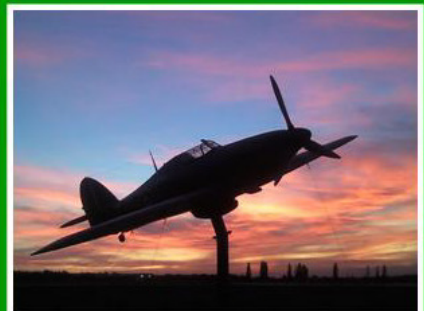
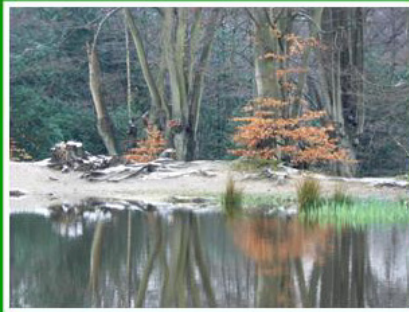




Epping Forest  
District Council

2011 - 2015

# Corporate Plan



Making our district a great place to live, work, study & do business



2

# INTRODUCTION



**Councillor Diana Collins, Leader of The Council  
& Derek Macnab, Acting Chief Executive**

**Making our district a great place to live, work, study & do business**

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# Our District Today



Much of the 131 square miles of the Epping Forest District is green and rural. 94% is within the green belt or in use for horticulture and farming.

Approximately half of our 123,900 residents live in 5% of the area of the district, close to the boundary with London. Most of the rest of the population live in a mixture of market towns, villages and rural hamlets, each with their own identity and personality. The local population is set to grow over the coming years and pressure for development and the demand for homes, jobs and leisure facilities has never been greater.

The District has a reputation for great affluence.

Unemployment is generally low and many residents enjoy a very high standard of living, taking advantage of employment opportunities in London. However there are also areas of significant disadvantage and the District has four wards amongst the ten most deprived in Essex.

4



More than 80% of the District's housing is in private ownership and levels of demand have contributed to high prices and a lack of affordable housing. Balancing the needs of an increasing population against the protection and conservation of the District's rural nature presents a major challenge.

The District currently suffers from an inadequate infrastructure, and with many small and isolated communities, communication and access to services is a cause of concern.



The District is becoming one of the most ethnically diverse in Essex. It has the second highest proportion of residents from black and minority ethnic communities in Essex, together with a large and well-established Jewish community and many residents of Italian extraction. The District also has one of the largest gypsy and traveller communities in the county.

The District is traversed by both the M11 and M25 motorways and is the only district in Essex that enjoys the benefits of London Underground services. It also has access to Network Rail services, both within the District at Roydon, and nearby at Harlow, Broxbourne and Chingford. Stansted Airport is also only a short journey away. However, bus services to railway stations and other public service locations within the District are inadequate and traffic congestion is a problem.

Whilst crime and the fear of crime remain a cause of local concern, in comparison with many other places, the District is a safe place to live and work. The District is also a healthy place to be although life expectancy and ill-health varies widely across the area.

Primary school education in the District is strong in comparison with the rest of Essex, and secondary education is improving overall with some schools being heavily oversubscribed due to good Ofsted results. This issue is exacerbated in the south of the District, where many children from other areas travel into the District for schooling. There are now two schools in the district with Academy status, and further local schools are working towards this standard. Following a complete rebuild in 2009/10, Epping Forest College now offers state of the art education facilities to the community, with academic and vocational studies available to young people of all abilities and interests.

The scope to develop tourism opportunities has been enhanced by the London 2012 Olympic Games. The District stands at the gateway to Stratford and is within a short distance of the white water canoe Olympic venue.

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# Our Council

Epping Forest District Council has 58 councillors, each elected for a period of four years. After full consultation with our residents, the Council introduced a Leader and cabinet system of decision making in 2000. The Cabinet is headed by the Leader of the Council and is made up of portfolio holders who determine strategic policy and have individual responsibilities. The officer structure is lead by the Chief Executive.

Within the District, responsibility for services is shared amongst different authorities. We are responsible for services including housing, street cleaning and waste collection, sports and recreation facilities, planning applications for homes and businesses, registering to vote, benefits, Council Tax collection, environmental health, food safety, parking, animal nuisance and pest control. Other services such as education, adult social care, and highways and transportation are provided by Essex County Council. As the Council is not responsible for the provision of all local services, it encourages and works with other agencies to provide necessary services

**6** The Council is committed to its community leadership responsibilities and took the lead in the formation of the Local Strategic Partnership which has developed the new Community Strategy for the District.



# Sustainable Community Strategy- “Putting Epping Forest First”

The Sustainable Community Strategy is the key long-term plan to deliver a better quality of life and improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the District over the next twenty years and beyond. Based on clear understanding of local needs and residents’ priorities, it seeks to support ‘sustainable communities’ for the future.

The Strategy is the cornerstone of all other plans and strategies that affect public services and long-term planning policies for the District and brings together the plans of all partners into one coherent, coordinated strategy. It tells local people and the national government how positive outcomes will be achieved .

‘One Epping Forest’ is the Local Strategic Partnership for the District. The partnership is made up of representatives of local councils, education, police, health services, and business and community groups. It promotes the economic, social and environmental well-being of the District and supports the delivery of the shared vision, outcomes and values enshrined in the Strategy, by individual partners.

Its role is to bring together all the agencies and groups that have a role in delivering these outcomes with the one aim of ‘making the Epping Forest District a great place to live, work, study and do business.



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# Our District Tomorrow -

The previous sections of this plan have set out a snapshot of where we are today. In this section, we set out a vision for the District over the next twenty-one years, drawn from the themes and intended outcomes of the Community Strategy - "Putting Epping Forest First".

## Theme 1 - 'Safe'

8 We want the District to be a place where people work together so that all in our communities, especially the most vulnerable, are able to lead lives free from the blight of crime and the fear of crime, and can play a full role in the life of their community in an environment that supports and sustains respect.



## Theme 2 - 'Sustainable'

We want the District to be a place with strong cohesive communities, where together we protect, capitalise on and enhance the green and unique heritage of our District, but also plan effectively to meet the needs of current and future generations for decent homes, jobs, services and transport, in a manner always sensitive to our environment.



# “Epping Forest in 2031”

## Theme 3 - ‘Health’

We want the District to be a place where the health and wellbeing of all our residents is promoted with partners focusing on the communities that suffer the greatest health inequality, supporting them to transform their lives while positively tackling the social and environmental factors which create the health divide.



9

## Theme 4—‘Aspiring’

We want the District to be a place where all our children and young people are cherished and protected, where aspiration and attainment are prized and the infrastructure and support to make the area a beacon of learning excellence is provided.

