other shops. The report then goes on to explain that markets provide low barriers to entry and as result can encourage new businesses and nurture retail innovation.

Chipping Ongar is a market town which has had a market running in it since the 12th century. At the current time the market doesn't operate due mainly to a lack of interest from both stall holders and the public. Having said this the opportunity still exists for the market to be reinstated.

Market day in Chipping Ongar has historically been Wednesday with the market being held within the library car park. In a town with a relatively small population that predominantly commutes out of the town, I can understand why the market isn't perhaps as well attended as it may be. The other point that sticks in my mind is the fact that the Epping Ongar Railway (EOR) brought to the town circa 45,000 passengers in 2019 (pre-covid) and moving forward have plans to increase this number to in excess of 80,000 people. The trains carrying these visitors run predominantly at weekends and on bank holidays. Bearing the above in mind I question whether it would be sensible to move the market to the weekend, when the market could be enjoyed by both visitors and locals alike. Speciality markets such as farmers, French, antique etc could also be included and perhaps tied up with services provided by EOR.

A busy and successful market will add to the attraction of Ongar as a destination, whilst at the same time providing additional footfall for other town retailers, attractions, services and facilities.

Recommendations:

- 16) Ongar Town Council to review town market and make proposals for its development including consideration of changing the market day.***
- 17) Review market layout, pitches and parking arrangements for traders.***
- 18) Speak to Epping Ongar Railway and tie up market days with the heritage rail service***

19) Put in place a calendar of feature markets i.e. Farmers, antiques, French, Italian etc.

3.4 Tourism/Visitors

I feel that the tourist/visitor economy in Ongar is undervalued and as a result overlooked. The town should be a real tourist destination with its historic high street, churches and Motte & Bailey Castle, to name but a few, all settled in the stunning Essex countryside. The Epping Ongar Railway (EOR) brought approximately 45,000 visitors to Ongar in 2019 (pre Covid) and with expansion plans underway could see this increasing to upwards of 80,000 visitors per year (post Covid).

The interesting thing is that the EOR brings the majority of its visitors over the weekends and on bank holidays. On Sundays and Bank Holidays, the majority of Ongar is closed and the market which could provide a visitor interest, when it's running, is held on a Wednesday.

Further, the Motte and Bailey Castle which could provide a major visitor interest is overgrown and inaccessible and the Essex Way path leading up to Greenstead and St Andrews Church, thought to be the oldest wooden church in the world, is muddy and again fairly inaccessible, in anything other than the finest weather and/or for the able bodied wearing appropriate foot ware.

Visitors can add real value to a local economy. Robertson and Fennel (2007) demonstrated that of visitors secondary spending, 24% was spent on food and drink, 19% was spent on gifts and clothing and 11% was spent on souvenirs. In general terms if an attraction can provide a dwell time of up to 2 hours then this encourages spending on drinks and snacks. If this dwell time is extended to 4 hours plus, then this generates spending on a meal. There is undoubtedly the potential for visitors to spend 4 or more hours in Ongar but the shops need to be open and the attractions need to be accessible and provide real visitor interest. If this could also be combined with busy and well run market then I feel that the visitor economy could add greatly to the future success and buoyancy of Ongar High Street.

At the current time, visitors arriving at Ongar station have very little to entertain them. There is no signage from Ongar station to the town centre and if and when they arrive in the town centre there is currently little to keep them entertained.

My view is that Ongar Castle should be developed to make it accessible and much more of a tourist attraction and the town centre and its range of historic buildings developed to increase their attractiveness and encourage visitors to explore the town and in turn avail themselves to its shops and facilities. My thought is that EFDC should consult with Historic England and see if there are any grounds for the Motte and Bailey Castle and for Chipping Ongar as a whole to be restored and become a truly historic destination town.

With the general shift away from consumerism, more people working from home and the requirement for increased experiences, local tourism will become even more important. As a result, work should be done to develop close partnerships between the town centre and the tourism sector with a view to reducing the reliance on retail shops, whilst at the same time increasing the general footfall around the town.

Recommendations:

- 20) EFDC to consider the benefits of developing the tourist/visitor attractions in Ongar and if appropriate draw up plans to progress.**
- 21) EFDC to discuss renovation of Ongar's Motte & Bailey Castle and historic town with Historic England and if appropriate draw up plans to progress.**
- 22) Town Forum to liaise with the tourism team and pull together joint ventures and program of events.**

23) Town Forum to encourage support and participation from local retailers and businesses of any town events

3.5 Chipping Ongar Community Hub

The key to a community hub, much the same as in the “20-minute neighbourhood” is to have a full range of services and facilities within easy reach of each other. This comprises of homes, shops, businesses, green spaces, schools, medical centres, play areas etc together with function space within which community events can take place.

Ongar already has a great community spirit. It has its own town newspaper, The Ongar News which is extremely well supported, Ongar in Bloom is a voluntary group set up to improve the community with the planting, care and maintenance of planters around the town, and there are numerous groups and associations such as the Ongar Town Forum and the Ongar and District Community Association, dedicated to the development of Ongar. The Budworth Hall plays a key role within the town and facilitates the meetings of over 50 clubs and associations. In addition, the town has held May Fairs and Festival of Light celebrations which are all really well supported and attended. The establishment of a formal Community Hub would work to pull all these groups and services together, put on events and celebrations including all relevant parties (including the towns retailers and businesses) and be the catalyst to building strong and long-term community spirit, which in turn will make Ongar a town that people want to live in and are proud to be a part of. From my research, the majority of people living in Ongar love Ongar and are keen to see it grow and succeed.

My suggestion would be to have a Community Hub base in the library. It would be used to coordinate events and activities within the town centre and also be a resource for services including perhaps a Police help desk, mini job centre, tourist information and a place for locals to impart their thoughts, observations and complaints. Provision of these increased services will encourage more people into the town centre and will lead to them using other elements of the town centre at the same time.

EFDC could also review their association with Budworth Hall and see if there are any areas where they can work together to facilitate the development of the Community Hub.

It is noted from my various conversations that outside of the specific clubs and associations based in the Budworth Hall, there is a lack of facilities in Ongar for the youth – such as a Youth Club. This is something that could also be considered by the Community Hub.

Recommendations:

24) Set up community hub base within library and man it on agreed days/times.

25) Publicise Community Hub.

26) Pull together program of events and activities for the year.

27) Liaise with Budworth Hall and jointly promote events and services

3.6 Love Ongar Residents Card

As a way of communicating with and building relationships with local residents, perhaps a Love Ongar card scheme could be developed. The facility would offer residents discounts, offers and preferential rates on various products, services and facilities throughout Ongar on production of the card – which would in turn encourage residents to use their local area and town centre.

The card could also be used as a library card, to allow resident discounts at the local leisure centre and used in the towns car parks to obtain free and/or improved parking rates.

Shop local campaigns and marketing could also be formulated around the Love Ongar residents card – Love Ongar, Shop Ongar!

This idea could also be rolled out on a larger scale – i.e. Epping Forest Resident Discount Card – offering a range of discounts, special offers and promotion across the Epping Forest district.

Recommendations:

- 28) Agree that “Love Ongar” Resident Card is viable proposition.**
- 29) Design programme, implement and process.**

3.7 Public Facilities

If the town centre is going to meet people’s needs, the town centre should be reviewed to ensure that there are the required public facilities. These facilities would include adequate seating for all sections of the community in all areas, open, clean & functional public toilets, adequate lighting at all times across all areas of the town centre, bike racks/hoops in easily accessible places and strategically placed dog poo bins.

It was noted that the public toilets in Ongar are always available and kept extremely clean and tidy.

Recommendations:

- 30) Review benches and seating within town centre and ensure adequate for needs of town.**
- 31) Review bike racks/hoops within the town centre and at other destinations and ensure adequate for the needs of the town.**
- 32) Review dog poo bins in town centre and other areas as appropriate and ensure adequate to needs of the town.**

3.8 Wi-fi and Digital Presence

The digital age and the need for connectivity is increasingly important for numerous sections of the community and as a result I would suggest a free wi-fi availability within Chipping Ongar town centre.

It should be acknowledged that people are now shopping differently and that circa 30% of retail sales are being done online (Office of National Statistics, Aug 2020). This figure is up from 21.9% at the beginning of March 2020 and the beginning of the Covid 19 lock down. Regardless of the pandemic, online sales will continue to grow, and retail experts KPMG predict the figure rising to 50% by 2025. As a result, retail businesses need to adjust their business models accordingly and develop their offer for both markets.

As a part of adding a wi-fi option to the town centre a social media presence should be developed enabling Ongar retailers and businesses to market their products and services to town centre visitors and build a link between their online and offline businesses. Mobile technologies and virtual shopping should be used to enhance the consumer town centre experience and in turn increase footfall.

Consideration should be given to bringing in a third-party contractor such as Maybe (www.maybetech.com) to develop social media/town centre/retailer collaboration.

