

Supplementary Committee Agenda



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Cabinet Thursday, 3rd September, 2015

Place: Council Chamber
Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Time: 7.00 pm

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11. GREEN BELT REVIEW (STAGE I) AND SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY (Pages 61 - 76)

(Planning Policy Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached summary of comments received during the consultation, alongside the report (C-025-2015/16).

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Table 1 – Summary of Comments Received Relating to Green Belt Review Stage 1 Report

Summary of Comments Received	Officer Response	Action taken
<i>General Comments on Green Belt Review Stage 1</i>		
<p>Additional factors beyond those directed by paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework should be taken into account in determining whether land should be released from the Green Belt.</p>	<p>Comments received raised valid points that will be taken into account in making eventual decisions about the location of development allocations. However, the Green Belt Review is one piece of evidence amongst many that will inform the preparation of the Local Plan. It is not within the remit of a Green Belt Review to determine <i>whether</i> Green Belt land should be released, but to provide an assessment on the performance of land against the purposes of the Green Belt. This Review provides evidence that will help the Council determine which areas should and should not be released from the Green Belt, if it is found necessary to do so.</p>	<p>No amendment to GBR Report. Points raised to be considered in respect of formulation of other evidence.</p>
<p>Green Belt land should not be released without proper and robust justification. It is not yet proven that Green Belt land release will be required.</p>	<p>If there is found to be insufficient capacity to meet development needs within existing settlements, the Council will need to use the evidence provided by a Green Belt Review. Whilst this evidence will help to inform the land that could potentially be released from the Green Belt, it will also indicate where the Green Belt boundaries should not be altered. Further, this will be a key piece of evidence in discussions with neighbouring authorities if it is found that the development needs arising in Epping Forest District cannot be met within the administrative boundaries. Any change to Green Belt boundaries must be supported by evidence of exceptional circumstances (see National Planning Policy Framework, para 83).</p>	<p>No amendment to GBR report.</p>
<p>The Green Belt Reviews and further work on the Local Plan of adjoining authorities will have an effect on the judgments made in EFDCs work.</p>	<p>The Duty to Cooperate (established by the Localism Act 2011) requires that local authorities cooperate on matters of strategic cross-boundary importance. The Green Belt has been identified as a strategic issue, and to this end has been discussed at the Cooperation for Sustainable Development Officer, and Member, group. The methodology for the Green Belt Review and emerging findings of the Green Belt Review (Stage 1) Report have been shared / discussed at this group to ensure there is consistency of approach, and any significant issues are addressed at an early stage. The Green Belt Review (see section entitled 'Green Belt in Neighbouring Authorities' in the report) addresses cross-boundary matters and EFDC continues to work closely with its neighbours in preparing the Stage 2 Green Belt Review.</p>	<p>No amendment to GBR report.</p>

Summary of Comments Received	Officer Response	Action taken
<p>It is not clear which settlements are considered “towns” for the purposes of the Green Belt Review (Stage 1) Report.</p>	<p>Para 5.16 has been updated to read: “The Review considers towns to be Epping, Waltham Abbey, Loughton / Debden, Chigwell, Buckhurst Hill, Chipping Ongar, North Weald Bassett, Theydon Bois, Roydon and Lower Nazeing. This is based on the Epping Forest District Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper’s classification of these settlements as ‘towns’ and ‘large villages’. The exception to this is Lower Nazeing, which is a ‘small village’ but is included at this stage given the close proximity to Broxbourne. This is explained in the Green Belt Review Methodology”</p>	<p>Accept. GBR Report updated.</p>
<p>A number of comments were received identifying typographical errors, or areas where clarity could be improved. Furthermore, a number of statements have been made which support assessments made, and do not seek any amendment to the Report.</p>	<p>Suggested changes have been made.</p>	<p>Accept. GBR Report updated.</p>
<p>A number of comments related to a misunderstanding of why parcels that score very well at the end of Stage 1 are still being assessed at Stage 2. Such comments also made reference to the Settlement Edge Landscape Sensitivity Study (2010).</p> <p>In addition to this, a number of respondents expressed their interest in maintaining the character of the settlement edges, and importance of ‘gaps’ between larger and smaller settlements.</p>	<p>The Green Belt Review (Stage 1) Report assesses all of the land within the Green Belt in Epping Forest District. This has been completed at a strategic level, and in some cases the land parcels that form the basis for assessment are very large. It is therefore necessary in those locations that are considered most sustainable, i.e. those immediately adjoining existing settlements, are assessed in a finer level of detail. Without this finer level assessment of all potentially suitable land being considered at Stage 2, the Council’s evidence is unlikely to stand up to scrutiny at examination. Stage 2 will therefore consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • areas where the Green Belt policy designation should remain; • any historic anomalies in the existing boundaries or locations where inappropriate development has taken place, which may therefore suggest minor amendments to Green Belt boundaries are required; and • areas with potential to accommodate development by minimising Green Belt harm. <p>Settlement edges and gaps will be considered in more detail in the Stage 2 Review as far as they relate to the national purposes of the Green Belt.</p>	<p>No amendment to GBR Report. Many of these issues will feed into Green Belt Review Stage 2.</p>

