

EPHING FOREST LOCAL COUNCILS' LIAISON COMMITTEE

NOTICE OF MEETING

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices,
High Street, Epping

Date: Thursday, 5th July, 2012

Room: Council Chamber

Time: 7.30 pm

Democratic Services Officer: Adrian Hendry (The Office of the Chief Executive)
Tel: 01992 564246 Email:
democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Members:

District Council Representatives:

Councillors B Rolfe (Chairman), K Angold-Stephens, B Sandler, Mrs M Sartin, Mrs P Smith and Rose E

Local Council Representatives:

Clerks and Chairmen/Members of Parish and Town Councils

County Council Representatives:

Members for the following divisions:

North Weald and Nazeing:	Councillor A Jackson
Loughton Central:	Councillor C Pond
Ongar and Rural:	Councillor G McEwen
Epping and Theydon Bois:	Councillor Mrs J Whitehouse
Buckhurst Hill and Loughton South:	Councillor V Metcalfe
Chigwell and Loughton Broadway:	Councillor J Knapman
Waltham Abbey:	Councillor Mrs E Webster

<p style="text-align: center;">PLEASE NOTE THE START DATE OF THE MEETING COFFEE/TEA WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE FROM 7.00 P.M IN THE MEMBERS ROOM</p>

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

Decision Required:

- (1) To confirm the appointment of District Councillor B Rolfe as the Chairman of the Committee for the Civic Year;
- (2) To appoint a Vice Chairman of the Committee for the Civic Year.

2. **WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

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

2. The Chairman will read the following announcement:

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

By entering the chamber's lower seating area you consent to becoming part of the webcast.

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

3. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

4. **MINUTES (Pages 5 - 10)**

To confirm the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 22 March 2012 and matters arising.

5. **ISSUES RAISED BY LOCAL COUNCILS**

To discuss the following matters raised by Local Council's:

- 1) **Local Planning – Neighbourhood Plans** – Local councils noted that the next stage in the District Council's Local Plan was to be the Issues and Options consultation and they would like this item brought to this meeting. This is covered separately on this agenda; and
- 2) **DCLG Consultations – Localising Support for Council Tax** – Local Councils understood that the tax base, on which the Parish or Town precept is based, would likely be reduced should the legislation go ahead as proposed. They would like EFDC to advise further. This is covered separately on this agenda.

6. **NEW STANDARDS REGIME**

Ian Willett to report.

7. **LOCALISING SUPPORT FOR COUNCIL TAX (Pages 11 - 14)**

(Finance and ICT) To consider the attached report.

8. **LOCAL PLAN (Pages 15 - 22)**

(Director Planning and Economic Development) To consider the attached report.

Because the draft Local Plan is 165 pages long it is not possible to reproduce it as a hard copy but is available online at the following address:

<http://haako/Published/C00000688/M00007137/SSSupp10898dDocPackPublic.pdf>

or

<http://rds.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/documents/b10898/Local%20Plan%20Cabinet%20Committee%20Supplementary%20Agenda%20I%202002nd-Jul-2012%2019.00%20Local%20Plan%20Cabinet%20Committee.pdf?T=9>

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Meetings of the Committee are scheduled for the following dates this year:

8 November 2012
7 March 2013

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EPPING FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL COUNCILS' LIAISON COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Thursday, 22 March 2012 **Time:** 7.30 - 9.20 pm

Place: Council Chamber, Civic
Offices, High Street, Epping

**Members
Present:**

Representing Epping Forest District Council:

Councillor(s): K Angold-Stephens (Chairman), B Rolfe and
Mrs P Smith

Other Councillors:

Councillor(s): J Philip

Representing Essex County Council:

County Councillor(s): G McEwen, C Pond and Mrs J H Whitehouse

Representing Local Councils:

Mrs L Peters, Mrs J Ballard (Roydon Parish Council), Mrs D Borton (Nazeing Parish Council), Mrs V Evans, Mrs S De Luca (North Weald Parish Council), B Surtees (Ongar Town Council), Mrs E K Walsh (Loughton Town Council), Councillor Mrs J Bowerman (Matching Parish Council), Mrs S Jackman (Ongar Town Council), Miss H Nicholas (Roydon Parish Council), K Avey (Epping Hemnall), Councillor A Barr (Lambourne Parish Council), Councillor E Borton (Nazeing Parish Council), S Bosworth (Willingale Parish Council), Councillor Ms G Castle (Nazeing Parish Council), R Church (Buckhurst Hill Parish Council), Councillor B Miller (Epping Upland Parish Council), Richardson, A Tadjrishi (Epping Town Council) and J M Whitehouse (Epping Hemnall)

Apologies: **Epping Forest District Council –**

Councillor(s): R Morgan and B Sandler

Essex County Council –

Councillor(s): V Metcalfe

Parish/Town Councils: -

Mrs K Richmond (Waltham Abbey Town Council), R Northwood (Sheering Parish Council), R Balcombe (Fyfield Parish Council) and Councillor Mrs N Bridge (Fyfield Parish Council)

**Officers
Present:**

I Willett (Assistant to the Chief Executive), K Polyzoides (Assistant Director (Policy & Conservation)), G J Woodhall (Democratic Services Officer) and R Perrin (Democratic Services Assistant)

By Invitation:

17. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Assistant to the Chief Executive 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.

18. MINUTES**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 3 November 2011 be agreed subject to the following amendments:

- Minute 12(b) Forum changing to Forums;
- Councillor Metcalfe in attendance; and
- Councillor Mrs J Whitehouse attending as a representative of Essex County Council.

19. MATTERS ARISING

The Assistant to the Chief Executive advised that the County Council were consulting on the revised Essex Wide Partnership arrangements regarding the demise of the Local Area Forums. Dialogue was on going and a number of possible options were available for the Epping Forest District . The options were;

1. A Locality Board comprising of County Division Members and District Councillors;
2. A Locality Board based on the existing quarterly meetings of MP's, County Division Members, District Council Cabinet Members and the Chairman of the Locals Councils' Association;
3. The existing "One Epping Forest" Local Strategic Partnership, Understanding the function of a Locality Board;
4. A hybrid of options of 2 and 3; or
5. A locality Board based on the current Local Councils' Liaison Committee.

The County Council are also looking at draft proposals for the new Highways Panels. When further details are made available, the Acting Chief Executive would circulate the information to the Town and Parish Councils. In the mean time the Director of Environment and Street Scene, J Gilbert would be addressing a number of the District Councils panels about the County Councils Highways Panels proposals.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee would await further information from the Chief Executive and County Council.

20. LOCAL PLAN

The Committee received a report from the Assistant Director Policy and Conservation (Planning), K Polyzoides regarding the progress of the Council's Local Plan. The National Planning Policy Framework would be issued and come into effect on 27 March 2012; replacing all but one of the current Planning Policy Statements, Planning Policy Guidance Notes and a small number of circulars.

The Council had appointed consultants, Nathaniel Lichfield Partners to work on the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) and the information will be fed into the Issues and Options document starting the consultations in July 2012. A briefing has been arranged for the 30 March 2012, for District Members and Locals Councils, where the consultants would be presenting their methodology and findings allowing the opportunity for questions and comments. Other evidence based works in the coming months would also include a Heritage Review, Carbon Reduction Strategy and an Assessment of Open Spaces & Recreation Facilities.

The District Council had appointed consultants Fortismere Associates to assist in the project management of the Council's Local Plan, offering advice on timetable and providing a 'critical friend' review of evidence base documents.

The anticipated submission for the new Local Plan was summer 2013, and would be continued to work towards. The consultation on the Issues & Options stage of the Local Plan would run from the end of July 2012 to September 2012 and would be under review for a further two weeks. The document would not set out detailed proposals for the new planning policy but identify specific issues and potential options for the District over the next 20 years, including population and household projections, strategic distribution of new housing and employment land and the information on potential development sites from the SLAA.