Recommendations:

- 33) Put in place free WIFI within Chipping Ongar town centre & publicise.**
- 34) Agree way forward in respect of Social Media strategy/presence and execute accordingly.**
- 35) Arrange for assistance and support for retailers in establishing an online presence.**

4. Appearance

Although a little tatty and in need of some general love and attention as indicated in the Quick Wins above, Ongar has a picturesque High Street with an impressive range of historic listed buildings. To maintain Ongars appearance and appeal as a historic town centre shopkeepers and property owners need to be encouraged to review the appearance and maintenance of their properties and when making alterations to make them in keeping with the overall appearance of the town.

Consideration should be given by the Council as to the suitability of street signs and street furniture to the townscape of this historic town.

Recommendations:

- 36) Review signage and street furniture and where necessary replace with alternative sympathetic to the townscape.**
- 37) Review planning process and ensure that applications for alterations to high street and/or listed properties are proposing alterations in keeping with the heritage and age of the town.**

4.1 Shop Fronts

Some consideration should be given to standardising the shop fronts and making them appropriate in colour and design to the town centre. The town centre falls within the Ongar Conservation Area and many of the buildings are listed. As such local authority consent should be sought for any change in shop front or building design. These changes should be carefully considered by the Council to ensure their suitability.

There is of course no obligation for landlords or retailers to renew their shopfronts, however perhaps a scheme could be developed where the local authority does some sort of match funding to assist in the renewal and updating of shop fronts.

Recommendations:

- 38) Consult with retailers and consider options in respect of Town Centre shop fronts and making them more in keeping with the overall age and style of the town centre.**
- 39) Consider match funding or other scheme to assist in and encourage updating of town centre shop fronts.**

4.2 "A" Boards & other retail paraphernalia

Some parts of the Ongar pavement are narrower than others which can present accessibility issues, particularly for those pushing prams/pushchairs and also the elderly and disabled. In addition to narrow pavements, the town also attracts a large number of "A" boards up and down the high street and also on occasions the addition of external trading/retail displays which also clog up the pavement. In some parts of the town this isn't an issue as the pavements are fairly wide and can accommodate them. In others however it is an issue and is a cause for concern.

As a result, I feel that some form of regulation needs to be put in place to manage street side retail paraphernalia and apply enforcement action where necessary. Considerations should be given to some form of demarcation outside each store over which seating, A boards and other retail paraphernalia, if allowed, cannot overstep. This would ensure that the pavement is kept clear for pedestrians.

Recommendations:

- 40) Review town centre policy and regulations for trading from the front of premises/display of signage and "A" boards on the pavement***
- 41) Review Ongar Town Centre in line with the aforementioned regulations and act as necessary***

4.3 Trees and Planters

Tree line pedestrian routes and landscaped areas all contribute to civic pride and generally make a town more attractive. Ongar is fortunate to have an active voluntary Ongar in Bloom team who do a massive amount of work to keep Ongar looking attractive and maintain a large selection of flower beds, planters, fence boxes etc throughout the town. The seasonal planting is funded by Ongar Town Council, however I feel that it is important that EFDC maintain a working relationship with Ongar in Bloom to maintain the larger townscape and green spaces.

Recommendations:

- 42) Review current "green" townscape and work with Ongar in Bloom to improve.***

1. Access

Town centres need to recognise that Co2 emissions have to be reduced and as a result there is much more emphasis on ensuring a reduced reliance on cars. To this end, town centres need to ensure their accessibility via other methods of transport and provide for these methods accordingly. In addition to reducing carbon emissions this will also encourage the use of the town centre by a wider range of the community via numerous methods of transport.

Simply stopping car access and reducing or taking away parking spaces, doesn't resolve this problem. Undoubtedly people will still want to access the town centre by car however there is a balance to be had between encouraging pedestrian and cycling access to a town centre and then gradually reducing provision for motor vehicles as other methods of travel develop and gain traction.

For generations urban areas have been designed exclusively around the car. This now has to change and town centres developed to provide attractive, walkable and cyclable physical space

5.1 Cycling

In a town the size of Ongar, all residents should be able to access the town centre, the towns various green and public spaces, leisure centre and attractions via a network of secure, safe and clearly marked cycle paths and routes.

In addition, the town should also provide for cycle racks/hoops at the various destinations to enable the bikes to be safely secured.

Recommendations:

43) Review cycling accessibility to Ongar town centre, attractions and green spaces and make arrangements to provide a network of secure, safe and clearly marked cycle paths and routes.

5.2 Trains

Although there is a railway running into Ongar, it has ceased to be operated by TfL and is now used by the Epping Ongar (Heritage) Railway (EOR). For a growing town the size of Ongar, I would suggest that there is an ever increasing need for a regular railway connection from Ongar onto Epping and then in to central London. I understand that there are a number of issues that come with this consideration, not least the provision of station parking in Ongar, however it is felt that the option should remain on the agenda and that feasibility studies are done to establish the practicality of reinstating this service.

Recommendations:

44) Review feasibility of reinstating a regular Ongar to Epping rail service.

5.2 Buses

Bus routes should be reviewed to ensure all residents have easy access to buses to bring them into and take them out of the town centre. It is suggested that residents should be within a 400 to 500 metre walking distance of a bus stop. Services should also be reliable and punctual.

It was suggested that there is little in the way of evening buses in and out of the area which was particularly an issue for younger people who would otherwise have to be picked up or get a taxi.

Recommendations:

45) Review/discuss bus routes with bus operator and amend accordingly

5.3 Parking

Although use of other methods of transport into the town centre is important, it is inevitable that a section of the community will continue to use a car for a variety of reasons.

Parking is undoubtedly a major issue in Ongar town centre. The subject has been mentioned by all stakeholders and by all consulted. The subject covers various issues:

- The free parking in the main shopping area. Due to the lack of parking enforcement, these spaces tend to be used for longer term parking. Either by mum's taking their children to the soft play area in the Crazy Kids Café, retailers, residents or anyone else who simply decides to leave their car there. Apparently parking enforcement comes to Ongar on one day per week, so people take their chances.

Likewise, there are two small parades of shops at the Ongar Bridge end of the high street which get used for longer term parking, also with very little parking enforcement taking place.

The effect of the reduced availability of these spaces is undoubtedly reduced custom for the shops, but also it forces people to either double park or park on the pavement if they have a need to make a quick shop or collect something up from a supplier.

A better option along these sections of the High Street would be to have a pay and display – with the first 30 minutes free and a maximum 1 hour stay time with no return within 3 hours.

In addition, regular parking enforcement would ensure that the regulations are adhered to.

- It has been suggested that the overall availability of parking was insufficient for the needs of the town. On my visits to Ongar I would suggest that for short term parking, this wasn't the case and that there was ample parking when also utilising the Budworth Hall and Library car parks (it should be noted however that town centre usage may be reduced as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic).

Having said this as the population grows as a result of new housing, with the regeneration and increased attractiveness of Ongar High Street and also with any tourists/visitors to the town in the summer months, the provision of parking in the town centre may well be stretched.

- Another area of contention is in connection with the parking charges. Disregarding the reduced "Covid 19" rate available at the moment, it is difficult to attract people to the town centre when they can visit supermarkets, retail parks and other larger out of town retailers without having to pay a parking charge.

My suggestion in this respect is that the parking in the library and Budworth Hall car parks is reduced to 30 mins free with normal charges applying thereafter. If a "Love Ongar" residents card was introduced, reduced charges could apply for residents on production of a chip and pin residents card.

Evidence in respect of the benefit of free parking within town centres is varied, however it would be a positive way of showing a town centre that a council was serious about improving footfall and assisting high street businesses.

- With the conversion of a number of the upstairs spaces above the shops into flats and various new builds directly behind the shops with limited parking, there is additional pressure on parking within the town centre as the majority of residents have one or more cars with nowhere affordable and/or accessible to park them. Likewise, retailers and the towns businesses have nowhere affordable to park. With this in mind, perhaps the land by Ongar Bridge, currently used for parking could be adopted by the council and then used for the permit holder parking of town centre residences and businesses.

It was also suggested that if required the grass land behind the library and Ongar Castle could be made into additional parking.

Recommendations:

- 46) Review Ongar town centre parking and consider whether additional parking is necessary and if so where it should go.**
- 47) Make the 1 hour free parking in the High Street pay and display and consider reducing to 30 minutes free.**
- 48) Increase town centre parking enforcement**
- 49) Maintain pay and display in town centre car parks and review charging to provide the first 30 minutes free of charge.**
- 50) Consider putting in place a town centre retailer/resident car park with retailer/resident parking permits available from the council.**

5.4 General Traffic

Ongar High Street is a fairly busy road and also sees its fair share of large heavy goods vehicles. With the narrow pavements and added to that numerous delivery and other drivers either double parking and/or parking on the pavement the town centre can become busy and also particularly hazardous to pedestrians, particularly those pushing prams & pushchairs, in a wheelchair or with reduced mobility and also the elderly. This I would suggest also goes some way to deterring people from visiting the town centre.

Within the main shopping area, there is a clear need for reducing the speed of the traffic. It has also been suggested that a weight restriction be put in place to deter the numbers of large HGV's, which in principle I agree with, although I am not clear as to how this would work in practice.