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<p>Comments were received querying the role of infrastructure in Green Belt analysis, raising concerns over the sustainability of existing infrastructure and the impacts upon the release of Green Belt land on existing systems.</p> <p>Comments were also received on difficulties in some areas with issues such as parking, traffic and noise pollution.</p>	<p>Existing infrastructure provision has been a key consideration in the preparation of the Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper which has in turn played an important role in the selection of areas for further analysis in Stage 2 of the Green Belt Review.</p> <p>Infrastructure capacity and requirements will be addressed through other technical evidence work including the Infrastructure Development Plan.</p>	<p>No amendment to GBR report.</p>
<p>A number of comments were received questioning why the London Boroughs were not addressed as part of the calculations for Purpose 1.</p> <p>Other comments questioned why settlements within London (Chingford in particular) were not being considered as part of Purpose 2.</p>	<p>There appeared to be some confusion as to what constitutes a 'large built-up area' as opposed to defined 'towns' particularly in respect of London. In the Green Belt Review, London is regarded as one 'large built-up area' and although settlements / places within London are referred to in the report, it is London itself that purpose 1 is assessed against.</p> <p>As is set out in the methodology and report, only the 'towns' in EFDC are assessed as part of purpose 2.</p>	<p>Update made to GBR Report to include clarification.</p>
<p>Comments were received regarding the benefits of most versatile agricultural land as part of the Green Belt review process as set out in the NPPF.</p>	<p>Although the quality of agricultural land is important, this is a factor one would consider if the 'quality' of the countryside were being taken into account as part of the Green Belt Review. However, the quality of the countryside is not considered in the Review as this is not a stated factor for consideration in the NPPF purposes of the Green Belt.</p>	<p>No amendment to GBR report.</p>
<p>The importance of conservation areas and the role they play within Green Belt settings was made in a number of submissions.</p>	<p>The majority of comments in relation to this topic suggested that historic conservation matters should have been taken into account across the District irrespective of whether the area was within or adjacent to a 'historic town'. However the national purposes of the Green Belt only refer to 'historic towns' and not conservation areas / heritage assets in general.</p> <p>The Historic Environment Characterisation study and Conservation Area Appraisals / Management Plans will address conservation areas and heritage assets in the District.</p>	<p>No amendment to GBR report.</p>