The Council would not be able to provide support for Neighbourhood Plans to Parish and Town Councils but would be issuing questionnaires within the next couple of weeks, to identify local priorities and request that Local Councils make arrangements for one to one visits with officers to areas to collate local information.

Town and Parish representatives commented that the briefing and presentations regarding the SLAA should be made available to more attendees and the way in which invitations responses to these events are dealt with should be reviewed. The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Technology advised that if the scheduled SLAA briefing on 30 March 2012 and the Population projections briefing on 2 April 2012 were over prescribed they could possibly look into webcasting them.

The Committee commented on the timescale that the Government had intended and the possibilities of schedules being changed but the officers felt that they would be able to complete the local plan within the timetable of the 18 months.

21. ISSUES RAISED BY LOCAL COUNCILS

(1) Update - Invite to County Councillor Mrs Tracey Chapman, Portfolio Holder and/or County Councillor P Channer, Deputy Portfolio Holder for Highways to speak on Highways issues, principally the North Essex Parking Partnership.

The Chairman noted with regret that that neither the Portfolio Holder or Deputy Portfolio Holder for Highways could attend previous Local Councils' Liaison Committee's and that the Committee felt let down by these events.

County Councillor G McEwen advised that his colleagues sent their apologies for being to unable to attend, although County Members had received an email about a briefing on Local Highways Panels within the County, where local people decide on the issues rather than County Council Officers. A proportion of funding would be dissolved to each District and for Epping Forest a sum had been worked out as £700,000 for traffic improvements. The panel would comprise of the 7 County Members and 7 District Members to decided on matters concerning Epping Forest District.

County Councillor Pond advised that the Parking Partnership was not within the Local Highways Panel's remit and therefore who should be contacted about the concerns regarding about parking issues and problems with the District. County Councillor McEwen reported that he would take these questions back to the County Council to get answers.

Councillor Jackman advised that EEC had given her a contact number to distribute for highways complaints, which was 0845 6037631.

The Portfolio Holder for Safer, Greener and Highways advised that she had recently received a presentation from the Parking Partnership at District level and found this gave a lot of relevant information and enquired whether LCLC would like to have the Parking Partnership attend a future meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Parking Partnership would be invited to attend the LCLC on 8 November.

(2) New Standards Regime

Councillor Pond thanked District Council Officers, I Willett and C O Boyle for their recent Briefing on the new standards regime and also the Essex Monitoring Group that have become a National Leader in setting the ground rules, following the demise of the Standards board on the 30 June 2012. He advised that hopefully there would be some consistency between the tiers of Local government, County, District and Parish/Town. The Essex Association of Local Councils discussed forming a joint committee for Parish and Town Complaints, and the County and District to have their own Standards Committee. The District Monitoring Officer would also act as the Parish and Town Councils Monitoring Officer.

Councillor Pond had drafted some thoughts on a constitution for the Standards Regime and had requested comments from the Parish and Town Councils. Once the comments had been received, a small working party would be formed. A report had been submitted to the District Council Meeting on the 27 March 2012, for the District to consider options for the new Standards regime and also agree none discretionary items.

Councillor Pond enquired about advise from the District Council Finance Officer regarding the precept of the Standards Committee. The Assistant to the Chief Executive advised that he would investigate and advise.

RESOLVED:

1. That Parish and Town Councils respond to Councillor Pond's draft constitution on the New Standards Regime; and
2. that the Assistant to the Chief Executive seeks advice from the Director of Finance on financial issues for the joint Standards Committees.

(3) Improved Representation

Councillor Jackman requested that all Local Councils make an attempt to attend these meetings.

22. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Assistant to the Chief Executive informed the Committee that the District Council were about to start the process for recruiting the new Chief Executive.

23. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting of the committee will take place on Thursday 5 July 2012 at 7:30 p.m. and then on the following dates:

- (a) Thursday 8 November 2012 at 7:30 p.m.; and
- (b) Thursday 7 March 2013 at 7:30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

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Report to Local Councils Liaison Committee

Date of meeting: 5 July 2012

Subject: Localising Support for Council Tax

Officer contact for further information: Brian Moldon (01992) 564455

Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

To note the changes to the system of support for Council Tax payments.

Report:

Requirement for preparing a scheme

1. In December 2011 the Department for Communities and Local Government published a consultation on proposals for the localisation of council tax support in England. This sets out how the Government intends to implement the Spending Review commitment to localise support for council tax from 2013-14, reducing expenditure by 10%.
2. The Government intends that in future support for council tax will be offered as reductions within the council tax system. However, allowances and awards for claimants of state pension credit age will not experience a reduction in support i.e. they will be protected.
3. The Welfare Reform Act 2012 contains provisions for the abolition of council tax benefit, paving the way for new localised schemes. Within the Local Government Finance Bill (December 2011) is a provision for localisation of council tax support in England by imposing a duty on billing authorities (Epping Forest) to make a localised council tax reduction scheme by 31 January 2013. If a billing authority does not make a scheme by 31 January 2013, then the Government will prescribe a default scheme on that authority.
4. Local authorities are reimbursed currently at a rate of 100% for correctly awarded council tax benefit through submitting audited subsidy claims to the Department for Work and Pensions. Under the new scheme the Government will make funding available to Councils based on 90% of the forecast council tax benefit expenditure for 2013-14.
5. The Local Government Finance Bill requires billing authorities to consult on the draft scheme with major precepting authorities and to other persons it considers are likely to have an interest.

Transitional arrangement

6. To minimise the administrative burden on both claimants and local authorities, and help meet the principle of tell us once, billing authorities can use existing council tax benefit applications and information to calculate reductions for council tax bills for 2013-14.
7. It will be for each billing authority to determine how they wish to design the application forms required for their local schemes, and to consider any requirements on how these should be completed (including, for example, whether an application can be filled in on-line).
8. A billing authority will be required each financial year to consider whether it wants to revise or replace its scheme.

Council Tax Base

9. The council tax base is the aggregate of the relevant amounts calculated for each valuation band multiplied by the authority's estimated collection rate for the year. The Government intends to amend the council tax base regulations to ensure that the calculation of the tax base by billing authorities takes into account the new council tax reductions under local schemes. It is recognised that this will have an effect of reducing the council tax base.

10. The number of dwellings to which council tax is chargeable is represented by the estimated number of dwellings in each band to which council tax will be charged, after allowing for discounts (for example, single persons discount).

11. The current legislation will require the discount and reductions to be taken into account as percentage reductions to the council tax base. For example, if there are four dwellings each occupied by a single person in receipt of 25% single person discount, they would be represented as 1 dwelling removed from the council tax base (4×0.25 (single person discount) = 1). The billing authority will, in effect, receive the equivalent of full council tax liability from 3 of the 4 dwellings.

12. Under the existing council tax benefit system, the council tax base is unaffected by changes in council tax benefit granted. The billing authority receives payment of the liability eligible to be covered by council tax benefit.

13. However, under the new local council tax reduction scheme, the council tax base will be affected by whether persons living in a dwelling are in receipt of a council tax reduction awarded under the scheme. As the billing authority will be foregoing council tax income from those dwellings.

Effect on Council Tax Charged

14. The new council tax reductions will normally reduce the tax base on which the local precepting authority's council tax is raised. Assuming that the council tax requirement remains unchanged, then this reduced tax base would lead to a higher precepting authority Band D council tax level.

15. The Government expects billing and local precepting authorities to work together to manage the potential impact on the local precepting authority Band D council tax level.

16. This could be achieved by billing authorities passing down an element of the funding to local precepting authorities, so the funding is taken into account when calculating the local precepting authorities council tax requirement. The portion of the funding that could be passed down will depend on the local scheme being developed and its impacts in each local precepting authority. This approach will allow local authorities to take a proportionate approach to managing the impact on local precepting authority Band D levels, appropriate to their circumstances.