It was suggested that another Zebra Crossing should be installed by the pinch point. This would serve the purpose of slowing down traffic flow whilst at the same time making road crossings safer and save, particularly elderly/disabled people from having to walk to Budworth Hall where the other crossing is. If this could be combined with an indicated/signposted 20mph speed limit, I feel that the speed of traffic could be reduced dramatically.

Discussion was also had in respect of a bypass, which I understand has been discussed on numerous occasions over the years. My feeling on this is that it would undoubtedly reduce traffic flow through Ongar, however I feel that this could also be to the detriment of the town and its passing trade. Perhaps this idea could be left for ongoing and future consideration.

Recommendations:

- 51) Increase parking enforcement – prosecute for double parking/parking on the pavement**
- 52) Add additional zebra/pelican crossing at/near pinch point in High Street**
- 53) Reduce signposted speed limit to 20mph in main shopping area – from say pinch point to Budworth Hall.**

6. Consultation

6.1 Market Research

In addition to thoughts and expertise of the author, consultation for this report has been obtained from the following:

Office of RH Alex Burghart MP
Epping Forest District Council
Ongar Town Council
Ongar Town Forum
Ongar and District Community Association
Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Community Group
Epping Ongar Railway
Councillors and other prominent/influential Ongar residents
Approximately 15 High Street Retailers
Various Ongar residents

It is accepted that additional research will be required from residents, retailers and businesses to move the ideas in this report forward. It is felt however that if the initiative is going to be Community/Town Council driven then the research should be carried out more locally.

7. Discounted Ideas and Thoughts

As a result of discussions with stake holders, there are a number of ideas and considerations which I don't feel require further consideration at this stage. Some of these are:

- Developing an Ongar Bi-pass
- Removing all parking from the shopping area in the centre of the High Street and pedestrianizing it to allow more pavement space and a more continental feel where bars, restaurants and shops trade from outside their shops.
- Suspending parking and reinstating the market in the main shopping area in the middle of the high street.
- Banning HGV's from the High Street – I think it's a nice idea, however I'm not sure how practical it will be or how it will be enforced.

7. Sources of Additional Support

High Streets Task Force (www.highstreettaskforce.org.uk) – supporting communities and local government to transform their high streets.

Maybe (www.maybetech.com) – A smarter approach to social media

Action List	Priority
<i>Highway Rangers to complete "quick wins"</i>	1
<i>Discuss with and establish Town Leadership Team</i>	1
<i>Form Town Team / refocus Town Forum</i>	1
<i>Appoint Town Centre Manager</i>	1
<i>Form Community Hub in Library</i>	1
<i>Clear town centre of all rubbish and weeds</i>	1
<i>Provide for additional seating, bike racks/hoops, dog poo bins as appropriate</i>	2
<i>Talk to retailers re shop fronts, A boards, pavement trading etc</i>	1
<i>Review town market and put in place plans to re-establish and grow it</i>	1
<i>Put in place plans to review town cycle paths and implement findings</i>	2
<i>Review bus routes and timetables</i>	3
<i>Review parking charges and reduce to first 30 mins / hour free as appropriate</i>	1
<i>Review parking arrangements for businesses and Town Centre residents</i>	2
<i>Review town tourism and pull a plan together encompassing town businesses</i>	3
<i>Review town WIFI proposal and put in place findings</i>	2
<i>Develop town centre social media presence</i>	2
<i>Consider Love Ongar Residents Card – implement and publicise</i>	2
<i>Complete research on thoughts and considerations of residents and businesses – incorporate and implement where appropriate</i>	1
<i>Review new businesses required in Ongar and take steps to attract</i>	3
<i>EFDC to liaise with Ongar in Bloom and see if they can collaborate</i>	2
<i>EFDC to discuss options for Ongar with Historic England</i>	2
<i>Increase parking enforcement</i>	1
<i>Consider additional zebra/pelican crossing</i>	1
<i>Consider introduction of signed 20mph speed limit in main shopping area</i>	1

Appendix 1

Regenerating Ongar paper by Ongar Town Council – November 2020

Ongar Town Council



Regenerating Ongar

November 2020

Ongar Town Council has compiled this document to highlight their concerns about the serious deterioration in the appearance, maintenance, and consideration of the town of Ongar, which is at the extreme boundary of Epping Forest District with Brentwood Borough Council. Ongar is destined to have a large increase in housing under the Local Plan, but the town has been neglected and is in serious decline.

Over the years there has been a lack of investment, regular maintenance, repairs, and support to help improve and develop the appearance, image and condition of Ongar, which residents and the Town Council feel are unacceptable.

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The High Street.

Commercially, Ongar has approximately sixty outlets in the High Street, including a variety of small shops, pubs, restaurants/cafés, hairdressers, nail bars, estate agents etc. They are not concentrated in one main area but are spread out along the whole of the High Street. The pavements are very narrow in some places; large lorries travel along the High Street, causing congestion and noxious fumes while vehicles park illegally and on the pavement. The result of these issues is that pedestrians can have difficulty in navigating from one end of the High Street to the other, especially those using mobility vehicles or pushing prams or pushchairs. About 20% of the outlets are currently empty, and there is little prospect of this changing.

Ongar High Street is now in serious decline, and was so even before the coronavirus pandemic, and does not present a positive image to potential shoppers, shop owners or businesses. Consequently, there is no incentive for any new beneficial establishments to consider opening in Ongar.

Ongar has no major high street banks or large brand stores to attract shoppers the High Street, apart from a small Sainsbury, which is situated at one end of the High Street behind the shops and Budworth Hall. It is not clearly visible from the High Street to capture passing trade. There is also a small Tesco Express and attached petrol station.

As mentioned above, pavement parking is a major issue in Ongar. Incidents happen daily where the pavement has been blocked to pedestrians, pushchair users and mobility scooters by parked vehicles, sometimes forcing them walk into the road. Additionally, pavements are cracking and sinking under the weight of the vehicles, including where paving was recently replaced during the repairs and resurfacing of the High Street, posing a trip risk to pedestrians. There is a lack of parking controls in the High Street, and the thinking is, that being issued with a parking ticket is unlikely/very rare and therefore it is worth taking the risk of parking illegally for convenience or to save having to pay for parking in the car parks.

Ongar Town Council opposed the blanket increase in parking charges in 2019 across the Epping Forest District Council District, which we believe was badly thought-out and unfair on small struggling towns like Ongar. Increased parking tariffs have not assisted our local businesses or made Ongar attractive to new business. The perception is that EFDC is more concerned in deterring commuters, than the economy of Ongar High Street. But as we have previously stated in communication with you regarding this matter, Ongar does not have a problem with commuters filling car parks, so there is no justification for the increases here.

The following are extracts from our comments on Parking in Ongar discussed with EFDC Councillors in 2019, including Councillor Nigel Avey. Ongar Town Council were told that the EFDC parking strategy was under review. Whilst we appreciate that the pandemic has interrupted proceedings, and we are appreciative of the current reduced tariff of 20p for up to two and a half hours, tariffs will no doubt return to the regular rate at some time in the future.

“Ongar is not a commuter destination town. It is a small regional town centre in the north east of the District without reliable public transport and 8 miles from the nearest station. Visitors need to use a car when they come to Ongar, whether they are shopping, working or simply coming to enjoy the rural location and historic town. There is a small workforce employed in Ongar, the majority on minimum wage, who found the increased daily charge prohibitive”.

“Ongar High Street is in desperate need of regeneration but the recent increase by Epping Forest District Council in parking tariffs has not helped; it makes it even more attractive to shop elsewhere. Ongar is

surrounded by four larger shopping areas, Chelmsford, Romford, Harlow and Brentwood, which are outside the Epping Forest District. Ongar residents often choose to shop in these areas as they offer a greater range of retail outlets. This does not contribute to the Ongar economy or Epping Forest District. Brentwood is the nearest and attracts many shoppers from Ongar, who contribute to improve its economy and ensure their High Street is buoyant”.

“Ongar Town Forum is trying to attract more stall holders to the Wednesday Ongar market. Time will tell if this successful, (it failed because of the lack of customers and ultimately a lack of stalls) but more needs to be done to attract shoppers and businesses to Ongar to revitalise the High Street. Increased parking charges are damaging to Ongar and our High Street. Retail businesses struggle to survive and there are currently several empty shops which are not being filled, and will not be, unless visitors are able to park for a reasonable price and use local shops and amenities. Growth in retail and tourism will create jobs and a better environment”.

“In conclusion Ongar Town Council believes that the unilateral parking charges increase by Epping Forest District Council did not take into account the local climate. Ongar Town Council urges Epping Forest District Council to reconsider the blanket increase in car parking tariffs across the district and instead considers individual locations, what is relevant in those locations and how a reduction or removal of parking tariffs would benefit specific locations”.

Ongar Town Council has applied to Essex County Council for a 20-mph speed limit and a vehicle weight restriction through the High Street. The restriction, if granted, would improve safety, reduce pollution, protect historical buildings, and improve the environment for shoppers and residents.

