

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL COUNCILS' LIAISON COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Thursday, 8 July 2021 **Time:** 6.00 - 7.13 pm

Place: Virtual Meeting on Zoom

Members Present:

Representing Epping Forest District Council:

Councillors H Kane (Chairman), J Lea, R Morgan, B Rolfe, M Sartin, J Share-Bernia and J H Whitehouse

Other Councillors:

Councillors R Balcombe

Representing Essex County Council:

County Councillors S Kane

Representing Local Councils:

C C Pond (Vice-Chairman), B Rumsey (Epping Town Council), A Belgrave (Chigwell Parish Council), Cllr S Bosworth, Cllr E Burn (Theydon Bois Parish Council), Cllr K Carter (Nazeing Parish Council), S De Luca (North Weald Bassett Parish Council), Cllr C Feetham (Ongar Town Council), Cllr L Fresco, Cllr C Jefcoate, Cllr S Neville, Cllr R Northwood (Sheering Parish Council), Cllr D Wixley (Loughton Town Council), Cllr B Scruton, M Squire (Loughton Town Council), Cllr D Stokes (Willingale Parish Council) and Cllr J Whybrow

Apologies: Epping Forest District Council –

Councillors R Bassett

Essex County Council –

Councillors M Vance, L Scott, H Whitbread and C Whitbread

Parish/Town Councils: -

Buckhurst Hill Parish Clerk (Buckhurst Hill Parish Council), Epping Upland Parish Clerk (Epping Upland Parish Council), Nazeing Parish Clerk (Nazeing Parish Council), Stanford Rivers Parish Clerk (Stanford Rivers Parish Council), Theydon Bois Parish Clerk (Theydon Bois Parish Council) and Waltham Abbey Town Clerk (Waltham Abbey Town Council)

Officers Present:

N Richardson (Service Director (Planning Services)), V Willis (Planning Policy Team Manager), N Blaken (Interim Planning Policy Manager), T Carne (Corporate Communications Team Manager), J Leither (Democratic Services Officer) and R Perrin (Democratic and Electoral Services Officer)

By Invitation: Ruth Duston (Primera), Austin Casey (Primera) and P Hewitt (Qualis Group)

1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman reminded everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN & VICE-CHAIRMAN

(1) It was confirmed the District Councillor H Kane was the Chairman of the Committee for this municipal year; and

(2) Councillor C C Pond was appointed the Vice-Chairman of the Committee for this municipal year.

3. LOCAL PLAN: MAIN MODIFICATIONS

The Committee received an update on the Local Plan from the Interim Planning Policy Manager Natalie Blaken and the Planning Policy Team Manager, Vicki Willis with regards to the next steps for the Main Modifications(MM's) consultation. (Presentation attached).

The Committee asked the following questions:

- Would Parish and Town Councils be able to have hard copies of the Consultation documents? The Planning Services Director, Mr Richardson advised that a hard copy would be supplied to Town and Parish Council, if requested.
- Could a copy of the presentation be emailed to the relevant Town and Parish Councils? The Planning Services Director advised that this would be actioned.
- Could a correction be made to the Green Infrastructure Policy? The Planning Policy Manager advised that the Green Infrastructure Policy formed part of supporting documentation for the consultation and the Cabinet had already agreed the Strategy in April 2021, subject to liaison with the Woodland Trust. Although, because the final amendments had not yet been made, it may be beneficial if the comments were emailed to the Planning Policy Team. The Interim Planning Policy Manager advised that this raised an important issue of how people should respond to the consultation, to ensure that comments on the MM's were made clearly and separately to corrections to the strategy.

The Planning Services Director advised that the delay to the MM's consultation had been due to the continual dialogue between the Council and the Inspector in regards to the 39 Actions and responses given. It was hoped that the consultation would be started within the next two weeks although the date could not be confirmed. It was noted that if the consultation started before the public re-opening of the Reception area, hard copies of the documents could be viewed by appointment at the Civic Offices.

Agreed:

That the presentation be shared with the Committee by email and included with the minutes of the meeting.

4. COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY CONSULTATION - QUALIS

The Committee received a presentation (attached) from Primera Corporation representatives Ruth Dawson and Austin Casey on the Community Interest Company

(CIC) which had been commissioned in March 2021 by the Qualis Group. This included a consultation, the next steps and timeframe for delivery.

The Committee asked the following questions;

- What was meant by the term '15 minute city'? Mr Casey advised that it was a concept which meant that residents could meet most of their needs within a short walk or bicycle ride 15 minutes from their homes, promoting a healthy lifestyle and supporting local independent businesses.
- Who had initially been consulted? Mr Casey advised that they had consulted Qualis and the Service Directors within EFDC. The more general consultation had been hampered by the Covid restrictions and local elections, although they were now reaching out to local Town and Parish Councils, EFYC and other local groups and organisations. The link to the consultation had been included in the presentation and would be emailed out to Parish and Town Clerks.
- How does CIC work? Ms Duston advised that the CIC was there to provide opportunities over and above what the Council already delivered. For example there would be significant opportunities generated through Qualis building projects which could create apprenticeships and training programmes. The CIC would initially focus on the three emerging strategic themes set out in the presentation.

Mr Hewitt clarified that services which had been already transferred to Qualis were a completely independent from the CIC. The CIC was entirely focused on community benefits.

- A member of the Committee raised concerns regarding the Risk Management of Qualis. Mr Hewitt advised that the purpose of Qualis attending the meeting was to discuss the CIC. Qualis' four year business plan had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1 July 2021 and the would be considered by the Cabinet on 12 July 2021.
- How wide ranging would the CIC be? Ms Duston advised that the CIC was currently conceptual ideas of what could delivered. The consultation would allow the CIC to consider what key deliverables the community wanted and that could be self-funded with the opportunity for the CIC to expand in the future.
- How many people would be employed to develop the CIC? Mr Hewitt advised that all resources were already within the Qualis Group and currently no one would be employed by the CIC.
- What was meant by enhanced skills? Mr Hewitt advised that skills from within the Qualis Group would be used to enhance the development of the CIC.

Agreed:

That the consultation included with the presentation was emailed the Committee representatives.

5. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 27 September 2021.

CHAIRMAN

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Local Councils' Liaison Committee update on the Main Modifications stage of the Local Plan

08 July 2021

Update

- Update in 4 sections followed by questions:
 - Introduction
 - Main Modifications stage
 - Inspector's Actions
 - Main Modifications consultation process
- We will avoid acronyms with exception of referring to Main Modifications as MMs and abbreviating Local Plan Submission version (2017) LPSV

Introduction

- What is a Local Plan:
 - District-wide Plan which identifies the vision and aspirations for the future of an area, planning policies, and allocations identifying the sites or areas which can be developed and those which should be protected
 - Sets out the level and distribution of planned growth, including new homes and employment land
 - Once adopted it will become the statutory (legal) Development Plan
 - The LPSV (2017) now afforded substantial weight as material planning consideration in the assessment of planning applications and appeals

- Why do we need a Local Plan:
 - We operate within a Plan-led system
 - Creates a robust planning framework to support and manage the future development of the District
 - Without it, the Council would lose the ability to secure and co-ordinate the development and infrastructure

Introduction: Local Plan process

- We are at an advanced stage in the Plan-making process:



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- Consultation undertaken at a number of stages since 2010
- Most recently:
 - Consultation on the Draft Local Plan Oct – Dec 2016 generated 3,400 responses which were taken into account in producing the LPSV 2017
 - Regulation 19 Publication period Dec 2017– Jan 2018 enabled representations on soundness, legal compliance and Duty to Co-operate. Representations collated and submitted to Planning Inspectorate
 - Examination process provided the opportunity to input through hearing statements and at hearing sessions

Introduction: Local Plan Examination

- LPSV submitted for Examination Sept 2018 and Inspector appointed
- Examination hearing sessions Feb – June 2019
- Inspector issued her post Examination hearing advice Aug 2019
- Council undertaken further work to address the Inspector's Actions
- This work has led to proposed changes to the LPSV known as Main Modifications (MMs)