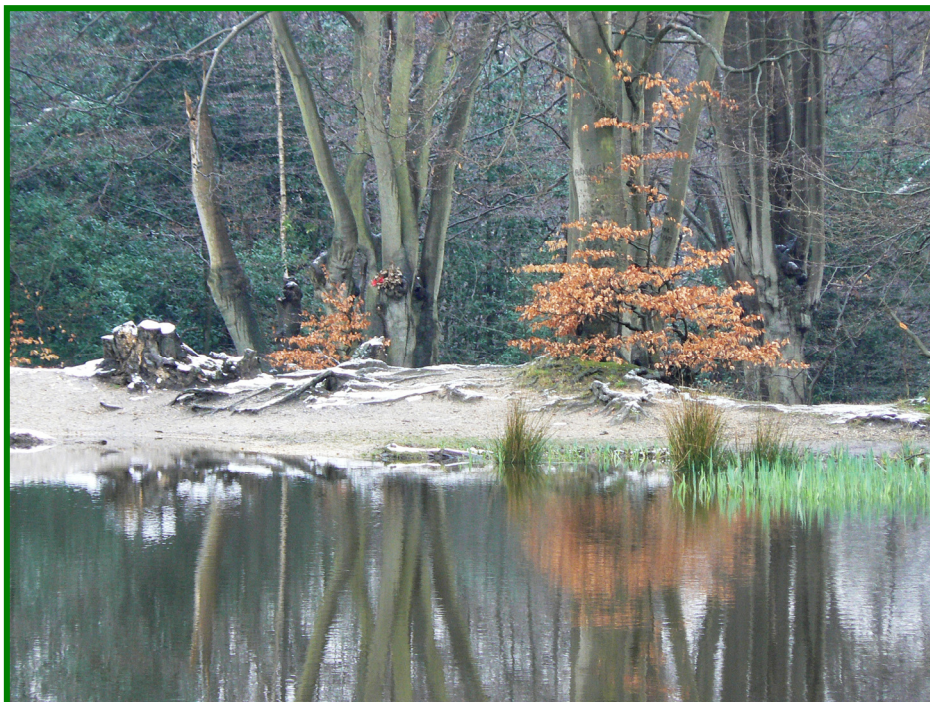


# Our Partnership Approach

Although the Council exists to provide public services to residents and businesses in the District, we are not the only supplier of public services. To ensure residents get the services they require, we work in partnership with agencies such as Essex County Council, the National Health Service, the Police, the Fire and Rescue Service, local parish and town councils and community groups. We are committed to working with others to make sure we provide our services in the best possible way, and also work with private sector service providers where this represents the best value for money.

The Council works effectively with its partners to develop cross-cutting initiatives, deliver service improvements, and reduce costs and improve value for money wherever possible. The authority regards partnerships as an effective way of enhancing service provision, or of providing facilities where none currently exist.

10 The Council has formed a West Essex District Councils group with Harlow and Uttlesford District Councils, in order to work together to promote the interests of West Essex. The partnership develops ways to improve value for money, service performance and responsiveness to the needs of communities, and works collaboratively with other public, voluntary and private sector organisations to achieve economies and efficiencies. Whilst the partner authorities maintain separate roles as leaders of their own communities, the West Essex Group also works together to develop strategic responses to sub-regional, regional and national issues which affect all of West Essex.



# Our Achievements 2006-2011



We published our previous Corporate Plan in 2006, which set out our objectives and priorities for the period between 2006 and 2010. Within that plan, we aimed to lay down the framework within which we would make improvements to services and strive to become a top performing authority.

The plan highlighted key aims designed to help us achieve goals and identify the issues which were important to our residents, and six key themes were identified as areas for improvement to services. Since 2006, we have achieved the following:

11

Ensuring the protection of the unique, green and sustainable environment of the District

- (i) Improved waste and recycling arrangements resulted in recycling levels increasing from 37.1% in 2006 to 51.2% by March 2010. Recycling performance is anticipated to increase to approximately 60% by 2011/12. As importantly, residual waste fell significantly reducing the amount going to land fill.
- (ii) The successful remediation of the former landfill site at Bobbingworth as a pocket park, with natural ecosystems (reed beds) being used to deal with pollutants from the site.
- (iii) We opposed very high levels of growth in early versions of East of England Plan, ensuring no major loss of Green Belt to development.

1



# Our Achievements 2006-2011 (cont.)

Ensuring that the District has decent housing and clean and attractive neighbourhoods

2

- (i) The “Safer, Cleaner, Greener” initiative provided a co-ordinated approach to environmental issues, with dedicated enforcement officers and a Rapid Response Unit to deal swiftly with environmental problems such as flytips.
- (ii) We dealt with offensive graffiti rapidly wherever it arose.
- (iii) We completed a programme of ensuring that all of our Council properties are decent and gave financial assistance to vulnerable families to bring their homes up to the Decent Homes Standard
- (iv) We facilitated the provision of 240 new affordable homes within the District.
- (iv) We began a Housing Repairs Refresh Programme, resulting in key repair targets being achieved and exceeded for the first time, and progressed the appointment of a private Repairs Management Contractor to bring a more commercial approach to the management of the Housing Repairs Service, along with economies from the bulk purchasing of materials



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Ensuring that residents of the District can enjoy local amenities with little fear of being a victim of crime

3

- (i) The Community Safety Partnership was successful in reducing levels of crime within the District, which remains a safe place in which to live. Since 2006 overall crime has reduced by 13.7% (9,260 down to 7,990). **(DOESS to update for 2010/11)**
- (ii) We appointed two anti-social behaviour investigators and an officer to oversee the introduction of new and updated CCTV facilities, which have both proven very effective in dealing with anti-social behaviour and assisting the police with high quality CCTV evidence.
- (iii) We worked with Essex Police and the Essex Youth Service on a range of diversionary youth activities, including intergenerational arts projects such as Make Do And Mend, where participants from Waltham Abbey, the Limes Farm estate at Chigwell and Loughton supported by The Royal College of Fashion, investigated wartime recycling and made new clothes from old charity shop items.



4

Ensuring that residents of the District lead a healthy lifestyle by having access to effective, high-quality leisure and cultural services



- (i) The leisure and sports centres have been improved, and fitness equipment updated, in the District.
- (ii) A range of targeted initiatives ranging from social inclusion sports programmes for young people from disadvantaged areas to the ‘Lifewalks’ walking for health programme, have been introduced;
- (iii) Special sports projects have been provided to support children with low self esteem and confidence, children’s holiday play programmes have been expanded to provide low cost and free options, and play and youth facilities have been improved in key locations;
- (iv) Targeted community arts projects for socially excluded young people and people with disabilities have been provided, including dance classes and intergenerational work with people living in residential care homes.
- (v) We have secured over £2,000,000 of external funding towards the provision of leisure and cultural services provision in the last six years.