Maintenance

Town Councillors have recently compiled photographic evidence of the decline in the state of Ongar. The photographs included in the document are merely a sample. There are many more and all are exclusive to Ongar.

Defects found and reported to Essex County Council and Epping Forest District Council receive little or no attention, and Ongar Town Council has been forced to submit repeated reports. One repeatedly reported defect took more than 3 years to be dealt with, even though there was a risk to the public from said defect. When the work was finally undertaken the quality of the work was poor and shoddy and consequently a new defect was reported. The work should never have been left in such an obvious substandard condition and still posing a risk to the public.

Bollards were located at various places on the pavements in the High Street, as both a safety and deterrent measure, but over time these have been damaged, removed and not replaced, and the surrounding pavement badly repaired. The removal of the bollards and poor repairs have added to the declining appearance of Ongar. More bollards are needed to prevent pavement parking (for example outside the Well Pharmacy and Chinese takeaway) and missing or damaged bollards need replacing.

Ongar Town Council are aware that many of these highlighted issues may be prevalent within Epping Forest District Council but their concern is with the condition of Ongar, and its apparent neglect.

The defects and problems photographed and documented include the following issues:

- blocked drains
- broken pavement bollards which have not been replaced, and poorly repaired surrounding pavement
- damaged kerbs and verges
- overgrown vegetation
- pavement parking
- road and footpath maintenance
- street cleaning
- street signs and street furniture
- weed control and grass cutting

These many defects and issues are not comprehensive or restricted to any particular road but are prevalent throughout Ongar, and a physical visit to Ongar to inspect these issues will make EFDC fully aware of the issues and the embarrassment to Ongar and EFDC.

Ongar Town Councillors would welcome the opportunity to host a visit by Epping Forest District Council to Ongar and open discussions about how these problems will be addressed.

Footpath Obstructions and Parking

Walking around Ongar, especially in the High Street, it has been noted that there are a number of pedestrian obstructions including advertising boards/goods placed outside businesses, and vehicles parking on the pavements.

While we have no wish to adversely affect businesses, especially during these difficult times, the fear is that precedents will be set if this issue is not checked. The placing of advertising boards and goods on the pavement is unsympathetic to the status of Ongar as an old rural market town in a conservation area and spoils the appearance of the High Street.

With regards to vehicles parked on the footpaths, there are instances where, in order to get past parked vehicles, pedestrians, mobility scooters and those pushing prams or pushchairs are forced to go into the road, putting themselves and others at risk.

The following photographs show examples of these issues:

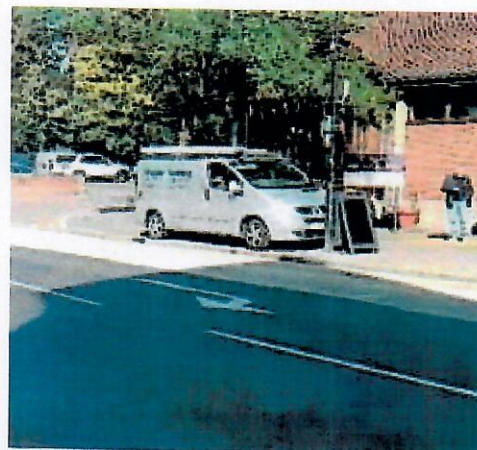
Footpath Obstructions High Street



Footpath Obstructions High Street



Vehicle Obstruction High Street



Vehicle Obstruction High Street



Vehicle Obstruction High Street Opposite the Fire Station



Kerbs and drains

Ongar councillors have surveyed the condition of the streets in their wards, both residential and the main High Street, and are dismayed at the number of broken kerbs and damaged or blocked drains to be seen. Once again, this demonstrates the apparent lack of maintenance and attention given to the town.

Broken kerbs and collapsed drains in residential streets are a trip hazard to pedestrians and can damage vehicles. Blocked and damaged drains cause regular flooding, particularly in the High Street, every time there is heavy or prolonged rain.

The photographs below are a small sample to demonstrate the issue, which is very extensive and occurs throughout Ongar.

High Street - outside police station



Love Lane



High Street - between station and Bowes Drive



High Street



Shakletons Bowes Drive - (outside 16 and 23 and others)



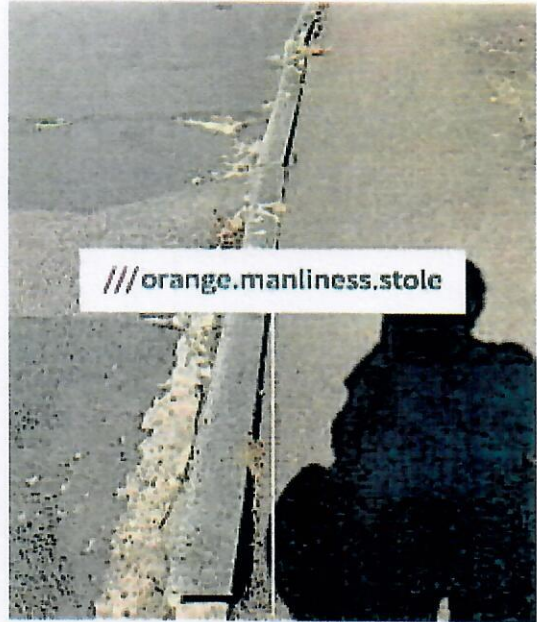
Onslow Gardens



Mayflower Way



Onslow Gardens – footpath leading to Recreation ground and Great Lawn



Longfields



Green Walk and Woodland Way



Queensway



The Elms



Road and Pavement surfaces

Walking round their wards, observing the condition of the streets, both residential and the main High Street, Ongar Councillors have noted that the status of many of the pavement and road surfaces are unsatisfactory. Many are a danger to pedestrians and vehicles, as well as being unsightly, giving the impression that the town is uncared for. Pavements are a patchwork of repairs, with uneven surfaces, cracks, and gaps, with weeds growing through those gaps. Sunken manhole covers and uneven repairs present a trip hazard to pedestrians. There are painted markings left by companies such as Gigaclear, which are unattractive. Many residential road surfaces have defects which have been poorly repaired or have not been dealt with at all. These issues are one of the many aspects which, yet again, demonstrate a lack of maintenance and attention to the town, and are angering residents.

These problems are extensive and occur in every street in Ongar. The photographs below are a small sample to demonstrate the issue.

Pavement between Tesco and Basons Way - White markings left on pavement after Gigaclear works to install broadband



Bowes Drive no 16 Dropped kerb/driveway collapsed



High street footpath into Mayflower Way



High Street between Great Lawn and Four Wantz



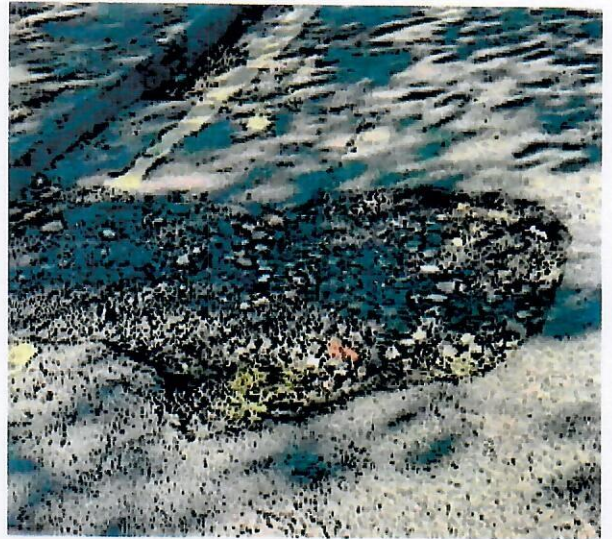
Churchill Close and The Johns



High Street and faded pedestrian crossing markings



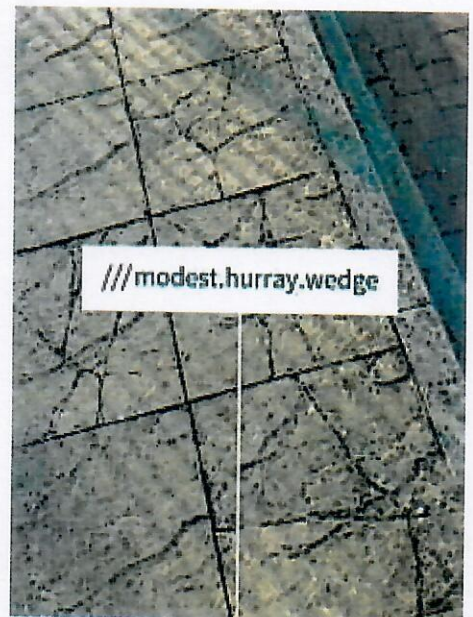
Great Lawn



High Street opposite Great Lawn



Victoria Road



Cripsey Ave, corner of Acres Ave, Shelley



Fyfield Road pavement



The Elms



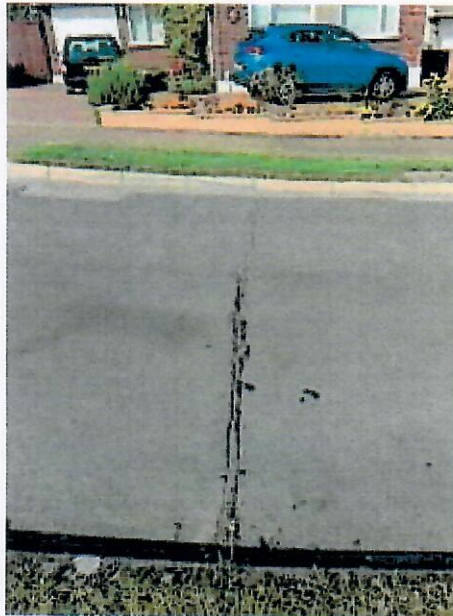
Woodland Way



Landview Gardens



Green Walk



Street Cleaning

When Ongar Councillors walked around their wards looking at the condition of many aspects of the town, street cleaning was another issue that was a cause for concern.