Main Modifications stage

- What is the MM Stage about?
 - Inspector has identified that a number of MMs to the LPSV 2017 are required to address issues of soundness and/ or legal compliance.
 - This stage is an opportunity for people to make representations on the changes proposed to the published LPSV 2017, including the supporting documents that have informed these changes.
- What it is not:
 - an opportunity to make representations about parts of the Plan that are not proposed to be modified and such representations will not be considered by the Inspector
 - an opportunity to repeat comments already made on other aspects of the Plan as these are already being considered by the Inspector

Main Modifications stage

- The MMs include:
 - Changes to some of the supporting text and Policies within the Plan
 - Deletion and the amendment to some site allocations
 - Updated Housing Supply data to March 2020
 - Associated changes to mapping
 - Drafting inaccuracies or factual updates
- The MMs do not alter the strategy in the LPSV and do not propose any new residential, traveller or employment site allocations to the LPSV
- Format of MM Schedule – new text denoted by underline and removal of text by strikethrough

Inspector's Actions

- 39 Actions within the Inspector's post Examination hearings advice
- Essential to note that the Inspector's advice also confirmed acceptance of a number of key elements of the Plan e.g. the Plan's housing requirement at 11,400
- Summary response to each of the 39 Actions is one of the consultation documents

Main Modifications consultation process

- Consultation period will be approx.10 weeks
- How the consultation be communicated:
 - Internal communication within the Council
 - Postal + email communication with Consultee Database
 - Council and dedicated Local Plan website
 - Programme of press releases and social media
 - District Member Briefing
 - Developer Forum (Date TBD)
 - Town and Parish Council Briefing (08 July)
 - Planning Policy hotline/dedicated email
- Access to consultation materials
 - Local Plan website at efdclocalplan.org and clearly linked from the Council's website
 - Guidance notes and FAQs
 - Hardcopies at libraries and by appointment at Civic Offices

Main Modifications consultation process

- What information will be available
 - Single MM Schedule document (Note Appendix 6/Part 2 constitutes policy)
 - Revised mapping + mapping index
 - Supporting documents to include:
 - Council's response to Inspector's Actions
 - Sustainability Appraisal Addendum
 - 2021 Habitats Regulations Assessment
 - Epping Forest Interim Air Pollution Mitigation Strategy
 - Green Infrastructure Strategy
 - IDP: Part B Infrastructure Delivery Schedule 2020 Update
 - EFDC Consolidated and Updated Viability Evidence 2020
 - Supporting documents that have informed responses to the Inspector's Actions
 - Other Examination Documents e.g. homework notes/ response to Inspector's questions

Main Modifications consultation process

- Tips on how to navigate information
 - MM stage is about proposed changes to the LPSV – readers can familiarise themselves with the LPSV, then refer to sections of interest in the MM schedule.
 - If someone is keen to understand the key areas where MMs are proposed then useful for them to read the Inspector’s post hearings advice (02 August 2019) and the Council’s response.
 - If someone is keen to understand all MMs relating to the removal of site allocations from the LPSV/ amendments to site allocations (i.e. site capacity, likely delivery trajectory) see response to Action 9.
 - If someone is keen to understand MMs proposed to a specific policy, site allocation or settlement then helpful to use the search function in the MM Schedule (Ctrl F on a keyboard) to navigate to specific keywords.
 - The Planning Policy Team will be happy to provide further instruction or assistance via the Hotline or the dedicated email address.

Main Modifications consultation process

- How people can provide a representation
 - Online
 - Email
 - Post
 - Responses can be made on behalf of a group – should be clear how many representing and how authorised
- What next after consultation
 - Representations to Inspector
 - Summary Council response per MM
 - Inspector will determine in Plan is ‘sound’
 - Further hearing sessions cannot be ruled out

Questions?

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Qualis Community CIC

Primera Corporation was commissioned in March 2021 by the Qualis Group to set up a Community Interest Company (CIC) and to develop an initial business plan.