Summary of Comments Received	Officer Response	Action taken
Report does not analyse in great enough detail the impact and potential growth of Brentwood and implications of this upon the Green Belt land in EFDC.	There is no built up development within the proximity of the boundary between Brentwood Borough Council and Epping Forest District Council, and so the growth of Brentwood did not require the same level of analysis as other bordering areas.	No amendment to GBR report.
The report understates the role of thoroughfares between Epping and Coopersale.	Coopersale is not classified as a 'town' therefore there is no question arising to thoroughfares between these settlements.	No amendment to GBR report.
The role of "Historic Towns" and purpose 4 (To preserve the special character of Historic Towns) was raised, with the case being made for additional Towns and Villages to be awarded the designation, with this reflected in the scoring for Purpose 4 in the parcels surrounding these settlements.	The Historic Towns identified within the District are based on the Historic Towns Supplementary Planning Guidance (1999) produced by Essex County Council. Officers do not consider there to be a case that would justify revisiting these classifications. The assessment of settlements in historic terms will be covered by other ongoing pieces of evidence such as the Historic Environment Characterisation study and Conservation Area Appraisals/Management Plans.	No amendment to the report.
The role in which Green Belt lands in Epping Upland plays in preventing sprawl between the Epping Town and Harlow has not been discussed sufficiently.	The parcel appraisal for DSR070 goes into detail about the relationship between Epping Upland Parish and the Town of Epping.	No amendment to the report.
Due regard should be paid to a very narrow strategic Green Belt gap inserted by Chigwell UDC into the Roding development of 1947-50 which coalesces Buckhurst Hill and Loughton.	This gap will be considered in greater detail in the Stage 2 Review.	No amendment to the report.
There is confusion over the status and mentions of "Matching" and which Hamlet or Hamlets within the Parish was being referred to and why.	The three settlements of Matching Green, Matching Tye and Matching have been combined and classified as a Small Village. Land surrounding and between the three settlements have been identified for further review as part of Green Belt Review Stage 2.	Amendments made to GBR Report and associated mapping.
Many comments received outlined specific physical constraints pertaining to lands within or surrounding different settlements throughout the District.	Many of these comments were fair and should be considered as part of Green Belt Review Stage 2.	No action. To be reviewed in greater detail at Stage 2.

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Requests for larger, more detailed versions of the maps.	The final version of both reports (Green Belt Review Stage 1 and the Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper) will be added to the Local Plan pages of the Council's website. This will include larger scale versions of the maps, so they can be more easily viewed.	Larger scale, higher resolution mapping to be provided for final report drafts.
Identification of Omissions/Errors in Parcel Descriptions		
DSR016 – The Gables has been considered encroachment into the Greenbelt when it is mostly redevelopment of an existing urban brownfield site. This should be re-examined.	The portion of the Gables development which occurred on previously developed land is located within the settlement boundary of Chipping Ongar. Only the portion of development which occurred on undeveloped Green Belt land has been considered encroachment. Also, only new housing development has been considered encroachment, and not the playing fields which have been considered permissible on Green Belt land.	No amendment to GBR report.
DSR027 – Total is incorrect.	This is a result of a typographical error which has now been rectified.	Accept. GBR Report updated.
DSR039 – Include reference to large fishing lake.	Suggested change has been made.	Accept. GBR Report updated.
DSR049 – Points 6 and 7 state there is no well used thorough fare though this parcel, however the B181 goes directly through it.	Although Epping is classified as a 'town' there is no other 'town' linked to Epping via the B181.	No amendment to GBR report.
DSR050 - States that the parcel adjoins areas that provide a strategic barrier against the unrestricted sprawl of Harlow, with DSR 050 being a 'secondary' part of this network, however the contribution score is 0. The identification of this parcel forming 'any' contribution to the unrestricted sprawl of Harlow should be reflected in the contribution score.	Report has been updated to reflect comments and purpose one has been increased to a score of '3 – moderate'.	Accept. GBR Report updated.
<i>Suggested Additional Information to be Added to Parcel Assessments</i>		

Summary of Comments Received	Officer Response	Action taken
<p>DSR038 – title of parcel is incorrect.</p> <p>Recent planning permissions granted will narrow the gap between Chigwell and Buckhurst Hill.</p>	<p>Title of parcel corrected to “Southwest of M11 and the London Underground Fairlop Loop”.</p> <p>This detailed level of information will be considered as part of the Green Belt Review (Detailed Assessment).</p>	<p>Amendment to title of DSR038.</p> <p>No amendment to GBR report. Comment to be passed to appointed consultants.</p>
<p>DSR039 – include reference to views of Buckhurst Hill.</p> <p>Amendment to body of report in para 5.19 (previously omitted), identifying the “Green Walk” and its importance to the Green Belt.</p>	<p>Suggested change has been made to reference views to Buckhurst Hill.</p> <p>This detailed level of information will be considered as part of the Green Belt Review Stage 2.</p>	<p>Accept. GBR Report updated.</p> <p>No amendment to GBR report. Comment to be passed to appointed consultants for Stage 2.</p>
<p>DSR041 – Description of land should be amended to “Land between Theydon Bois and Loughton, E of Central Line, W of M11”.</p>	<p>Given description “East of Theydon Bois” is sufficient.</p>	<p>No amendment to GBR report.</p>
<p>DSR042 – encroachment in this parcel should not include the playing fields of Davenant School, only the buildings.</p> <p>Should mention Home Mead Local Nature Reserve.</p> <p>Disagree that this parcel does not contribute to Purpose 1 as it goes directly into Loughton/Debden.</p>	<p>The level of encroachment into the Green Belt in this parcel has been reassessed. Removing the playing fields reduces the total amount of encroachment in the parcel from 6.67 ha to 4.67 ha. This represents a drop from 6.195% to 4.33% encroachment.</p> <p>Although the parcel is situated between Loughton / Debden and Theydon Bois it is not preventing the sprawl of any of the defined ‘large build-up areas’.</p>	<p>Report amended to reflect new figures and additional information.</p>
<p>DSR043 – Shows as very strong but scores 0.</p>	<p>Updated to reflect typographical error.</p>	<p>Accept. GBR Report updated.</p>