Ongar has a street cleaner whose function appears to be to pick up litter, empty the waste bins in the High Street, but not to sweep or clean it. Residential roads to receive little or no attention.

The following photographs show clearly the extent of the problem. This issue is evident all over Ongar, not just in one area.

High Street litter and poor ground maintenance



Litter Livingstone Close residential area



Discarded sandbags corner of High Street and Castle Street



High Street litter and unauthorised discarded rubbish



Recycling bins and Discarded Tickets Budworth Hall car park



Surface dressing from the recent resurfacing of the High Street



Blocked drain High Street



Fly posting High Street lamp post



Discarded EFDC car park notices



Unswept beds and unkept footpaths with leaves from 2019 and earlier



Pigeon Droppings High Street



High Street waste bin between Zinc and Great Stoney



Street Furniture

It was observed by Ongar Councillors that street furniture in Ongar, including, but not exclusively, lamp posts, railings, street signs and bollards, are suffering from a lack of maintenance in both the High Street and residential roads.

Bollards in the High Street were installed to stop vehicles from parking on the footpaths, (highlighted as a serious issue elsewhere in this document) and to provide protection to pedestrians, especially where the pavements are narrow. However, some bollards have been damaged, knocked over, or removed, and not subsequently replaced, defeating the object of having them in the first place. Pavement repairs around the damaged bollards are poor. As no effect control exists to stop pavement parking more bollards are needed in the High Street to, protect pedestrians, and prevent further damage to the paving.

Repairs to the fence around the old allotments at the south end of the town, carried out by ECC, were extremely poor and it is now in a dangerous condition, posing a risk to passing pedestrians. ECC were notified that the repair was not acceptable, but OTC have received no response.

The following photographs show some examples of these issues:

Budworth Hall car park. Weeds, cable ties on lamp post, poor maintenance



Damaged, missing, and unmaintained bollards in the high street, kerb stones are level with the road rendering them ineffective



Unmaintained and damaged bollard in the high street



Poorly maintained street name



Poorly maintained street name



This fence at the bottom of the high street was recently repaired by ECC, using the same mesh. Clearly visible is a poor and shoddy work.



Verges, weeds, vegetation

The poor state of many of the verges, the number of weeds and the amount of overhanging or encroaching vegetation which was observed by Ongar Councillors, in both residential streets and along the main road, are a major concern, both visually and for pedestrian safety.

It appears that these have received little or no attention or maintenance for a considerable amount of time, apart from cursory mowing of the verges. Many verges have little or no definitions or edging and have been damaged by vehicles. Weeds are growing around street furniture and trees, alongside walls and in gaps in the pavement and roads left from poor repairs. In some locations, vegetation is encroaching onto, or overhanging footways causing pedestrians difficulty in passing. It was also noted that there is a risk to pedestrians from, for example, thorns from overhanging brambles and as well as low, overhanging branches. Additionally, street signs are often obscured by excessive vegetation which has not been cut back.

The photographs below are a small sample to demonstrate these issues, which are very extensive and occur in every street in Ongar.

Verges - High street and Bowes Drive



Verges

- Churchill Close and Onslow Gardens



Verges - High Street and Mayflower Way



Verges - High Street and Roding View

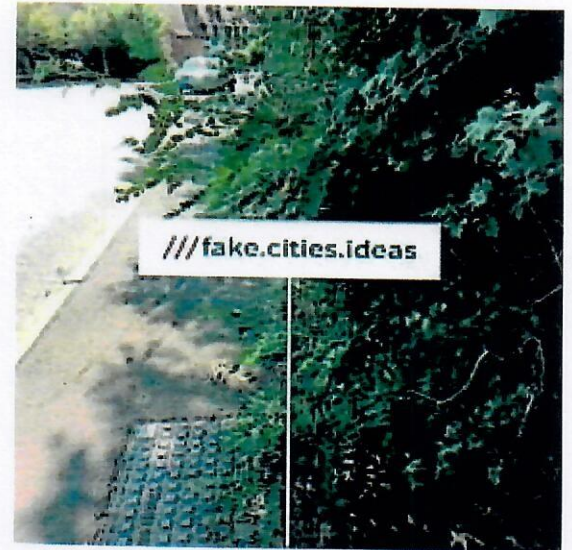


Verge and weeds - Acres Avenue and Banson's Way

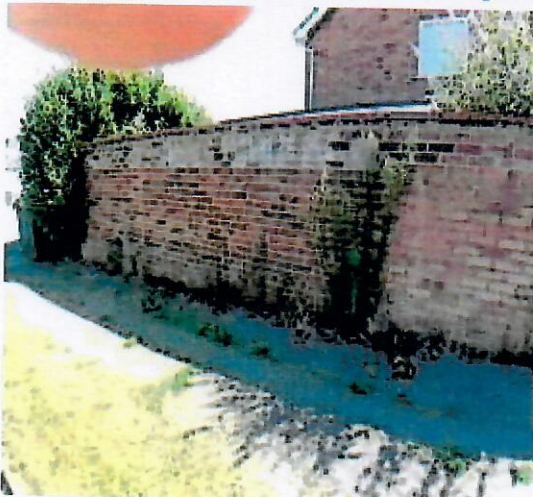




Weeds and encroaching vegetation



Weeds Corner of Cloverly Road/Longfields



Weeds and vegetation Queensway and Fyfield Road obscuring important road sign warning drivers of a school



Verge/Overgrown Vegetation – Shelley



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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-057-2020/21
Date of meeting: 21 January 2021



Portfolio: Finance and Economic Development – Cllr. J Philip

Subject: Digital Gateway for Place

Responsible Officer: Houston John Houston (01992 564094).

Democratic Services: Adrian Hendry (01992 564246).

Recommendations:

- (1) That Cabinet notes the work undertaken by officers in relation to the development and implementation of a digital platform for the district; and**
- (2) That Cabinet considers the proposals and options for creating support for local businesses to trade successfully online and makes recommendations on the preferred way forward.**

Executive Summary:

The Economic Development team have been tasked with the development of a digital platform for the district that will create a single online point of access for a wide range of information and services catering for the needs of residents and public and private sector organisations plus links to EFDC and other public sector websites and information.

This report therefore provides an overview and update for Cabinet on work carried out to date.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To give guidance and approval for the site and its initial design, development, construction and approval for purchase of the Maybe* support/training package.

Other Options for Action:

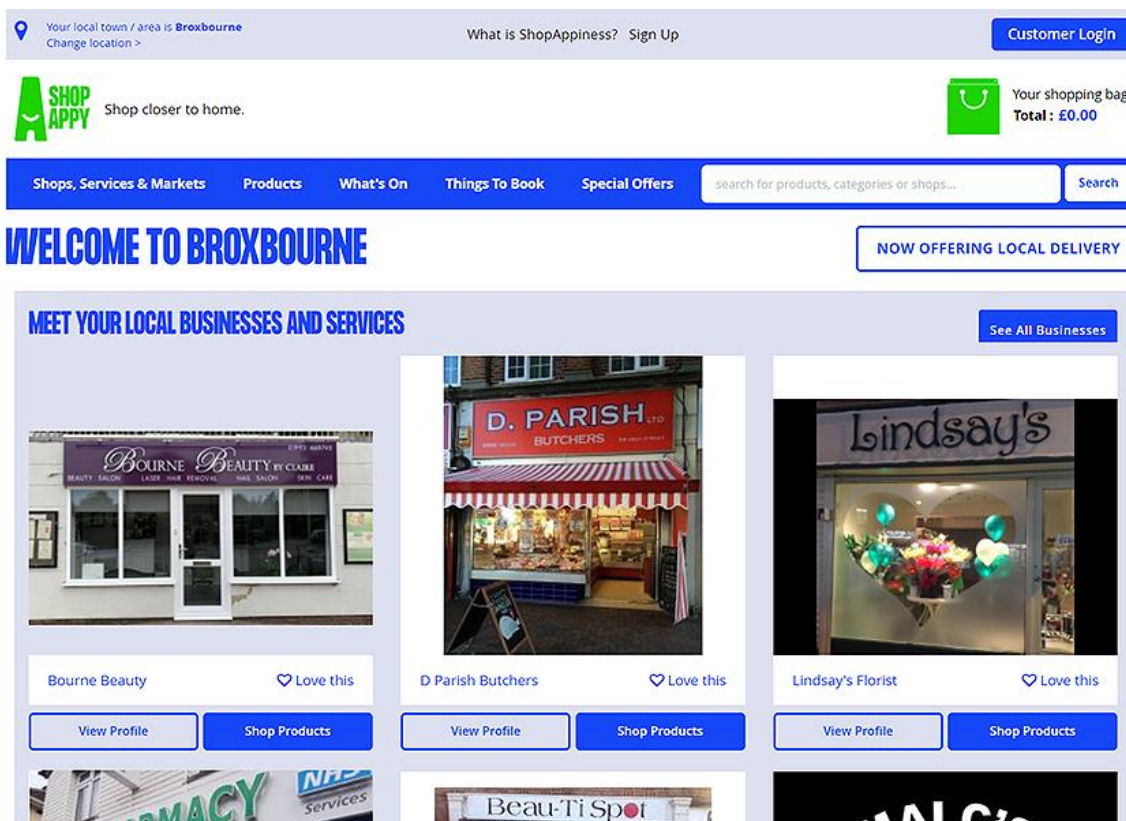
N/a

Report:

- Given the limitations from funding and urgency to develop the initially envisaged full digital platform, a decision was taken to progress a more limited brief with the intention of quickly offering practical help to enable local businesses to trade successfully online. This is the option also being taken by a number of neighbouring authorities to support the businesses most impacted by Covid 19 restrictions and in support of beleaguered high streets and town centres. This support has two main strands, an easy to use online portal that allows businesses to promote their businesses and make online sales, and online training to understand how to match the online offer to changing local customer needs and generate traffic to the site and sales.
- It is recommended that Maybe* is the proven development tool purchased to support the council and local businesses to effectively engage with the local marketplace via social

media to create, promote and build local online sales. The proposed package includes support packages for 500 local businesses giving the council the ability to monitor and measure local online growth by town centre and benchmark this against neighbouring areas and national best practice. The Maybe* package also includes the ability to run a local shopper loyalty rewards system. More details are attached in the Maybe* proposal document including a cost breakdown.

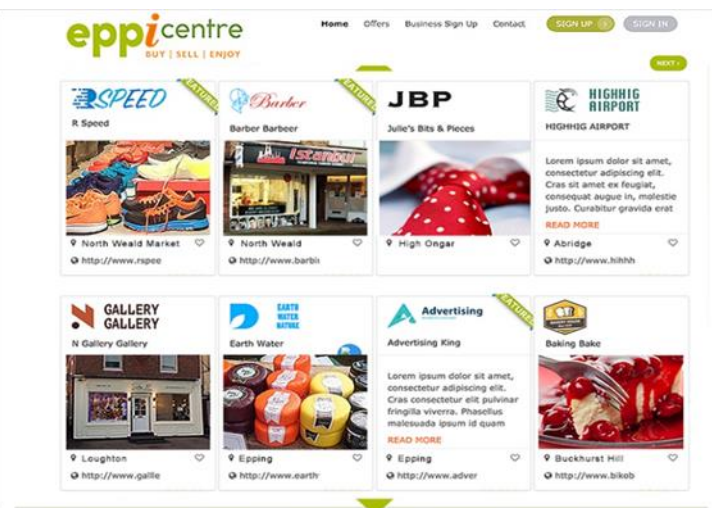
3. For the provision of an online portal, two options are available. The first is to buy an off-the-shelf package and the second is to create our own platform. The benefits of the first option are speed of delivery, a proven system and no design and development costs. The benefits of the second option are a system tailored to our specific needs on a platform that can be expanded and therefore form the starting point for a more integrated digital platform as initially envisaged.
4. The marketplace for off-the-shelf online portals have been investigated and two products are available to suit our needs. The first is ShopAppy and the second is Click It Local. ShopAppy was created four years ago in the town of Saltaire to provide local shops with an online shopping portal featuring a click and collect/delivery service. ShopAppy allows businesses to create and manage their own online shop and customers to select purchases from across a range of local outlets into one basket with one payment for all the goods. The purchases are gathered together and placed in a collection point for customer pick-up or delivered to the customer's home. There is a variable weekly charge to the businesses in the scheme although this is currently waived during the pandemic. An additional charge applies to the customer for home delivery and there are time limit restrictions on collection for fresh goods.



5. Click It Local is similar to ShopAppy but a more recent commercially developed product that is more sophisticated in look and operation. As with ShopAppy it is primarily a click and collect offer with delivery courier partners included. There is no joining charge for businesses but a levy on transactions. In both cases, the system provider generates awareness and business sign-ups in new areas plus promotion of the site to customers. However, the speed of population of businesses and quality of content generated by the businesses themselves, is limited with an expectation that the local authorities resource input can accelerate the process.



6. Currently, locally ShopAppy is being offered by Broxbourne and Enfield and Click It Local is being offered across all the Uttlesford town centres and in talks with Chelmsford and Brentwood. There is a possibility that if Uttlesford, Chelmsford, Brentwood and Epping Forest all take Click It Local, there could be benefits in some form of linkage, especially around promotion and delivery and benefits to businesses that have customers or outlets across the geography.
7. For the own developed site option, the Economic Development Team have created a site proposal with a private company that has undertaken similar work for the council in the past. A draft site name and domain has been worked up to illustrate a brand style. An initial skin and sample pages have been produced for evaluation with an off-line beta site being created to test functionality and navigation. The site would offer the same benefits as the off-the-shelf products plus additional local functionality with direct linkage to other existing local information.



8. In summary, Maybe* gives officers the tools to monitor and measure the performance of local online markets and the ability to directly support 500 local businesses to successfully extend sales online and create customer loyalty rewards. Off-the-shelf websites can provide fast portals for local businesses to start trading online with no design and development costs or delay for build. A purpose-built site would be council owned and tailored to our specific

requirements including the ability to expand in line with the vision for a more comprehensive digital platform.

Timescales and milestones:

Maybe* and ShopAppy / Click It Local are available off-the-shelf and therefore could be live within a matter of days. The Maybe* dashboard would need to be cleared with IT for installation and access within the Council's IT system. For the own-site option, some of the initial development work has already been done on a speculative basis. It may take up to four weeks for the site to be fully ready for businesses to access and trade. However, the site would not be officially launched until a plausible representative cross section of local businesses was featured on the site, although direct marketing to local businesses for sign-up would commence as soon as the site was commissioned. Likewise, building a customer base would commence with the launch to businesses of the Maybe* support package. It is envisaged that a populated and functioning portal would be operating within eight to ten weeks of go ahead. Timescales, milestones and costs here

Resource Implications:

For Maybe* the dashboards need IT input to be placed and operational within the council's system and then be monitored and acted upon where necessary within the appropriate departments. This is a resource that can be shared across all relevant council departments. The Economic Department will be responsible for allocating, distributing and supporting the 500 local business memberships and monitoring and measuring ongoing performance. The Economic Department will be responsible for coordinating and implementing local loyalty reward programmes.

For an off-the-shelf local online business trading platform, the Economic Team would be responsible for negotiating a suitable package and work with the provider to sell-in to businesses, establish a plausible spread of local businesses across the district and build awareness and buy-in across the relevant customer base. In addition, for the own-site option, the Economic Team would be involved in the design and development of the online shopping portal and any additional functionality added.

Costs identified are:

Maybe support package (EFDC plus 500 local businesses) including Local Rewards package - £7,353 for first year.

£10k marketing: business sign-ups and public awareness for online trading portal.

For own-site option: £10k site development, build and populate to level suitable for launch and £10k for first year hosting, web mastering and maintenance.

Legal and Governance Implications:

None at present.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

None at present.

Consultation Undertaken:

Development work on the own-site option with a private company that has undertaken similar work for the council in the past.