Qualis Community CIC is now incorporated at Companies House. The next phase in this piece of work is learning more about the wider community and its needs and aspirations.

We are in the process of an extensive consultation and engagement exercise with the key local stakeholder groups.

The feedback and findings of the consultation exercise will be used to shape and inform activity going forward.

The consultation has been conducted through virtual meetings with stakeholder groups, In addition to this there is a questionnaire which can be completed in paper form or electronically via Survey Monkey.

Once complete we will develop a business plan and programme of delivery for the first 4 years of activity of the CIC for presentation to the Qualis Board.

Ruth Duston and Austin Casey to present on progress so far including key themes highlighted by stakeholder groups

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QUALIS COMMUNITY CIC LCLC UPDATE

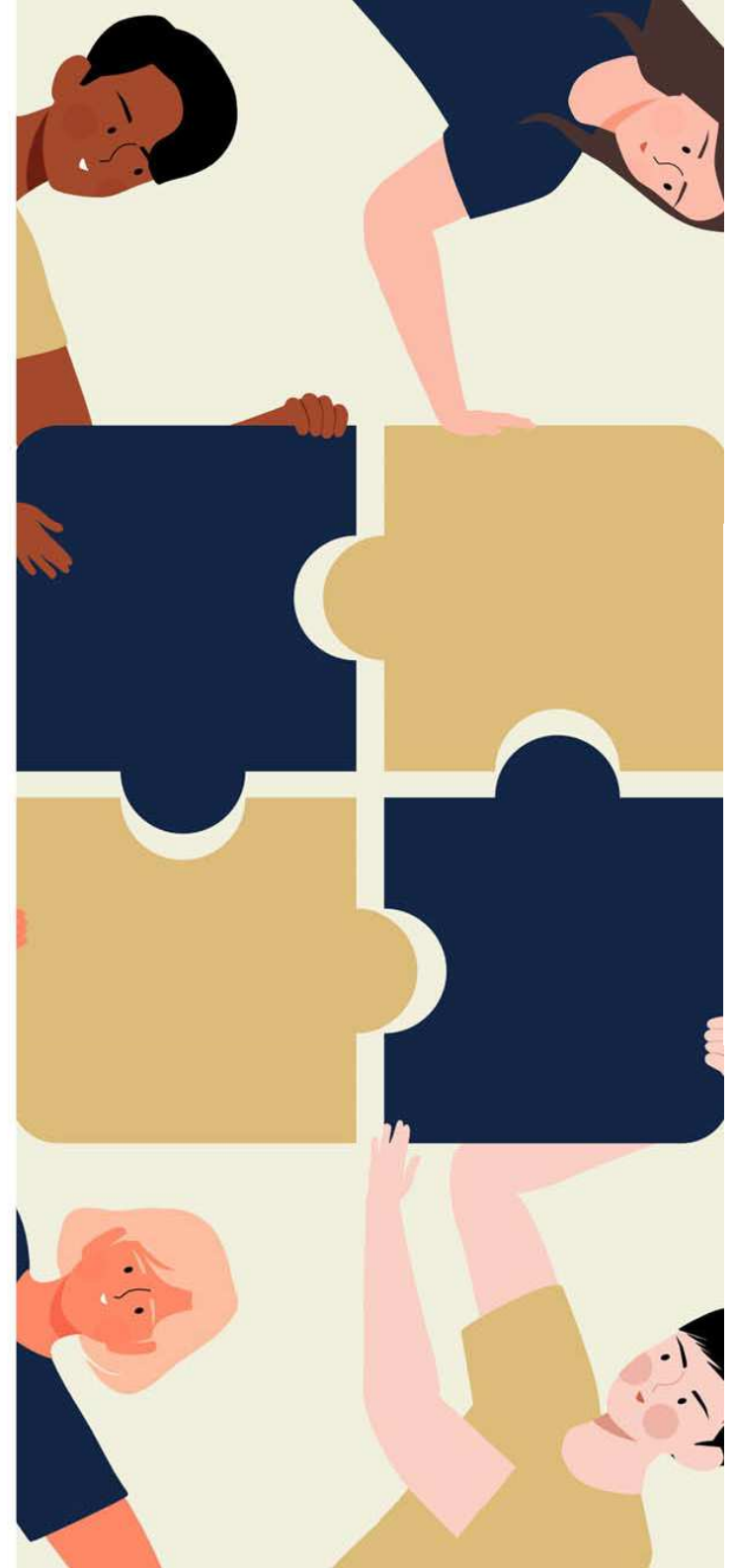
Delivering for the whole of Epping Forest
District through partnership