5

Ensuring that the District has a thriving and sustainable economy



- (i) We appointed a Business Champion to work closely with the local Chamber of Commerce and improve communications with businesses;
- (ii) Business Breakfasts have been used to inform businesses about key issues such as business rates and public sector procurement, and ongoing support provided for the Town Centre Partnerships across the district;
- (iii) No parking charge increases have been made over the past two years and free parking on Saturdays in long stay and mixed use car parks has been maintained. The 30 minute tariff to facilitate short stay parking in town centres has been retained and the “RingGo” facility introduced to enable parking charges to be paid via mobile phone;
- (iv) We completed the Design and Development Brief for the Broadway area of Loughton.
- (v) We remain a low tax authority and now have the second lowest Council Tax in Essex, with a gap of just £1.35 per year for an average property between this Council and the lowest charging authority.

# Our Achievements 2006-2011 (cont.)

6

Ensuring that we offer high-quality, customer focused services, provided by skilled and committed staff

- (i) We retained our Investors in People status, and secured re-accreditation and /or new accreditation of quality systems and charter marks such as LEXCEL, and the Cabinet Office's new Customer Excellence Award for the whole of the Housing Service.
- (ii) During 2009/10 and 2010/11, the Tenant Services Authority assessed that the Council had the lowest rent levels amongst all social landlords in the District, and the highest levels of tenant satisfaction for all 3 satisfaction areas assessed.
- (iii) The Council has invested in its Benefits Service with a modern processing system and electronic records document management. This has led to substantial reductions in the time taken to process new benefit claims, despite the number of claims increasing.



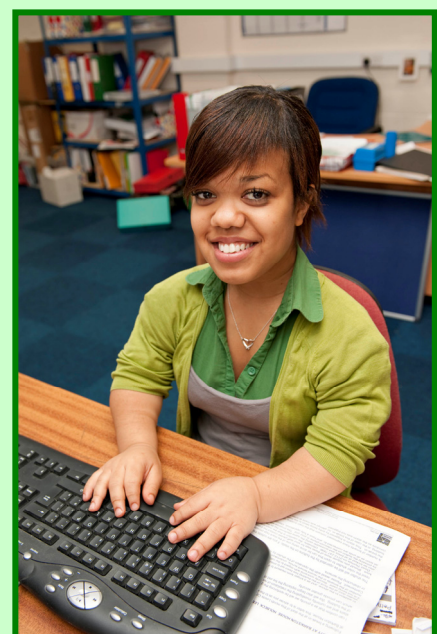
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## Our Commitment To Equality

***'Epping Forest District Council will treat everyone equally and fairly according to their needs'***

The Council welcomes diversity and is committed to equality for all people in the community. The Council views diversity and equality as integral to its service delivery and in the employment of its staff. This means that it will think about the needs of its service users or whom it employs and strive to eliminate discrimination and improve equality of opportunity for all. As a community leader the Council will work to improve understanding between the different communities in the district opposing all forms of prejudicial discrimination on grounds of age, disability, ethnic origin, nationality, gender, sexual orientation or religious belief.

Placing equality at the heart of our services and creating an environment that encourages diversity, removes barriers and allows our communities to reach their full potential.



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# Our Resources & Performance

Annual budgets are prepared according to the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan. They are also set against the context of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, which projects revenue and capital expenditure for four years ahead to ensure that planned developments and investments are affordable. In undertaking resource and financial planning, the Council observes the following principles:

- all spending plans are subjected to rigorous and regular review to ensure they are aligned with established need and provide value for money;
- changes in service delivery to meet the corporate aims and priorities are underpinned by appropriate allocation and use of available resources;
- the resource and financial planning processes cover all services, and all expenditure;
- maximising the availability of external sources of funding and income, such as central government grants, and new partnership funding arrangements are pursued.

We produce and update our Housing Revenue Account Business Plan every year, which includes a 30-Year Financial Plan forecasting anticipated expenditure and income over this period in order to inform current and future spending decisions.

The Council is committed to delivering and continually improving high quality services so that we can make a positive impact on the quality of life of residents of the Epping Forest District. We believe that we can make a positive difference through our services and the way we operate, and the Council measures its performance in a variety of ways.

A range of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) relevant to the Council's aims and objectives are adopted each year and performance against them monitored on a regular basis. The aim of the KPIs is to focus our improvement efforts and achieve comparable performance with the top performing local authorities. Improvement plans set out the actions we will implement to achieve our targeted performance and to reflect year on year changes in service delivery.

Full details of the Council's performance can be found in the annual [Performance Report](#).

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# On The Horizon - The National Picture

## Reduced Public Sector Spending

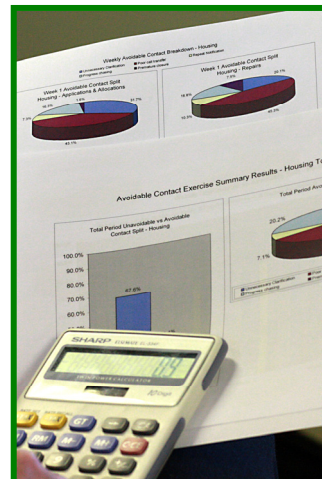
There is a clear need to significantly reduce public spending to achieve the necessary improvement in the state of the overall public finances. Estimates suggest that the grant that the Council receives from the Government and which the Council uses to fund, in part, the provision of its services, will fall by approximately 30% over the next four years, meaning that over the period from 2011/12 to 2014/15 block grant is likely to reduce by £2.6 million to £6.1million.

A savings target for the 2011/12 budget was set at £500,000 and this is likely to be achieved. However, this will still leave around £2.5 million to be found through increases in income or reductions in services in subsequent years.

16

The picture has been complicated by the introduction of the New Homes Bonus, which will largely be funded by reductions in the money available for block grant. The consultation on the New Homes Bonus is open until late December and so the exact figure that this Council will receive from this scheme and how that will effect the block grant is unlikely to be confirmed much before the budget for 2011/12 is set in February.

Shared services are a growing trend for local authorities seeking to reduce costs and improve efficiency. Pressures to improve service delivery while cutting costs, have seen the public sector begin to embrace shared services arrangements to take advantage of economies of scale and streamlined processes. Whilst shared services models have traditionally focused on back-office functions, such as human resources and information technology, increasingly organisations are beginning to share key strategic functions.





# On The Horizon - The Local Response

## Responding to Reduced Public Sector Spending

Improved efficiency and sharing services may not be sufficient to achieve the savings required from councils as a result of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2010. Although focus will remain on how the Council can do things more efficiently and better, reductions in local services provided may be inevitable in the future, possibly alongside differences in the quality and extent of the services. However, the Council will do everything possible to minimise any adverse effects on its services and will strive to maintain existing levels of performance where these already represent significant achievements.

Partnership working is key to ensuring that appropriate services continue to be provided to local communities in a time of reduced spending in the public sector.

The Council will actively explore shared service opportunities where these can be demonstrated to be in the authority's best interest, and/or where its expertise can be sold to others. An example of a shared service provided to another Council is insurance claims handling, where a mutually beneficial agreement has been entered into with a neighbouring local authority for the Council to provide the service for both authorities.