SIMPLE EXAMPLE

Current

Dibley Parish Council has 100 dwellings all band D. The estimated collection rate is 98%. Therefore, the tax base is:

$$100 \times 98\% = 98$$

Their annual precept is £10,000. Therefore, the council tax charge would be:

$$£10,000 / 98 = £102.04$$

From 2013-14

The 100 dwellings include 5 in receipt of full council tax support and 10 in receipt of 40% support. As bills will now be issued to people on limited means the estimated collection rate reduces to 96%. Therefore, the tax base would be:

$$100 - (5 \times 100\%) - (10 \times 40\%) \times 96\%$$

$$91 \times 96\% = 87.36$$

If the annual precept remains at £10,000 and the share of Central Government grant allocated to the parish is £1,000. The council tax charge would then be:

$$£10,000 - £1,000 = £9,000$$

$$£9,000 / 87.36 = £103.02$$

Next Steps

17. The Council is currently working with other districts within Essex and major precepting authorities to design a scheme that gives the 10% savings. Following the completion of this exercise and a draft scheme being developed, consultation on the scheme will be undertaken with interested parties and it is proposed that the final scheme will go to Cabinet on 22 October and then onto Council on 18 December.

18. It is currently not possible to detail the effect for each Parish / Town Council on their tax base until the scheme has been agreed. Also it is not possible to confirm what grant will be allocated to each parish until final figures are made available as part of Local Government Finance Settlement in December.

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Report to the Local Council Liaison Committee



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Date of meeting: 5 July 2012

Portfolio: Planning

Subject: Local Plan – Issues & Options consultation document

Responsible Officer: Kassandra Polyzoides (01992 564119)

Democratic Services Officer: Adrian Hendry (01992 564246)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- 1. To note that the “Community Choices – Issues & Options” document is due to be published for public consultation;**
- 2. To note that the Sustainability Appraisal of the Issues & Options document prepared by Scott Wilson/URS is due to be published for public consultation;**
- 3. To note that the consultation period will run for 8 weeks from Monday 30 July to Friday 21 September 2012; and**

Executive Summary:

Following the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012, the Council is required to produce an up to date Local Plan. The timetable is challenging, but necessary to ensure that the district has continued Local Plan coverage.

Community Choices covers a wide range of issues including options for potential growth targets, possible distribution patterns and locations for growth. It also identifies a number of policy issues which need to be addressed, including Green Belt, historic and natural character, transport, economic development and the Community Infrastructure Levy.

The proposed consultation period will be between 30 July and 21 September 2012.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To meet the timetable as previously agreed by Members to prepare a new Local Plan for the district as quickly as possible.

Other Options for Action:

No alternative options for action exist within the authority of this Committee.

Report:

- 1. The Council has made a commitment to replace the existing Local Plan. This is largely in response to the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF – March 2012), but also to reflect a need for the district to accommodate**

necessary growth in a planned manner, rather than in an ad hoc response to planning applications.

2. The NPPF replaces all of the previous Planning Policy Guidance notes and all but one of the Planning Policy Statements with a single shorter document. By its nature, the guidance that is provided is more succinct, leaving much detail to be covered in Local Plans. The NPPF gives a short transitional period until March 2013. After this date the adopted Local Plan policies (1998 and Alterations 2006) will no longer be in effect if they are not in conformity with the NPPF. It is therefore vital that in order to protect the most sensitive parts of the district, a revised Local Plan is put in place as quickly as possible. The emerging Local Plan will cover the period to 2033.
3. Previous reports to the LDF Cabinet Committee have set out a challenging timetable which seeks to produce a Local Plan as quickly as possible. The first stage is to consult on the Issues & Options paper. This consultation period seeks views on the issues, determining whether those identified are the correct ones; and invites comments on the potential options available to address these issues.

