

Report to Local Councils Liaison Committee



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Date of meeting: 8 November 2012

Subject: Local Plan – Briefing

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Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins (01992 56 4607)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) To note the briefing for the Local Plan Issues & Options consultation

Report:

The Issues & Options consultation concluded on the 15th October 2012. There was a large number of representations submitted and interest generated regarding the consultation as a whole. Drop-in sessions were well attended and public engagement was generally constructive. Forward Planning are focused on processing and analysing the representations in order to progress to the next stage of the Local Plan preparation, the Preferred Options. The team are also focusing on commissioning, progressing and completing key pieces of evidence work that will inform the Local Plan.

1. The Issues and Options Consultation was launched on the 30th of July and ended on the 15th of October. The means by which the consultation was publicised included:

- a) Drop in sessions around the district
- b) Information on the EFDC Homepage and Planning pages
<http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/index.php/contact-us/consultation/planning-our-future>
- c) Our Facebook, Twitter accounts and Forward Planning consultation phone line
- d) A static exhibition at the Civic Offices including questionnaires and a submission box.
- e) Letters or emails to individuals who were on our database from previous EFDC planning policy consultations.
- f) Letters or emails to anyone who owns land within any of the potential development / opportunity areas within the consultation document
- g) Consultation boxes (questionnaires, I&Os documents, leaflets, posters etc) provided to all Town & Parish Councils.
- h) Consultation boxes (questionnaires, I&Os documents, leaflets, posters etc) provided to the residents associations we had on our database.
- i) Leaflets distributed to Epping District residents
- j) Leaflets handed out at all the Districts tube and rail stations.
- k) A rotating series of exhibitions at all the Libraries in the District

2. The number of representations received for the Community Choices document was over 5,000. The representations are currently being processed and a decision was made to outsource this piece of work in order to ensure that the timetable for meeting the Local Plan continues on track. As the representations are being indexed the Forward Planning team will be working to analyse the results. The information from the I&Os consultation will be used to inform a series of Member workshops in the new year aimed at EFDC and Town & Parish Members.

3. There were isolated incidents with the distribution of leaflets to residences in a couple of parts of the district, which were quickly rectified. The Forward Planning team are in the process of reviewing the consultation methods used for the Issues & Options to make proposals to Members for the next stage of consultation. The Essex wide Planning Policy Forum Group that EFDC officers attend will be providing information on other Councils' approaches to Local Plan consultations, which will also be considered as part of the officers proposals to Members for the next stage consultation. Responses to the consultation for the Statement of Community Involvement, which will outline how we are expected to consult during the implementation of the Local Plan, will be taken into account during the review. Discussions will be held with Members to establish an appropriate approach for the next stage consultation (Preferred Options) and the input and assistance of the Town & Parish Councils continues to be vital in delivering the Local Plan.

The drop in sessions that were held in a series of towns in the District, were overall well attended and included information boards and all the documentation associated with the consultation. A group of officers was present at each drop-in session to answer questions and provide information on responding to the consultation. A detailed report of the number of attendees is available in Appendix I.

4. Work on the Local Plan evidence base is ongoing and there are a number of studies being commissioned.

- a) Climate Change- This will enable a review of existing policies, make them more robust in relation to climate change.
- b) GRT (a potential Essex-wide update of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) is being discussed with other Essex authorities via (EPOA-Essex Planning Officers Association).
- c) Additional work (Glasshouse study) – attempting to identify potentially suitable areas of land elsewhere in the district for glasshouse development
- d) SFRA (Level 2 for identified preferred sites)
- e) Transport Assessment for identified preferred sites
- f) Sustainability Appraisal. Consultants taking the role of 'critical friend' and Forward Planning team delivering core work.