The Council will continue to improve its approach to joint purchasing, particularly through the Essex Procurement Hub. The Hub assists in constructing and advising on framework agreements, collaborative procurements and spend analysis, to help Essex local authorities achieve best value from purchasing.

We will continue to pursue external funding opportunities across the range of the Council's responsibilities, but particularly for the provision of sports, health and cultural activities given the importance of these to general well being.

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# On The Horizon - The National Picture

## The Recession

The economic situation is clearly a major issue for local communities and service providers. In the past severe economic downturn has led to increased unemployment and business failures, which impact on the health and well-being of local communities and the public services that support them. In particular, negative impacts on health and in crime, falling employment rates and increasing homelessness due to repossession levels might flow from the current downturn. The District has a sizeable number of residents employed in the financial sector, which has accounted for a significant proportion of employment growth over recent years, leaving the area particularly vulnerable to a contraction in this sector of the economy.

18

The Council's budget contains a number of income streams such as land charges, building control and development control that have been adversely affected by the current state of the economy and the housing market. Clear direction is needed from Government on what will replace the regional planning structures and housing targets that have been set aside.

The Council's interest earnings have also been hit by the "Credit Crunch". Earlier in the crisis in 2008/09 as banks struggled for liquidity they were prepared to pay high interest rates to borrow from the Council. This position has now reversed and low interest rates show no imminent sign of upward movement.

As well as reducing income, the recession has had the effect of pushing up costs in some service areas. There has been a significant increase in the overall Housing Benefit caseload, which has been particularly noticeable in the number of more complex claims and claims from people who are experiencing the benefits system for the first time.



# On The Horizon - The Local Response

## Responding to the Recession

The Council is committed to supporting local communities throughout the recession to ensure that they remain vibrant and positive. This will be achieved by working in partnership with other organisations including the voluntary sector, to build community capacity and empower communities to contribute to local initiatives. Actions to support this include:

- Retaining, where possible, comparatively low car parking charges
- Creating ongoing opportunities for local companies to tender for work
- The timely processing and payment of invoices for work completed
- Developing a local loyalty card for Town Centres

The Council will engage with the Government's arrangements for Local Enterprise Partnerships between local authorities and businesses. Intended to determine local economic priorities and undertake activities to drive economic growth and the creation of local jobs, Local Enterprise Partnerships enable local authorities and businesses to work together to quicken the economic recovery based on economic areas. The Council will work with the Kent and Greater Essex and East Sussex Local Enterprise Partnership to determine the needs of the local economy, and to identify barriers to local economic growth.

The Council remains committed to further developing Town Centre Partnerships to continue to play a strong role in helping to address the challenges being faced by the District's centres

The Council is seeking to improve access to services by redeveloping Limes Farm Hall at Chigwell. This facility will be available to other public sector partners to provide surgeries and will expand the existing Housing Office. It will provide a base for Benefits staff and will mean face to face access to discuss claims is widely available without the need to travel to Epping.

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# On The Horizon - The National Picture

## The Environment

The Epping Forest District is a great place to live, and our residents have indicated that a major factor in people living their lives here or aspiring to live here, is its green and unique nature and environment. There is constant pressure for development in the countryside, and the Council's planning policies have traditionally been directed towards resisting any encroachment into the Green Belt. However, the District must develop as the population grows, and new creative and sustainable ways need to be found to meet the needs of future generations. This is an extremely difficult balance, particularly in an area where housing supply and affordability are key issues.

The natural environment remains a high priority for the Coalition Government and it is clear that the Council will be required to embrace this within its own environmental policies. The government's commitments up to 2015 include:

- 20
- Delivering secure energy on the way to a low carbon energy future
  - Saving energy with the Green Deal and supporting vulnerable consumers
  - Driving ambitious action on climate change at home and abroad
  - Managing our energy legacy responsibly and cost-effectively

A key environmental challenge facing the Council is the sustainable use of natural resources. By reducing consumption of electricity, gas and water we can reduce our carbon emissions, contributing to sustainable development and influencing others through the example set. The Council is also aware of the need to ensure that it constantly improves the ways in which it protects the environment, by reducing carbon emissions, recycling more, and promoting sustainable transport options.



# On The Horizon - The Local Response

## Responding to The Environment

One of the Council's most important responsibilities is to help to create a sustainable environment for the Epping Forest District. This means keeping the District clean and green and tackling climate change. In order to reduce the impact of climate change, over the next four years the Council will:

- Reduce carbon emissions from its operations;
- Use its natural resources more efficiently;
- Install SMART meters in its buildings to identify energy efficiency improvements that can be made; and
- Increase staff, public and business awareness of the effective use of natural resources, the reduction of carbon emissions and adapting to severe weather.

With fuel poverty on the rise, the Council is involved in the implementation and completion of London Commuter Belt Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty Initiative and we will continue to promote grants that are available to the public.

The Council has invested heavily in improvements to its waste and recycling services with recycling performance continuing to rise. Resources have been allocated to further increase public awareness and education of waste and recycling services to ensure that high levels of recycling are maintained.

The Council will develop a Corporate Climate Change Strategy, that will set out priorities and actions for the delivery of environmental objectives including, fuel poverty planning and a monitoring framework for the Council.

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# On The Horizon - The National Picture

## Planning Growth

The Council's responsibility to help to create a sustainable environment for the Epping Forest District includes planning for growth, to address issues such as the provision of affordable housing and making sure that homes are built in the right place.

The local economy should be able to provide jobs and services for local residents, with high quality and accessible employment land and premises so that there can be effective competition with adjoining areas. There is a need to reduce unemployment in those areas of significant deprivation and provide opportunities for those gaining qualifications locally. The Council is concerned that many residents shop outside of the District for a range of products and services and the District's main shopping centres need to be able to remain competitive despite significant competition from a number of much larger nearby centres.

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The Government is proposing radical changes to the provision of affordable housing. Local authorities may in future have to provide fixed-term tenancies for 2-5 years, instead of secure tenancies (sometimes referred to as "tenancies for life"). Housing associations will have to charge "affordable rents" for all newly-built properties and a proportion of re-lets, much higher than the current "social rents". The Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the District identified that around 4,620 affordable homes needed to be provided within the District to meet current and forecast need. It is a considerable challenge for the Council to increase the amount of affordable housing over the next four years.



# On The Horizon - The Local Response

## Responding to Planning Growth

As the population grows and changes, provision needs to be made for additional housing in a manner appropriate to the Council's overriding priority to protect and conserve the environmental heritage of the District. This will put further pressure on available land, transport services and jobs. The continuing high cost of housing makes it difficult for people, even with good incomes, to get on the housing ladder, and in many cases this leads to young people moving out of the District to access housing. The Council will work hard with developers and housing associations to increase the amount of affordable housing over the next four years, and will carefully consider the implications of the Government's proposals for changes to the provision of affordable housing.

Decisions need to be taken on the proportion of affordable homes on new developments and at higher density provision for appropriate sections of the community, in appropriate areas and in consultation with local people. This would help meet need but also ensure that green space is not swallowed up. These will largely be questions for the new Local Development Framework (LDF) which replaces the Local Plan.