“Community Choices” – the Issues & Options paper

4. It must be stressed that the Issues & Options consultation document is not a policy document, and at this stage does not commit the Council to any particular course of action. The options presented here are those that are considered reasonable for further investigation, and may eventually form part of the final Local Plan. Issues have been identified on the basis of the available evidence, and responses received from the Community Visioning exercise undertaken at the end of 2010.
5. The draft document proposed for consultation is split into a number of chapters which set out the key issues and potential options for the district up to 2033.
6. Chapters 1 and 2 introduce the document, and provide a series of key facts about the district to establish the context within which the Local Plan is being prepared. General figures are included around historic and estimated population growth, migration, and key features of the district. There are also a number of brief profiles on the largest settlements in the district, identifying key features. The draft Vision and Aims are included at the end of this section. The LDF Cabinet Committee was asked to agree draft Vision, Aims and Objectives for the Core Strategy in August 2011. Now that the Council is preparing a full Local Plan rather than a Core Strategy, a slightly different approach is required. Whilst the general direction of the agreed Vision, Aims and Objectives has been retained, the detailed wording has not been at this stage. The detailed objectives will follow as the Local Plan is prepared, and will be informed by the consultation responses received over the summer.
7. Chapter 3 concerns the Green Belt and the character of the district. The continued protection of the Green Belt is the priority for residents of the district, and therefore this issue is addressed at the outset and the potential options for growth later in the document are included with this in mind. It is clear that amendments to the Green Belt boundary will be needed in the period to 2033 to accommodate the growth needs of the district. No significant changes to the Green Belt boundaries in the district have been made since they were first established, and no housing or employment land allocations have been made since the last full Local Plan was adopted in 1998.
8. One of the key principles of Green Belt policy is to maintain separation of distinct settlements. The draft consultation document includes a number of areas that could be identified as “Strategic Green Belt Gaps” in order to protect this element of

separation. These are primarily in the south of the district, separating Buckhurst Hill, Loughton, Theydon Bois and Epping. There are further areas around Chigwell where the inner Green Belt boundary prevents the outward spread of the Greater London area, and between the western edge of Harlow and Roydon.

9. Chapter 4 presents the reasonable options for the levels of growth that could be included in the Local Plan, and the potential strategies for distribution of this growth. In the longer term the East of England Plan (EEP) is due to be abolished, but this has not yet happened and no timetable has been published by CLG for this. In the meantime, the EEP remains part of the Development Plan for the district, and the Council must continue to take this into account. However, the NPPF (para 47) requires that Local Plans must meet "...the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing...". In order to investigate this fully, the Community Choices document also includes alternative options for levels of growth based on population projections using different assumptions which would determine the appropriate level of growth. Three possible targets for housing growth are included within the document, covering a range of between 7,700 and 11,500 new homes.
10. Less detailed information about job growth is known at this stage. Potential options have been presented from the information available within the Employment Land Review and Town Centres Study (3,960 jobs), and secondly the East of England Plan review (3,917 jobs). Officers are aware that further research will be needed, both in terms of updating available evidence to take into account the changes in the economic markets over last few years, and to investigate in more detail the types of business that already exist within the district. This work should also look at any aspirations the Council or businesses may have for creating economic clusters that do not currently exist within the district.
11. Epping Forest Council, in common with all local authorities in England, must make planned provision for growth, and is required to be able to demonstrate 5-years of housing land supply at any point. If this land supply cannot be shown, the Council will be in a much weaker position to refuse planning applications for development which is considered inappropriate.
12. Further to a consideration of overall growth targets, the Community Choices document also presents a number of possible distribution options. Key decisions that must be taken early in the preparation of the Local Plan are whether (i) growth on the periphery of Harlow should be supported, and (ii) land should be allocated for development on the boundaries of Harlow but within Epping Forest District. Whilst the EEP is due to be abolished, growth in this area can still be considered as a reasonable option for the Local Plan. Under the Localism Act 2011 the Council has a "Duty to Cooperate" with adjoining authorities, and Harlow Council has continued to make clear its aspiration for regeneration within the town. A level of growth to help to deliver this regeneration may be appropriate. Five potential options for directions of growth around Harlow, within Epping Forest district, have been identified at this stage, drawing on evidence that has been jointly prepared between Epping Forest, Harlow & East Herts Councils.
13. In considering the remainder of Epping Forest district, a number of potential spatial distribution options have been identified. All of these have been presented both including and excluding growth on the periphery of Harlow, therefore demonstrating the potential impact on the remainder of the district. Taking into account the findings of the Community Visioning exercise previously completed, a proportionate distribution pattern was investigated – i.e. the largest towns would accommodate the largest level of growth. However, it was clear from the outset that the largest town in