Primera

Qualis 
COMMUNITY

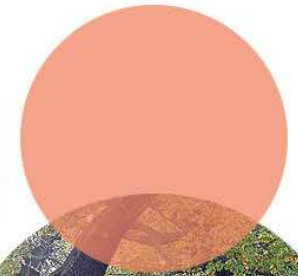
Getting the most out of your consulting partnerships

- The CIC represents an incredible opportunity for all communities located across the district to shape a powerful agenda of transformation and improvement. Working collaboratively, the CIC offers local residents and the wider stakeholder community an outstanding opportunity to invest in a better future.
- A partnership created by Qualis Group and EFDC supports the community in having a stronger and more influential voice to raise the profile and better promote Epping Forest as a place to live, play and do business through Qualis Community.
- A rigorous and transparent governance structure will ensure that activities align with local need and are developed through close dialogue with local communities and wider stakeholders including town and parish councils.



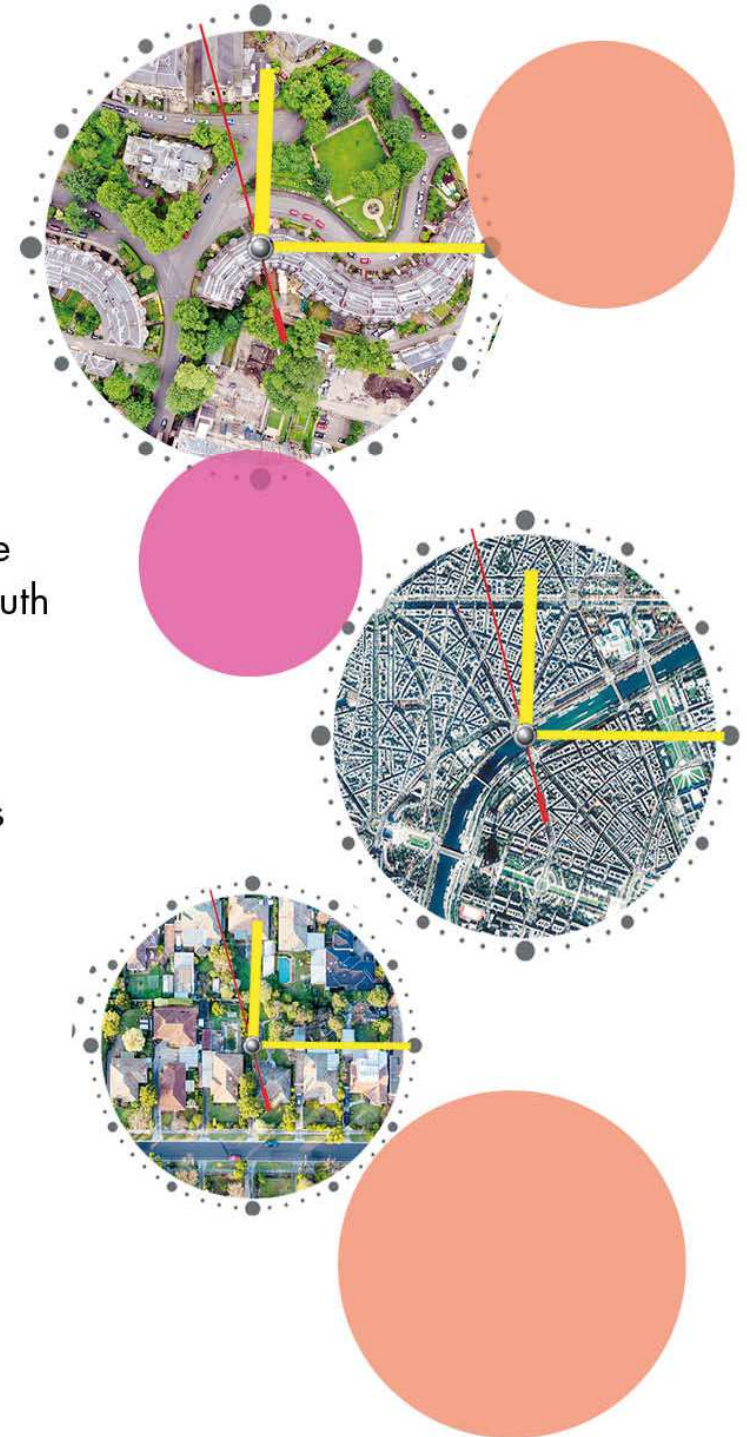
Creation of a CIC

- Understanding the key issues and priorities for the community and business forms an important step in the consultation in gauging what is deliverable and achievable for the area.