Ongoing projects such as the possible redevelopment of the St. John's Road area at Epping, the Langston Road area of Loughton and the Lee Valley White Water Centre Economic Development Study, will aid economic development and aim to boost local economies.

We must consider how we achieve the community's vision for the future of the District; the potential environmental, economic and social benefits of new development; the protection and maintenance of the rural landscape and the countryside, including protecting the Green Belt; the protection of the historic built environment; and the implications of climate change, including increased flood risk and the protection of the most valuable agricultural land.

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# On The Horizon - The National Picture

## Demographic Change & Health Inequalities

The population of the district is increasing and changing, creating a need for more and different types of housing, e.g. adapted for the elderly and those with special needs. Based on 2006 estimates, the District's population is anticipated to increase by 16% over the next 25 years. The district has fewer than average numbers of younger adults (15-34), and higher than average numbers of 35-64 and over 75 year olds. Projections for 2015 show that the population of the district will increase in the upper age bands, but see a relatively big decrease in the 35-44 age group. The need for local health and social care services is expected to increase as the population ages.

The district experiences a broad inflow of migration from London, and an outflow of migration to other Essex authorities. According to 2007 estimates, the district has the second most Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) residents in Essex (18,300). It is estimated that over 10% of residents belong to BME groups (defined as anything other than White British).

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Overall the district is relatively affluent, enjoying good health outcomes for the majority of its residents, but it also has some pockets of significant health inequality across ward areas and population groups. Waltham Abbey is one of the most deprived areas in Epping Forest, in terms of income, employment, and health, with the lowest life expectancy in Epping Forest and the second lowest life expectancy in Essex. Other wards in Loughton

Adult and childhood obesity additionally contributes to local health inequalities, with Shelley, Loughton Broadway and Paternoster exceeding national averages for obesity in adults, and Epping Forest Year 6 children identified as having the highest level of obesity in Essex.





# On The Horizon - The Local Response

## Responding to Demographic Change & Health Inequalities

We will continue to seek external funding to support our work with partners such as the health service to develop health improvement projects aimed at addressing health inequalities in our communities of greatest need and ensure that future life prospects are improved.

This will include developing joint funding bids to secure resources for specific projects such as *HealthWorks* which is a holistic programme targeted at young people from 13 – 19 years of age, to encourage them to improve their lifestyles through increased physical activity, sexual health screening and reduced alcohol and drug use. *HealthWorks* has been funded by Harlow Health Centre's Trust and will initially focus on young people in Waltham Abbey with the aim of changing long term health prospects for the area.

We will also build on work undertaken through our Active Health Programme which over the last two years has seen improved health and well being for people over 50, through provision of walking programmes, seated exercise and allotment development.

Effective partnership working within the District and with our partners across West Essex will additionally focus on good use of existing resources, through forums such as the District Healthy Communities Group and Epping Forest Children's Partnership, who will work to ensure that children's and young people's needs continue to be met.

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# Our Aims for 2011 - 2015

Taking account of national priorities; our current performance levels and future targets; the issues that our residents have identified as important; and the priorities of our partners, we have identified the Council's own improvement priorities for 2011/12 to 2014/15.

We want the Council to be a high-performing local authority that delivers top-quality services in the most cost-effective way, ensuring the views and priorities of our service users are integral to all that we do.

Over the four year period of this plan, we aim to:

**(a) Endeavour to safeguard frontline services that our local residents tell us are important against a background of diminishing resources**

**(b) Have the lowest District Council Tax in Essex and maintain that position**

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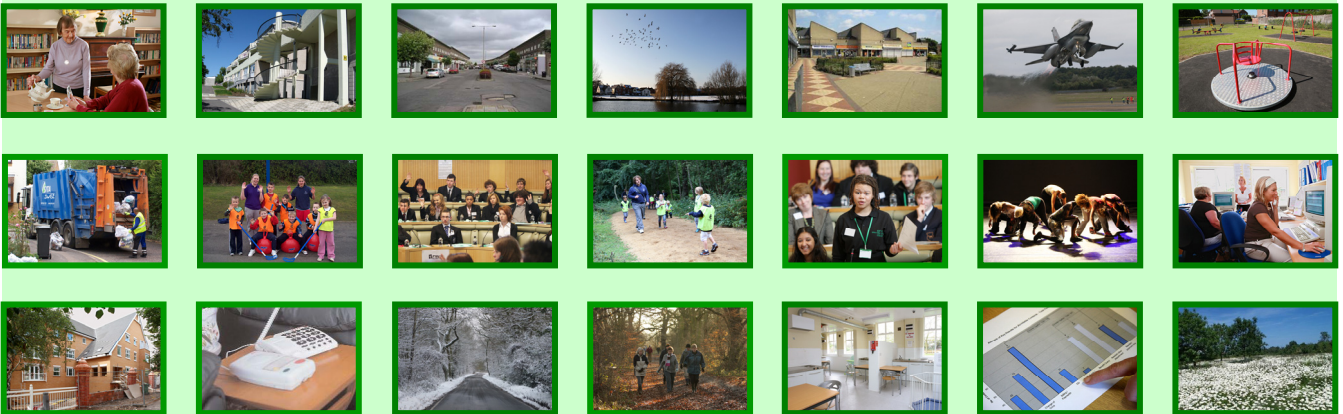
**(c) Be recognised as an innovative and transparent council involving residents in our decisions**

**(d) Continuously improve efficiency by adopting new ways of working with our partners and maximising revenue from our assets**

**(e) Provide clear community leadership and be a strong advocate, championing the interests of the people of Epping Forest and protecting the special character of the District**



# Our Key Objectives 2011/12



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## An Action Plan For The Year Ahead

# Our Key Objectives 2011/12

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Key Objective	What actions will we take to achieve this objective?
<p>(1) To review the Council’s commercial landholdings in order to coordinate competing land use proposals, fulfil operational requirements, achieve value for money, and produce additional capital and revenue income to the Council;</p>	<p>(a) To relocate existing services from the Langston Road depot in Loughton (with the exception of the museum store), to a new permanent depot site in Oakwood Hill, Loughton, and a new depot site at North Weald Airfield;</p> <p>(b) To relocate the museum store from the Langston Road depot to vacant units at the Brooker Road Industrial Estate in Waltham Abbey, to be co-located with the Countrycare service;</p> <p>(c) To develop a strategy for the redevelopment of the Langston Road depot site when vacant, in conjunction with the adjoining T11 site;</p> <p>(d) Determine a planning application submitted for the redevelopment of the Langston Road depot site and the adjoining T11 site;</p>

**How will we measure what we have achieved?**

**Links to Medium Term Aims, the Budget and Corporate Documents**

The relocation of the Council’s services from 31 March 2013;

The development of a cost benefit analysis and budgetary cost, and the agreement of capital financing for the construction of the new depot at Oakwood Hill, by 30 September 2011;