the district (Loughton) is the most constrained. Epping Forest is to the north west, with the River Roding flood plain to the south east, and small but strategic areas of Green Belt to the south west and north east. It is therefore not reasonable to take a proportionate distribution pattern forward as it cannot be delivered. The options that have been included take into account the currently identified capacity in Loughton and Buckhurst Hill, and whilst further land may be identified throughout the continued preparation of the Local Plan, at this stage this is the best available information.

14. The spatial options that have been identified are:

- a. Proportionate distribution
- b. Transport focus – Proportionate distribution
- c. Transport focus – Equal distribution
- d. Development focus away from Central Line - Proportionate distribution
- e. Development focus away from Central Line – Equal distribution
- f. Large settlements - Proportionate distribution
- g. Large settlements – Equal distribution

15. It is also possible for respondents to the consultation to suggest alternative growth targets and distribution patterns, although these must be supported by robust and up-to-date evidence.

16. An analysis of the potential opportunity areas within existing settlements, and possible areas for expansion outside of existing towns and villages, is presented. It is important to stress at this point that the Council is required to consider **all reasonable options** during the preparation of the Local Plan, and as a result significantly more land than would be required under any of the growth options has been identified. For the majority of these areas, a change in policy approach will be required in order to deliver development. Within existing settlements, such changes could include possible alterations to existing designated employment areas or leisure uses.

17. In considering the possible areas for expansion of towns and villages, all of these areas are within the Green Belt. For most of these areas there will be existing constraints of various kinds which could preclude development in whole or in part. At this stage, it is important that every reasonable option is fully considered in an open and transparent way.

18. The consultation process will request that residents and other stakeholders provide comments and evidence on their preferences for the future growth of the district. It is also an opportunity for additional growth areas to be suggested at this point.

19. Chapter 5 considers the issues around the delivery of new housing in the district, including density, the provision of affordable housing, design and sustainability. The Council must also consider the most appropriate way of making provision in future for the Gypsy, Roma & Traveller communities. Options on this latter issue are provided within the consultation document for comment (para 5.7).

20. Chapter 6 identifies the issues relating to economic development, including town centres, employment land and the rural economy. Short profiles for each of the main town centres are presented, including potential opportunities for change (in connection with identified opportunity areas in Chapter 4). As per paragraph 10 of this report, less information is known at present about the numbers and types of new jobs that may be needed in the district over the period to 2033, although some general trends are identified. For the rural areas of the district, any provision of economic opportunities will need to be balanced against Green Belt policy. One of

the key issues to be addressed by the Local Plan is the policy approach that should be taken to the horticultural glasshouse industry in the western part of the district. The Council has had a long standing policy of containing this use to particular areas, although it is becoming clear that the needs of the industry are changing significantly. There are a number of issues that need to be addressed around the future of the industry, and managing the decline of (in particular) the smaller sites that are no longer in use for horticulture.