Background Papers:

Maybe* proposal attached

Risk Management:

N/a

Equality Impact Assessment

1. Under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, Epping District Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, ie have due regard to:
 - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
 - advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
 - fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
2. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage/civil partnership
 - pregnancy/maternity
 - race
 - religion/belief
 - sexual orientation.
3. In addition to the above protected characteristics you should consider the cross-cutting elements of the proposed policy, namely the social, economic and environmental impact (including rurality) as part of this assessment. These cross-cutting elements are not a characteristic protected by law but are regarded as good practice to include.
4. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document should be used as a tool to test and analyse the nature and impact of either what we do or are planning to do in the future. It can be used flexibly for reviewing existing arrangements but in particular should enable identification where further consultation, engagement and data is required.
5. Use the questions in this document to record your findings. This should include the nature and extent of the impact on those likely to be affected by the proposed policy or change.
6. Where this EqIA relates to a continuing project, it must be reviewed and updated at each stage of the decision.
7. All **Cabinet, Council, and Portfolio Holder reports must be accompanied by an EqIA**. An EqIA should also be completed/reviewed at key stages of projects.
8. To assist you in completing this report, please ensure you read the guidance notes in the Equality Analysis Toolkit and refer to the following Factsheets:
 - Factsheet 1: Equality Profile of the Epping Forest District
 - Factsheet 2: Sources of information about equality protected characteristics
 - Factsheet 3: Glossary of equality related terms
 - Factsheet 4: Common misunderstandings about the Equality Duty
 - Factsheet 5: Frequently asked questions
 - Factsheet 6: Reporting equality analysis to a committee or other decision making body

Section 1: Identifying details
Your function, service area and team: Economic Development
If you are submitting this EqIA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service area or team: N/A
Title of policy or decision: Town Centre Regeneration
Officer completing the EqIA: John Houston Tel: 01992 564 Email: jhouston@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
Date of completing the assessment: 20/11/20

Section 2: Policy to be analysed	
2.1	Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project? This is an information item only.
2.2	Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision): This report provides an update on work undertaken to support Town Centres across the district. What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (ie decommissioning or commissioning a service)? It is anticipated that detailed reports will be produced for each of the Town Centres that will set out a set of recommendations for action by the Council.
2.3	Does or will the policy or decision affect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • service users • employees • the wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities? None at present Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate? Not at present
2.4	Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources? Not at present
2.5	Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies and how, if applicable, does the proposed policy support corporate outcomes? The work referred to in this report substantially contributes to Corporate Objectives.

Section 3: Evidence/data about the user population and consultation¹

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

3.1	What does the information tell you about those groups identified? N/a
3.2	Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision you want to implement? If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision? N/a
3.3	If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary: N/a

Section 4: Impact of policy or decision

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

Description of impact	Nature of impact Positive, neutral, adverse (explain why)	Extent of impact Low, medium, high (use L, M or H)
Age	N/A	
Disability	N/A	
Gender	N/A	
Gender reassignment	N/A	
Marriage/civil partnership	N/A	
Pregnancy/maternity	N/A	
Race	N/A	
Religion/belief	N/A	
Sexual orientation	N/A	

Section 5: Conclusion

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

Section 6: Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

What are the potential adverse impacts?	What are the mitigating actions?	Date they will be achieved.

Section 7: Sign off

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

Signature of Head of Service: Julie Chandler

Date: 20/11/20

Signature of person completing the EqIA: John Houston

Date: 21/11/20

Advice

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

Epping District Council

Digital Recovery Plan

Author: Sarah Bassett - Maybe* Head of Place

sarah@maybetech.com 07545 999362

www.maybetech.com

23rd October 2020

“Connecting businesses with their local communities/catchment and being able to connect business together is a fundamental element of success in town-centre regeneration.

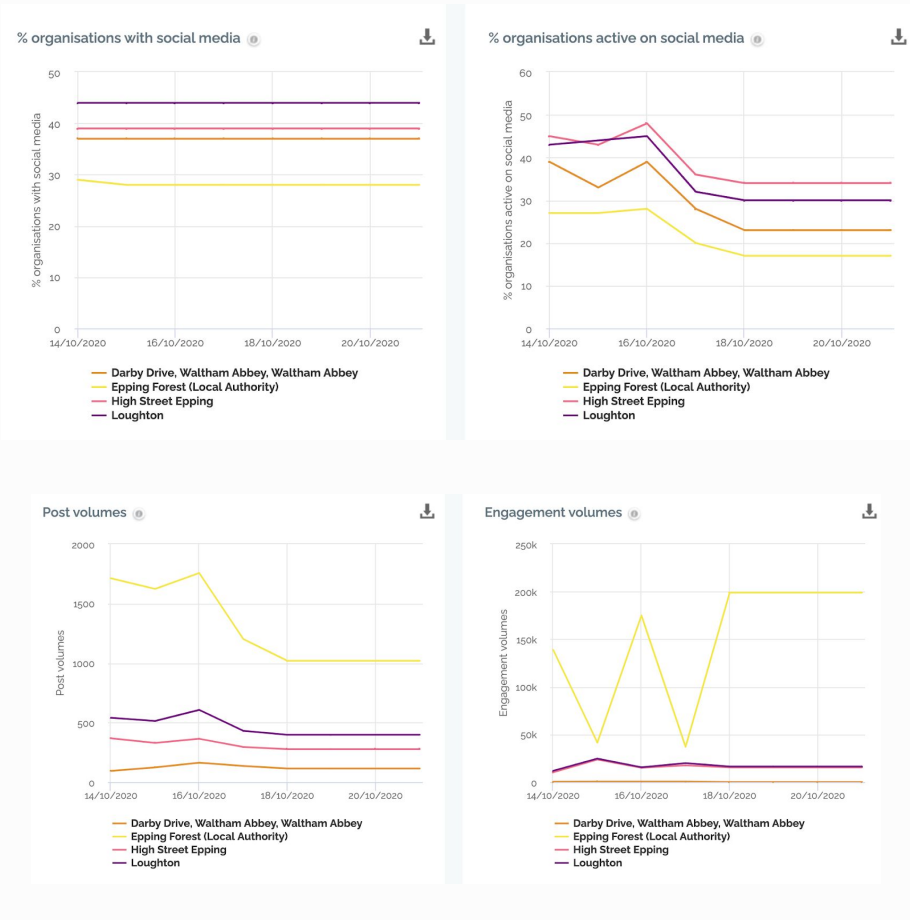
Maybe has a proven solution that can be used as a central pillar of the recovery of town centres across the UK.*

Professor Cathy Parker, Lead of High Street Task Force



Maybe* is part of the UK Government's High Street Task Force which supports communities and local government to transform their High Streets

Where do we start?



Maybe* data shows that across the district, only 27.5% of businesses use social media and only 16.9% of those are actively on social media each day. Together, they create 1200 posts per day and generate around 130k engagements.

Imagine the impact it would have if all of the businesses in the borough were using social media regularly! Even if those businesses simply engaged with each other's content, today's insights show they have a potential collective reach of over 732 million consumers.

Epping Forest (Local Authority) ★📍	▼	336 ↑ 32	27.5 %	16.9 % ↓ -36 %	732.6 M ↑ 1 %
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What Next?

Maybe* provides access to a market-leading platform and training that helps Local Authorities and BIDs support their businesses to leverage digital channels as they continue to trade alongside COVID-19.

Maybe* will connect you to all of your nominated High Streets, and the local businesses within them via social media channels; Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

This means, that Epping Forest District Council can:

1. Provide the access to [comprehensive online social media training](#) for all the businesses in the district, along with the tools they need to improve.
2. Increase both the volume and quality of the social media content across the district
3. Facilitate and drive engagement across all your seasonal local campaigns
4. Drive footfall, sales and economic resilience in the lead up to Christmas 2020 and beyond
5. Provide visible success stories in every town
6. Manage their organisational reputation across all social media channels
7. Understand sentiment and conversation across all of their main centres
8. Access weekly social media training for all key stakeholders and local Champions
9. Have daily access to the data that tracks the performance of all their businesses

Why Now?

3.6 billion consumers across the world are now spending over 3 hours a day on social media. In the light of recent lockdown measures becoming more stringent, this is likely to increase dramatically in the coming days and weeks and yet only 16.9% of the socially active businesses in the district are posting anything for them to engage with! It's not a localised problem, we are seeing this in all areas of the UK. Social media done well, drives sales FACT. No social media, missing an opportunity, FACT.

Given the urgency required to implement a launch campaign and commence the social media training needed to drive engagement, footfall, online and offline sales in the district in the lead up to Christmas and beyond into 2021, we are supporting every place with the assets they need to succeed at pace. Our campaign can be launched with 5 working days of agreements being in place.

Watch the Video Demo for [Place Stakeholders](#)

New Optional Loyalty Module

Local Rewards is a nationwide loyalty programme that helps increase sales and measure which promotions work.

It supports local economies by rewarding consumer's local spend through their existing Visa and Mastercard whilst also providing independent businesses with access to market leading digital tools and training.

Watch the Video Demo for [Local Rewards](#)



Maybe*



“Our aim is that every card transaction in a place, creates another opportunity to boost sales locally.”

— Polly Barnfield, OBE, CEO and Founder of Maybe*

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What is the cost?

The Maybe* licence gives you the ability to engage with and monitor the social media conversation throughout any one or all of your towns. The price paid by Epping Forest District Council will be determined by the number of organisations in the geographical area to be included within your platform.

It includes the ability to provide all of the businesses in each of your towns with sponsored access to the Maybe* platform, a suite of social media training, weekly webinars and all the tools they need enable them to socially connect, both with each other's conversations, and with their individual town as a place.