The determination of a planning application for the new depot at Oakwood Hill, by 31 December 2011;

The design and tender of the new depot at Oakwood Hill, by 30 September 2012;

The development of a cost benefit analysis and budgetary cost, and the agreement of capital financing for new depot facilities at North Weald Airfield, by 30 September 2011;

The determination of the submitted planning application for the new depot at North Weald Airfield, by 31 December 2011;

The design and tender of the new depot at North Weald Airfield, by 30 September 2012;

The relocation of the museum store, by 31 March 2012;

The development of a strategy for the redevelopment of the vacant Langston Road sites, by 31 March 2013;

The determination of the planning application for the redevelopment of the Langston Road depot site, by 30 April 2011;

**Medium Term Aims**

4 - Improve efficiency through partnership working

**Budget 2011/12 and other corporate plans or documents**

Asset management Plan 2007 - 2012

Capital Strategy 2010 - 2013

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2010 - 2014

...(continued)

# Our Key Objectives 2011/12

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Key Objective	What actions will we take to achieve this objective?
<p>(1) ...(continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(e) The development, subject to the completion of the Strategic Review of North Weald Airfield in March 2011, of a strategy for the future use of North Weald Airfield, based on the findings of the Aviation Intensification Assessment;</li> <li>(f) To complete consultation on the Development Brief for the proposed redevelopment of part of the St. John's Road area of Epping, including the Council's property assets and other land;</li> <li>(g) To determine the Council's approach to the use of its land and property assets at the Broadway area of Loughton, with reference to the Design and Development Brief for the area;</li> </ul>
<p>(2) To utilise existing resources to support the Government's vision for the 'Big Society' where individuals and communities have power and responsibility to create better neighbourhoods and local services;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) To encourage participation in the development of service and budgetary priorities, and take account of the views of local residents, staff and partners to address reduced local authority grant and identify opportunities for increased efficiency and income;</li> <li>(b) To develop arrangements for communicating and improving the understanding of local communities, of the roles and responsibilities of local authorities and the Council's statutory and discretionary duties to provide services and functions;</li> <li>(c) To establish closer partnerships with the voluntary sector and local communities across the district, to build community capacity and develop cohesive and sustainable communities;</li> <li>(d) To work in collaboration with partners and local community groups to provide support, training and mentoring to local people;</li> </ul>

## Corporate Plan

### How will we measure what we have achieved?

The development of a strategy for the future use of North Weald Airfield, in conjunction with relevant partners, by 31 March 2012;

The agreement of the Development Brief, by 30 September 2011;

The submission of planning applications for the redevelopment of part of the Broadway area, that accord with the Design and Development Brief;

The consideration by the Cabinet, by 30 September 2011, of options for undertaking priority setting and participatory budgeting consultation exercises for 2012/13 and future years;

Subject to Key Objective 2(a), the provision of opportunities for the participation of local residents, staff and partners in the Council's priority and budget setting processes for 2012/13 and future years:

The commencement of the delivery of key measures from the Big Society Action Plan, from September 2011;

- (i) The securing of external funding to support capacity building projects in local communities, and the report of funding received to the External Funding Working Party, by 31 March 2012;

### Links to Medium Term Aims, the Budget and Corporate Documents

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#### Medium-Term Aims

- 1 - Safeguard frontline services
- 2 - Lowest district Council Tax in Essex
- 3 - Innovative and transparent Council;
- 4 - Improve efficiency through partnership working;
- 5 - Provide community leadership

#### Budget 2011/12, and other corporate plans or documents

'Putting Epping Forest First' - Community Strategy 2010 - 2031

Utilising existing staff resources and through securing external funding.

...(continued)

# Our Key Objectives 2011/12

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Key Objective	What actions will we take to achieve this objective?
<p>(2) ...(continued)</p>	<p>(d) ...(continued)</p> <p>(e) To develop the ‘Healthworks’ programme for young people in Waltham Abbey, to raise aspirations, improve long-term health inequalities and encourage positive activity;</p> <p>(f) To support the health services in addressing local health inequalities across the district;</p> <p>(g) To seek external funding to deliver targeted initiatives in specific areas identified through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment;</p>
<p>(3) To work in partnership with Essex County Council and other statutory and voluntary agencies, to ensure the effectiveness of local arrangements and services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people;</p>	<p>(a) To review corporate procedures for safeguarding children and young people;</p> <p>(b) To provide training for appropriate members and officers, to ensure that they are confident in dealing with safeguarding concerns;</p>



**How will we measure what we have achieved?**

- (ii) The achievement of local residents trained and supported in leadership development, through the establishment of two Community Leads for each of five areas of the District, by 31 March 2012;
- (i) The achievement of peer mentors to support improved life and health outcomes, through the establishment of one Health Improvement Lead for each of the five areas of the District with the highest levels of health inequality, by March 2012;

The commencement of the delivery of key measures from the 'Healthworks' Action Plan, monitored by the Steering Group consisting of representatives from Harlow Health Centres Trust, the Council and NHS West Essex, by 30 September 2011;

The commencement of the delivery of partnership measures to reduce health inequalities in key areas of the district over a five year period, by 30 November 2011;

The securing of external funding to support a range of health improvement project delivery, and the report of funding received to the External Funding Working Party, by 31 March 2012;

The review and update of the Council's Child Protection Policy and individual service procedures in line with legislation, by 30 June 2011;

The training of relevant members and officers in child protection procedures at an appropriate level, by 30 September 2011;

**Links to Medium Term Aims, the Budget and Corporate Documents**

Budget fully funded by Harlow Health Centres Trust through competitive bidding process. The Council's Community Services staff resources to support project development

Links to Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership's Strategic Needs Assessment in respect of reducing anti-social behaviour and drugs and alcohol abuse

Direct link to Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

**Medium-Term Aims**

3 - Innovative and transparent council

**Budget 2011/12, and other corporate plans or documents**

Use of existing training budgets

...(continued)

# Our Key Objectives 2011/12

Key Objective	What actions will we take to achieve this objective?
<p>(3) ...(continued)</p>	<p>(c) To review recruitment and selection processes for officers that work directly with children and young people, in line with the 'Safer Recruitment' guidelines developed by the Essex Safeguarding Children Board;</p> <p>(d) To develop a Safe Recruitment Policy, to ensure that applicants are suitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults;</p>
<p>34 (4) To seek continuous performance improvement and the best use of resources, against the background of diminishing public expenditure;</p>	<p>(a) To achieve overall improvement in respect of the Council's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each of the four years from 2010/11 to 2013/14;</p> <p>(b) To work with the West Essex District Councils Group to promote the interests of West Essex;</p> <p>(c) To continue to achieve high levels of revenue Collection;</p> <p>(d) To further improve the performance of the Benefits Service;</p>

**How will we measure what we have achieved?**

**Links to Medium Term Aims, the Budget and Corporate Documents**

The development and introduction of appropriate recruitment and selection processes and induction arrangements, by 31 December 2011;

The development and introduction of a Safe Recruitment Policy, by 31 December 2011;

The improvement of a percentage improvement rate of **XX% (to be determined)** in respect of the Council's KPIs for 2011/12, by 31 March 2012;

The consideration by the Cabinet, by 31 March 2012, of the success of initiatives to improve value for money, service performance and responsiveness to the needs of communities, in partnership with other public, voluntary and private sector organisations across West Essex

- (i) Collection of 97.9% of the Council Tax due for 2011/12, by 31 March 2012;
- (ii) Collection of 98.1% of the National Non-Domestic Rates due for 2011/12, by 31 March 2012;
- (i) Processing of new benefit claims within an average of twenty days for 2011/12, by 31 March 2012;
- (ii) Processing of changes of circumstance within an average of seven days for 2011/12, by 31 March 2012;
- (iii) Completion, subject to consideration of proposals for the refurbishment of the Civic Offices Finance reception area, of the key recommendations of the January 2010 Benefits Service inspection, within timescales agreed with the Audit Commission and Department for Work and Pensions;

**Medium-Term Aims**

- 1 - Safeguard frontline services
- 3 - Innovative and transparent Council
- 4 - Improve efficiency through partnership working

**Budget 2011/12, and other corporate plans or documents**

£804,000 capital funding allocated, plus £250,000 external funding from Essex County Council

'Putting Epping Forest First' - Community Strategy 2010 - 2031;

...(continued)

# Our Key Objectives 2011/12

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Key Objective	What actions will we take to achieve this objective?
(4) ...(continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(e) To complete the 'Repairs Refresh Programme' to further improve the performance of the Housing Repairs Service, through the appointment of an External Repairs Management Contractor to manage the Repairs Service;</li> <li>(f) To introduce a scheme for all housing repairs to be undertaken by appointment;</li> <li>(g) To introduce mobile working arrangements for housing inspectors and tradesmen, to enable works orders to be received remotely, utilising appropriate mobile technologies;</li> <li>(h) To complete the redevelopment of the Limes Farm Hall to provide a new multi-agency facility;</li> <li>(i) To review the provision and enforcement of on-street parking within the district;</li> </ul>
(5) To achieve the levels of net savings necessary to maintain the Council's sound financial position;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) To freeze the Council Tax for 2011/12, to obtain the specific grant made available by the Government;</li> <li>(b) To ensure that over the period of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, there is a reducing use of reserves to balance the budget;</li> <li>(c) To ensure that the General Fund Reserve Balance falls to no lower than 25% of Net Budget Requirement;</li> </ul>

**How will we measure what we have achieved?**

**Links to Medium Term Aims, the Budget and Corporate Documents**

Completion of the 'Repairs Refresh Programme' and appointment of a Repairs Management Contractor, by the contract commencement date of 1 May 2011;

The introduction of an appropriate scheme, by 31 March 2012;

The introduction of appropriate mobile working arrangements, by 31 March 2012;

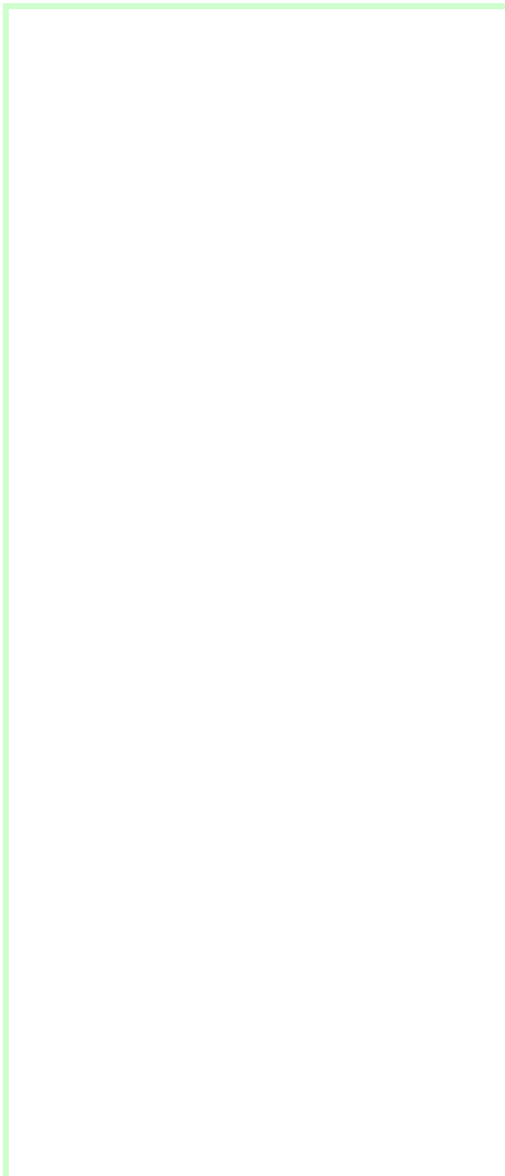
Completion of the redevelopment of the Limes Farm Hall, by 31 August 2011;

- (i) The completion of parking reviews for Buckhurst Hill, Epping and Loughton (The Broadway), in accordance with the agreed programme prepared by Essex County Council as highway authority:
  - Epping by 31 July 2011
  - Buckhurst Hill by 29 February 2012
  - Loughton (The Broadway) by 31 August 2012;
- (ii) Consideration by the Cabinet by 31 July 2011, of on-street parking enforcement options, following the completion of a review of existing enforcement arrangements by Essex County Council;

The Council Tax for 2011/12 remaining unchanged from 2010/11;

The success of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy in reducing the use of reserves to balance the budget for 2014/15;

The predicted level of the General Fund Reserve Balance for 2014/15;



**Medium-Term Aims**

- 1 - Safeguard frontline services
- 2 - Lowest district Council Tax in Essex

**Budget 2011/12, and other corporate plans or documents**

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2011/12 - 2014/15

# Our Key Objectives 2011/12

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Key Objective	What actions will we take to achieve this objective?
<p>(6) To maximise the provision of affordable housing within the District (see also Key Objective 8(b));</p>	<p>(a) To introduce an Open Market Shared Ownership Scheme, in partnership with Broxbourne Housing Association, to provide interest free loans to enable housing applicants to purchase properties on the open market with a shared ownership lease;</p> <p>(b) To work with housing associations to complete new affordable housing schemes in the District;</p> <p>(c) To work with Hastoe Housing Association to develop Council owned land at Millfield, High Ongar, to provide four affordable houses constructed from straw bales:</p> <p>(d) To provide grant of £375,000 to one of the Council's Preferred Housing Association Partners to fund the purchase of 5/7 two and/or three bedroom houses on the open market to let at social rents to the Council's nominees;</p>
<p>(7) To help mitigate the impact of the current economic conditions on local people and businesses, where resources permit and value for money can be achieved from the Council's activities;</p>	<p>(a) To implement measures to mitigate the impact of the current economic conditions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- business engagement events to address subjects of importance to the business community;</li> <li>- sharing information with businesses / business networks on funding, training opportunities etc.;</li> <li>- press releases reporting on business events; and,</li> <li>- the Council's Business Champion communicating more strongly to the business community;</li> </ul>