21. Chapter 7 identifies issues around transport and movement, particularly recognising that congestion on local roads, the capacity of the Central Line, and HGV traffic in rural areas are significant issues for the district.
22. The potential introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) (Chapter 8) is a key part of the new Local Plan. From April 2014 CIL will largely replace Section 106 agreements as the mechanism for levying payments from new development for the provision of infrastructure (including community infrastructure) in association with the grant of planning permission, other than for the securing of payments for on-site requirements and affordable housing. The setting up and adoption of a CIL charging regime needs to be prepared in conjunction with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) that is a key part of the Local Plan. The IDP will identify the infrastructure that is currently planned and budgeted for by providers, and will identify what else is needed in the district to support new or existing development. Any CIL payments introduced by the Council would then be used to fund infrastructure and community benefits which are not already funded from capital programmes.
23. Finally, Climate Change (Chapter 9) and Community Facilities (Chapter 10) are addressed. Identified issues include addressing and mitigating against the impacts of climate change within new development, flood risk management and carbon reduction. In respect of Community Facilities issues include methods by which existing services can be protected and retained, and where new facilities could be provided. This includes matters of accessibility and location.

Sustainability Appraisal

24. All local plans are required to be assessed in accordance with the European Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations, which have been included within Sustainability Appraisal requirements in England. Scott Wilson/URS have been retained to prepare the Sustainability Appraisal of the Issues & Options consultation document, and have produced a broad assessment of the options that have been put forward at this stage. This assessment considers the advantages and disadvantages of those options, and provides information which will be used in determining which are most appropriate for the district. The Sustainability Appraisal process will be used in conjunction with the outcomes of public consultation and further technical research.
25. The Sustainability Appraisal will be available for comment during the consultation period, and will be published as a supplementary appendix to this agenda when it is completed.

Consultation arrangements

26. The consultation period for the Issues & Options will be between **Monday 30 July** and **Friday 21 September 2012**. Officers accept that holding the consultation period over the main holiday period, when there are a number of major sporting events being held, is not ideal. However, it is necessary in order to achieve the quick preparation of the Local Plan. For this reason, the consultation period has been extended from

the statutory minimum of 6 weeks to 8 weeks.

27. Consultation documentation will be published on the Council's website, and respondents will be encouraged to submit comments using a new online consultation system. Hard copies can be made available on request, and copies will be deposited at a number of locations around the district for those that do not have access to the internet.
28. A number of methods will be used to advertise the consultation and encourage residents and key stakeholders to get involved. The methods that will be used include:
 - a. Extensive use of the Council's website, including Facebook and Twitter where appropriate;
 - b. Information leaflet delivered to every household and business address in the district;
 - c. Letter/email to residents, businesses and interested parties that have registered on the Local Plan Consultee Database to advise that the consultation period has started;
 - d. Mailshot to statutory undertakers and other key stakeholders;
 - e. Leaflets handed out at Central Line stations – commuters have previously been identified as a “hard to reach” group;
 - f. Exhibitions and workshops held in various locations around the district – these will be held at the beginning of September so that the main holiday period is avoided;
 - g. Positive engagement with Town / Parish Councils, including specific meetings to ensure the key messages and reasons are understood; and
 - h. Press briefings / releases as necessary.

Next steps

29. Following the end of the consultation period, the responses received, and the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal and any further technical studies, will be used to bring forward a Preferred Strategy. It is currently intended that this next step will be published for consultation from January 2013.

Resource Implications:

Within identified Local Plan budget as revised – Cabinet 11 June 2012

Legal and Governance Implications:

Preparation of a Local Plan is required by the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) as amended.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

The Local Plan seeks to plan for the necessary growth of the district over the period to 2033, taking into account the character of the district and the existing infrastructure constraints.

Consultation Undertaken:

Some consultation and briefing sessions have been held for relevant stakeholders on a number of evidence base documents in the recent past.

Informal consultation has been undertaken with Management Board and Cabinet.

Background Papers:

Previous reports to Local Development Framework Cabinet Committee

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) -

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2116950.pdf>

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

Equality and Diversity:

Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications? ~~Yes~~ **No**

Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? Yes No

*** An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out prior to the commencement of the Issues & Options consultation period ***

What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?

How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group?

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