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<p>DSR044 – With regard to the effect of these parcels on the setting and significance of the historic town of Epping, the view from the hill up the roadway to the right of Flux Lane is important. It shows Epping as a compact town from the edge of the built up area to the 3 towers in Epping High Street on the ridge of the hill.</p> <p>This scores the same as DSR042 which is clearly incorrect.</p>	<p>The stage 1 of the Green Belt Review has used a definition of historic towns in accordance with the Essex County Council Supplementary Planning Guidance (1999) which includes Epping, Chipping Ongar and Waltham Abbey. However the scope of the Fourth Green Belt purpose is relatively narrow and is not intended to import general historic environment into national Green Belt policy. The NPPF includes detailed policies within Section 12 ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’ which are relevant to both plan making and decision taking but are not directly relevant to an assessment as to whether existing Green Belt land serves the Fourth Green Belt purpose. The overall setting of settlements in historic terms will not be covered by Stage 2 of the Green Belt Review but will be covered by other ongoing pieces of evidence such as the Historic Environment Characterisation study and Conservation Area Appraisals/Management Plans.</p>	<p>No amendment to GBR report.</p>
<p>DSR045 – Submission made stating belief that it does contribute to Purpose 2.</p>	<p>The appraisal concluded that the defensible boundaries separating the towns are of such significance that the parcel is not playing any role in keeping Epping and Theydon Bois separate.</p>	<p>No amendment to GBR report.</p>
<p>DSR054 – title should read “Epping Forest – East of Epping New Road”</p> <p>Parcel is close to Chingford to should score perhaps 1 or 2 against the first Purpose.</p> <p>Disagree with scoring as it is a large built up area between Buckhurst Hill and Loughton.</p>	<p>Suggested change has been made.</p> <p>The parcel adjoins Buckhurst Hill but not Chingford.</p> <p>The ‘large built-up areas’ only refers to London, Harlow, Cheshunt and Hoddesdon.</p>	<p>Accept. GBR Report has been updated.</p>
<p>DSR057 – parcel directly adjoins Greater London at the southern end, and provides a strong boundary. Should score 5 (not 4) against the first Purpose.</p>	<p>The parcel is considered to make a relatively strong contribution to this purpose. The wooded area in the south of the parcel provides a strong barrier to Greater London.</p>	<p>No amendment to GBR report</p>
<p>DSR071 – increase score against the first Purpose from 3 to 4, given strong relationship with Greater London.</p>	<p>Given the proximity to London the score against the first Purpose warrants strengthening. Score changed as suggested.</p>	<p>Accept. Amended score against first Purpose, and overall total for DSR071. Subsequent amendments to other maps.</p>

Summary of Comments Received	Officer Response	Action taken
<i>General Parcel Commentary</i>		
DSR013 - Extending development in this area would detract significantly from the overall setting of the town with visibility of the railway and the historic features of the agricultural landscape that remain as visual clues to the development and market town function of Chipping Ongar.	Comments to be considered when preparing Green Belt Review Stage 2.	No amendment to GBR report.
DSR023 – Concerns raised at possibility of sprawl and possible adjoining of Ongar and High Ongar into the future.	High Ongar is not classified as a 'town', and so the score for purpose 2 is a zero,	No amendment to GBR report.
DSR024 - development in this area would need to be limited in order to preserve the open character of the countryside and significant infrastructure needs would need to be considered if this parcel was to go forward for phase 2 assessment.	This parcel scores a 'strong' contribution to the third purpose which reflects the predominately countryside uses of this parcel. As explained previously, infrastructure needs will be considered through other evidence studies including the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.	No amendment to GBR report.
DSR035: Concerns raised over the complex nature of different parts of this parcel and how this is reflected in the scoring. A series of points were made regarding the importance of this parcel in maintaining the gap between Chigwell and Buckhurst Hill, with a number of key local features and settings identified. Many of the conclusions of parcel assessment were also challenged.	Parts of parcel put forward for further assessment will be examined in finer detail as part of Green Belt Review Stage 2, at which point a more detailed examination can take place of the issues raised.	No amendment to GBR report. To be reviewed in greater detail at Stage 2.