- More fundamentally its looking to build on the good work already underway by various community groups and EFDC, citing where the CIC will add value in harnessing opportunities for the direct benefit of the local community, promoting good growth and generating social and economic opportunities.
- Through our consultation we are reaching out to EFDC and parish councils, the wider stakeholder community to identify and highlight additional services they would like the CIC to deliver.



Primera has been appointed to support Qualis Community on the establishment of a new CIC.

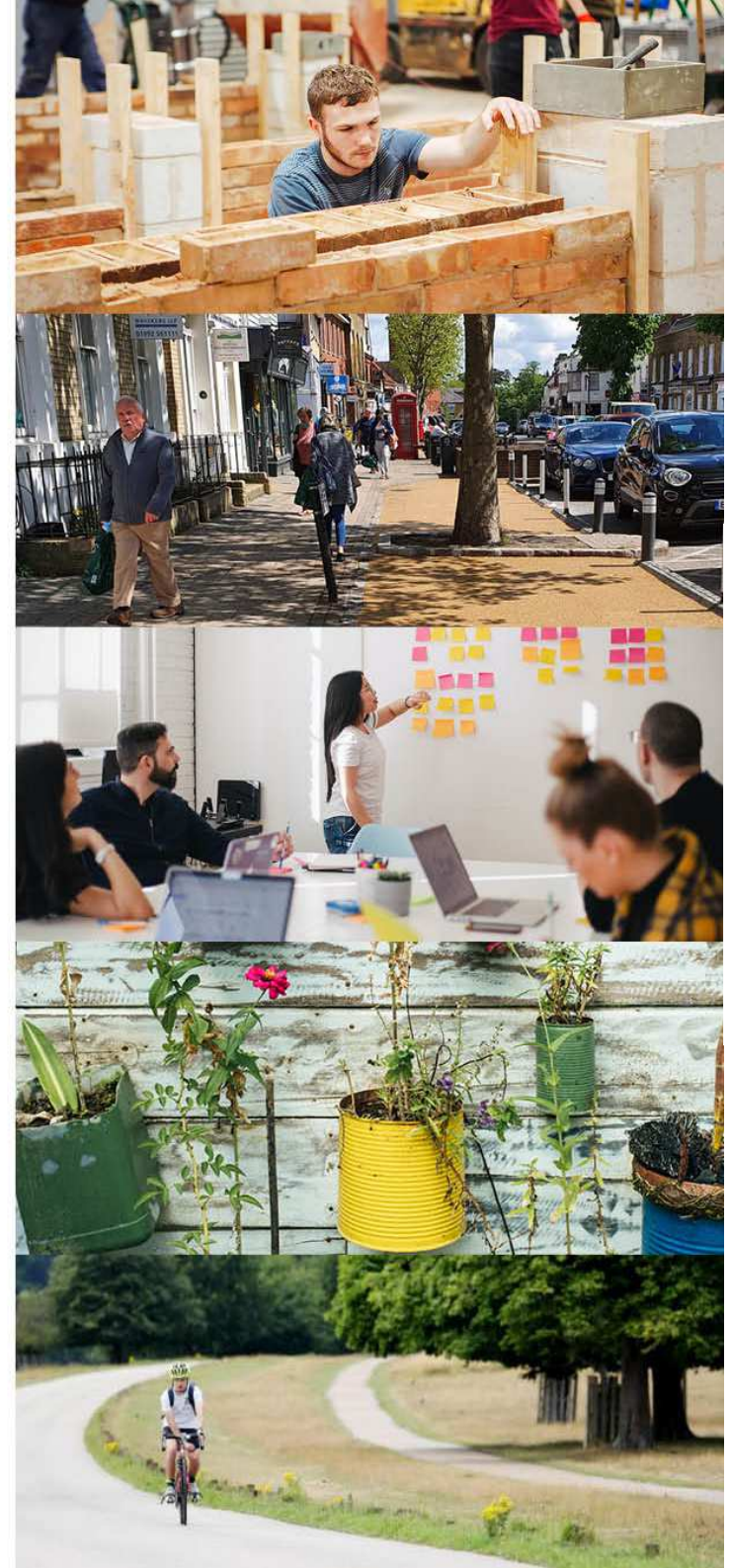
- Primera is consulting with a number of stakeholder groups across the local community, businesses, Essex Police, EFDC and Epping Forest Youth Council.
- Extensive consultation is enabling Qualis Community to formally gauge the views from local community groups in the area, with a focus on Waltham Abbey and Epping Town Centre.
- A survey has been created to capture peoples thoughts, ideas and suggestions to outline what can be achieved by the CIC between now and 2025. Dialogue with local communities and wider stakeholders including district, town and parish councils.



