

**Report to Local Liaisons Committee**  
**Date of meeting: 1 March 2005**



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Subject:** Draft Council Plan 2006-2010

**Officer contact for further information :** T Tidey, Head of Human Resources and Performance Management (ext 4054) S Tautz, (ext 4180)

**Committee Secretary:** Z Folley (ext 4532)

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**Recommendation:**

**That the Committee consider and comment on the draft Council Plan for 2006 to 2010.**

1. (District Council) The Council Plan sets out the District Council's ambition and priorities for a four-year period, showing how the authority will support the Community Strategy for the Epping Forest District through its role as a leader or influencer of action, and how it will respond to the priorities of the Government and residents of the district.
2. This report provides the Liaison Committee with an overview of the approach being taken by the District Council to the review of the current Council Plan, and the development of a new Plan for the four years from 2006 to 2010. A copy of the draft new Council Plan is attached as an appendix to this report.
3. The first Council Plan (known initially as the Corporate Plan and subsequently as the Community Plan) was produced in the mid 1990's and has since been reviewed on a number of occasions to reflect the Council's achievements and set new priorities for future years. The most recent review of the Plan was completed in 2003/04 in advance of the Council's first Comprehensive Performance Assessment.
4. Following the publication of the Epping Forest Community Strategy, the existing Council Plan (2003-2007) is currently being thoroughly reviewed once more, to ensure that it accords with the aims and aspirations for the district contained in the Strategy, to reflect recent progress and the results of the CPA, and to highlight new duties and responsibilities introduced by the government.
5. This purpose of the new Council Plan is to set out the Council's ambition and priorities for 2006 to 2010, and how it will respond to the priorities of the Government and residents of the district. The new Plan will also provide an opportunity to identify and promote the key aims that will build upon the Council's previous successes and take it forward over the medium-term. Together with its family of supporting plans and strategies, the Plan will show how the Council intends to achieve its priorities and how the authority will manage its resources to secure their achievement and maintain continuous improvement. The Council Plan outlines these priorities and brings together the Council's aims, core values and key priorities to illustrate how the authority will contribute to the vision for the district outlined in the Community Strategy. The target audience for the Council Plan will be councillors, staff partners and key external agencies, and will be a working document that ensures that the Council and other agencies work toward a common purpose.
6. It has been accepted by the District Council that the previous versions of the Council Plan have sought to address too many different issues and have lacked focus and prioritisation. The Council Plan should not cover everything that the authority does, but should focus on those issues that matter most to people, national priorities set by the

government and local challenges arising from the social, economic and environmental context of the district. As a strategic document, the Council Plan should not contain specific information on the wide range of services provided, or how the authority delivers statutory duties or enforces legislation. For the new Plan priorities for the next four years have therefore been focused specifically on the Council's previously adopted medium-term priority of ensuring that the Epping Forest District is a safe, healthy and attractive place in which to live and work, and this priority therefore constitutes the Council's vision and overall strategic aim for the district for the next four years. Whilst remaining important, the remaining current medium-term priorities of ensuring that the Council is an organisation that listens and leads to resolve local issues and provides accessible, affordable and improving services, act to support the achievement of making the district safe, healthy and attractive. The new Council Plan reflects these priorities in terms of their support of the Council's vision and overall strategic aim for the district until 2010.

7. Through consultation undertaken by the Council and the Local Strategic Partnership, and the analysis of socio-economic and demographic data from sources such as the 2001 Census, it has been possible to establish the main concerns and issues facing the district in the forthcoming years, all of which fall within the safe, healthy and attractive place theme. For the next round of CPA it will be important to be able to demonstrate that priorities are based on those issues that matter most to the Council's customers and, to ensure that these issues are addressed effectively, specific aims included in the new Council Plan have been developed in line with the following themes of the Community Strategy:

Green and Unique  
Homes and Neighbourhoods  
A Safe Community  
Fit for Life  
Economic Prosperity

8. The Council Plan recognises that to deliver its priorities the Council needs to have a range of high quality support services. An additional Council Plan theme entitled 'Improving Our Performance' has therefore been developed to address the importance of the processes and people that go towards meeting community need, although this theme is not directly linked to the Community Strategy.
9. All aims included in the new Council Plan are referenced to one of these themes and are supported by appropriate detail obtained from the evidence sources illustrated above. The Council Plan contains far fewer actions than previous editions, although these are more closely focused on priority issues. The Plan will be a rolling four year document that will be updated annually, and is currently being subject to consultation with residents and partner agencies, so as to ensure that actions and resources are targeted at those areas of greatest importance.
10. All local town and parish councils, district councillors and local members of Essex County Council are being individually consulted on the draft new Council Plan. However, the District Council would welcome the views of the Liaison Committee in respect of the content of the draft document and the authority's priorities for the next four years.