Summary of Comments Received	Officer Response	Action taken
<p>DSR036: The point was raised about the historic important of the Green Belt in this parcel, and a number of specific local challenges relating to it were raised.</p> <p>The point was made that development permitted in this Parcel has been allowed on the basis of very exceptional circumstances and that this should not be viewed as compromising the integrity of the Green Belt.</p>	<p>Parts of parcel put forward for further assessment will be examined in finer detail as part of Green Belt Review Stage 2, at which point a more detailed examination can take place of the issues raised.</p>	<p>No amendment to GBR report. To be reviewed in greater detail at Stage 2.</p>
<p>DSR038 – The scoring is too low as a reduction in the gap would compromise the separation of Buckhurst Hill and Chigwell, as well as the visual gap</p> <p>The parcel lies within a Flood Plain and should be released from Green Belt.</p>	<p>The separation of Buckhurst Hill and Chigwell will be considered in greater detail in the Stage 2 Review.</p> <p>Detailed flood risk analysis will be applied in separate evidence base documents and will influence the Green Belt Review Stage 2.</p>	<p>No amendment to GBR report. To be reviewed in greater detail at Stage 2.</p>
<p>DSR039 – The importance of protection afforded by this parcel in restricting sprawl has been significantly understated.</p> <p>The parcel lies within a Flood Plain and should not be released from Green Belt.</p> <p>An area of land has been identified to the rear of Rolls Park that could be assessed at a more detailed level.</p>	<p>The parcel appraisal explains the reason for the parcel scoring ‘moderate’ against the first purpose is due to the existing defensible boundaries in the parcel.</p> <p>Detailed flood risk analysis will be applied in separate evidence base documents and will influence the Green Belt Review Stage 2.</p>	<p>No amendment to GBR report. To be reviewed in greater detail at Stage 2.</p>
<p>DSR054 – Disagreed that the parcel does not act as a barrier against sprawl of large built up areas.</p>	<p>The ‘large built-up areas’ only refers to London, Harlow, Cheshunt and Hoddesdon.</p>	<p>No amendment to GBR report.</p>
<p>DSR057 – Disagreed that the parcel does not act as a barrier against sprawl of large built up areas.</p>	<p>The parcel scores as making a ‘relatively strong’ contribution to this purpose.</p>	<p>No amendment to GBR report. To be reviewed in greater detail at Stage 2.</p>

Summary of Comments Received	Officer Response	Action taken
<p>DSR058: This parcel of Green Belt is essential to preventing sprawl from the LB Chingford and should be strengthened. As there is already development at Gilwell Hill, the Town Council considers that the gap between Chingford to the south must be maintained.</p> <p>Waltham Abbey is a charter market town. It has been serving the surrounding areas for centuries. The perception, long held, is that Waltham Abbey and its hinterland is one area, not divided into disparate parcels. Any reduction in the protection given by the Green Belt in this area would have a detrimental effect on the historic centre of the town. Therefore, we assert that the scoring for this section should be uplifted to 3.</p>	<p>It has received a 'moderate' score against this purpose as it considers the whole parcel, not just the area in the south.</p> <p>For the purposes of the Green Belt Review it is necessary to divide the district into parcels for assessment purposes. This does not infer there is no relationship between DSR058 and Waltham Abbey. However, the M25 and more modern development in the south of Waltham Abbey create a buffer between the historic core of the Town and the Green Belt land to the south. No change to the scoring is proposed.</p>	<p>No amendment to GBR report.</p>
<p>DSR059: This parcel of land also abuts Chingford, and this has not been clearly identified.</p> <p>We would re-iterate the comments made previously insofar as Meridian Park is part of Waltham Abbey, and any development in this area would have an adverse effect on the historic significance of Waltham Abbey. Waltham Abbey as a town was built upon its relationship to the Abbey Church, all the surrounding hinterland has a relationship with the historic centre. We assert that the scoring for this section should be increased to 3.</p>	<p>References to Chingford have been added as suggested.</p> <p>As set out above, the overall setting of settlements in historic terms will be covered by other pieces of evidence such as the Historic Environment Characterisation study and Conservation Area Appraisals/Management Plans not by the Green Belt Review</p>	<p>References to Chingford have been added.</p> <p>No amendment to GBR report.</p>