**How will we measure what we have achieved?**

- (i) The provision of eight interest free loans to Broxbourne Housing Assoc. by 30 September 2011;
- (ii) The review of the Open Market Shared Ownership Scheme by the Housing Scrutiny Panel, by 30 September 2011, with a view to undertaking a second phase and providing additional loans;
- (iii) The provision of six further interest free loans to Broxbourne Housing Assoc., by 31 March 2012;

The completion of the following affordable housing schemes, by 31 March 2012:

- Epping Forest College, Loughton (39 homes)
- Zinc, Ongar (9 homes)
- Station Approach, Ongar (6 homes)
- Sewardstone Road, Waltham Abbey (67 homes);

The achievement of a start date on site of the Millfield Development, by 30 June 2011;

The occupation of all properties purchased by the council's Preferred Housing Association Partner, by 30 June 2011;

**Links to Medium Term Aims, the Budget and Corporate Documents**

3 - Innovative and transparent Council

4 - Improve efficiency through partnership working

**Budget 2011/12, and other corporate plans or documents**

Open Market Shared Ownership Scheme - £435,000 and possible additional 350,000 for Phase 2

Housing Association open market purchases - £375,000

Housing Strategy 2009-2012

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The six-monthly reporting of the Council's achievements and successes in mitigating the impact of the current economic conditions, to the meetings of the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel to be held on 20 September 2011 and 20 March 2012

**Medium-Term Aims**

4 - Improve efficiency through partnership working

5 - Provide community leadership

**Budget 2011/12, and other corporate plans or documents**

'Putting Epping Forest First' - Community Strategy 2010 - 2031

# Our Key Objectives 2011/12

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Key Objective	What actions will we take to achieve this objective?
<p>(8) To deliver a sound Core Planning Strategy of the Local Development Framework.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) To agree a revised timetable for the preparation of the Core Planning Strategy, taking account of the publication of the Localism Bill in December 2010;</li> <li>(b) To determine the level of future housing growth within the District, taking into account evidence already collected, the results of the community visioning exercise, the scale of the Council's housing waiting list, relevant environmental constraints, and the degree to which cooperation can be achieved with Harlow and Uttlesford district councils;</li> <li>(c) To complete Stage 2 (Issues and Options) of the Core Strategy consultation exercise.</li> </ul>

## Reporting Our Performance

As a Council committed to transparency and publishing how we are performing, we will publish our progress against these key objectives on a quarterly basis. Progress updates will be reported ..... and you will be able to view details of these updates at.....

The key objectives will also be reviewed and refreshed on an annual basis. Objective for 2012/13 and subsequent years will be published in an updated version of this Corporate Plan and will be available .....



**How will we measure what we have achieved?**

The submission of a fully revised Local Development Framework, by 31 March 2012;

The establishment of new housing targets for the District as part of the Issues and Options consultation for the Core Planning Strategy (Preferred Options Stage) by 31 March 2012;

The completion of the Issues and Options consultation for the Core Planning Strategy by 31 March 2012.

**Links to Medium Term Aims, the Budget and Corporate Documents**

- 1 - Safeguard frontline services
- 2 - Lowest district Council Tax in Essex
- 3 - Innovative and transparent Council
- 4 - Improve efficiency through partnership working
- 5 - Provide community leadership

**Budget 2011/12, and other corporate plans or documents**

The Local Development Framework links directly to the 'Putting Epping Forest First' - Community Strategy 2010 - 2031 and informs other corporate plans and strategies

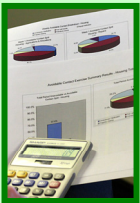
Housing Strategy 2009-2012

## Corporate Plan



We would like to thank the following individuals and teams that contributed and were the subjects of the photographs included in the Corporate Plan:

Epping Forest Youth Council  
Performance Improvement Unit  
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Christine Sobey  
Diane Butler



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Melissa Page Photography  
Brian Thomas Photography

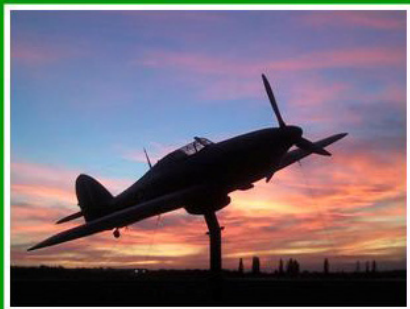
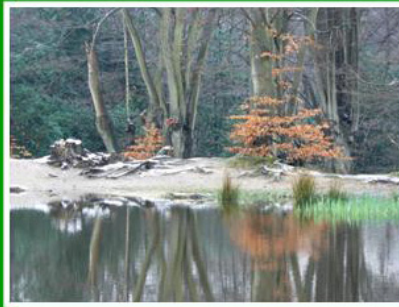




2011 - 2015

Epping Forest  
District Council

# Corporate Plan



## Partner Feedback Form

Making our district a great place to live, work, study & do business

# Draft Corporate Plan 2011-15

## Partner Feedback Form

### INTRODUCTION

Thank you for reading Epping Forest District Council's draft Corporate Plan for 2011 to 2015, we hope that you found it informative. We are interested to know what you think of the Corporate Plan and our proposed priorities for the next four years, and would be grateful if you could complete and return this short questionnaire. The replies that we receive will be used to inform the format and content of the final version of the Corporate Plan.

Please return this form to:

Epping Forest District Council, Performance Improvement Unit, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping, Essex, CM16 4BZ.

Please tick the answer to each question that comes closest to your view of the draft Corporate Plan. Please only tick one answer for each question.

#### **(1) Overall, how did you find the content of the draft Corporate Plan?**

Please tick one box

Very interesting	
Fairly interesting	
Neither interesting nor uninteresting	
Not very interesting	
Not interesting at all	

## Corporate Plan

### (2) How did you find the draft Corporate Plan to read?

Please tick one column for each row

	Very easy	Fairly easy	Neither easy nor hard	Hard	Very hard
<b>(a) Overall</b>					
<b>(b) Format and layout</b>					
<b>(c) Finding Information</b>					
<b>(d) Understanding</b>					

3

### (3) Do you have any comments on the content and priorities of the draft Corporate Plan?

.....

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## Corporate Plan

### (4) Overall, does the draft Corporate Plan explain the following?

Please tick one column for each row

	Yes	A little	No	Not much	Not at all
<b>(a) The role of the Council?</b>					
<b>(b) The issues that the District faces over the next four years?</b>					
<b>(c) The priorities of local People?</b>					
<b>(d) The Council's proposed aims for 2011 to 2015?</b>					

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### (5) Do you have any other comments regarding the Draft Corporate Plan?

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Name :  
 Address :  
 Telephone :  
 Email :