Maybe* Service	Annual Costs
Platform access for you and up to 500 businesses* <i>Uttlesford DC main centres</i>	£5,180 <i>£10.36 per business</i> <i>Minus 15% discount</i> Discounted Price £4,403
Platform access for you and up to 1000 businesses* <i>Larger district</i>	£8,080 <i>£8.08 per business</i> <i>Minus 15% Discount</i> Discounted Price £6,868
Local Rewards - Starter Pack (small) To include 5000 transactions - must have Platform access package	£2.950 per town
Local Rewards - Starter Pack (large) To include 10,000 transactions - must have Platform access package	£4950 - would cover the district NB:based on transaction not annual fee.
Local Rewards - additional 5000 transactions	£1500
Full training on how to use the Maybe* platform to engage with your businesses for all LA account users and local champions	Included
Social Media training for businesses, access to webinars and membership of the Maybe* make social media work Facebook Group	Included
Launch Campaign to include landing page content; press release templates; social media campaign plan and social media assets	Included

Who Maybe* works with

- High Street Task Force
- FSB - Federation of Small Businesses
- Bira - British Independent Retailers Association
- ACS - Association of Convenience Stores
- BT- Skills for Tomorrow Program
- New River Retail
- Addington Capital
- Redevco
- Alterx Capital
- GFirst LEP
- The Growth Hub
- Cotswold District Council
- Harrogate Borough Council
- Destination Chesterfield
- Uttlesford District Council
- Exeter BID
- Putney BID
- Kings Lynn BID
- And more!

We look forward to working with you.

www.maybetech.com

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-058-2020/21

Date of meeting: 21 January 2021



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Planning & Sustainability – Cllr. N Bedford

Subject: Tree Planting Strategy

Responsible Officer: Nick Dawe (01992 562541).

Democratic Services Officer: Adrian Hendry (01992 564246).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

Note the work being undertaken by officers on a large-scale tree planting strategy, endorse the approach and provide any further guidance to officers

Executive Summary:

This report looks to update Cabinet on work being done to move forward a joined up and proactive strategy that aims to increase tree and hedgerow planting throughout the Epping Forest District. The overall aim is to enable and support all organisations in the public and private sector to have a proactive approach to planting. Initially the Council will look to lead this activity by getting significant planting underway this planting season (November-March).

The Council's Corporate Plan aims to make the District a good place to live, work, study and do business, significant tree planting supports these aims by enhancing health and wellbeing in the area, capturing carbon and improving air quality. This strategy also encompasses the tree planting project within the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and the call for sites from Essex County Council for the Essex Forest Initiative.

I should be noted, that the success of this initiative is dependent on the established and developing links with Parish and Town Councils and other interested groups, charities and volunteers.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

This report does not require a decision or recommendation as all actions suggested are within existing budget provision.

Other Options for Action:

N/A

Report:

1. Work has been undertaken to devise a joined up and proactive strategy that aims to increase tree and hedgerow planting throughout the District. The Council's Corporate Plan aims to make the District a good place to live, work, study and do business, significant tree planting supports these aims by enhancing health and wellbeing in the area, capturing carbon and improving air quality. There is also alignment to the tree planting project within the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and the call for sites from Essex County Council for the Essex Forest Initiative that aims to plant 375,000 trees across Essex in the next 5 years.
2. The first priority for the Council is to take action and show leadership by planting trees on Council owned land, therefore an internal working group has been established internally to champion this activity. The group includes representatives from the Countryside and Planning service areas.
3. Work has started to identify available land with a call for sites internally. The group are reviewing numbers to be planted and assessing deliverability in the short term, while also looking at medium- and long-term planning. The area of land available from the initial call for sites, without a full review is reasonable but it is highly unlikely all these will be able to be brought forward. The density of trees to be planted on each site will also be variable depending on the location. The intention is to get significant planting underway this planting season within the £250k existing budget that has been allocated to support and underpin work such as this.
4. A supply of trees has been identified and funded from a private sector company, but investigations have shown initial barriers of land acquisition as well as post planting maintenance and care. It is thought that Qualis Community Interest Company could take on a stewardship role with regards to maintenance and care and this issue is being followed-up.
5. The plant trees at scale previous links were built with neighbours through the Green Arc partnership, chaired by Nigel Bedford. This was hampered by the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, with the work parked until the new climate change officer started in post to give resource to move this forward. The strategy aims to renew this and activate public sector body, private sector and private landowner planting action across the District.
6. Parish Councils have already been proactive by accessing resource from Woodland Trust, something we would like to promote to others including community groups and schools. The overall aim is to enable and support all organisations to have a proactive approach to planting. Officers are also exploring provisions to support partnerships with farmers and private landowners with regards to the Agriculture Act that comes into force in 2021.

Resource Implications:

Officer lead – support from John Houston, internal working group
Budget

Legal and Governance Implications:

No immediate implications

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

This tree planting strategy has been designed to underpin the values of safer, cleaner and greener.

Trees capture and store carbon emissions through photosynthesis and within a woodland ecosystem carbon is stored within the living wood, deadwood, surrounding soils and associated vegetation. Increased capture of carbon will play a role in reaching the ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030 alongside carbon reduction activities. By planting new native woodland well suited to the area, this will boost biodiversity and help wildlife.

Trees have also been shown to improve air quality particularly in urban areas by removing gaseous air pollution through uptake on the plant surface and interception of airborne particles.

Reduced flooding can be another benefit where trees directly intercept rainfall, promote higher soil infiltration rates and use a greater amount of water.

A greener area with trees planted has also been found to improve the mental health and wellbeing of residents.

Consultation Undertaken:

A number of significant external conversations have been held with public bodies in and around the District to establish and assess the commitment to work jointly.

Background Papers:

Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy

Essex Forest Initiative Paper

Green Arc Briefing Paper

Risk Management:

Risks are being identified and mitigated and are alluded to in this report. However it should be observed that this is a start of a process and plan.

Equality Impact Assessment

Equality Impact Assessment

1. Under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, Epping District Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, ie have due regard to:
 - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
 - advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
 - fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
2. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage/civil partnership
 - pregnancy/maternity
 - race
 - religion/belief
 - sexual orientation.
3. In addition to the above protected characteristics, you should consider the cross-cutting elements of the proposed policy, namely the social, economic and environmental impact (including rurality) as part of this assessment. These cross-cutting elements are not a characteristic protected by law but are regarded as good practice to include.
4. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document should be used as a tool to test and analyse the nature and impact of either what we do or are planning to do in the future. It can be used flexibly for reviewing existing arrangements but in particular should enable identification where further consultation, engagement and data is required.
5. Use the questions in this document to record your findings. This should include the nature and extent of the impact on those likely to be affected by the proposed policy or change.
6. Where this EqIA relates to a continuing project, it must be reviewed and updated at each stage of the decision.
7. All **Cabinet, Council, and Portfolio Holder reports must be accompanied by an EqIA**. An EqIA should also be completed/reviewed at key stages of projects.
8. To assist you in completing this report, please ensure you read the guidance notes in the Equality Analysis Toolkit and refer to the following Factsheets:
 - Factsheet 1: Equality Profile of the Epping Forest District
 - Factsheet 2: Sources of information about equality protected characteristics
 - Factsheet 3: Glossary of equality related terms
 - Factsheet 4: Common misunderstandings about the Equality Duty
 - Factsheet 5: Frequently asked questions
 - Factsheet 6: Reporting equality analysis to a committee or other decision-making body

Section 1: Identifying details

Your function, service area and team: **Climate Change (Chief Operating Officer)**

If you are submitting this EqlA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service area or team: **NA**

Title of policy or decision: **Tree Planting Programme**

Officer completing the EqlA: **Tel: 07939449512 Email: ndawe@eppingforestdc.gov.uk**

Date of completing the assessment: **6th January 2021**

Section 2: Policy to be analysed

2.1	Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project? No
2.2	Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision): Tree planting and environmental improvement What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (ie decommissioning or commissioning a service)? Spatial and environmental improvements
2.3	Does or will the policy or decision affect: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• service users• employees• the wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities? Only beneficially and proportionately Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate? No
2.4	Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources? No from within existing budget and from external sources
2.5	Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies and how, if applicable, does the proposed policy support corporate outcomes? Local Plan (draft) other policies to follow

Section 3: Evidence/data about the user population and consultation¹

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

3.1	What does the information tell you about those groups identified? No adverse impact after review
3.2	Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision you want to implement? If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision? Partners involved in the initiative and project and broader community support is required during implementation stage.
3.3	If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary: NA

Section 4: Impact of policy or decision

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

Description of impact	Nature of impact Positive, neutral, adverse (explain why)	Extent of impact Low, medium, high (use L, M or H)
Age	Beneficial	Marginal
Disability	Beneficial	Marginal
Gender	Beneficial	Marginal
Gender reassignment	Beneficial	Marginal
Marriage/civil partnership	Beneficial	Marginal
Pregnancy/maternity	Beneficial	Marginal
Race	Beneficial	Marginal
Religion/belief	Beneficial	Marginal
Sexual orientation	Beneficial	Marginal

Section 5: Conclusion

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

Section 6: Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

What are the potential adverse impacts?	What are the mitigating actions?	Date they will be achieved.

Section 7: Sign off

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

Signature of Head of Service: **Nick Dawe**

Date: **06/01/2021**

Signature of person completing the EqIA: **Nick Dawe**

Date: **06/01/2021**

Advice

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