Summary of Comments Received	Officer Response	Action taken
<p>DSR060 - Despite the 20th century development between Town Mead and the Town Centre, there is a close relationship between the two. The pedestrian access to the park goes through a much older part of the town centre, and the church tower can be seen from the field, ensuring that the field is part of the town and vice versa. We assert that the scoring for this section should be increased to 3.</p>	<p>The appraisal concluded that although the parcel is partially within the context of the historic town, it is unlikely that the removal of the Green Belt designation would cause harm to the setting and significance of this area. This will be considered in greater detail in the Stage 2 Review.”</p>	<p>No amendment to GBR report.</p>
<p>DSR065 – It appears odd that this parcel scores very differently to its adjacent parcel of DSR064 given how small it is.</p>	<p>DSR064 adjoins built development in Harlow to the east and Hoddesdon to the west and forms part of a gap between towns, whereas DSR065 is further removed from other built up areas and towns therefore has a lower score.</p>	<p>No amendment to GBR report.</p>
<p>DSR068 - Waltham Abbey is not a large town, this parcel of land is close to the historic centre, and indeed has its own heritage. This area is the former hunting ground of Henry VIII, and there is a monument commemorating Boudicca, and her relationship with the area. As identified in previous sections, there is a close relationship between this parcel and the historical centre of the town. We do not accept that this parcel does not contribute positively to the significance of the town and/or heritage assets, and in light of the historical merit of this parcel and its relationship to the town, we would assert that the scoring for this section be increased to 3.</p>	<p>As set out above, the overall setting of settlements in historic terms will be covered by other pieces of evidence such as the Historic Environment Characterisation study and Conservation Area Appraisals/Management Plans not by the Green Belt Review.</p>	<p>No amendment to GBR report.</p>
<p>DSR069 - Paragraphs (9) and (10) seem to contradict each other. We would assert that a reduction in the gap would compromise the separation of the towns, and have an adverse impact on the overall openness of the parcel.</p>	<p>Paragraphs (9) and (10) relate to different questions regarding physical and visual separation, and this is why they arrive at different conclusions.</p>	<p>No amendment to GBR report.</p>
<p>DSR071 – Disagreed that the parcel does not act as a barrier against sprawl of large built up areas.</p>	<p>Accepted. The appraisal has been amended showing this parcel making a ‘relatively strong’ contribution to the first purpose.</p>	<p>Report amended accordingly.</p>

Table 2 – Summary of Comments Received Relating to the Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper

Summary of Comments Received	Officer Response	Action taken
<i>General Comments on Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper</i>		
Comments received on the factual presence of facilities/services within settlements, incorporating both additions and deletions.	The majority of comments submitted contained clarifications on which services do and do not exist in different settlements. Given the local knowledge of the respondents, these comments have been accepted, and suggested changes have been made to the Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper.	Accept. All profiles and scoring updated.
A number of comments were received on the scoring mechanism, and assertions that some facilities are more important than others, and so should be weighted accordingly.	The views on this matter varied, and are perhaps a reflection of personal views on the usefulness of each service/facility identified. The Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper seeks only to identify the services and facilities that contribute to the way in which a settlement functions, and does not seek to rank those services in order of importance.	No amendment to Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper.
That capacity of existing services/facilities should be taken into account as part of this Technical Paper, and a further assessment of the ability of any services/facilities to be expanded to meet the needs of an increased population should be incorporated.	The comments made of this nature raise valid points and concerns. However it is not within the remit of the Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper to address such matters. These matters will be addressed fully by other pieces of evidence that will inform the preparation of the Local Plan including the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.	No amendment to Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper.
Clarity required around the population information used.	The original draft of the Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper sought to identify the population in each location, even those where the settlement is too small to be covered individually by Census data. This approach caused confusion, and therefore only Parish based Census data (2011 census) has been included. Where a small settlement is included within a larger parish, this is set out at the head of the settlement profile.	Population information amended. All profiles updated.
Add “Places of Worship” and “Citizens Advice Bureaus” and remove “Recycling facilities” from the assessment process.	Suggested changes have been made to the Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper to include places of worship and citizens advice bureaus and remove recycling facilities from the assessment process.	Accept. All profiles and scoring updated.