Emerging themes

Understanding the key issues and priorities for the community and business forms an important step in the consultation in gauging what is deliverable and achievable for the area. Feedback to date has focused on five key areas:

- Employment and Training
- Placemaking/public realm
- Business, Enterprise and innovation
- Sustainable Environment
- Transport



Strategic themes

Based on the consultation undertaken to date; three emerging strategic themes have been identified.

Page 26 This will include identifying appropriate funding sources and how the CIC can generate its own income. The three strategic themes are:

1. Employment, enterprise and innovation
2. An outstanding environment
3. Accessible and inclusive neighbourhoods



Employment, enterprise and innovation

Conversations to date have identified employment and skills training as an area of activity that could be led by the CIC, working in partnership with local FE institutions.

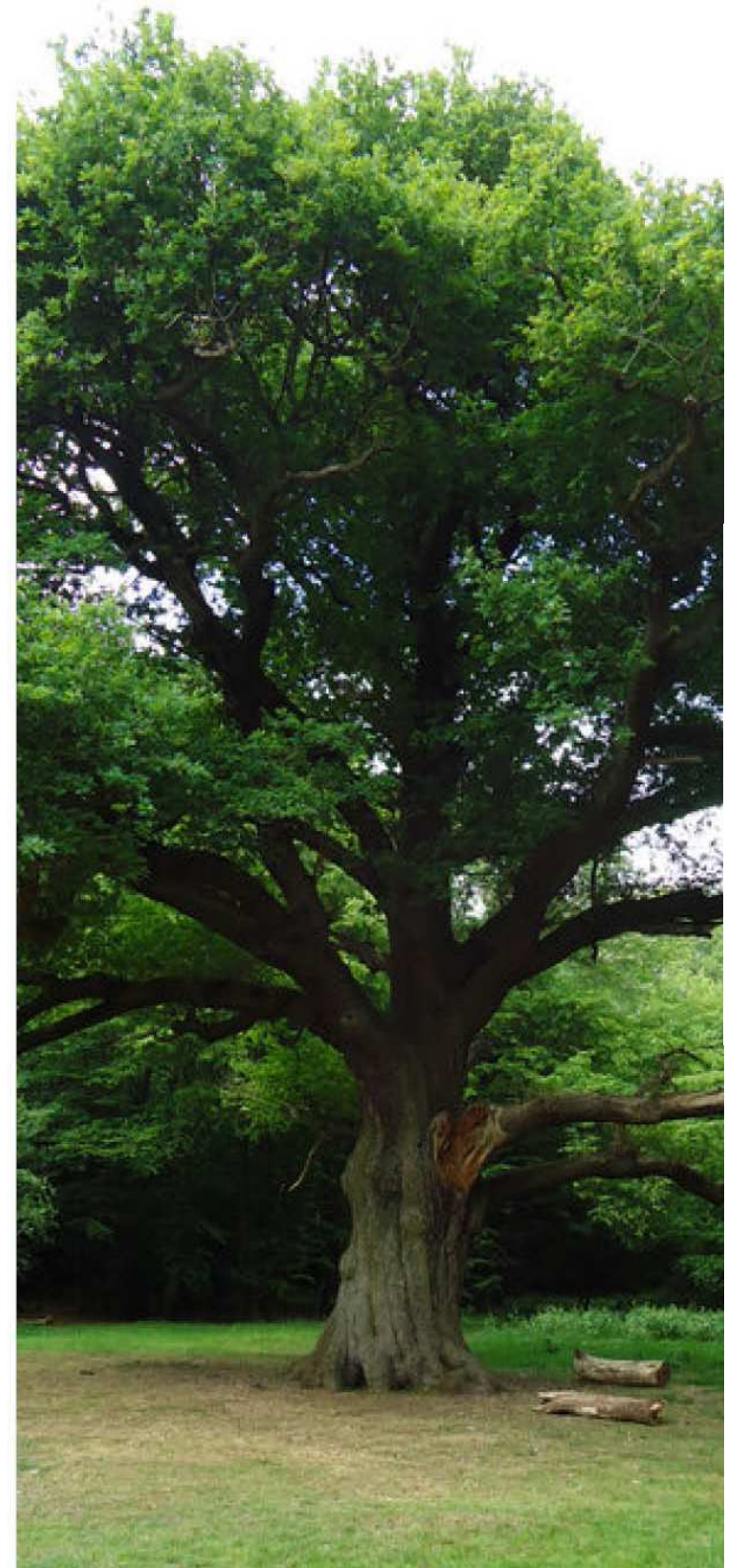
- Construction industry could be a key sector, providing apprenticeship training opportunities and upskilling existing employees, across a range of occupational areas.
- Supporting SMEs and business start-ups
- Taking advantage of digital opportunities



An outstanding environment

People and place have become even more important as a result of the pandemic. The district is also home to Epping Forest, an ancient forest of both environmental and ecological significance. Huge opportunities to deliver tangible enhancements under this strategic theme

- Page 28
- Promote the important role of green spaces
 - Work with local communities on issues such as safeguarding greenbelt
 - Enhancing access to green spaces – signage, wayfinding, for example
 - Climate change



Accessible and inclusive neighbourhoods

There are several emerging opportunities to build a sustainable income stream through this strand of activity:

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- Community hub working with in partnership with EFDC
 - Placemaking will be fundamental to the longer-term aspirations for the district, and maximising the potential of creating a 15 minute city
 - Changing working practices / evolving demographics / adapting to new ways of living and working (post pandemic)
 - Partnership model in the future: Business Improvement District/ 15 minute city



Next steps and a timeframe for delivery

The activities identified within each strategic area align closely with the policies of both the EFDC and Qualis Group.

- The strategy will set out a programme of activity, which will provide the opportunity to test and explore some of the more ambitious areas of activity. The programme is based on activities from Oct 2021 until Sept 2025
- A focus on additionality and complementing the work of the council and its partners – no duplication
- Aspiration to add long term value to the communities across EFDC– no quick wins, we must bring communities with us
- We will continue to work with a range of stakeholders, communities and groups and always welcome views and input. You can view the consultation survey [here](#).

Thank you for your time and we look forward to working with you on this exciting project for Epping Forest District.