Summary of Comments Received	Officer Response	Action taken
Nightclubs should be considered separately to Pubs.	The Pub classification has been renamed "Pub/Restaurant". Clubs, where they exist, have been recorded under this classification as they are a similar type of service retail use and it was not believed that they merited a separate category. This classification has been relocated from the "Community Facilities and Services" section of the settlement profiles to the "Retail" section to reflect this broader definition.	Settlement profiles and scoring updated, but nightclubs not added separately.
Cemeteries and Funeral Homes should be classified as services.	Given that in the vast majority of cases cemeteries are located in church grounds, they have been considered as part of the new "Places of Worship" category. While Funeral Homes play an important social role, they have not been considered significant enough in the day to day nature of a settlement to merit inclusion in this process.	No action, aside from the related inclusion of a "Places of Worship" category.
A number of comments were received regarding the merits or otherwise of recognising private schools and private hospitals in the settlement profiles.	As private schools and hospitals are not public facilities they have not been counted as a service for the purposes of the settlement profiles. The previous draft settlement hierarchy paper already took this position with regards to schools, but the updated report has been revised to omit private hospitals in order to ensure consistency.	Private hospitals removed from settlement profiles. Settlement profiles and scoring updated.
Comments were received stating a belief that Care Homes should be included as a classification.	While they provide an important social service, Care Homes have been considered as a residential use and not identified as a service or facility for the purposes of the Settlement Hierarchy.	No amendment to Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper.
NHS clinics connected to nearby hospitals should either be classified as hospitals or given a separate use class given service that they provide.	These clinics have been recognised as part of GP services. While they do provide additional services, these services are not considered to merit a separate classification, or inclusion within the hospital classification.	No amendment to Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper.
Many comments flagged inaccuracies where "Youth Centres" had been identified and raised questions as to why other specialised community groups were not being identified.	This point has been accepted as it was evident that Youth services, along with other community services for the elderly or specialised groups, are nomadic in nature. Instead, only community facilities (town/church/village halls or similar) are included in the scoring.	Accept. All profiles and scoring updated.

Summary of Comments Received	Officer Response	Action taken
Playgrounds, parks and other recreational and leisure amenities should be considered as well as sports/leisure facilities.	The point has been accepted and there are now two categories. "Leisure/Sports Facility" (Referred to as "Leisure Centre" in some parts of the report) refers to recreational facilities which contain a significant "built" element. "Recreational Amenities" (Referred to as Parks/playgrounds in some parts of the report) include parks, playgrounds and playing fields (without built facilities) or similar amenities within or adjacent to a settlement.	Accept. All profiles and scoring updated.
Factors such as agricultural activity and the importance of historic landscapes and features in the lands surrounding a settlement should be factored into the assessment of a settlement.	The quality and productivity of agricultural land, and the value of historic landscapes, are important issues which form key parts of the Local Plan evidence base. However, it has not been deemed appropriate to rate or score these features as they are not considered to be services or facilities.	No amendment to Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper.
<i>Comments on Transport and Infrastructure</i>		
The mechanism for determining the level of services provided by bus operators is not clear. Information does not make reference to specific bus routes. Bus services are weighted too heavily and can effectively be "triple counted".	<p>It has been accepted that the scoring placed too much weighting towards bus services, and that the services themselves needed re-evaluation in certain areas.</p> <p>The mechanism for evaluating bus services has been revised, with the scores available reduced from three to two. A "Level 1" service has been applied where off peak services are viewed to be limited or non-existent, even if satisfactory peak service exists. A "Level 2" service has been designated where there is a comprehensive peak time service (Approximately 3 or more departures per hour), and a satisfactory off-peak service, including weekends. Level 2 services would also be required to provide a connection to nearby areas of employment or major service centre.</p> <p>A more detailed description of the available service provided has been included in the evaluation.</p>	Level 1 and Level 2 categories of bus service introduced. All profiles and scoring updated

Summary of Comments Received	Officer Response	Action taken
No account has been taken of the different levels of service provided by the main branch of the Central Line compared to the Fairlop Loop.	It is accepted that the service on the Fairlop Loop is not as frequent, and is available for less of the day, than the service provided on the main Epping branch. In order to address this, a weighted scoring system has been applied. Settlements serviced by the Fairlop Loop have been awarded a score of 1, while settlements serviced by the main Epping branch have been awarded a score of 2.	Underground station (Loop) and underground station (Direct) categories of underground service introduced. All profiles and scoring updated.
Comments were received relating the opening of a new Crossrail link at Shenfield, with some submissions feeling the report overstated its relevance, and other submissions stating that not enough analysis has been undertaken into its potential impacts.	It is believed that the report gives appropriate consideration to the possible implications of Crossrail in so far as it is feasible at this point. The implications of Crossrail on the District will be reviewed in greater detail in the Transport and Accessibility study which will be prepared as part of the Local Plan process.	No amendment to Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper.
Comments were submitted raising concerns over the infrastructure capacity in some settlements, and that this should be taken into account in the settlement analysis if future housing is to be proposed.	The limitations of infrastructure and requirements for upgrade in different settlements in the District will be addressed through the preparation of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan to support any proposed new development.	No amendment to Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper.
There is no reference to broadband or mobile phone service, which tends to be of poor quality in some settlements in the District.	Telecommunication infrastructure provision within settlements will be assessed in greater detail in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).	No amendment to Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper.
<i>Settlement Specific Comments</i>		
Buckhurst Hill should not be classified as a town. It does not provide the same services and facilities as the other towns in the Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper.	A range of comments about the classification of Buckhurst Hill were provided, largely centred around the loss of “traditional High Street/Town Centre” uses in the relatively recent past. It is accepted that the character of Queens Road has changed from the centre it used to be, and provides fewer general retail opportunities. However, the settlement does include most of the services and facilities identified for the assessment. There are two Central Line stations (serving both the Epping branch and the Fairlop Loop). The revised assessment concludes that in numerical terms, Buckhurst Hill should remain classified as a town.	No amendment to Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper.

Summary of Comments Received	Officer Response	Action taken
Roydon should not be classified in the same category as North Weald, which is a much larger village.	The assessment has found that in terms of the service and facilities available, Roydon (score of 14) is very similar to North Weald (score of 15)	No amendment to Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper.
The population and housing statistics for Chipping Ongar were inaccurate and exclude Shelley.	An error in the draft report resulted in statistics for the Shelley ward being erroneously omitted from the Ongar profile, meaning the population and housing statistics were inaccurate.	Population and housing statistics for Chipping Ongar have been rectified.
Comments raised objections to Ongar Academy not being considered in the settlement profile, pointing to the fact that the school is opening in September 2015.	At the time when the settlement profiles were being prepared, there was uncertainty on the status of Ongar Academy and its opening date. As the school is now opening in September 2015 it has been recognised in the settlement assessment for Chipping Ongar.	Ongar Academy has been added to the settlement profile for Chipping Ongar.
Comments indicated confusion over the settlement of Matching Green, and the fact that services contained within the adjoining settlements of Matching and Matching Tye were attributed to Matching Green.	Given the nature of the settlements of Matching, Matching Green and Matching Tye, it has been decided to assess them as one combined settlement under the title of "Matching".	"Matching Green" now referred to as "Matching" with services in all 3 settlements assessed as one.
Lower Nazeing should be classed as "Small Village" rather than a "Large Village" given the loss of amenities and services.	On re-evaluation of the services and facilities in Lower Nazeing (score of 10), it has now been reclassified as a Small Village.	Lower Nazeing classified as a Small Village.
Waltham Abbey should be considered together with outlying settlements such as Sewardstone, Sewardstonebury, High Beach and Upshire as these settlements grew in support of the historic monastic settlement of Waltham Abbey.	While the current and historic links between Waltham Abbey and the smaller outlying settlements is evident and a key influence in the life of those settlements, it is considered that the assessment of these settlements should be undertaken separately given the degree of physical separation which exists between them.	No amendment to Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper.