



CABINET
Thursday, 21st July, 2016

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Cabinet**, which will be held at:

Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping
on **Thursday, 21st July, 2016**
at **7.00 pm** .

Glen Chipp
Chief Executive

Democratic Services
Officer

G. Woodhall
(Governance Directorate)
Tel: (01992) 564470
Email: democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Members:

Councillors C Whitbread (Leader of the Council) (Chairman), S Stavrou (Deputy Leader and Housing Portfolio Holder) (Vice-Chairman), R Bassett, W Breare-Hall, A Grigg, H Kane, A Lion, J Philip, G Mohindra and G Waller

PLEASE NOTE THE START TIME OF THE MEETING

1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

- (a) This meeting is to be webcast;
- (b) Members are reminded of the need to activate their microphones before speaking; and
- (c) the Chairman will read the following announcement:

"I would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be broadcast live to the Internet and will be capable of subsequent repeated viewing, with copies of the recording being made available for those that request it.

By being present at this meeting, it is likely that the recording cameras will capture your image and this will result in your image becoming part of the broadcast.

You should be aware that this may infringe your human and data protection rights. If you have any concerns then please speak to the Webcasting Officer.

Please could I also remind Members to activate their microphones before speaking.”

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Director of Governance) To be announced at the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Director of Governance) To declare interests in any item on this agenda.

4. MINUTES

To confirm the minutes of the last meeting of the Cabinet held on 9 June 2016 (previously circulated).

5. REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

To receive oral reports from Portfolio Holders on current issues concerning their Portfolios, which are not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

To answer questions asked by members of the public after notice in accordance with the motion passed by the Council at its meeting on 19 February 2013 (minute 105(iii) refers) on any matter in relation to which the Cabinet has powers or duties or which affects the District.

7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

(a) To consider any matters of concern to the Cabinet arising from the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function.

(b) To consider any matters that the Cabinet would like the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function to examine as part of their work programme.

8. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT CABINET COMMITTEE - 16 JUNE 2016 (Pages 7 - 18)

(Finance Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached minutes from the recent meeting of the Finance & Performance Management Cabinet Committee, held on 16 June 2016, and any recommendations therein.

9. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME AND LOCAL PLAN BUDGET UPDATE (Pages 19 - 28)

(Planning Policy Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C-009-2016/17).

10. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2017/18 (Pages 29 - 36)

(Finance Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C-010-2016/17).

11. EPPING FOREST SHOPPING PARK - AWARD OF CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT (Pages 37 - 46)

(Asset Management & Economic Development Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C-011-2016/17).

12. TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME MONITORING REPORT - MAY 2016 (Pages 47 - 54)

(Leader of Council) To consider the attached report (C-013-2016/17).

13. DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY - COUNCIL HOUSEBUILDING PROGRAMME (Pages 55 - 86)

(Housing Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C-017-2016/17).

14. MASTERPLAN AND DEVELOPMENT SCHEME - HILLHOUSE, WALTHAM ABBEY (Pages 87 - 98)

(Leisure & Community Services Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C-014-2016/17).

15. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EXAMINATION OUTCOME - MORETON, BOBBINGWORTH AND THE LAVERS (Pages 99 - 104)

(Planning Policy Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C-008-2016/17).

16. HOME WORKING POLICY (Pages 105 - 122)

(Technology & Support Services Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C-004-2016/17).

17. TOWN AND VILLAGE CENTRES OPPORTUNITIES FUND POLICY 2016 (Pages 123 - 134)

(Asset Management & Economic Development Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C-015-2016/17).

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 requires that the permission of the Leader of Council be obtained, after prior notice to the Chief Executive, before urgent business not specified in the agenda (including a supplementary agenda of which the statutory period of notice has been given) may be transacted.

19. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Exclusion

To consider whether, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press should be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below on grounds that they will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the following paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the

Act (as amended) or are confidential under Section 100(A)(2):

Agenda Item No	Subject	Exempt Information Paragraph Number
20	St John's Road Development, Epping	3 & 5
21	Procurement of Consultants to Support the draft Local Plan	5

The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, which came into effect on 1 March 2006, requires the Council to consider whether maintaining the exemption listed above outweighs the potential public interest in disclosing the information. Any member who considers that this test should be applied to any currently exempted matter on this agenda should contact the proper officer at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Confidential Items Commencement

Paragraph 9 of the Council Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution require:

- (1) All business of the Council requiring to be transacted in the presence of the press and public to be completed by 10.00 p.m. at the latest.
- (2) At the time appointed under (1) above, the Chairman shall permit the completion of debate on any item still under consideration, and at his or her discretion, any other remaining business whereupon the Council shall proceed to exclude the public and press.
- (3) Any public business remaining to be dealt with shall be deferred until after the completion of the private part of the meeting, including items submitted for report rather than decision.

Background Papers

Paragraph 8 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Constitution define background papers as being documents relating to the subject matter of the report which in the Proper Officer's opinion:

- (a) disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based; and
- (b) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report and does not include published works or those which disclose exempt or confidential information (as defined in Rule 10) and in respect of executive reports, the advice of any political advisor.

Inspection of background papers may be arranged by contacting the officer responsible for the item.

20. ST JOHN'S ROAD DEVELOPMENT, EPPING (Pages 135 - 140)

(Asset Management & Economic Development Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C012-2016/17).

21. PROCUREMENT OF CONSULTANTS TO SUPPORT THE LOCAL PLAN (Pages 141 - 186)

(Planning Policy Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C-016-2016/17).

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EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee **Date:** Thursday, 16 June 2016

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.00 - 8.10 pm

Members Present: Councillors G Mohindra (Chairman), A Lion, C Whitbread and R Bassett

Other Councillors:

Apologies: S Stavrou

Officers Present: R Palmer (Director of Resources), P Maddock (Assistant Director (Accountancy)), D Bailey (Head of Transformation) and R Perrin (Democratic Services Officer)

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2016 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

3. Tribute MP Jo Cox

The Chairman advised the Cabinet Committee that the MP for Batley and Spen, Jo Cox had been tragically killed in her constituency.

Members noted that Councillors and Staff, which could come into contact with the public, should be more vigilant. Councillor C Whitbread asked that the safety of people dealing with the public should be included within the consideration of the Transformation project and new reception area.

4. Any Other Business

RESOLVED:

(1) That, as agreed by the Leader of the Council and in accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, together with paragraphs (6) and (24) of the Council Procedure Rules, the following items of urgent business be considered following publication of the agenda:

(a) 4(a) Provisional Revenue Outturn 2015/16.

This item would be discussed after item 8 Provisional Capital Outturn 2015/16.

5. Key Performance Indicators - 2015/16 Quarter 4 (Outturn) Performance

The Director of Resources presented a report on the outturn performance for the Key Performance Indicators adopted for 2015/16.

The Director of Resources advised that the Council was required to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions and services were exercised, whilst having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. As part of the duty to secure continuous improvement, a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) relevant to the Council's service priorities and key objectives were adopted each year and the performance was reviewed on a quarterly basis.

A range of thirty-six Key Performance Indicators (KPI) had been adopted for 2015/16 in March 2015 and the KPIs were important to the improvement of the Council's services, comprised a combination of former statutory indicators and locally determined performance measures. The aim of the KPIs was to direct improvement towards services, the national priorities and local challenges arising from the social, economic and environmental context of the District. Progress in respect to all of the KPIs was reviewed by Management Board and Overview and Scrutiny at the conclusion of each quarter and service Directors reviewed the KPI performance with the relevant Portfolio Holder(s) on an on-going basis throughout the year. The Select Committees were each responsible for the review of quarterly performance against specific KPIs within their areas of responsibility.

The position with regard to the achievement of target performance for the KPIs at the end of the year (31 March 2016) was as follows:

- (a) 27 (75%) indicators achieved the cumulative end of year target;
- (b) 9 (25%) indicators had not achieve the cumulative end of year target; and
- (c) 1 (3%) of those KPIs had performed within the agreed tolerance for the indicator.

The outturn performance against the indicator set for 2015/16 had been slightly better than last year when 26 (72%) of the 36 indicators achieved the target.

The Director of Resources advised that KPI RES001, Sickness Absence had not achieved the year-end target but had improved by a day compared to the previous year.

Councillor G Mohindra advised that he was concerned about the KPI GOV007, Appeals – officers, which required improvement.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Committee noted the Quarter 4 performance for the Key Performance Indicators adopted for 2015/16.

Reasons for Decision:

The KPIs provided an opportunity for the Council to focus attention on how specific areas for improvement would be addressed, and how opportunities would be exploited and better outcomes delivered. It was important that relevant performance management processes were in place to review and monitor performance against the

key objectives, to ensure their continued achievability and relevance, and to identify proposals for appropriate corrective action in areas of slippage or under performance.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

No other options were appropriate in this respect. Failure to review and monitor performance could mean that opportunities for improvement were lost and might of had a negative implications for judgements made about the progress of the Council.

6. Invest to Save Proposals

The Director of Resources presented a report on 3 Invest to Save Proposals for capital works at North Weald Airfield for a vehicle compound extension, the Civic Office main reception structural survey for the Customer Contact project and software prototype and evaluation for project management.

The Director of Resources advised that in setting the budget for 2015/16, the Council had decided that because the balance on the General Fund Reserve had exceeded the minimum requirement and further savings were required, £0.5 million would be transferred from the General Fund Reserve into an Invest to Save earmarked reserve. This would be then used to finance schemes that would reduce the Continuing Services Budget (CSB) in future years. There was nearly £200,000 available for additional schemes after the budget had been approved in 2016/17

The accommodation review and the replacement of NEPP for off street car parking enforcement had already been put forward and these three business cases which included;

1. Capital works at North Weald Airfield which involved extending a vehicle compound for approximately £12,000, would gain a rental income of £4,000 per annum and result in a three year payback. It was possible that further income could arise from leasing some spare office accommodation to the same company;
2. A structural survey of the current main reception area for approximately £15,000, which was a necessary complementary piece of work for the accommodation review and would inform the discussion around potential re-configuration of and alternative uses for the site; and
3. A programme management system for prototype activities, which sought funding of £6,000, which would ensure that inconsistent project management would not occur and the improved efficiency and effectiveness would save the Council time and money.

Councillor Bassett raised concerns over the length of leases with regards to the future Master Plan for the Council's estates and this impacting on future developments. The Director of Resources advised that this could be taken into account with break clauses, although he would make sure that the Estates Department were advised.

The Cabinet Committee asked that they were updated on the progress of Invest to Save projects on a 6 monthly basis from when they were approved at Cabinet.

RECOMMENDED:

(1) That the proposal to invest in the North Weald Airfield 240 compound extension, Civic Office Main Reception – Structural Survey Customer Contact Project and Software prototype and evaluation (Establishment of Programme and Project Management be recommended to Cabinet;

RESOLVED:

(2) That Members were updated on the progress and financial outcomes of the Invest to Schemes that were approved by Cabinet after 6 months.

Reasons for Decisions:

To seek Member approval for Invest to Save proposals before implementation.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

Members may decide not to support the proposals and suggest additional or alternative uses for the Invest to Save Fund.

7. Risk Management - Corporate Risk Register

The Director of Resources presented a report regarding the Council's Corporate Risk Register.

The Corporate Risk Register had been considered by both the Risk Management Group on 26 May 2016 and Management Board on 1 June 2016. These reviews identified minor amendments to the Corporate Risk Register which included the following;

(a) Risk 1 Local Plan

The key date had been updated to advise of the intended July 2016 Cabinet report.

(b) Risk 2 Strategic Sites

The Effectiveness of controls/actions had been amended to include the updated position for the key sites, with work progressing well at the Winston Churchill site, progress on the St. Johns site being delayed by Essex County Council and three tenders being received and assessed for the Retail Park at the Langston Road site. The completion of the site was now anticipated in the summer of 2017 and completion of the Oakwood Hill was expected in June 2016.

(c) Risk 6 Data / Information

The Effectiveness of Control had been amended to advise that there had been no data losses within 2016/17.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Key Date within the Action Plan for Risk 1 be updated;
2. That the Effectiveness of controls/actions for Risk 2 be updated;
3. That the Effectiveness of control/actions for Risk 6 be updated;

RECOMMENDED:

4. That the amended Corporate Risk Register be recommended to Cabinet for approval.

Reasons for Decisions:

It was essential that the Corporate Risk Register was regularly reviewed and kept up to date.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

Members may suggest new risks for inclusion or changes to the scoring of existing risks.

8. Provisional Capital Outturn 2015/16

The Assistant Director (Accountancy) advised the Cabinet Committee that the report set out the Council's capital programme for 2015/16, in terms of expenditure and financing, and compared the provisional outturn figures with the revised estimates. The revised estimates which were based on the Capital Programme represented those adopted by the Council on 18 February 2016.

The Council's total investment on capital schemes and capital funded schemes in 2015/16 was £37,298,000 compared to a revised estimate of £49,917,000 and represented an underspend of 25%. The largest underspends were experienced on General Fund projects, in particular on the planned developments at St John's Road, the Langston Road Retail Park and the Oakwood Hill Depot.

The Director of Resources advised that the funds available to finance capital programmes were applied in line with any restrictions avoid the potential loss of funds. Another element of capital receipts known as 'attributable' or 'allowable' debt could be used to fund either General Fund or HRA expenditure in any proportion.

The previous decision to use 30% for housebuilding had been decided by the Housebuilding Cabinet Committee, although the Cabinet may not have had the opportunity to fully consider other options at that time and the latest 30 year plan suggested £869,000 would be available for replacement housing schemes. An alternative approach would be to take 30% of the assumed debt figure of £1,218,950 as a basis for ascertaining the amount to be used for housebuilding and this would make £366,000 available.

Currently, none of these resources had been applied to the housebuilding programme as 1-4-1 capital receipts, capital grants and private contributions were applied in the first instance and they had been sufficient to cover all costs to date. Hence a change to the alternative approach was recommended to liberate additional capital resources of £503,000 to be invested in General Fund schemes.

The use of capital receipts to finance expenditure was £2,672,000 higher than estimated and the year-end balance on the Capital Receipts Reserve had fallen to £3,790,000 as at 31 March 2016. All of this balance had been set aside for the Council's housebuilding programme. Due to all the capital receipts currently available to fund General Fund schemes, being fully utilised, internal borrowing had been made available from the HRA. In total, the General Fund had borrowed around £4,000,000 from the HRA and would be required to pay interest on the sum for the

Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee
Thursday, 16 June 2016

duration of the loan. The internal borrowing had been made on a temporary basis only and future borrowing requirements would continue to be monitored closely.

In summary, the Cabinet Committee were requested to recommend to Cabinet the approval of the budget overspends, savings, carry forwards and brought forwards. There was one General Fund budget saving of £7,000 on Revenue Expenditure financed from Capital under Statute and two areas where spending was higher than estimated totaling £160,000 on the HRA, which were proposed to be brought forward from 2016/17. The carry forwards requested total £9,227,000 on the General Fund; £3,698,000 on the HRA capital programme; £41,000 on Capital loans and £83,000 on REFCuS. The Cabinet Committee was also asked to approve the other amendments of £37,000 on the General Fund and £229,000 on REFCuS.

With regards to the use of direct revenue funding, the HRA contribution of £4,900,000 was in line with the revised budget. However, the use of funds from the Major Repairs Reserve was £3,097,000 lower than estimated reflecting the underspend on HRA capital schemes. The impact of this off-set was that the balance on the Major Repairs Reserve was £2,896,000 higher than expected at £11,997,000 as at 31 March 2016.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the provisional outturn report for 2015/16 be noted;

RECOMMENDED:

- (2) That retrospective approval for the over and underspends in 2015/16 on certain capital schemes as identified in the report be recommended to Cabinet;
- (3) That approval for the carry forward of unspent capital estimates into 2016/17 relating to schemes on which slippage occurred be recommended to Cabinet;
- (4) That approval of the funding proposals outlined in the report in respect of the capital programme in 2015/16 be recommended to Cabinet;
- (5) That the in principle decision to meet a funding requirement for the purchase of street properties in 2016/17 from HRA underspends in 2015/16 be recommended to Cabinet; and
- (6) That an amendment to the position regarding the use of the attribute debt element of the retained capital receipts as set out in the report be recommended to Cabinet.

Reasons for Decision:

The funding approvals requested were intended to make best use of the Council's capital resources that were available to finance the Capital Programme.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

The Council's current policy was to use all HRA capital receipts from the sale of assets, other than Right to Buy Council House sales, to fund the Council's house building programme. However, Members had the option to use these capital receipts for other HRA or General Fund schemes if they chose. This option had been rejected to date because, unless HRA receipts were applied to affordable housing schemes,

50% of each receipt would be subject to pooling i.e. the council would have had to pay 50% of the receipts to central government.

The Council retained an element of the right to buy receipts classified as 'allowable' debt. It had been agreed that 30% of this receipt should be set aside to help finance the HRA housebuilding programme; this represented a sum of £869,000 as at 31 March 2016. However, none of this sum had been utilised to date and the Council was reconsidering this position.

9. Provisional Revenue Outturn 2015/16.

The Assistant Director Accountancy provided an overall summary of the revenue outturn for the financial year 2015/16.

The net expenditure for 2015/16 totalled £16.204 million, which was £2,856,000 (21.5%) above the original estimate and £435,000 (3%) above the revised. The large movement between Original and Revised was due to including some revenue funding of capital expenditure which had reduced the General Fund balance down to £7.3 million from £9.3 million. It had been felt sensible to use some of the balance because in recent years there had been Central Government criticism of Local Authorities holding "excessive" reserves. There were improvements in the funding position as this had shown an increase of £879,000 when compared to the original position and £88,000 compared to the revised position, which had been due to the inclusion of additional business rates Section 31 income. The in year deficit on the business rates collection fund was approximately £27,000 and the main factor which had created this had been the provision to cover future rating appeals.

The Continuing Services Budget (CSB) expenditure was £283,000 below the original estimate and £407,000 higher than the revised. Variances had arisen on both the opening CSB and the in year figures. The opening CSB was £369,000 higher than the revised estimate and the in year figures £38,000 higher than the revised estimate. When measured against the Original Budget, salaries were underspent by £465,000 and the actual salary spending for the authority in total including agency costs was £20.802 million compared against an original estimate of £21.267 million. When comparing to the Revised Estimate there was an underspend of £302,000, half of which fell on the General Fund, though £72,000 of this was actually DDF or Building Control savings rather than CSB.

There was an additional amount of £215,000 added to the General Fund Bad & Doubtful debts provision as a number of uncollectable debts had been written off and Housing Benefit Overpayment debts outstanding at the year end had increased significantly from £2,382,000 to £2,723,000. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital expenditure was underspent by some £3.5 million and this increased the interest payable to the HRA, contributing to an overall net reduction of £190,000 to the Genral Fund.

The main other movement between the Original estimate and the Revised and Actual position was that the decision to Fund Capital Expenditure of £3 million from the General Fund balance.

The original in year CSB savings figure of £573,000 became an in year savings figure of £634,000, which was primarily due to additional Development Control fee income of £55,000 and a couple of other more minor items with the in year savings falling short by £38,000. The two main areas were Non-HRA Rent Rebates £40,000 and the Waste Management Contract £18,000 and there were a number of minor items that offset these.

The net District Development Fund (DDF) expenditure was expected to be £1,129,000 in the original estimate and £949,000 in the revised estimate and actually showed net income of £143,000. This was £1,272,000 below the original and £1,092,000 below the revised. There were requests for carry forwards totalling £775,000 for one-off projects and a net underspend of £317,000. The DDF reduced between the Original and Revised position by £180,000, which overall was not significant but there were some large swings on both income and expenditure. The Income side related to Development Control £220,000, Land Charges new burdens £103,000, a dividend following the liquidation of the former waste management contractor, South Herts Waste Management £100,000 and additional income from the technical agreement with major preceptors £119,000. Offsetting this were the amounts brought forward from 2014/15 for the Local Plan £185,000 and Assets Rationalisation £85,000.

The difference between the revised position and the outturn position was a reduction of £1,092,000 and around half of this related to income from the Recycling Reward Scheme £268,000 and further income relating to the aforementioned technical agreement. It had been proposed that £100,000 of the latter be used to create a transformation project budget and £154,000 be used to top up the Invest to Save Reserve. The main items making up the remaining £570,000 were £139,000 relating to Local Plan slippage, £82,000 to Asset rationalisation, £73,000 to the planned maintenance programme, £62,000 to Electoral registration and £43,000 to town centre support.

The expenditure for the Invest to Save Reserve was estimated at £87,000 and the actual being £75,000, with the underspend relating to investigating the withdrawal from the NEPP contract. It had been recommended for the transformation budget that for projects to proceed quickly but with appropriate oversight, the DDF budget would be established under the control of Management Board and subject to consultation with the Leader. Additional funds had already been allocated from the Invest to save Reserve in 2016/17 and to ensure money remained available for suitable projects the proposed top up to the fund was required.

A Surplus within the HRA of £60,000 and deficit of £83,000, which had been expected within its original and revised revenue budgets respectively, the actual outturn, was a surplus of £633,000. There had been savings on Revenue Expenditure of £520,000 when compared to the revised position and these included salary savings due to vacancies in a number of areas amounting to around £150,000, savings on professional and consultancy fees £86,000, gas and electricity £79,000, various communal services £63,000, Grounds Maintenance £63,000, rent collection costs £20,000, furniture and equipment at sheltered units £17,000 and Corporate Core contribution £11,000. Income from Dwelling Rents had been down by £139,000 although other income was up through interest received on capital and revenue balances by around £300,000. The depreciation charge relating to HRA assets was £346,000 higher than expected but the difference was reversed back to the HRA and formed the bulk of the remainder of the £681,000 underspend shown. The current financial year was likely to be more difficult for the HRA with the 1% rent reduction coming in and the potential effects of the forced sale of high value voids, the detail of which has yet to be decided.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the provisional 2015/16 revenue out-turn for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) be noted; and

Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee
Thursday, 16 June 2016

(2) That as detailed in Appendix E, the carry forward of £775,000 District Development Fund and £12,000 Invest to Save Reserve expenditure be noted.

RECOMMENDED:

(3) That the additional unbudgeted income of £254,000 from the agreement with the major preceptors to create a District Development Fund budget of £100,000 for transformation projects and to top up the Invest to Save Fund be recommended to Cabinet; and;

(4) That the transformation projects only being funded from the transformation budget following approval by Management Board and in consultation with the Leader be recommended to Cabinet.

Reasons for Decision:

To ensure adequate funding going forward for both transformation and invest to save projects.

Other options Considered and Rejected:

Members could decide to use the unbudgeted income to further increase the balance on the DDF and not to provide additional funding for transformation and invest to save projects. However, this would slow progress on transformation and necessitate reports to Cabinet and Council for supplementary funding for relatively small amounts of money.

CHAIRMAN

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DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT FUND 2014/15 - 2015/16

Directorate	Description	C/Fwd £000's	Year of Approval
Communities	Landlord Accreditation Scheme	1	2015
	Analysts post	23	2016
		24	
Governance	Document Scanning	11	2014
	Individual Registration Costs	62	2015
	Contingency for Appeals	(3)	2016
		70	
Neighbourhoods	Town Centres Support	42	2015
	Council Asset Rationalisation	82	2015
	Local Plan	139	2015
	Food Safety Inspections	4	2015
	Neighbourhood Planning	9	2016
	Payment to NEPP for redundancies	20	2015
	Survey of River Roding erosion	15	2015
	Replacement Bins	(43)	2015
	DCLG Recycling Reward Scheme	268	2016
	Salary Savings to fund restructure	30	2016
		566	
Resources	Implementation of E-Invoicing	3	2015
	Planned Building Maintenance Programme	73	2016
	Local Council Tax New Burdens Expenditure - Mobile Workin	0	2016
	Benefits Specific Grants - Online Forms	17	2016
	Benefits Specific Grants - Furniture	2	2016
	Emergency Premises Works	5	2015
	Temporary Additional Staffing	15	2015
		115	
	Total	775	

INVEST TO SAVE RESERVE 2014/15 - 2015/16

Neighbourhoods	Termination of contract with NEPP (R)	11	2016
Resources	Ariel Camera System (R)	1	2016
	Total	12	

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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-009-2016/17
Date of meeting: 21 July 2016



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Planning Policy

Subject: Local Development Scheme (LDS) and Local Plan Budget Update

Responsible Officer: Kassandra Polyzoides (01992 564119).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) To agree that the updated Local Development Scheme included within this report, be adopted and published on the Council's website; and
- (2) To note expenditure against the Local Plan budget in 2015/16, the projected expenditure for 2016/17, and the estimated expenditure for 2017/18 and 2018/19

Executive Summary:

This report seeks agreement to an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS), the high level project plan for the preparation of the Epping Forest District Local Plan. The proposed new scheme would supersede the earlier Local Development Scheme agreed in June 2015, with the preparation of the single District wide Local Plan scheduled for submission to the Secretary of State for examination in Winter 2017. The report also highlights expenditure, commitments and estimated spend against the Local Plan budget last reported to Cabinet in December 2015.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The Council is obliged under the Localism Act 2011 to prepare and publish a Local Development Scheme so that the public and stakeholders are aware of the likely timing of key stages of the plan making process. Cabinet have requested a six monthly update on the Local Plan budget, which has also been re-profiled to match the amended LDS.

Other Options for Action:

To not agree, or to vary, the Local Development Scheme.

Report:

1. The preparation of the Local Plan for Epping Forest District is an on-going and complex process. The level of expert evidence that is required to support the emerging Local Plan is significant. The guidance on exactly what this should cover continues to evolve in light of the National Planning Policy Framework and its associated Guidance, and emerging Inspector's Reports into other Local Plan Examinations around the country. Much of the evidence and support needed requires expert knowledge on specific topics, and therefore necessitates commissioning external consultants with the requisite expertise and experience.

2. The Localism Act 2011 amended the provisions set out in the Planning & Compulsory

Purchase Act 2004. However, S111 maintains the requirement that a local authority must prepare and maintain a scheme to be known as their Local Development Scheme. The scheme should specify the local development documents which are to be development plan documents, the subject matter and geographical area for each development plan document, and the timetable for them. Essentially the Local Development Scheme (LDS) lists and programmes the documents that will be produced by a Local Authority. Although there is no longer a requirement for this to be submitted to the Secretary of State, new provisions in the Act state that the local planning authority must make the following available to the public:

- the up to date text of the scheme;
- a copy of any amendments made to the scheme; and
- up to date information showing the state of the authority's compliance with the timetable set out in the scheme

3. The last Local Development Scheme was formally adopted by the Council in June 2015. This set out the proposed programme for the preparation of a single document – the Epping Forest District Local Plan which will provide a framework for the future development of the district for the period up to 2033. The Plan will contain the strategic vision and policies, site allocations and development management policies. There is no longer a requirement for the Local Development Scheme to list any proposed supplementary planning documents or the statement of community involvement.

4. Since the publication of the Local Development Scheme in June 2015, the Council has made good progress in developing the evidence base and the development of reasonable alternative options for testing. At this stage of the Plan making process, as the draft Local Plan is being prepared to be ratified by Cabinet and Council in October 2016 for publication for consultation, there is a need to review all the evidence we have prepared over time and undertake technical assessments that will allow Members to make the final decisions on the plan's content. This review has identified the need to repeat and refresh some evidence work as well as commission additional consultancy support in order to reach the autumn consultation deadline. The Government has made clear their expectation that all local planning authorities should have a post NPPF local plan in place and have set out their commitment to take action to get plans in place and ensure there are up to date policies. This includes intervening where no local plan has been produced by early 2017 to arrange for the plan to be written, in consultation with local people, to accelerate production of a local plan. One of the penalties proposed for not having produced a plan (it is not clear yet how this will be interpreted) is the loss of new homes bonus. It is clear that the Council needs to make good progress this year and to have consulted on our Draft Plan Preferred Approach prior to the cut off date. NLP published a research report in April 2016 setting out a review of local plan progress. Their report identified 21 authorities most at risk of intervention and names Epping Forest, Uttlesford and East Herts Districts.

5. It is proposed that the new Local Development Scheme is agreed, Scheme with the preparation of the single district wide local plan scheduled for submission to the Secretary of State for potential examination, in winter 2017. The table below sets out the proposed strategic timeline as the basis for the new Local Development Scheme based on a complete review of the programme and assessment of resources/skills available for preparation of the Local Plan going forward.

Local Plan	
Role and Subject	Determines the amount and location of development for the district together with some release of Green Belt land for this purpose. Sets out the spatial vision, objectives and strategy, all development sites and development management policies for the development of the district for the period up to 2033.
Which "saved" policies will it replace?	All
Geographical coverage	District wide
Status	Development Plan Document
Conformity	Consistent with national planning policy and planning practice guidance
Timetable	
Evidence gathering & background work Issues & Options preparation and public consultation including initial sustainability appraisal ♣	October 2011 – September 2012 Consultation on the issues & options 'Community Choices' took place between 30 July 2012 and 15 October 2012
Draft plan preparation and sustainability appraisal	October 2012 – October 2016
Consultation on draft plan (a minimum of 6 weeks)	31 October 2016 – 12 December 2016
Preparation of Submission Plan and Sustainability appraisal	October 2016-April 2017
Pre-submission publication and representations on soundness (6 weeks) Regulation 19	June/July 2017
Submission to Planning Inspectorate for Examination Regulation 22	November/December 2017
Examination in public Regulation 24	Subject to discussion with the Planning Inspectorate and timetabling – likely to be Spring 2018
Receipt of report Regulation 25	July 2018
Expected Adoption & Publication (including policies map) Regulation 26	October 2018
Production	
Lead department	Planning Policy (Neighbourhoods Directorate)
Management	The Portfolio Holder (and the relevant Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet as necessary) will consider drafts. Full Council will approve final draft documents prior to submission.
Resources	Planning Policy Team with consultative input from Development Management Team Corporate Support, Economic Development, Environment and Street Scene, Country Care, Finance and ICT, and Housing.
Community and Stakeholder Involvement	In accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement

Resource Implications:

Much of the budget allocated for 2016/17 is related to the review and completion of the evidence work as outlined above. In addition allocations have been made for the statutory consultation period, in line with previous costs incurred during the Issues & Options consultation. Budgetary allocations have been made for ongoing programme management support and Counsel advice needed to produce the draft plan for public consultation in Autumn 2016.

The table shows the budget agreed in February 2016 totalling £1,472,800, the actual spend in 2015/16 and projected spend through to 2018/19. The re-profiling of the budget suggests additional funding will be required during 2017/18 and this will be formally requested as part of the 2017/18 budget cycle. It is currently estimated that the shortfall is around £448,810.

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	total
Spend	£297,481	£68,639	£0	£0	£366,120
Committed		£214,688	£0	£0	£214,688
Estimated spend (evidence)		£783,502	£162,100	£0	£895,123
Estimated spend (LP process)		£105,600	£105,600	£184,000	£395,200
TOTAL BUDGET REQUIRED (July 2016)	£297,481	£1,172,429	£267,700	£184,000	£1,921,610
Budget available 2015/16 (Feb 2016)	£435,140	£551,910	£231,750	£254,000	£1,472,800
Budget shortfall (July 2016)	£0	£0	-£264,810	-£184,000	-£448,810

The main reason for this has been a recent decision to appoint Ove Arup consultants to take on work on settlement and site analysis and Infrastructure Delivery Plan work, in order to meet the Local Plan timetable. The significant allocated amounts in 2016/17 for the draft plan consultation are only estimates, so it is suggested that a future request for an addition to the DDF budget is anticipated, but premature at this stage. Planning Policy will continue to monitor the Local Plan budget and submit an update report to Cabinet in December 2016.

A detailed analysis of commitments for 2016/17 and estimated spend for subsequent years to 2018/19, is in the Appendix, Financial Information.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The Council is obliged to publish and maintain a Local Development Scheme. Approval of a revised document will fulfil this obligation.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

The delivery of a Local Plan, informed by a robust evidence base, will contribute to safer, cleaner, greener objectives by planning for sustainable development.

Consultation Undertaken:

Accountancy, within the Resources Directorate.

Background Papers:

None.

Risk Management:

Preparation of the Local Plan is a key priority for the Council and it is important that the published project plan is kept up to date to inform all stakeholders, and that the project is adequately resourced.

Due Regard Record

This page shows **which groups of people are affected** by the subject of this report. It sets out **how they are affected** and how any **unlawful discrimination** they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how **access to the service(s)** subject to this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to **understand each other better** as a result of the subject of this report.

S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

The Local Plan will affect all who live, work and visit the District. As a document it will take into account the needs of all and make provisions for their environment to 2033.

The preparation of the Local Plan will be subject to a full equality impact assessment in due course.

A further report setting out details of the consultation arrangements will be presented to Cabinet in due course.

Appendix – Financial Information

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	total
Spend	£297,481	£68,639	£0	£0	£366,120
Committed		£214,688	£0	£0	£214,688
Estimated spend (evidence)		£783,502	£162,100	£0	£895,123
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Budget available 2015/16 (Feb 2016)	£435,140	£551,910	£231,750	£254,000	£1,472,800
Budget shortfall (July 2016)	£0	£0	-£264,810	-£184,000	-£448,810
Strategic Programme July 2016 (for information)	Evidence	Evid & Draft LP Consultation (Oct-Nov 16)	Pre-Sub Reps (Summer'17), Sub to Plg Insp (End'17)	Examination (Feb'18) Adoption (Sept'18)	
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	
Spend					
Evidence base work	£168,969	£34,456			£203,425
Project Management	£124,165	£34,183			£158,348
Legal advice	£10,463				£10,463
	£303,597	£68,639	£0	£0	£372,236
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	
Committed (by order or contract)					
Evidence base work		£183,490			£183,490
Project Management (to Sept 2016)		£31,198			£31,198
		£214,688	£0	£0	£214,688
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	
Evidence Base work & studies (estimated spend)					
Project management (contract extension to September 2017)		£60,000	£60,000		£120,000
Population estimates project (ECC)		£1,500	£1,500		£3,000
Strategic Housing Market Assessment		£30,000	£10,000		£40,000
EF District Transport		£3,000			£3,000

Accessibility				
EF District Transport Modelling		£30,000	£10,000	£40,000
Contribution to Wider Harlow VISUM transport modelling		£20,000		£20,000
Sustainability Appraisal		£28,700	£5,600	£34,300
Strategic Sustainability Appraisal (joint work)		£5,000		£5,000
Habitat Regulation Assessment		£15,000	£2,000	£17,000
Habitat Regulation Assessment (cross boundary strategic review)		£5,000		£5,000
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Level 2) & EiP support		£11,000	£3,000	£14,000
Strategic Land Availability Assessment		£8,530		£8,530
Viability Assessment of emerging plan (CIL prep)		£15,000	£15,000	£30,000
Economic Study (HJA)		£25,000	£5,000	£30,000
Strategic Functional Economic Area study (joint on HMA area)		£12,500		£12,500
Glasshouses		£30,000		£30,000
Town Centres Study		£30,000		£30,000
Open Space, Sport & Recreation		£20,000		£20,000
Tourism/Hotel capacity & demand research		£25,000		£25,000
Further Masterplanning to support strategic site delivery			£50,000	£50,000
Site selection, IDP & Settlement Analysis		£323,272		£323,272
Hillhouse Masterplanning exercise		£23,000		£23,000
Hillhouse Outline Planning Application		£45,000		£45,000
Green Infrastructure Strategy - ancillary consultation costs		£5,000		£5,000
Heritage Review (no update needed)				
Landscape Character Study (no update needed)				
Settlement Edge Landscape Sensitivity Study (no update needed)				
Local Wildlife Sites Review (no update needed)				

Carbon Reduction Study (no update needed)					
	£0	£783,502	£162,100	£0	£945,602
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	
Local Plan process					
Consultation on draft Plan (Oct-Dec 2016)		£95,600			
Counsel advice (Draft Plan)		£10,000			
Publication for representations (Summer 2017)			£95,600		
Counsel advice (Pre-Submission reps)			£10,000		
Local Plan Examination in Public (early 2018)				£120,500	
Counsel advice (examination)				£20,000	
Local Plan Adoption (Sept 2018)				£23,500	
CIL Examination in Public (Sept 2018)				£20,000	
	£0	£105,600	£105,600	£184,000	

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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-010-2016/17

Date of meeting: 21 July 2016



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Finance

Subject: Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2017/18

Responsible Officer: Janet Twinn (01992 564215).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) That Members confirm that a public consultation exercise on the 2017/18 scheme is undertaken between August and October 2016;

(2) That the following elements of the scheme be approved for consultation purposes:

(i) that a general principle is that the Local Council Tax Support scheme for 2017/18 should aim to be cost neutral for the Council;

(ii) to seek views on alternative funding options for the Local Council Tax Support scheme if the scheme is not cost neutral;

(iii) the removal of the Family Premium in the calculation for new claimants in line with other Welfare Reforms;

(iv) reducing the period allowed for backdating to one month in line with other Welfare Reforms;

(v) limiting the number of dependant additions to a maximum of two for all cases where dependants are born on or after 1 April 2017, in line with other Welfare Reforms; and

(vi) withdrawal of Local Council Tax Support where a person leaves the UK for 4 weeks or more in line with other Welfare Reforms.

Executive Summary:

On 15 December 2015, Council adopted the Local Council Tax Support scheme for 2016/17. Consideration now has to be given to the scheme for the financial year 2017/18 which will require approval by full Council in December 2016.

It is necessary to undertake public consultation on the Council's scheme each year before the scheme is adopted by Council. In view of the timescales, it will be necessary for the consultation to be undertaken between August and October 2016 in order to ensure that the Authority will have consulted correctly and that Council can adopt the scheme at the December meeting.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The judgement given in the case of R v London Borough of Haringey on 29 October 2014, highlighted the requirement for Local Authorities to consult on their scheme annually, whether they intend to make any changes to their Local Council Tax Support scheme or not. The judgement also made clear that in their consultation, Local Authorities also needed to consult on how the scheme is to be funded. Respondents should be given the opportunity to give their views on whether the scheme should be cost neutral, or, if not, whether the scheme should be funded by making cuts to the scheme, increasing the Council Tax, cutting other Council services, or using Council reserves. The Council's scheme must be agreed by full Council and be in place by 31 January 2017.

In view of the timescales, consultation needs to be undertaken between August and October 2016. If consultation is commenced later, it will not be possible to complete the consultation and make any amendments to the scheme in time for a further report to Cabinet on 1 December 2016.

Other Options for Action:

Cabinet could either decide not to carry out a consultation exercise for the 2017/18 Local Council Tax Support scheme, or that consultation should only be carried out on potential changes to the scheme, not the funding of the scheme. However, bearing in mind the judgement in R v London Borough of Haringey, the Council could be judicially reviewed.

Report:

Local Council Tax Support Schemes from April 2013

1. Local Council Tax Support replaced Council Tax Benefit with effect from 1 April 2013. People of pension age continue to be protected from adverse changes as required by the Government, although the Government can introduce legislation to change the scheme for people of pension age. Every Local Authority must then amend their scheme to reflect the legislative changes. For people of working age, the Council has adopted a scheme which has the following key elements:

- The calculation of support is based on 75% of the Council Tax bill, rather than 100%. This was 80% for the years 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16 but reduced to 75% from April 2016.
- The calculation of support is based on a maximum of a band D property. This means that anyone of working age that lives in a property with a Council Tax Band of E, F, G, or H, has their support calculated as if their property was a band D.
- Inclusion of child maintenance in the calculation with a disregard of £15 per week (per family). This is income that is received into a household that may not be available to other households that pay the same amount of Council Tax.
- The capital limit is £6,000, so those with capital exceeding £6,000 are required to make full payment of their Council Tax liability.
- A minimum award of £0.50 per week. This is in line with the minimum award in Housing Benefit.
- The period of backdating (with good cause) is 3 months. This is in line with the time limit for pensioners.
- A Minimum Income Floor for claimants who are self-employed (from April 2016). Where the declared income from self-employment is less than the National Living Wage, income is assessed using the National Living Wage instead. This is in line with

- other welfare reforms.
- The Exceptional Hardship Scheme for LCTS is intended to support people whose individual circumstances mean that their Council Tax liability is causing them exceptional hardship.

2. The scheme was designed to take into account the ability to pay and the collectability of the resultant Council Tax liability. Across Essex, annual collection rates have been higher than originally anticipated, which is due partly to the caseload decreasing as the economy recovers, but also due to the proactive work that Officers have undertaken with people affected by the Local Council Tax Support scheme. In the first year of the scheme, there were relatively few complaints about the scheme itself and there is an acceptance by people that they need to pay something. As the scheme was unchanged in 2014/15 and 2015/16, there was only a minimal amount of customer contact about the scheme itself. When the scheme was changed for 2016/17 there were some complaints from people who are self-employed, but very few people have complained about the reduction in the maximum amount of support that they can receive. Council Tax Officers have been pro-actively contacting people and have set up special arrangements to help people who do not receive their income on a monthly basis. The scheme design has therefore been successful to date.

Consultation for 2017/18

3. In view of the judgement in R v London Borough of Haringey, it is clear that consultation is required whether changes are to be made to the scheme or not. Although at present, it is not proposed to make any major changes to the scheme for 2017/18, there are some changes which should be considered and therefore it is recommended that consultation is undertaken on these issues.

4. If it becomes necessary to make further cuts to the expenditure on Local Council Tax Support, the maximum Support payable for people of working age could be reduced from 75% to a percentage that would achieve the required savings. However, although collection rates have been better than expected, if the scheme is changed and people have to pay more, there will become a point at which collection rates will significantly reduce as the liability becomes too much and people stop paying altogether. Consultation will be required on this particular aspect of the scheme, together with options for alternative funding arrangements, rather than making savings through the scheme itself.

5. The Government has introduced legislation to make some changes to both the Housing Benefit scheme, and the Local Council Tax Support scheme for people of pension age. Housing Benefit is calculated at the same time as Local Council Tax Support and therefore it is reasonable to align the rules for claiming Local Council Tax Support with those of Housing Benefit. Similarly, it is reasonable to align the scheme for people of working age with the scheme prescribed by Government for people of pension age. By aligning the schemes, the administrative burden on the Authority would be greatly reduced, and it would be aligning our scheme with other Government Welfare Reforms. It is also less confusing for claimants to have a consistent approach to entitlement, rather than having different rules depending on a claimant's age, or the type of scheme administered by the Authority.

6. There are four changes in the Housing Benefit legislation and the Local Council Tax Support scheme for people of pension age, for which it is recommended that consultation is undertaken.

- The removal of the Family Premium in the calculation for new claimants. This change has already been implemented from 1 May 2016 in the Local Council Tax Support scheme for people of pension age and therefore this would be making this aspect of the scheme equal, regardless of age.

- Reducing the period allowed for backdating to one month. This was introduced in the Housing Benefit scheme from 4 April 2016 and this is therefore in line with other welfare reforms.
- Limiting the number of dependant additions to a maximum of two for all cases where dependants are born on or after 1 April 2017. As part of the calculation, there are additions for dependant children and this proposal is to limit the number of additions when new children are born. Legislation is already in place to apply this restriction to the Local Council Tax Support scheme for people of pension age, and also to all Housing Benefit cases.
- Withdrawal of Local Council Tax Support where a person leaves the UK for 4 weeks or more. This is a change that was originally due to be implemented in the Housing Benefit scheme from April 2016. It was then delayed until May 2016 but has now been delayed further until later in the year. The Government's intention is to implement this change and therefore we should consult if we want to align Local Council Tax Support with Housing Benefit.

7. The Essex Authorities have continued the joint work that they have carried out to implement their schemes for the last four years. Meetings take place on a monthly basis and ECC regularly attend these meetings. Although the Police and Fire Authorities are invited, they rarely attend because ECC act as their representative and they are sent minutes of these meetings. In this way, the requirement to consult with major precepting Authorities is met.

8. It is proposed to carry out public consultation for the 2017/18 scheme between August and October 2016. Essex County Council have previously hosted the on-line consultation for the Essex Authorities and they have agreed to also host the on-line consultation for 2017/18. For anyone who does not have access to the internet, the ability to respond in paper format will be made available.

Resource Implications:

The cost of consultation on the Local Council Tax Support scheme for 2017/18 will be met from existing budgets.

Legal and Governance Implications:

There is a requirement for consultation to be undertaken on the Council's Local Council Tax Support scheme each year.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

There are no specific implications.

Consultation Undertaken:

Consultation has been undertaken with ECC and the Fire and Police Authorities through the regular meetings with the Essex Benefit Managers. The proposed amendments and funding arrangements for the scheme will be subject to public consultation as set out in this report.

Background Papers:

Report to Council 15 December 2015.

Risk Management:

A risk register was produced as part of the process for devising the Local Council Tax Support scheme. It has not been necessary to make any amendments.

Caseload growth risk

If more people become eligible to claim LCTS e.g. because of economic downturn, then the cost of the scheme will increase. However caseload has been reducing as the economy has improved.

Collection risk

If there is a reduction in the maximum percentage of Council Tax liability that is eligible for Local Council Tax Support, the impact of the scheme is that low income working age households have to pay a proportion of their Council Tax liability. Inevitably there will be bad debts but the collection rate has been higher than anticipated. However, there will be a point where people are asked to pay more Council Tax, therefore making the liability too high for them, that they will not make any payments at all.

Funding reduction risk

The LCTS component of the Local Government Finance Settlement will reduce again in 2017/18. This could lead to either making changes to the LCTS scheme to reduce expenditure or to make savings elsewhere either from Council budgets, increasing the Council Tax or using Council reserves.

Precept increase risk

LCTS costs will increase if any of the precepting Authorities increases their Council Tax.

Due Regard Record

This page shows **which groups of people are affected** by the subject of this report. It sets out **how they are affected** and how any **unlawful discrimination** they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how **access to the service(s)** subject to this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to **understand each other better** as a result of the subject of this report.

S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

Local Council Tax Support Scheme

Background:

The Local Council Tax Support Scheme is designed to help those of working age on a low income. If any changes are to be made to the Council's existing scheme, consultation must first be undertaken.

Report:

The financing of the Local Council Tax Support scheme is a matter for all council taxpayers, not just people who currently receive LCTS. In order to ensure that consultation is open to everybody, the consultation will not be restricted to just certain groups. We will be promoting the consultation through both the Council website and the Essex County Council website, messages on emails, notices with Council Tax demands sent during the period of consultation and posters in reception areas. Anyone will be able to respond, including local taxpayers who are not LCTS recipients, and any organisation that provides support to vulnerable people.

The scheme (not the consultation) is likely to impact on families with children of school age or disabled people who are more likely to have a fixed or lower income, and claimants from ethnic minorities whose families tend to be larger.

There are just fewer than 3,500 people of working age who would be affected by changes to the current scheme. These include families with school age children, people with disabilities and people from ethnic minorities. If the level of Council Tax liability increases above affordable levels, there is a risk that people may have to leave their homes and move to cheaper properties, which may be some distance away. For children of school age this may mean they have to change schools which may cause disruption to their education; for disabled people this may mean that they are separated from their friends and families who may provide support and assistance to their daily lives; and for people from ethnic minorities who may also may be separated from their extended families. Some recipients may get into debt.

A number of measures are being taken to mitigate the potentially negative impacts of the scheme:

- Additional resources have been directed towards people affected by providing them with information about alternative housing and help with financial

- management;
- The scheme spreads the changes as widely as possible to reduce inequalities;
 - The Exceptional Hardship Fund will assist people with the most exceptional circumstances.

Equality of opportunity is built into the system via The Exceptional Hardship Fund. Premiums for children and disabled persons are included in the calculation of entitlement, which provide some additional support to these groups.

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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-011-2016/17

Date of meeting: 21 July 2016



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Asset Management and Economic Development

Subject: Epping Forest Shopping Park – Award of Construction Contract

Responsible Officer: Chris Pasterfield (01992 564124).

Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the tender of £10,218,000 from McLaughlin & Harvey Construction to carry out the construction of the Epping Forest Shopping Park in Langston Road be agreed;
- (2) That an increase also be agreed in the contract sum for Section 278 Highways works of £343,053 to the contract awarded to Walkers Construction on 11 January 2016;
- (3) To authorise the Director of Neighbourhoods, in liaison with the Asset Management and Economic Development Portfolio Holder, to agree any final variation to the Highways Contract subject to it being within the current capital budget for this element of the project; and
- (4) To note the current anticipated opening date for the Shopping Park is August 2017.

Executive Summary:

This report advises Members on progress with respect to the development of the new Epping Forest Shopping Park in Langston Road, Loughton and associated works, as discussed at previous meetings.

The tender bid is below the previously estimated pre-tender cost of the Shopping Park construction works prepared by the Council's quantity surveyors, Ridge & Partners LLP, of £10,500,000. This cost was allowed for within the projections contained in the Development Appraisal approved by Cabinet on 11 June 2015.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To award the main construction contract for the Shopping Park and agree a variation to the costs of the associated S278 Highways Work.

Other Options for Action:

To not accept the tender from McLaughlin & Harvey Construction, which would delay the works being carried out and therefore the opening of the shopping park. Similarly, to not agree the increased provision for the Highways Works would delay the opening.

Report:

Procurement of EFSP Main Building Contract

1. The re-tendering of the main building contract was carried out under European procurement regulations - OJEU for a two stage tender. Following the PQQ (Pre Qualification Questionnaire) stage five companies were invited to participate in the second ITT (Invitation to Tender) stage.
2. Three tenders were received on 3 May 2016 from McLaughlin & Harvey Construction, RG Carter and Higgins Construction which was a four week extension of time from the original tender date following questions and representations from the tenderers. These tenders were evaluated by the Council's Project Architect (PRC), Project Manager (WYG), Mechanical & Electrical Engineer (Pinnacle), Structural Engineer (Pinnacle), Quantity Surveyor (Ridge LLP) and the Council's in house development consultant.
3. The three tenderers were interviewed by the Council's team on 26 May and RG Carter and Higgins Construction were made aware that their bids were non compliant as they included provisional cost sums relating to ground contaminates and retaining walls. Both companies were given until 1 June to amend their bids. Higgins did not amend their bid and therefore they were excluded but RG Carter did amend their bid and were therefore considered by the consultant team at a moderation meeting.
4. The consultant team scored Mclaughlin & Harvey's bid at 92% and RG Carters bid at 71%. This was largely due to the RG Carter bid being over £3million higher and also have a longer construction programme than the bid by McLaughlin & Harvey bid.
5. The standstill period ended on 20 June without any representations from the two losing bidders or any other party.
6. The OJEU process was supervised at all times by the Council's solicitors, DAC Beachcroft, who have a department specialising in public procurement and by the Council's internal Procurement Manager. A report is attached from DAC Beachcroft on the OJEU process and its outcome.

Highways

7. The final technical approval is currently awaited from Essex Highways following discussions and amendments to plans and specifications by the Council's highways consultants, JMP Consulting.
8. These amendments are likely to add four weeks/previously 34 weeks, to the construction programme and some £343,053 to the tender price of £2,070,029 (total £2,413,082). This increase is largely attributed to Essex County Council constraining working hours and seeking increased areas and higher specifications. Walkers tender included a schedule of rates for specific works and therefore the Council's quantity surveyors, Ridge & Partners LLP were able to check this increase in detail.
9. It is unfortunate that Essex Highways were not able to provide this input prior to tendering of the contract as it has led to significant delay. The target start on site date is now Monday 11 July 2016.

Marketing/Letting

10. Marketing of the scheme continues with strong interest from a number of quarters and

at this time there are no negotiations with discounter brands but there is wide interest from a number of different retail areas including fashion, toys, furniture, sports, outdoor activities and food. A number of Heads of Terms have been agreed and are in solicitor's hands to complete Agreements for Lease of the various units. A more detailed report was given to the Asset Management & Economic Development Cabinet Committee in Part II on 30 June.

Relocation of Other Users To Oakwood Hill Depot

11. Following an inspection by VOSA on 11 July the relocation of the Grounds Maintenance and Fleet Operations/MOT Services to the new depot is now complete and the Langston Road Depot is now vacated and ready for occupation by the contractor to begin works. The temporary licence to use the T11 site for car parking has been terminated effective on 31 July to provide vacant possession of this area.

Opening Date

12. A combination of the delay to the Highways Works and the previously reported need to repeat the tender for the main construction contract, as a result of the first "open process" procurement not attracting any bidders. This has led to a revised opening date of August 2017.

Resource Implications

On the 11 June 2015 the Cabinet agreed a comprehensive development agreement as part of the decision to buy out the Council's previous partner. The development agreement contained not only cost estimates for the construction of the Shopping Park and associated works, but also professional fees and the likely revenue to be generated by lettings. The increased cost of the Highways Work of £343,053 is offset by the saving of £282,000 on the main contract. Adequate provision exists within the Council's Capital Programme.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The Council has engaged legal advisors to support the procurement process. Although Cabinet will continue to receive regular progress reports, it is intended that the Asset Management Cabinet Committee has taken on the role of more detailed scrutiny of the project to ensure that good governance continues to be achieved.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

Highways improvements will reduce congestion and emissions. Security at the shopping park will involve the use of ANPR and CCTV

Consultation Undertaken:

Essex County Council Highways.

Background Papers:

Report to Cabinet 20 July 2015.
Report to Council 23 June 2015.

Risk Management:

The project is subject to constant risk management with a formal Risk Assessment Register reviewed regularly at Project Team Meetings.

Due Regard Record

This page shows **which groups of people are affected** by the subject of this report. It sets out **how they are affected** and how any **unlawful discrimination** they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how **access to the service(s)** subject to this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to **understand each other better** as a result of the subject of this report.

S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

This report deals specifically with the award of the building contract and therefore aspects such as the design have been dealt with in previous reports.

The tender process as described in the report was a two stage OJEU process overseen by a specialist solicitor from DAC Beachcroft to ensure that it complied fully with European regulations that the tender was open, fair and carried out without any discrimination.

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EPPING FOREST SHOPPING PARK**PROCUREMENT OF A CONTRACTOR TO UNDERTAKE DESIGN AND BUILD WORKS ("THE WORKS")**

We have been asked by Epping Forest District Council ("the Council") to set out in brief detail the procurement process undertaken to appoint a contractor to undertake the Works.

The team involved in the procurement process for the Works consisted of professionals from:

- the Council;
- WYG (as Project Managers);
- Ridge and Partners (as Cost Consultants);
- PRC Architecture and Planning (as Architects);
- Pinnacle Consulting Engineers (as M&E Engineers); and
- DAC Beachcroft LLP (as legal advisors).

As the estimated value of the works was £10,000,000, the Council was required by virtue of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 ("the Regulations") to undertake a procurement process in full compliance with the Regulations.

In December 2015, a decision was made to commence a procurement process using the restricted procedure. The restricted procedure is a two stage procurement process. At the first stage of the process, interested contractors are invited to complete a pre-qualification questionnaire ("PQQ") which assesses the contractor and its previous experience. Following assessment, a number of qualified contractors are invited to submit a response to the Invitation to Tender ("ITT"). This assesses a contractor's proposal for the project. One bidder is then selected as the winner.

Stage 1 – pre-qualification

The project team created a suite of documents for the procurement and these were placed on a publically available website in order to comply with Regulation 53 of the Regulations. The opportunity went live on 19 January 2016 with the publication of a Contract Notice in the Official Journal of the European Union. This invited the market to participate in the procurement. An advertisement on the UK government website Contracts Finder was published shortly afterwards.

The Regulations require that contracting authorities use the Crown Commercial Service ("CCS") standard PQQ and any deviations are reported to the CCS. Guidance from CCS states that contracting authorities may use the specialist construction PQQ, PAS 91, for works procurements. As PAS 91 is a considerably long document with numerous questions, it was decided to create a PQQ using the CCS standard PQQ with relevant parts of PAS 91 included. The Council informed CCS that it had done this and no complaint was received.

The Council specified that it would invite 5 bidders to ITT Stage. In order to shortlist, the PQQ contained a number of "pass/fail" questions, on matters such as health and safety compliance and financial stability, as well as 3 questions which tested past experience on similar projects.

The Council received 8 responses to the PQQ. These responses were evaluated by 5 members of the project team individually, prior to a moderation meeting on 26 February 2016. The purpose of the moderation meeting was to agree a single consensus score for each question evaluated and then rank

bidders in numerical order by score. The 5 highest ranked bidders were (1) Bowmer & Kirkland Limited (2) McLaughlin and Harvey Construction Limited; (3) RG Carter Southern Limited; (4) RG Group Limited; and (5) Higgins Construction Limited.

Notification letters were sent to bidders on 29 February 2016.

Stage 2 – ITT Stage

The 5 shortlisted bidders were invited to prepare a response to the Council's ITT. The ITT tested a bidder's proposal for the Works. Bidders were asked to detail:

- their price for the Works;
- their proposed programme;
- the methodology and resources for delivery of the Works, including how they would deal with sub-contracting and contaminants on the site;
- their approach to risk; and
- how they would deal with stakeholders.

The Council received 3 completed tenders for the Works. This was because prior to the deadline for ITT submissions, both Bowmer & Kirkland Limited and RG Group Limited informed the Council that they would not be submitting a response to the ITT.

Issues encountered

The ITT was clear that bidders were not permitted to include any qualifications or exclusions in their bids. Bidders were also not permitted to amend any of the Provisional Sums contained within the pricing schedule. Any bidder including qualifications, exclusions and/or amendments to the Provisional Sums would be excluded. All the bids received contained either qualifications, exclusions, or amendments, and as such were liable for exclusion. In order to keep the procurement process moving forward the Council took legal advice and elected to approach each bidder and ask for removal of the qualification, exclusion or provisional sum change together with an updated proposal if the bidder considered it necessary.

Evaluation process

Tenders were evaluated by 6 individual evaluators drawn from the project team. 6 evaluators were selected in order to achieve a good mix of experience and expertise. Evaluators were instructed to evaluate submissions alone and feedback their scores and comments to DAC Beachcroft LLP by 25 May 2016.

The 3 bidders then attended a clarification interview with the evaluation panel on 26 May 2016. This occurred at North Weald Airfield. At the interview, bidders explained their programme and answered any questions evaluators had. Each evaluator then had the opportunity to amend their scores, after which they informed DAC Beachcroft LLP if there had been any change.

A telephone conference then took place on 3 June 2016 during which the evaluators discussed the scores they had awarded and agreed a consensus score for each question for each bidder, together with an agreed rationale.

Results

Following evaluation McLaughlin and Harvey Construction Limited were identified as the Council's preferred bidder having achieved the highest score. The final scores in the procurement are included in Annex A.

Despite Higgins Construction Limited being given the opportunity to amend their bid, it was necessary to exclude them as they refused to remove a number of Provisional Sums relating to ground contaminants and the retaining wall structure. Their bid was therefore not considered at the meeting on 3 June 2016.

Notification letters in compliance with the Regulations were issued on 10 June 2015 to the 3 bidders. The Council then observed the required 10 day standstill period. The Council received no complaint from either of the unsuccessful bidders during this period and has therefore commenced pre-contract discussions with McLaughlin and Harvey.

DAC Beachcroft LLP
24 June 2016

ANNEX A

McLaughlin and Harvey Construction

Question	Score achieved	Maximum score	Weighting	Weighted score	
1	4	4		13.5	13.5
2a	3	4		8.75	6.5625
2b	3	4		6.75	5.0625
2c	3	4		4.5	3.375
2d	3	4		2.25	1.6875
3a	3	4		2.25	1.6875
3b	3	4		2.25	1.6875
3c	3	4		2.25	1.6875
3d	3	4		1.15	0.8625
4	3	4		1.35	1.0125
				Quality total from 45%	37.125
Price	£9,950,690.73			55	55
				TOTAL	92.125

RG Carter

Question	Score achieved	Maximum score	Weighting	Weighted score	
1	2	4		13.5	6.75
2a	3	4		8.75	6.5625
2b	3	4		6.75	5.0625
2c	3	4		4.5	3.375
2d	3	4		2.25	1.6875
3a	3	4		2.25	1.6875
3b	3	4		2.25	1.6875
3c	3	4		2.25	1.6875
3d	3	4		1.15	0.8625
4	3	4		1.35	1.0125
				Quality total from 45%	30.375
Price	£13,337,351			55	41.03423462
				TOTAL	71.40923462

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-013-2016/17

Date of meeting: 21 July 2016



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Leader of Council

Subject: Transformation Programme – May 2016 Monitoring Report

Responsible Officer: David Bailey (01992 564105).

Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) That the Cabinet review the progress of the Transformation Programme through the highlight report for May 2016; and

(2) That the Cabinet endorses the decision of the Transformation Programme Board to progress permanent recruitments for the customer service posts from within existing resources.

Executive Summary:

Regular highlight reports on the progress of the Transformation Programme will be presented to the Cabinet. This is the highlight report for May 2016. It is anticipated that the format of the highlight report will evolve over time in order to remain an effective tool for highlighting progress, slippage and remedial actions being undertaken.

The transformation programme is at an early stage and all progress indicators are green.

The Cabinet agreed on 3 March 2016 (C-074-2015/16) to proceed with the appointment of a Customer Services Manager for the Council and IT support post.

Reasons for Proposed Decisions:

To inform Cabinet of progress on the Transformation Programme and to endorse the recruitments of the customer service posts.

Other Options for Action:

Members could decide not to endorse the recruitment but this would delay the implementation of the priority Customer Contact project.

Report:

1. This is the May 2016 highlight report brought to the Cabinet for the Transformation Programme. As such, it's anticipated that the format may change over time so as to remain effective at highlighting progress, slippage and any remedial actions in the programme overall.

2. The Cabinet is requested to review progress for May 2016.
3. The highlight report uses the RAG rating, based on Red, Amber and Green colours used in a traffic light system. The definitions of the RAG ratings are:

<i>Light</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Action</i>
Red	<p>There are significant issues with the project, programme or workstream.</p> <p>The project requires corrective action to meet business objectives. The issue cannot be handled solely by the project manager or project team.</p> <p>One or more aspects of project viability – time, cost, scope – exceed tolerances set by the Transformation Programme Board.</p>	The matter should be escalated to the project sponsor and Transformation Programme Board immediately.
Amber	<p>A problem has a negative effect on project performance but can be dealt with by the project manager or project delivery team.</p> <p>Action is taken to resolve the problem or a decision made to watch the situation.</p> <p>One or more aspect of project viability – time, cost, scope – is at risk. However, the deviation from plan is within tolerances assigned to the project manager.</p>	The Transformation Programme Board should be notified using a progress report or scheduled briefing with the sponsor.
Green	<p>The project is performing to plan.</p> <p>All aspects of project viability are within tolerance. However, the project may be late or forecast to overspend (within tolerance).</p>	No action needed.

4. At this stage, all status indicators are green, and this reflects the progress of actions to establish the transformation programme, including workstreams and priority projects.

5. Appendix 1 contains the highlight report for May 2016.

6. The Cabinet agreed on 3 March 2016 (C-074-2015/16) to proceed with the appointment of a Customer Services Manager for the Council and IT support post. Job Descriptions and other materials have been drafted and the roles evaluated as Head of Customer Service, Grade 11, and Business Support Analyst, Grade 5, respectively. Funding for these recruitments will come from the salary budget underspend in 2016/17 and from a consolidation of roles across the directorates from 2017/18. Any proposed changes to employment contracts will be undertaken in line with the Council's agreements with staff and Trades Unions.

Resource Implications:

Funding for the customer service recruitments will come from salary underspends in 2016/17. The Management Board commits to manage the costs within the overall salary budget from 2017/18 through the consolidation of roles across the directorates.

Legal and Governance Implications:

There are no legal or governance implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Relevant implications arising from actions to achieve specific outcomes or benefits will have been identified by the Transformation Programme Board.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

There are no implications arising from the recommendations of this report in respect of the Council's commitment to the Climate Local Agreement, the corporate Safer, Cleaner and Greener initiative, or any crime and disorder issues within the District. Relevant implications arising from actions to achieve specific projects will have been identified by the Transformation Programme Board.

Consultation Undertaken:

Progress has been reviewed by the Transformation Programme Board (1 June 2016).

Background Papers:

Progress submissions and relevant supporting documentation is held by the Programme Management Office (PMO).

Transformation Programme – Customer Experience Workstream Cabinet Report, 3 March 2016, C-074-2015/16.

Risk Management:

The Council is seeking to reduce the risks associated with strategic choices on accommodation by engaging appropriate external expertise.

Due Regard Record

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S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

Progressing the priority transformation projects, particularly the Customer Contact Projects and the Review of Service Accommodation, will improve access to our services for both our customers and our staff from various protected groups.

The benefits would include but are not limited to:

- Improved physical access to the Civic Offices for customers and employees with disabilities or customers with babies and young children;
- Improved self-service access for customers, through online and mobile phone applications, which can be used outside of normal office hours; and
- Reduced transaction times, where customer enquiries are dealt with at the first point of contact.

Transformation Programme Highlight Report

<i>Report</i>	<i>Period</i>
4	May 2016

Document control

<i>Version</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Status (draft, approved)</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Change description</i>
1.0	13.05.2016	May draft	David Bailey	Draft
1.1	01.06.2016	Draft	David Bailey	Draft

Approval

<i>Approved for submission to the Cabinet (Sponsoring Group), given by</i>	Transformation Programme Board	<i>Date</i>	01.06.2016
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Distribution list

<i>Name</i>	<i>Job title</i>	<i>Directorate / Department</i>	<i>Organisation</i>
Transformation Programme Board	Membership	-	EFDC
Cabinet	Portfolio Holders	-	EFDC

Overall transformation programme progress and status

	<i>RAG status</i>		<i>Comment on overall progress and status and recommended actions</i>
	<i>This period</i>	<i>Last period</i>	
Time	Green	Green	
Cost	Green	Green	
Delivery / outcome / output	Green	Green	
Benefits	Green	Green	

Progress this period and actions for the next period (in addition to those overdue)

<i>Workstream / Project</i>	<i>Progress this period</i>	<i>Actions for next period</i>	<i>Due</i>	<i>Owner</i>
Reporting	-	Report to Cabinet meeting 9 June	Jun 2016	Leader of the Council
	-	Include all charted projects on June highlight report	Jun 2016	Chief Executive
Workstreams	TPB agreed project charters: P019 File Scanning Building Control P020 Legal Document Scanning P043 Correspondence Scanning	-	-	Chief Executive
	Work continued drafting charters for key projects from the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2016/17	Present charters for approval. TPB uses information to balance resource deployment across programme	Jun 2016	Chief Executive
P001 Customer Contact Projects	Monitoring of customer visits / transactions commenced	Analyse data	Sep 2016	Assistant Director, Governance & Performance Management
	Team draft Project Initiation Document (PID)	TPB consider PID 1 June	Jun 2016	Head of Transformation
	-	Commence customer journey mapping	Jun 2016	Head of Transformation
P002 Service Accommodation Review	Tender selection and award	-	-	Director of Resources
	-	External consultants start feasibility study	Jun 2016	Head of Transformation
	-	Workshop with Leadership Team	Jun 2016	Director of Resources
P003 Establish Project and Programme Management	Discovery activities	Design prototype	Aug 2016	Head of Transformation
	Team draft Project Initiation Document (PID)	TPB consider PID 1 June	Jun 2016	Head of Transformation
P004 Corporate Communications	Initial meeting 18 May	Undertake discovery	Sep 2016	Public Relations Manager
P033 Printer Migration	Printer usage discovery and analysis	-	-	Assistant Director, ICT & Facilities Management
	Team draft Project Initiation Document (PID) 23 May	TPB considers PID 1 June	Jun 2016	Assistant Director, ICT & Facilities Management
P039 Out-of-hours Power Management	SCCM system tested on PCs and laptops as replacement for Verismic	IGel power down test	Jun 2016	ICT Operations Manager

<i>Workstream / Project</i>	<i>Progress this period</i>	<i>Actions for next period</i>	<i>Due</i>	<i>Owner</i>
P043 Correspondence Scanning	-	Establish project team	Jun 2016	Business Manager
P044 Electronic Invoicing	E-invoicing pilot commenced with Facilities Management 23 May	Continue pilot	Jun 2016	Procurement Manager
P045 Customer Self-Service Payment Kiosks	Live upgrade to software v8.1	-	-	Senior Cashier
	Equipment delivered to facilities	-	-	Senior Cashier
	Visit to Basildon BC arranged	-	-	Senior Cashier
	-	Kiosk programming and testing	Aug 2016	Senior Cashier
	-	First kiosk installed in Civic Offices cashiers reception	Aug 2016	Senior Cashier
P046 Propman Property Management System	Testing and updates for UPRN addresses	Invoices for quarterly rent run to be produced from Propman	Jun 2016	Estate Management Officer
P105 Civic Office Waste and Recycling	Discovery to determine current recycling rates, costs, contract constraints	Appoint provider	Aug 2016	Environmental Co-ordinator
Staff transformation training	Cohort 1 training day 2 delivered 10 May	-	-	Learning & Development Manager
	Cohort 1 evaluation completed 16 May	-	-	Learning & Development Manager
	TPB selected cohort 2 delegates	Deliver cohort 2	Jun 2016	Learning & Development Manager
Communications	Update available to staff via Corporate Intranet 3 May	Maintain and extend information pages, inc. project management tools	Ongoing	Head of Transformation
	-	Evaluate staff briefing	May 2016	Assistant Director, Human Resources
	Post-election briefing for Councillors 10 May	Briefing for Council to be arranged	Jul 2016	Head of Transformation
	District Lines articles 11 May	-	-	Assistant Director, Human Resources
	Draft Communication Management Strategy	TPB considers Communication Management Strategy	Jun 2016	Public Relations Manager

<i>Workstream / Project</i>	<i>Progress this period</i>	<i>Actions for next period</i>	<i>Due</i>	<i>Owner</i>
Transformation Programme Board (TPB)	Met 4 and 18 May	-	-	Chief Executive
	-	BT initiative (Clr Lion) seek direction from Chief Executive, meeting 26 May	May 2016	
Programme Management Office (PMO)	Initial meetings held 9 and 25 May	Regular meetings	Jun 2016	Head of Transformation
£100k transformation savings	PMO to undertake discovery	Progress agreed projects	Jun 2016	Head of Transformation
	-	TPB considers business cases	Jun 2016	Chief Executive

Note: TPB – Transformation Programme Board, PMO – Programme Management Office

Milestones overdue

None.

Escalated issues (including those from the last highlight report not yet resolved)

None.

Escalated risks

None.

*** End of Report ***



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-017-2016/17

Date of meeting: 21 July 2016

Portfolio: Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee

Subject: Development Strategy – Council House-Building Programme

Responsible Officer: Paul Pledger (01992 564248)

Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the Development Strategy, at Appendix 1 of this report, be approved, with specific attention drawn to the Council continuing to charge Affordable Rents for all new Council homes built under the programme and that Affordable Rents also be charged for any purchased as new or purchased off the open market; and**
- (2) That the Development Strategy now be reviewed every three years, in line with the review period for other strategies, or earlier if circumstances make it necessary.**

Executive Summary:

Since its formation in March 2013, the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee has considered a number of policies that has shaped the way the Council is delivering new affordable housing across the district as part of the Council Housebuilding Programme, all of which have been captured in the Development Strategy that was first agreed by the Cabinet in September 2013 and then updated in February 2014. This updated Development Strategy has been considered by the Council House-Building Cabinet Committee at its meeting in April 2016. However, the decision to adopt the Strategy rests with the Cabinet.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

Responsibility for the approval of the Development Strategy rests with the Cabinet.

Other Options for Action:

To not adopt the contents of the Strategy in the format presented and alter any of its statements, targets, standards, procedures or assumptions. However, this could have an effect on the feasibility studies already approved by the House-Building Cabinet Committee.

Report:

1. Within the Terms of Reference for the House-Building Cabinet Committee, it states that “we will consider and recommend to the Cabinet the Development Strategy for the Council’s House-building Programme on an annual basis”.
2. Since the Cabinet first adopted the Development Strategy in September 2013, we have continued to follow the Strategy to deliver our Housebuilding Programme. Further

policies were included to reflect the decisions reached by the Cabinet Committee in the February 2015 update.

3. The main change in this update is in respect of the Affordable Rent Policy, whereby all new homes built or are purchased as new, or purchased off the open market they shall be let at affordable rent. This also reflects the Council's decision to purchase new-build or open market properties in order to avoid returning unspent 1-4-1 receipts back to the Government.

4. The Development Strategy is set out at Appendix 1 of this report for consideration in detail and, subject to being satisfied with its contents, we recommend its approval to the Cabinet, together with the use of the supporting Design Standards and Employers' Requirements.

Resource Implications:

None.

Legal and Governance Implications:

Within its Terms of Reference, the House-Building Cabinet Committee is expected to consider and recommend to the Cabinet the Development Strategy for the Council's House-building Programme.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

None.

Consultation Undertaken:

The House-Building Cabinet Committee has considered the strategy and we support its contents.

Background Papers:

The various reports to the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee.

Risk Management:

Since the Development Strategy has a direct bearing on the financial viability and delivery of the Council's house-building programme, the greatest risks are that the assumptions prove to be incorrect resulting in each phase being un-viable.

Not gaining planning consent will present a risk of not only having to hand back to the Government one for one Right To Buy and HCA Grant, but also the risk to the Council's reputation with the respective Government Offices and the wider community for failing to deliver on its House-building targets.

Some risks are mitigated by the Council being able to learn from the experience of East Thames, who have been undertaking developments similar to that proposed in the strategy for some time.

Since the Cabinet Committee considers and signs off financial appraisals for every proposed development, the financial effects of the Strategy can be monitored. If, over time, a problem or theme is identified, the Cabinet Committee can review its policies.

In addition, a Programme-wide Risk Register has been developed and is reviewed regularly by the Cabinet Committee, where new risks and/or any actions to mitigate risks are agreed.

Due Regard Record

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Within the Housing Service Strategy, it has been identified that the target groups that are affected by the Council's house building programme are people in need of:

- affordable housing,
- homelessness assistance,
- supported housing for special needs groups,
- owners and occupiers of poor condition housing
- council and housing association tenants.

From that, it was identified that generally, there is an under provision of suitable accommodation for nearly all target groups. This has been reaffirmed in the most recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

Decision making is affected by funding and other factors, such as the availability of building land suitable for particular groups e.g. the elderly or young families.



Development Strategy 2013-2019 (June 2016 update)

Content

1. Introduction
2. Purpose
3. Context (local and national)
4. What Will We Deliver?
5. How Will We Deliver?
6. Where Will We Deliver?
7. When Will We Deliver?
8. Appendices
 - A. KPI's
 - B. Economic Assumptions Framework
 - C. Terms of Reference for Council House Building Cabinet Committee
 - D. Phases 1, 2, 3 and 4 unit spread
 - E. Phases 1-6 updates

1 Introduction

Epping Forest District Council currently own and manage around 6,500 homes within the District. Presently there are 5,700 applicants on the Council's Housing Register who wish to gain access to affordable homes within the District. The Council currently acts as enabler facilitating Registered Providers (RPs) operating within the District to develop new affordable housing to meet housing need.

In order to directly meet this housing need the Council has agreed to initiate a Council House Building Programme to develop new affordable rented homes. This will be achieved through the use of its own funding and land holdings.

The Council's Development Strategy sets out what the Council wishes to achieve from the House Building Programme, details an overall approach to achieve the aims of the programme and describes a coherent plan to implement these aims.

The House-Building Programme will be delivered by the Council in conjunction with East Thames Group who have been appointed to deliver Development Agency Services for the Council, including all development and project management services and the provision of all professional building services, including: architectural, employer's agency, quantity surveying, cost consulting, Construction Design Management, engineering and surveying, but excluding works construction.

This Development Strategy was updated in February 2016 and was re-approved by the Council's Cabinet in June 2016. It will be reviewed again in March 2019.

2. Purpose

Through the Council House Building Programme the Council will:-

Meet the Aims of the Corporate Plan

The Council's Corporate Plan 2015-20 sets out its aims and objectives for the next 5-years. Within that Plan, the Council has identified three key strategic aims in achieving its vision for the district. The principle aim that this Development Strategy focuses on is to ensure that the Council has appropriate resources, on an ongoing basis, to fund its statutory duties and appropriate discretionary services whilst continuing to keep the Council Tax low and providing residents with good quality services. This is achieved by continually reviewing and developing the Council's own property and landholdings for appropriate uses, in order to maximise revenue streams and capital receipts, and to deliver amongst its key projects the Council house-building programme.

The Plan states that the Council will continue to explore new ways of using its land and assets to generate more capital receipts and income to support the delivery of services to our residents. In so doing, the Council will give our own council house building and economic development schemes added impetus.

Meet Housing Need

The Council House Building Programme will deliver new homes that go towards meeting the demand within the District for affordable rented homes. The demand is clearly identified in the Housing Strategy, and this Programme shall help to meet the Council's Housing Strategy and its vision that "Epping Forest will be a district that has

safe, decent and attractive housing that meets the needs of those who want to live in the District.”

Build Sustainable, high quality homes and services

The Council House Building Programme will provide high quality and sustainable homes to meet the current and future housing need within the District.

The Council will control the type, tenure, and specification and quality of the new affordable housing provided by the programme.

The programme will expand the Council’s stock holding, and the new homes will be owned, managed and maintained by the Council thereby increasing efficiencies within the Housing Directorate, the HRA Business Plan and the Council as a whole.

Create high quality environments and regenerate Communities

The new homes will predominantly be developed on Council-owned difficult to let and under utilised garage sites. These new homes will improve the existing environment, reduce anti-social behaviour and contribute toward the revitalisation of existing communities.

Develop and Maintain a Strong Council

By building new homes on its own land, rather than disposing of it to RP partners within the District at a discount, the Council will maintain control over its assets and the HRA will benefit financially from the generation of a long term income stream. Additionally, the Council will receive the Government’s New Homes Bonus (with the “affordable housing premium”), and potentially attract capital grant receipts from the Homes and Communities Agency, whilst increasing efficiencies through improved economies of scale by growing stock in management.

Since the Council is able to utilise Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loans at extremely preferential rates, compared to the private loans market, and can recover all the VAT paid on development fees, it is in an ideal position to deliver affordable housing within the District at a lower cost than its Preferred Housing Association Partners.

3. Context

Housing Revenue Account Reform

In 2012 the Government introduced legislation to abolish the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system and introduce self-financing for Council Housing.

The Government’s policy objectives at that time were:-

- To increase local transparency and abolish the current opaque system under which there is little connection between the level of rent charged and the resources Councils have to spend locally;
- To give Councils financial autonomy and therefore more accountability for the provision of housing services;

- To end decades of complex central control and allow Council housing to be managed and financed locally; and
- To ensure Councils have the incentives to actively manage their housing stock on a Long term basis rather than simply react to an uncertain annual funding formula.

Source: Implementing self-financing for council housing, DCLG, 1 February 2011

The Council built its last home in June 1985 and these reforms will provide the Council with a means of delivering new affordable housing within the District and to enable it to build more new affordable homes each year than it currently sells under the Right to Buy.

The Council has agreed that the House Building Programme will be self-funded, without any financial support from the General Fund and financed from the following sources:-

- Capital receipts from additional Right to Buy sales as a result of the Government's decision to increase discounts for tenants purchasing their property under the Right to Buy;
- S106 Agreement contributions from developers in lieu of on-site affordable housing provision;
- Funding from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) (where possible);
- Borrowing (if necessary);
- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) surpluses (generated through additional financial capacity provided through loans from the PWLB);
- Any other external sources of funding that may be identified or secured from time to time; and/or
- Cross-subsidy from the sale of other development sites within the House Building Programme on the open market (if necessary).

Using its own assets to meet housing need

The Council has identified a portfolio of garage sites that are designated as 'Difficult to Let'. The Council's research estimates that around 65 of these sites may have development potential. A further 5 non-garage sites have been identified as also having development potential. The Council has agreed that, where developable and viable, these sites will be developed by the Council through the Council House Building Programme to provide new affordable homes.

4. What Will We Deliver?

Quantum of New Homes

The Council's initial review of the sites to be used in the House Building Programme estimates that a maximum of ca.230 new homes could be developed thereon.

Based upon this review the Council originally set a target of delivering 20 new homes each year over the next 6 years or 120 in total.

However, in April 2014 the Cabinet Committee agreed to accelerate the Housebuilding Programme. The Council's HRA Business Planning Consultant

produced a report on this issue, together with advice on the maximum amount for which HCA funding should be sought, in order to ensure that all 1-4-1 Receipts from Right to Buy sales are spent within the required 3 years of receipt and none are passed on to the Government, with interest.

Based on the information within CIH Consultancy's report, the headline changes to the phases are as follows;

- **Phase 1** – Remains the same comprising 23 homes (all of which now have planning permission)
- **Phase 2** – Increasing the number of homes from the currently-planned 20 homes to either 56 homes, based on the optional proposals put forward by the Project Team
- **Phases 3-6** – Increasing the number of homes from the currently-planned 20 homes per year to 30 homes per year
- **Phase 7-10** – Extending the Programme by a further 4 years, from the 6 years currently planned, with 30 additional new homes provided each year.

Further details on the acceleration programme are set out in later in the strategy

Affordable Rents

Whether the homes are built or purchased as new, or purchased off of the open market they will be for affordable rent to meet the housing need within the District.

The affordable rents to be charged are set out in the Council's Affordable Rent Policy, adopted by the Council's Housebuilding Cabinet Committee in July 2013, and will be a percentage of the market rent for that property type in the area.

The rent charged shall be the lower of:-

- 80% of market rents for the location; or
- The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) within the Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA) for the type of property; or
- An affordability cap of £180 per week.

The Council has decided to adopt an affordability cap which recognises the Government's Universal Credit regime and the associated Benefits Cap. Under the Benefit Cap, the total amount of benefit for which a family in England & Wales shall be eligible is £500 per week, with single people eligible to a maximum of £350 per week.

Therefore, with mind to the affordability of the homes and the sustainability of residents' tenancies, the Council has used the Homes and Community Agency (HCA) guidance that weekly housing costs should not exceed 45% of net income.

The application of the Council's Affordable Rents Policy will result in a maximum weekly affordable rent of £180 per week (this being 36% of the £500 per week Benefit Cap under Universal Credit).

All Affordable Rents charged by the Council will be gross and inclusive of service charges.

A further paper was presented to cabinet, which capped the weekly affordable rent at £180 per week for 2014/15 and is reviewed annually by the cabinet committee. Please note that a change in the rent settlement with central government means that Affordable and Social Rents will need to reduce by 1% for the 4 years (2016-2020). This reduction has been factored into the financial appraisal of the house building program.

Quality

The Council has a significant role to play in improving its existing housing stock, regenerating neighbourhoods and providing high quality new homes that meet the needs of local households on low to modest incomes. Through the House Building Programme the Council will work to provide well designed and cost effective new homes to meet these aims.

The Council places a great emphasis on providing homes that will last, be cost effective and be valued by residents. As a design direction, the Council has adopted the *East Thames Design Guide*, the *East Thames Employer's Requirements* and the *Essex Housing Design Guide* for the design and construction its new homes. The Council will work with East Thames to ensure that, for each site, the design complements and enhances the local neighbourhood in which the homes are built.

The Council will build a range of typologies, both houses and apartments that are appropriate to the individual development sites, with a particular focus on creating sustainable family housing where appropriate.

Through carefully considered design and liaison with local communities, the Council will develop schemes of a range of sizes that address local needs.

The Council places an emphasis on the sustainability of its homes, environmental performance and economy of use. Therefore every new home delivered through the Council House Building Programme will meet at least Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Each new scheme will go through a design critique process that will enable Council staff, residents and other stakeholders to have meaningful input into design evolution.

This co-ordinated approach to developing and designing schemes will ensure that all relevant Council departments are involved in ensuring successful design, handover, completion and management.

The Council will work with the Development Agent to provide a comprehensive brief for each project.

Technical Specification

The Council recognises that the design of the places, spaces and homes built, along with the quality of their construction, are critical for resident satisfaction.

The Council will use East Thames' existing comprehensive performance specification, known as "The East Thames Employer's Requirements" to ensure that all the new homes delivered by this Programme are robust, energy efficient and cost effective to residents and the Council.

Key Performance Indicators

The Council will measure the success of the House Building Programme through the evaluation of key performance indicators relating to the delivery of schemes, cost and sustainability of the schemes. These can be found at Appendix A.

These will be monitored monthly by the Council's officers and East Thames and reported to each meeting of the Council House Building Cabinet Committee.

5. How Will We Deliver?

Review of sites

It is proposed that, in order to achieve the best value for the Council, sites will be packaged up, preferably using geographical selection. This will achieve economies of scale for contractors, making them more attractive for contractors and more viable for the Council.

The 65 garage sites potentially available for development will undergo a systematic review and assessment process during the first two years of the Council House Building Programme. This will determine their suitability and viability for development.

Review of Sites



Primary Phase

Technical review

This will highlight issues that will impact upon or even prevent the development of the site such as planning considerations, rights of way, rights of light, flood risks, servicing etc. Any issues highlighted will inform the design direction, technical specification and cost assumptions used to appraise the viability of the site.

Legal review

This involves investigating the legal title. Once again this will highlight any issues which could prevent or affect the development of the site such as easements, rights of way etc. These will inform the financial appraisal and the physical development proposals.

Secondary Phase

Capacity Study

If, after identifying any physical, legal or technical constraints to development, the sites are considered viable an architectural feasibility study will be conducted to determine the development capacity of the site.

Initial Pricing

The architectural proposals produced will be reviewed, along with the technical information, and priced by the project team and a quantity surveyor.

Financial Appraisal

A financial appraisal will be conducted on each site to determine whether the development is viable against the parameters set within the Council's Economic Assumptions Framework. If the scheme is considered viable (either on a stand alone basis or as part of a wider package of sites) it shall be taken to the Council House Building Cabinet Committee as part of a package of viable sites for approval to proceed. The Council's Economic Assumptions Framework is set out in Appendix C

Any site not considered viable for development as affordable housing shall be assessed by the Council, with the assistance of the Development Agent, for either other development potential or any other alternative use and the outcome of the assessment will be reported to the Council's Cabinet.

HCA Grant Funding

Following the launch of its 2015-18 Affordable Homes Programme Bid Prospectus by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), the Council House-building Cabinet Committee agreed in April 2014 that East Thames submit a bid on behalf of the Council for a total of £500,000 to subsidise the development costs of 40 new affordable homes, making up Phase 2 of the Council House-building Programme. In July 2014, it was announced that this bid was successful, subject to the Council being able to achieve Investment Partner Status with the HCA and the Council being able to deliver the new affordable homes within the timescale of the Bid Programme 2015-18.

The bid was amended slightly during negotiations which mainly centred on removal of all three bed houses. This was because the rent on these properties was set at 65% of market rent rather than 80%. As these properties were entered as zero grant properties this did not have an effect on the actual grant allocation received from the HCA.

The bid that has been accepted by the HCA and the following funding will be made available is set out below.

Scheme	Units	grant per unit
Harveyfields	9	£0
Roundhills (site 7)	6	£0
Red Cross	2	£0
Burton Rd	40	£12,500

The final requirement for this grant to be processed is for EFDC to become a partner of the HCA. This is a formal process that includes the HCA checking the accounts of the partner organisation and carrying out other due diligence. This process was completed in March 2015 and EFDC are now a partner of the HCA

The grant funding for these schemes will be provided 50% at start on site and 50% on practical completion and schemes must practically complete before April 2018.

Please note that you cannot mix HCA Grant funding with 1-4-1 receipts. As there is a priority to spend 1-4-1 receipts further HCA funding will only be requested if 1-4-1 receipts are not available.

Tertiary Phase

Cabinet Committee Approval

The Cabinet Committee will be presented with a comprehensive report detailing the scheme details including:-

- The design proposals (the number and nature of units to be developed);
- A scheme budget estimate;
- A procurement strategy;
- A financial appraisal of the site;
- A project time table;
- A project risk assessment; and
- A recommendation on how to proceed.

Once a project or package has been approved by the Cabinet Committee the projects shall be progressed to RIBA Stage D by the Development Agent and submitted for planning approval.

Appraisal Methodology

The Council will use a loan repayment methodology to determine viability.

The repayment methodology assesses whether the net revenue generated by the project is capable of repaying the capital loan required to develop the project as well as the accrued interest.

The Council will use a set of economic assumptions in the appraisal of each scheme. These assumptions have been derived from various sources, including the Council's HRA Business Plan and the actual cost of maintaining and managing its existing stock. These assumptions are referred to as the 'Economic Assumptions Framework' and are at Appendix C.

The Council will consider a scheme viable when the following parameters, set within the Economic Assumptions Framework, are met:-

- The scheme can repay its loan within 30 years; and
- The scheme produces a positive Net Present Value (NPV) over 30 years.

The Council will also consider the viability of schemes within a package i.e. if an individual scheme within a package does not meet the financial parameters, but when it is included within a package of sites and the overall package meets those parameters, the Council will consider the package to be viable.

Community Liaison

As part of the development appraisal process, the Ward Member(s) for the areas in which developments are proposed will be invited to the meeting of the Cabinet Committee at which the development and financial appraisals will be considered and decisions made about whether or not development of the site should be pursued. This will give an opportunity for Ward Members, as the Council's representatives of the local residents, to give their views on the proposals and to raise any concerns.

For those developments that are pursued, during the preparation of planning applications, the Development Agent, on behalf of the Council, will inform local residents and Ward Members of the forthcoming planning application, providing access to view plans on-line. Residents' Associations will also be consulted where one exists.

During the preparation and construction of each project, the Development Agent and contractor will identify and provide a dedicated point of contact for residents to answer queries, attend any meetings and provide any requested information.

Delivery

Post-Cabinet Committee approval the Development Agent will progress the schemes through the planning process and to handover.

Planning

Upon Cabinet Committee approval the scheme will be progressed to RIBA Stage D by the Development Agent and submitted to the Council's Planning Directorate for approval.

On site

Upon planning approval, packages of sites will be tendered to procure a Design and Build Contractor to develop the detailed design (RIBA Stages E onward) and build out the scheme to completion.

Procurement

The Development Agent will ensure that all procurement is in line with the Council's Contract Standing Orders. The Council's Development Agent, East Thames Group, has procured an EU-compliant Contractors Framework consisting of 12 contractors.

Any council in the South East of England may utilise this Framework, and the Council's Cabinet Committee has agreed that East Thames' Framework should be used for the House Building Programme, and that the Development Agent can call-

off contractors from the Framework, and tender each package to every member of the Framework to ensure value for money is achieved.

Addition to the process for the procurement of Contractors

An additional option for the procurement of contractors was agreed by CHBCC in January 2016; this was as follows

) (1) That for Phase 3 the Council adopts an alternative procurement strategy and breaks down the 8 sites making up Phase 3 into 7 separate contracts with a mixture of Design and Build contracts and traditional fully designed contracts, and tender them in accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders; and

(2) That the additional costs of associated with the design, management and supervision of 7 separate contracts be met from the existing HRA Capital programme for house-building.

The reason for the additional process was due to the lack of interest from larger contractors on the East Thames Framework to undertake Phase 3 of the Council's house-building programme as a whole due to the complications and difficulties managing dispersed sites, it is necessary to look at alternative procurement methods. Soft market testing suggests a better approach might be to let the works through a mixture of smaller contracts using different contract types. This would allow smaller scale builders to bid for works whilst ensuring that more control over the delivery of the project remained with the Employers Agent/Development Agent

On site

The scheme will be managed on site by the Development Agent.

Throughout the construction process the Council's Development Agent will administer the build contract on behalf of the Council, ensuring that the Programme is delivered on time and on budget and to the quality and technical standards specified in the contract.

The Development Agent and the Council will liaise throughout the process to ensure that the scheme is handed over for occupation as programmed and residents can occupy the new homes immediately.

The Development Agent will procure for the Council a detailed core file providing all necessary technical and legal information on the development, a Health and Safety File and Operation and Maintenance Manual.

The Development Agent will prepare a Resident Handbook for each new property describing how their new home works and who to contact if a problem arises.

Post Completion and Defect Monitoring

Post-completion of the new homes the Development Agent will administer any defects that are identified or reported to the Council during the 12 month defects liability period.

They will ensure that the build contractor deals with all defects according to the requirements of the build contract and ensure that the Final Account is agreed.

After the new homes have been occupied for at least 6 months, the Development Agent will visit residents to find out more about their experiences of living in their new homes – what they like about the design of their home, what could be better and the things they don't like. This feedback will be used to improve future homes in the Council House Building Programme.

Once the Final Account has been agreed the Development Agent will produce a scheme review. This shall incorporate:-

- Resident feedback on the new homes;
- The scheme KPIs;
- The financial performance of the scheme against original approval; and
- The scheme programme against approval.

The outcome of these reviews will be reported to the Council House Building Cabinet Committee at the appropriate time after completion of each phase.

Governance

The Council has established its Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee, comprising members of its full Cabinet, to oversee the delivery of the Housebuilding Programme. Its Terms of Reference are provided at Appendix D.

The Council House Building Programme will have the following governance structure to ensure accountability, quality control and transparency.



Risk Management and Risk Register

As part of the governance approach, and a requirement of the Development Agent's appointment, the Development Agent will record and maintain risk registers for both the Housebuilding Programme as a whole for each individual development. These will identify the key risks, the likelihood and impact of them arising and ways for them

to be mitigated. East Thames has subcontracted responsibility for preparing and maintaining all the risk registers to its building consultants, Pellings.

The risk registers will periodically be reviewed by the Cabinet Committee.

Programme Monitoring

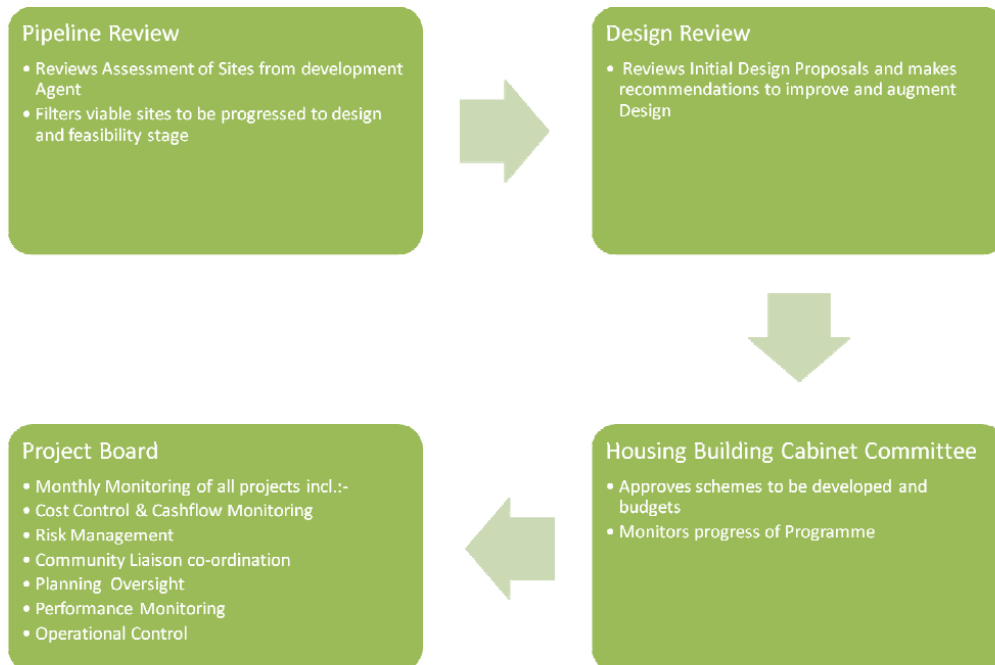
Once scheme approval is granted, monthly meetings will be held where the Development Agent reports to the Council upon progress of the packages and the Development Programme generally.

A Programme & Performance Report will be produced detailing:-

- Development Programme cashflow;
- Contract KPIs;
- Performance against Programme;
- Build Contractor KPIs;
- Key risks;
- Scheme Reviews;
- Any programme variances (cash or time); and
- Performance against HCA targets (should partner status be achieved).

Once each scheme is on site, all data relating to the units in development will be recorded using the Development Agent's project management system and reports will be provided to the Council at the monthly progress meeting.

Programme Control Panels



6.0 Sites unsuitable for development

There will be occasions when a site is considered unsuitable for development as council housing. This could be for a number of reasons;

- 1) unable to gain planning permission
- 2) site is financially unviable
- 3) Cabinet committee considers the site, for whatever reason, unsuitable for development.

In these cases Officers are to be authorised to consider the following options and will submit a separate report to the Cabinet Committee to determine the future use of these sites:

- a. To sell the site for social housing to a Housing Association in return for a capital receipt to fund future Council house-building and to gain nomination rights for Council housing applicants;
- b. To sell the site for private development, either for residential or other use in return for a capital receipt to fund future Council house-building;
- c. To divide up the site and sell the land to local residents to extend their private gardens in return for a capital receipt to fund future Council house-building;
- d. To demolish the garages, re-surface and mark out the land and to leave the site as open car parking for local residents;
- e. To sell the site to a Town or Parish Council for their own purposes (e.g. public amenity space) in return for a capital receipt to fund future Council house-building; or
- f. To continue to market and rent the garages to local residents;

Prioritisation of Sites

On the 4th of February 2014 the Council Housebuilding Cabinet set out the matrix for the prioritisation of sites for redevelopment.

The summary of the paper is as follows;

The Cabinet has previously agreed a list of potential development sites for which the Council's Development Agent would be asked to undertake detailed development and financial appraisals. Now that the Development Agent is starting to undertake development appraisals for each site, there is a need to agree a strategic approach to the prioritisation of potential sites for development.

A general strategic approach for the prioritisation of potential sites is proposed for adoption, which suggests that locations within the District be grouped together into two Groups, having regard to the Primary List of Sites previously agreed by the Cabinet and whether the locations have capacity to deliver more or less than 10 new homes, and that development packages/phases be formulated each year, on a rotational basis in an agreed Priority Order, based on the number of applicants living within each location.

Since there are various ways in which the number of potential sites within a location could increase and, as the Development Programme progresses, the number of new homes that could be provided at locations within the groups is likely to reduce - which could have an effect on the Priority Orders within both groups – it is proposed that a review of the priority orders within the two groups be undertaken in three years' time, having regard to the same proposed strategic approach. The groups are set out below:

Group A (Locations with sites that could potentially deliver 10 or more homes):

Priority Location

- 1 Loughton
- 2 Waltham Abbey
- 3 Epping
- 4 Buckhurst Hill
- 5 Ongar
- 6 North Weald

Group B (Locations with sites that could potentially deliver less than 10 homes):

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Location</u>
-----------------	-----------------

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 1 | Theydon Bois |
| 2 | Nazeing |
| 3 | Roydon |
| 4 | Coopersale |
| 5 | High Ongar |
| 6 | Matching Green/Tye |

See Appendix E for an update of the programme position for phases 1 – 6.

When Will We Deliver?

The Council wish to deliver a minimum of 300 new homes over 10 years.. The Council aim to start building the first new homes in 2014/15 financial year and deliver the first handovers within 12 months of commencing the programme.

The Council will review all of the sites on the list within the first two years of the programme for suitability and viability.

Once assessed the sites will be presented to the Cabinet Committee for approval. A delivery programme will be composed, which will involve concurrent packages of sites, to ensure that the 300 home delivery target is achieved.

Any new sites identified will be approved by the Cabinet Committee before being added to the pipeline.

Acceleration of the Development Programme

Since the original publication of the development strategy a decision was taken by Cabinet to accelerate the development programme. The main recommendations / Decisions accepted were as follows:

- (1) That Phase 2 of the Council housebuilding programme consists of 51 homes at Burton Road, Loughton
- (2) Phase 3 consists of 7 contracts which will deliver 34 new homes in Epping, Coopersale and North Weald (see appendix E for spread of units in the District)
- (3) That the Council seeks to increase the number of affordable homes developed in Phases 4-6 from 20 to 30 per year;

(4) That HCA funding is sought, initially, for Phase 2 of the House-building Programme at Burton Road, Loughton for 40 homes - based on a 51-home development;

With the remaining homes in Phase 2 being funded from 1-4-1 Receipts and the other resources made available within the HRA as a result of the other recommendations within this report;

(5) That further bids for HCA funding be made in future years for future phases of the House-building Programme, should the amount of 1-4-1 Receipts be less than forecast within the CIH Consultancy report, provided that the receipt of such HCA funding would not result in any 1-4-1 Receipts having to be passed to the Government;

(6) That, as a policy, the minimum balance held in the HRA is reduced from £3 million to £2 million;

(7) That the Council's HRA Self-Financing Reserve be re-profiled, to release funds for the House-building Programme in earlier years of the HRA Business Plan by increasing contributions to the Reserve in later years (closer to the HRA's first PWLB loan maturing in 2021/22), whilst ensuring that sufficient resources have been accumulated within the Reserve to repay this first loan on maturity (subject to no further borrowing being undertaken to extend the House-building Programme, as referred to in Recommendation 8 below);

(8) That the HRA's contribution to the Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund between 2019/20 – 2021/22 (Years 7-9) be reduced by a sufficient amount to enable Phases 2-6 of the House-building Programme to be funded (currently estimated at a reduction of £1.79 million - £2.42 million per annum, from £3.87 million per annum to £1.45 million - £2.08 million per annum), which will be dependent on:

- (i) The number of homes pursued for development under Phase 2;
- (ii) The outcome of the HCA funding bid;
- (iii) The amount of 1-4-1 Receipts received in 2014/15;
- (iv) The receipt of any further financial contributions received as a result of Section 106 Agreements;
- (v) Any property or land sales for which the Cabinet agrees the resultant receipt can be utilised to fund the House-building Programme; and
- (vi) Any adjustments that have to be made to the amount allocated to the Fund in the intervening period, due to unforeseen and un-budgeted reasons affecting the HRA.

(9) That, in principle, the Council House-building Programme be extended by a further 4 years to 10 years, after the current Years 3-6, with an additional 30 new affordable homes provided each year;

(10) That no decisions be made now on the most appropriate way of funding an extended House-building Programme, but that consideration be given at an appropriate time in the future - and before any commitments are made or expenditure incurred; and

(11) That the purchase of properties from the open market and/or the provision of local authority grant(s) to one of the Council's Preferred Housing Association Partners to fund affordable housing schemes in need of grant, continue to be kept as

a contingency plan, should the amount of 1-4-1 Receipts still be in excess of the maximum amount that can be spent on the House-building Programme, in order to avoid having to pass any 1-4-1 Receipts to the Government, with interest;

8.0 Use of one for one Right to Buy Receipts

The CHBCC has agreed further recommendations to ensure the full use of 1-4-1 since the publication

(1) That the Council Housebuilding Programme be accelerated further, and that the construction periods of Phases 3 onwards be brought forward to overlap, as set out in Appendix 1;

(2) That the programme delivery risks of bringing forward overlapping construction phases be noted and accepted;

(3) That recommendations be made to the Cabinet that, subject to the costs being able to be met from the Council Housebuilding Capital Budget:

(a) Should it be identified by the Director of Communities that there is a risk of one-for-one replacement capital receipts having to be passed to the Government, delegated authority be granted to the Housing Portfolio Holder to authorise the purchase of individual vacant properties for sale on the open market (either existing properties or new build);

(b) Delegated authority be granted by the Cabinet Committee to authorise the Director of Communities to enter into Development Agreements with private developers, and agree terms for the purchase, for affordable rented housing required to be provided by developers in accordance with Section 106 Agreements, where an opportunity is presented that is considered suitable and appropriate; and

(c) If outline planning application is granted for development on Council-owned land held by the General Fund at Pyles Lane, Loughton and the Cabinet subsequently decides to sell the site on the open market, the sale be subject to a requirement that the required affordable housing element (expected to be between 40-50% of the total number of properties) be sold to the Council on practical completion, on agreed terms (to be set out in a separate Development Agreement) to be approved by the Cabinet when considering the sale of the site;

(4) That, should it be identified that individual vacant market properties need to be purchased to avoid one-for-one capital receipts being passed to the Government:

(a) The Director of Communities be authorised to source such properties for sale, make verbal offers to purchase and make recommendations to the Housing Portfolio Holder to agree their purchase; and

(b) Approval be given to the Director of Communities to appoint, on appropriate terms, a suitable consultant / organisation to act on the Council's behalf to negotiate the purchase of such properties - including to identify properties, assess their condition, undertake financial viability assessments, make recommendations and, if approved, make offers on behalf of the Director of Communities;

(5) That, where the Council agrees to purchase affordable rented housing from developers in accordance with Recommendation 3(b) and/or 3(c) above, the Director of Communities be authorised to employ a suitable organisation as the Council's Employers Agent to act on the Council's behalf during the construction period or, alternatively, to employ a Clerk of Works (or similar) to undertake this role as appropriate;

(6) That as of January 2016 CHBCC has agreed a program of street property purchases to ensure the use of £2m worth of 1-4-1 receipts that were at risk of being returned to central government.

9.0 Review of the Development Strategy

Although the Development Strategy is intended to cover the whole period of the initial House Building Programme, it will be reviewed every 3 years by the Cabinet Committee, which will recommend any changes to the Cabinet for adoption.

10.0 Appendices

A. Key Performance Indicators

B. Economic Assumptions Framework

C. Terms of Reference for Council House Building Cabinet Committee

D. Phases 1, 2, 3 and 4 unit spread

E. Phases 1-6 update

Appendix A - Key Performance Indicators

Standard	Measures		Target
Resident satisfaction	Post-handover resident questionnaire		95% satisfaction amongst respondents
Time	Planning: 1 st pre-application meeting to validation		Variable target based on initial estimate for planning submission
	Planning: from validation to approval		13 weeks
	Construction time: (excess time over contract completion date)		108% total days on site compared to contractual days on site
	Construction time: (excess time over valid extensions granted)		0%
Construction costs	Predictability	Feasibility to tender	95% - 105% of estimated cost
		Tender to completion	98% - 102% of accepted tender
	Cost per metre ²		For information
	Whole Life costs		Less than 80% of the construction costs
Quality of Design	HCA Housing Quality and Design Standards		100% of units meet standard
	Lifetime Homes		100% of units meet standard
	Secure by Design		Achievement of Part 2 for all schemes Full certification for schemes with more than 40 units
	Building for Life		Minimum score of 14
	Code for Sustainable Homes		Level 3 as minimum
Defects	Resident satisfaction (from post-occupation resident survey)		98% satisfaction amongst respondents
	Defects at beginning of snagging		Score of 8 or above on scale below
	Defects at handover		Score of 10 on scale below
	<i>Defect free</i>		10
	<i>Some defects with no significant impact on residents/client</i>		8
	<i>Some defects with impact on residents/ client</i>		5/6
	<i>Major defect with impact on residents/client</i>		3
	<i>Totally defective</i>		1
	Defects completed on time	Emergency	100%
		Urgent	85%
Routine (end of defects)		100%	
Site Issues	Health & Safety		Zero reportable
	Considerate contractors	Small sites < 40 units	Minimum score of 32, no less than 4 in each section

Economic Assumptions Framework for Epping Forest District Council

Operating / Revenue Assumptions

Affordable Rent

Affordable Rent Item	Suggested Value
Investment Period	45 years
Rent Increase (above RPI)	+ 0.50 %
Major Repairs Cost per Unit (from year 7)	0.80 % * £1,300 * GIA
Management Cost per Unit	£1,327
Maintenance Cost per Unit	£910
Voids	1%
Bad Debts	1%

Inflation Elements

Inflation Items	Suggested Value
Long-term inflation forecast	2.50 %
Management Costs Inflation	RPI + 1.00 %
Maintenance Costs Inflation	RPI + 1.00 %
Major Repairs Costs Inflation	RPI + 1.50 %

Funding Elements

Funding Items	Suggested Value
Debt Funding: Development Period	3.3%
Debt Funding: Long-term Financing Period	30 years
Debt Funding: Long-term Financing Rate	3.5%
NPV Discount Rate	3.5%

Approval Criteria

Affordable Rent

Approval Criteria	Suggested Value
Internal Rate of Return (IRR)	5%
Net Present Value (NPV)	> £0
Cost-to-Value (C/V Ratio) ***	100 %
Payback year	< 40 years

Notes

Investment Period

This figure is in line with industry assumptions regarding the useful life of a building and the cyclical replacement of its component parts.

Major Repairs Cost per Unit (from year 7)

This is derived from East Thames research into building lifecycles from the Building Defects Insurance (BLP).

Management Cost per Unit

Based on Current Council costs

Maintenance Cost per Unit

Based on Current Council costs

Voids

Based on Current Council Performance

Bad Debts

Based on Current Council Performance

Long-term inflation forecast

Based on current RPI projections

Management Costs Inflation

The margin above inflation reflects the fact that over the long term, these costs such as the cost of staff, tend to rise above inflation.

Maintenance Costs Inflation

The margin above inflation reflects the fact that over the long term, these costs such as the cost of staff and materials, tend to rise above inflation.

Major Repairs Costs Inflation

The margin above inflation reflects the fact that over the long term, these costs such as the cost of staff and materials, tend to rise above inflation.

Debt Funding Costs and NPV discount rate

The debt funding costs reflect the Council's true borrowing costs and NPV discount rate matches these for the for use in calculating the discounted cashflows.

Appendix C – Terms of Reference Council House Building Cabinet Committee

Terms of Reference

1. To consider and recommend to the Cabinet the Development Strategy for the Council's House Building Programme on an annual basis.
2. To consider and sign-off development appraisals and financial appraisals produced by the Council's appointed Development Agent for sites previously identified by the Cabinet as having development potential and that could be included within the Council's House Building Programme.
3. To approve the submission of detailed planning applications, and/or if more appropriate outline planning applications, by the Council's appointed Development Agent for sites that the Cabinet Committee considers are suitable for development and viable, having regard to the development appraisals and financial appraisals for the sites.
4. To invite ward members to attend meetings of the Cabinet Committee when potential development sites in their ward are under consideration, and to provide an opportunity for ward members to provide comments on proposed developments, before development appraisals and financial appraisals are signed-off and approvals to submit planning applications are given.
5. To approve the subsequent development of sites considered suitable for development and viable that receive planning permission, subject to the acceptance of a satisfactory tender for the construction works.
6. To approve, and include within financial appraisals, the use of the following sources of funding for the development of individual sites within the Council's House Building Programme:
 - (a) The agreed Housing Capital Programme Budget for the House Building Programme;
 - (b) Capital receipts made available through the Council's Agreement with the Department of Communities and Local Government allowing the use of receipts from additional Right to Buy (RTB) sales as a result of the Government's increase in the maximum RTB Discount to be spent on House Building;
 - (c) Financial contributions received from developers for the provision of affordable housing within the District, in lieu of on-site affordable housing provision, in compliance with Section 106 Planning Agreements; and
 - (d) Grant funding received from the Homes and Communities Agency.
7. To approve the submission of the Council's Pre-Qualification Questionnaire to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), applying for Investment Partner status with the HCA.
8. To consider and accept tenders received for the construction works on sites included within the Council House Building Programme.

9. To determine whether, in addition to the potential development sites already considered by the Cabinet, sites with development potential within the following categories should be added to either the House Building Programme's Primary List or Reserve List and detailed development appraisals and financial appraisals undertaken by the Council's Development Agent:
 - (a) Other specific garage sites comprising 6 or less garages;
 - (b) Specific garage sites where garage vacancies arise with no waiting list of applicants; and
 - (c) Specific areas of Council-owned land on housing sites considered to be surplus to requirements.

10. To determine whether sites on the Reserve List of potential development sites previously agreed by the Cabinet should be promoted to the Primary List, and detailed development appraisals and financial appraisals undertaken by the Council's Development Agent, due to:
 - (a) There being insufficient numbers of properties that can be viably developed from the Primary List of potential development sites to deliver a House Building Programme of 120 new homes over a six-year period; and/or
 - (b) The Cabinet subsequently deciding to increase the size of the House Building Programme and there being insufficient numbers of properties that can be viably developed to deliver a larger Programme.

11. To monitor and report to the Cabinet on an annual basis:
 - (a) Progress with the Council House Building Programme; and
 - (b) Expenditure on the Housing Capital Programme Budget for the Council House Building Programme, ensuring the use (within the required deadlines) of the capital receipts made available through the Council's Agreement with the Department of Communities and Local Government allowing the use of receipts from additional Right to Buy (RTB) sales as a result of the Government's increase in the maximum RTB Discount to be spent on house building.

12. To approve applications to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) (or any successor body) to obtain HCA Investment Partner Status (or similar), in order to enable the Council to seek funding from the HCA, and to approve funding bids to the HCA for developments within the Council House Building Programme (*added by Leader Decision – 21.3.14*).

13. To consider and approve the future use of any potential development site previously identified by either the Cabinet or Cabinet Committee as having possible development potential for Council House Building where it either does not gain planning consent, is deemed inappropriate to develop undevelopable by the Cabinet Committee for whatever other reason or where the development appraisal identifies that the site is economically undevelopable. (*Added by Leader Decision – 16.5.14*)

14. To decide, where necessary, the names of developments undertaken through the Council House Building Programme, following consultation with the Parish or Town Councils. (*Added by Leader Decision – 16.5.14*)

Membership

Housing Portfolio Holder (Chairman)
Finance and Technology Portfolio Holder
Planning Portfolio Holder
Environment Portfolio Holder
Safer, Greener and Highways Portfolio Holder

Frequency of Meetings

As and when required, as determined by the Housing Portfolio Holder.

Appendix D – Spread of units Phases 1, 2, 3 and 4



Appendix E - Site and Phase Update

Phase	Site	Description	Contract Type	1-bed flat	1-bed bungalow	2-bed flats	2-bed bungalow	2-bed houses	3-bed houses	Total Approved	Stage in Dev process	Contractor	Planning	SOS	PC	Construction Period (weeks)
	Marden Close & Faversham Hall	Refurbishment	D&B	10						10	Completed	P A Finlay	Full Permission granted	15/09/2014	04/12/2015	50
Phase 1										0						
	Harveyfields	New-build	D&B	3	6					9	On site	Broadway Construction Ltd	Full Permission granted	27/10/2014	TBC	52
	Red Cross	New-build	D&B					2	4	6	On site	Broadway Construction Ltd	Full Permission granted	27/10/2014	TBC	52
	Roundhills site 4	New-build	D&B						2	2	On site	Broadway Construction Ltd	Full Permission granted	27/10/2014	TBC	52
	Roundhills site 7	New-build	D&B					6		6	On site	Broadway Construction Ltd	Full Permission granted	27/10/2014	TBC	52
Phase 2																
	Burton Road	New-build	D&B	13		21		2	15	51	On site	Mulalley & Co Ltd	Full Permission granted	07/03/2016	27/02/2018	105
Phase 3										0						
	Springfield, Epping	New-build	D&B		2			2		8	In Procurement	TBC	Full Permission granted	Sep-16	Apr-18	TBC
	Centre Avenue, Epping	New-build	D&B						4	4	In Procurement	TBC	Full Permission granted	Sep-16	Apr-18	TBC
	Stewards Green Road, Epping	New-build	Traditional						4	4	In Procurement	TBC	Full Permission granted	Sep-16	Apr-18	TBC
	Parklands (Site A), Coopersale	New-build	D&B	2		2				4	In Procurement	TBC	Full Permission granted	Sep-16	Apr-18	TBC
	Queens Road, North Weald	New-build	D&B					2	10	12	In Procurement	TBC	Full Permission granted	Sep-16	Apr-18	TBC
	Bluemans End, North Weald	New-build	D&B					4		4	In Procurement	TBC	Full Permission granted	Sep-16	Apr-18	TBC
	Centre Drive, Epping	New-build	Traditional						1	1	In Procurement	TBC	Full Permission granted	Sep-16	Apr-18	TBC
	London Road, Stappleford Abbots	New-build	Traditional						1	1	In Procurement	TBC	Full Permission granted	Sep-16	Apr-18	TBC
Phase 4																
	Kirby Close, Loughton	New-build	TBC					2	2	4	Design Stage	TBC	Full Permission granted			
	Lower Alderton Hall Lane, Loughton	New-build	TBC					2		2	Design Stage	TBC	Full Permission granted			
	Bushfields, Loughton	New-build	TBC					2		2	Design Stage	TBC	Full Permission granted			
	Chequers Road (Site B), Loughton	New-build	TBC					5		5	Design Stage	TBC	Full Permission granted			
	Chequers Road (Site A), Loughton	New-build	TBC						3	3	Design Stage	TBC	Full Permission granted			
	Ladyfields, Loughton	New-build						6		6			Refused - Revised application submitted			
	Whitehills, Loughton	New-build					2			2			Refused - Revised application submitted			
	Etheridge Road, Loughton	New-build	TBC				1		2	3	Design Stage	TBC	Full Permission granted			
	Pyrles Lane (Site A), Loughton	New-build						2		2			Refused. To go to CHBCC			
	Pyrles Lane (Site B), Loughton	New-build							3	3			Refused. To go to CHBCC			
	Chester Road, Loughton	New-build	TBC					3		3	Design Stage	TBC	Full Permission granted			
	Thatchers Close, Loughton	New-build	TBC					1		1	Design Stage	TBC	Full Permission granted			
	Hillyfields, Loughton	New-build						2		2			Withdrawn - Site to be auctioned			
Phase 5																
	Bourne House, Buckhurst Hill	New-build	TBC						2	2			Refused - Referred to DDMC			
	Hornbeam Close (Site A), Buckhurst Hill	New-build	TBC					2		2			Refused - Referred to DDMC			
	Hornbeam Close (Site B), Buckhurst Hill	New-build	TBC						3	3			Refused - Referred to DDMC			
	Hornbeam House, Buckhurst Hill	New-build	TBC					2		2			Refused - Referred to DDMC			
	Pentlow Way, Buckhurst Hill	New-build	TBC	5		2				7			Withdrawn - Refer to CHBCC			
	Millfield, Ongar	New-build	TBC		2					2	Design Stage	TBC	Full Permission granted			
	Queensway, Ongar	New-build	TBC		4					4	Design Stage	TBC	Full Permission granted			
	St Peters Avenue, Ongar	New-build	TBC						8	8			On Hold - Pending road widening			
Phase 6																
	Beechfield Walk, Waltham Abbey	New-build	TBC					1	4	5			Feasibility Study Agreed by CHBCC			
	Broomfield Court, Waltham Abbey	New-build	TBC				1			1			Feasibility Study Agreed by CHBCC			
	Colvers, Morton	New-build	TBC						2	2			Feasibility Study Agreed by CHBCC			
	Denny Avenue, Waltham Abbey	New-build	TBC						3	3			Feasibility Study Agreed by CHBCC			
	Gant Court, Waltham Abbey	New-build	TBC					3		3			Feasibility Study Agreed by CHBCC			
	Graylands, Theydon Bois	New-build	TBC		1					1			Withdrawn - Refer to CHBCC			
	Mallion Court, Waltham Abbey	New-build	TBC					4		4			Feasibility Study Agreed by CHBCC			
	Mason Way, Waltham Abbey	New-build	TBC		1					1			Feasibility Study Agreed by CHBCC			
	Palmer's Grove, Nazeing	New-build	TBC						4	4			Planning Application Submitted			
	Parkfields (Site A), Roydon	New-build	TBC						2	2			Planning Application Submitted			
	Pick Hill, Upshire	New-build	TBC						2	2			Feasibility Study Agreed by CHBCC			
	Pound Close, Nazeing	New-build	TBC					3	2	5			Planning Application Submitted			
	St Thomas's Court, Waltham Abbey	New-build	TBC						4	4			Feasibility Study Agreed by CHBCC			
	Shingle Court, Waltham Abbey	New-build	TBC				1			1			Feasibility Study Agreed by CHBCC			
	Stonyshots, Waltham Abbey	New-build	TBC					1		1			Feasibility Study Agreed by CHBCC			
	Woolard Street, Waltham Abbey	New-build	TBC					5		5			Feasibility Study Agreed by CHBCC			
	Wrangley Court, Waltham Abbey	New-build	TBC						1	1			Feasibility Study Agreed by CHBCC			
			TOTALS	33	11	31	5	64	87	231						

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-014-2015/16

Date of meeting: 21 July 2016



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Leisure and Community Services

Subject: Hillhouse Master Plan and Development Scheme - Waltham Abbey

Responsible Officers: Alan Hall (01993 564004).

Derek Macnab (01992 564050).

Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations:

(1) That the Hillhouse Master Plan, produced by Essex Housing and JTP Consultants on behalf of the Council, Essex County Council (ECC) and NHS England (available as a Background Paper to this report, summarised in the Concept Illustrative Master Plan in the attached Appendix) be endorsed;

(2) That approval be given to the Council being a party to the submission of an Outline Planning Application by Essex Housing, on behalf of the Council, ECC and NHS England, and to the Council's expenditure for its share of the costs of preparing the Outline Planning Application;

(3) That approval be given to the Council contributing an appropriate amount, through the Council's new leisure management contractor, towards the overall financial contribution required from the three key partners towards the provision of alternative sports/recreation facilities elsewhere in Waltham Abbey, in order to compensate for the loss of informal recreation space at Hillhouse and to enable the proposed development to proceed; and

(4) That the Leisure Management Portfolio Holder Advisory Group be authorised to include a provision, and to determine an appropriate specified amount, within the Invitation to Tender for the Council's Leisure Management Contract, requiring the new leisure management contractor to provide the Council's share of the required financial contribution, referred to in Recommendation (3) above.

Executive Summary

The Council's adopted Leisure and Cultural Strategy 2015-2025 identified a need for the existing Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool to be replaced by a new facility in Waltham Abbey, as well as an opportunity to provide a "community hub" at Hillhouse, Waltham Abbey - with the aim of co-locating health and wellbeing services to improve the quality of life of residents in this area of health inequality. Accordingly, the Council's Key Action Plan for its Corporate Plan includes plans to investigate the feasibility of developing a new leisure/community hub at Hillhouse and to take forward the provision of a replacement swimming pool in Waltham Abbey.

In addition, other statutory partners have identified the needs for: a replacement community space/facility in the locality; the provision of around 240 independent living homes; and a new health centre to replace the existing Doctors Surgery adjacent to the site.

The proposed site comprises land in the ownership of EFDC and ECC, who have worked together with NHS England to develop a Master Plan for the area which, following consultation with local people and key stakeholders, would provide the identified community facilities, whilst retaining around half of the existing playing fields as informal recreation space, and help facilitate alternative sports/recreation to be provided elsewhere in Waltham Abbey.

An Outline Planning Application now needs to be submitted by the three key partners to seek approval to the general principle of development and to the general location and size of the three main components, in order to enable the three partners to progress their individual elements.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

The Council has identified a need to replace its existing swimming pool at Roundhills, Waltham Abbey with a new facility elsewhere in Waltham Abbey. Other statutory partners have also identified the needs for an independent living scheme for older people in the District and a new health centre to replace the existing doctors surgery in Maynard Court.

The site at Hillhouse is in a relatively central, well-populated, part of Waltham Abbey; is no longer used for formal sports activities; the community centre has been closed; and the land is in the ownership of the Council and ECC – all of which presents a good opportunity to provide an integral leisure and community hub for Waltham Abbey.

Cabinet approval is required for submission of an Outline Planning Application by Essex Housing, on behalf of the three key partners.

Other Options for Action:

The main options appear to be:

(a) Not to endorse the Master Plan - but this would result in an Outline Planning Application not being submitted in time for the procurement of the new, long-term, Leisure Management Contract, which would not only significantly increase the financial risks (and therefore costs) of the Leisure Management Contract (in terms of the cost of providing a new swimming pool and the amount of subsidy that the Council would have to continue to provide for the existing swimming pool), it would also lose the opportunity for three much-needed community facilities being provided in a planned and co-ordinated way.

(b) Not to agree to the Council being a party to the Outline Planning Application – however, not only would this result in no Outline Planning Application being made, it would also lead to an un-planned and un-coordinated approach to the development of the Hillhouse area. This, in turn, would mean that the Council would either have to:

- Submit its own Outline Planning Application for the swimming pool only, for which the cost to the Council would be greater than its share of a jointly-funded Outline Planning Application; or
- Wait until the new leisure management contractor is in a position to submit a Detailed Planning Application, which would introduce a significant risk to the Council in terms of the

increased costs for the Leisure Management Contract, due to the uncertainty over the receipt of planning permission and potential abortive costs for the Detailed Planning Application.

(c) Not contributing an appropriate amount towards the provision of alternative sports/recreation facilities elsewhere in Waltham Abbey – however, this would undoubtedly result in an objection to the planning application by Sport England. Since it is a statutory consultee, if planning permission was granted by the Council, such an objection would trigger the application being referred to the National Planning Casework Unit, which could result in the application being called in for determination by the Secretary of State, on the recommendation of a planning inspector. This would not only delay the development and remove the required certainty for the Leisure Management Contract, it could also result in any Outline Planning Permission being overturned and refused by the Secretary of State.

(d) Not authorising the Leisure Management Portfolio Holder Advisory Group to include provision within the Invitation to Tender for the Council's Leisure Management Contract for the Council's share of the required financial contribution – however, if provision is not made for the new leisure management contractor to make the payment, funded through its tender submission, the Council would still need to meet the cost and make appropriate budgetary provision for the payment.

Report:

Introduction

1. In 2014, the Council adopted its Leisure and Cultural Strategy 2015-2025. The purpose of the Strategy is to *“provide a policy focus for EFDC in its role in supporting the future provision of leisure and cultural opportunities, to meet the needs of residents and visitors to the District”*. The Strategy's stated overarching aim is *“to increase the number and frequency of people participating in leisure, cultural and community activities, by ensuring that local provision is accessible and of the highest affordable quality.”*

2. The Strategy identified that Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool in Roundhills has effectively reached the end of its viable life and that it would not make economic sense to spend the required £1million+ investment to refurbish a building that is almost 50 years old, especially given inherent problems with its layout. Moreover, the Council's costs and subsidy to the current leisure management contractor to operate the existing swimming pool is around £550,000 per annum. The Strategy therefore recommended that the swimming pool be deemed to have reached the end of its viable life and be replaced by a new facility in Waltham Abbey.

3. The Strategy also identified an opportunity to provide a “community hub” in the Hillhouse area of Waltham Abbey and recommended that the potential for such a community hub at this location be positively explored, with the aim of co-locating health and wellbeing services to improve the quality of life of residents in this area of health inequality.

4. Accordingly, the Council's agreed Corporate Plan Action Plan for 2016/17 includes the following two actions to meet the Council's Corporate Plan Objective (ii)(c), which is:

“To deliver the Council's new Leisure and Cultural Strategy, in order to maximise participation and value for money in the provision of leisure and cultural services to local residents and visitors:

- *Work in partnership with Waltham Abbey Town Council to investigate the feasibility of developing a new leisure/community hub at Hillhouse, Waltham Abbey.*

- *As part of the competitive dialogue procurement process for the new Leisure Management Contract, take forward the provision of a replacement swimming pool in Waltham Abbey.”*

5. In order to progress these aims, provision was included within the Council’s Local Plan Budget to fund the Council’s share of the costs to formulate a Master Plan for the Hillhouse area, in partnership with Essex County Council (ECC) and NHS England.

The Hillhouse Master Plan

6. The proposed development site at Hillhouse is in a relatively central, well-populated, part of Waltham Abbey; is no longer used for formal sports activities; the community centre has been closed; and the land is in the ownership of the Council and Essex County Council – all of which presents a good opportunity to provide an integral leisure and community hub for Waltham Abbey.

7. The site currently comprises the following three areas, to the west and north-west of the Hillhouse shopping parade (which does not comprise part of the proposed development area):

- Playing fields to the north (owned by ECC) - 1.72ha;
- Playing fields to the south (owned by EFDC) - 1.44ha; and
- The Hillhouse Community Centre and a circular car park (both owned by EFDC, with Waltham Abbey TC being the long leaseholders of the Community Centre) to the south-east of the playing fields.

8. In addition to the Council’s identified need to re-provide the existing Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool;

- Waltham Abbey Town Council has closed the Hillhouse Community Centre, that it leases from EFDC, because it is in a poor and unlettable condition – which it does not intend to re-open and for which it wants to surrender its lease with EFDC;
- ECC has identified a shortfall/need for around 240 independent living homes, of different tenures, within the Epping Forest District; and
- NHS England has identified that the existing Maynard Court Doctors Surgery (that currently occupies two EFDC ground floor flats adjacent to the development area) has outgrown its current premises and will soon no longer be fit for purpose.

9. Since EFDC and ECC own the land forming the development area, and in view of the identified needs set out above, EFDC, ECC and NHS England has worked together to develop a Master Plan for the area comprising:

- A new leisure centre and swimming pool to replace the existing Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool at Roundhills - with a 25m pool with 6 lanes, plus a learner pool, a studio for movement/dance activities, and a multi-use community space;
- An Independent Living (sometimes referred to as Extra Care) Scheme - providing 1 and 2 bedroom self-contained flats for people over 55 years of age with identified care and support needs, and access to services to meet residents’ individual care needs, as well as having a range of communal social spaces;

- A new health centre providing new, modern accommodation, to replace the existing Maynard Court Doctors Surgery - to enable a wider range of health services to be provided for the benefit of the local community and to provide an opportunity for the practice to increase GP and nurse training on site;
- The retention of around half of the existing playing fields as informal recreation space; and
- The provision of an appropriate level of financial contribution towards alternative sports/recreation provision to be provided elsewhere in Waltham Abbey, to compensate for the loss of informal recreation space at Hillhouse.

10. Since the development comprises three separate partners, it was agreed that Essex Housing would act as development agent for the project, appointing and co-ordinating the work of the various consultants to formulate a Master Plan for the area. Essex Housing is part of ECC, formed through the Essex Public Land Project, which has been sponsored and led by EFDC's Chief Executive since its inception.

11. Two of the key requirements for the development of the Master Plan were that:

- it must be designed to enable each partner to develop out their scheme separately, if one or more of the other components of the scheme do not come to fruition, and to take account of different development timescales; and
- if possible, in order to aid the effective and smooth delivery of the key components, EFDC's new swimming pool should be located on EFDC's own land and ECC's new Independent Living Scheme should be located on ECC's own land.

12. Throughout the process, Waltham Abbey Town Council has been consulted and kept informed of progress with the proposals and the development of the Master Plan.

13. Following a competitive tendering exercise, JTP Consultants were appointed as the main consultants to produce the Master Plan, with other consultants appointed to undertake the required topographical, transport/highways, arboricultural, geo-technical and ecological surveys, as well as to produce the required open space assessment/statement and flood risk report.

14. An important part of the formulation of the Master Plan was to consult, and to seek the views of, the local community on the proposals. This comprised three main approaches:

- In February 2016, JTP organised and facilitated a Stakeholder Workshop, which was attended by representatives from the three key partners, and included EFDC members, Waltham Abbey Town Council, Ninefields Residents Panel, Roundhills Residents Association and GPs from Maynard Court Surgery;
- JTP also met separately with: Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool staff; Epping Forest Swimming Club Committee; other Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool users; Hillhouse Primary School Council; shopkeepers from the Hillhouse shops; and shoppers using the shopping parade.
- Over the weekend of 18/19 March 2016, following leaflets being distributed to local residents, JTP held a Community Planning Weekend comprising an exhibition on the basic proposals and participatory workshops - where local people were invited to explain any concerns and aspirations that they had about the proposals, and to put

forward suggestions about how the three main components could best be provided on the site, together with any other proposals. Around 140 people attended the exhibition and community planning workshops.

15. JTP then collated all the information obtained from the key partners, key stakeholders, Community Planning Weekend and consultants' reports to formulate the Master Plan, which was jointly funded by the three key partners and published in early July 2016.

16. A copy of the Master Plan is available on the Council's website, and is available as a Background Paper to this report. A copy of the Concept Illustrative Master Plan is attached as an Appendix, which summarises the outcome of the masterplanning process and demonstrates how the proposed facilities and associated car parking can be accommodated on the site, whilst respecting the views from existing homes and retaining substantial open space for recreation. It positions:

- The proposed new swimming pool / leisure centre on EFDC's land to the south of the site, with its entrance facing the existing shopping parade, so that businesses in the parade can benefit from increased exposure to footfall and passing trade;
- The new health centre on ECC's land to the north of the site; and
- The independent living scheme also on ECC's land to the north of the site, adjacent to the new health centre.

17. The Master Plan also illustrates some ideas for the retained open space, such as the enhancement of the area alongside the stream and the potential for the provision of a play area, with new footpaths included to improve pedestrian access to such facilities and to create a circular route or trim trail, with stations for outdoor gym equipment along the way. Shallow attenuation basins would form an integral part of the informal landscaped areas to both the north and south of the scheme.

18. The provision of the new health centre would also result in the Council's two ground floor flats, currently accommodating the Doctors Surgery, being made available to applicants registered on the Council's Housing Register in need of affordable rented housing.

Procurement of EFDC's new Swimming Pool / Leisure Centre

19. The procurement of the Council's new Leisure Management Contract is being undertaken through a formal competitive dialogue process, overseen by the Council's Leisure Management Portfolio Holder Advisory Group. As part of the Leisure Management Contract, the new leisure management contractor will be asked to construct the new swimming pool and associated facilities. As part of the competitive dialogue, tenderers have already been asked to provide indicative design proposals for consideration.

20. One of EFDC's key and urgent drivers for the Master Plan is to "de-risk" the cost of the Council's Leisure Management Contract, by giving some certainty to the leisure management contractors who will be tendering for the contract over the location and acceptance, in town planning terms, of the proposed new swimming pool, before they submit their tenders.

Outline Planning Submission

21. The next stage in the process is for the three key partners to submit an Outline Planning Application for the development of the area, in general accordance with the Master

Plan, which Essex Housing is co-ordinating and JTP are drafting.

22. The purpose of the Outline Planning Application is to seek approval to the general principle of development and the general location and size of the three key components, to enable the three key partners to progress their individual elements. There are some risks to successfully receiving planning permission, and the delivery of the development itself, which are set out in the Risk Management section at the end of this report.

23. In view of the need to obtain certainty (in order to de-risk the costs to EFDC's Leisure Management Contract, as outlined above), work had to commence and consultants had to be commissioned in June 2016, to ensure that the submission deadline of August 2016 is met. This is to enable the District Development Management Committee to be able to determine the planning application in November 2016, in advance of the final tender submissions for the Leisure Management Contract.

24. As with the Masterplanning exercise, the total costs of preparing and submitting the Outline Planning Application (estimated at £118,000) are again able to be shared between the three key partners, with EFDC's share being around £57,000. Part of the Council's cost will be offset by the £10,700 planning application fee that it will receive to process and determine the planning application. Sharing the costs of undertaking the required surveys reports with the other partners at the Outline Planning Permission stage also reduces the costs that would otherwise have to be met solely by the Council, for the same work, at the Detailed Planning Application stage. The earlier report on the agenda for this Cabinet on the current position with the Local Plan includes the required budget provision to meet the Council's costs for the Outline Planning Application.

25. Once Outline Planning Permission has been received, the three key partners will then be responsible for obtaining Detailed Planning Permission and to procure, fund and deliver their own facility on the site.

Resource Implications:

EFDC's share of the estimated costs of preparing/submitting the outline planning application - £57,000 (part of which is offset by the £10,700 planning application fee that EFDC will receive).

EFDC's potential share of the financial contribution towards alternative sports/recreation in Waltham Abbey – still to be determined, but likely to be around £90,000.

The provision of the new swimming pool is expected to significantly reduce, or eliminate, the need for the Council to pay the current subsidy of around £550,000 per annum to its new leisure management contractor over the period of the Leisure Management Contract - which, in the long term, is expected to cover the capital costs of constructing the new swimming pool.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The Council's adopted Leisure and Cultural Strategy 2015-2025 set out the strategic direction for the proposals and the Council's involvement, which has been confirmed within the Council's Corporate Key Action 2016/17.

An Officer Project Team, led by the Council's Director of Communities, with representation from each of the three key partners (including the Council's Chief Executive, Director of Neighbourhoods and Assistant Director - Development Management and Conservation) has

been progressing the detailed arrangements for the Master Plan and the Outline Planning Application.

The Council’s Leisure Management Portfolio Holder Advisory Group has been responsible for overseeing the procurement of the Council’s new Leisure Management Contract, through a formal competitive dialogue process.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

At the Detailed Planning Application, the detailed design of the various facilities will have regard to the need to “design out” and reduce the potential for crime. The independent living scheme will also provide a safe and secure living environment for older people with care and support needs.

Although the development will result in the loss of some informal recreational space, provision is being made within the proposals to compensate this loss, through the provision of alternative sports/recreation facilities elsewhere in Waltham Abbey.

The new facilities being provided will benefit from increased energy efficiency and improved environmental measures.

Consultation Undertaken

As set out in Paragraph 14 above.

Background Papers:

Hillhouse Master Plan – July 2016

Risk Management:

The following key risks to the development scheme, and to the Council in particular, have been identified, with the approaches taken to mitigating the risks listed below:

Risk	Mitigation
Increase in the cost of preparing and submitting the Outline Planning Application	Fixed prices have been obtained from the various consultants, so only additional unforeseen costs should incur additional expenditure.
An objection to the outline planning application being made by the Environment Agency, resulting in the refusal of planning permission, due to most of EFDC’s land being within Flood Risk Area 2	Flood assessment consultants were commissioned as part of the Master Plan process, to identify and quantify the risks, undertake the sequential test required by the NPPF and to identify measures to mitigate the risk of flooding.
When built, the new swimming pool experiences	The consultant’s flood risk assessment has identified and assessed the need to increase the floor level of the

fluvial or surface water flooding due to its proximity to Cobbins Brook	swimming pool by a specified height, to minimise the risk of flooding.
Outline or Detailed Planning Permission is not granted	This is the reason for formulating a Master Plan, which has been developed following consultation with local people and key stakeholders, and for submitting an Outline Planning Application.
Cabinet does not agree to the Council being a party to the Outline Planning Application	A stop could be put on the work being undertaken by the consultants to prepare the Outline Planning Application, the day after the Cabinet meeting. However, it would result in the Council and other partners still incurring most of the costs anyway, as abortive costs. Moreover, the other partners may look to the Council to re-imburse them for their abortive costs, as a result of the Council's decision.
If Outline Planning Permission is granted, the decision is referred to the National Planning Casework Unit due to an objection from a statutory consultee, which potentially could result in the application being called in for determination by a planning inspector or the Secretary of State.	<p>The Master Plan process included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A flood risk assessment to identify and quantify the flooding risks, undertake the sequential test required by the NPPF and identify measures to mitigate the risk of flooding, which should reduce the risk of objections from the Environment Agency; • A highways/transport assessment to ensure that the proposals meet with highways requirements; and • The identification of the need to contribute an appropriate amount towards the provision of alternative sports/recreation facilities elsewhere in Waltham Abbey, in order to compensate for the loss of informal recreation space.
Risks associated with the procurement and construction of the new swimming pool.	These are being identified, assessed, managed and mitigated through the work of the Leisure Management Portfolio Holder Advisory Group

Due Regard Record

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S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

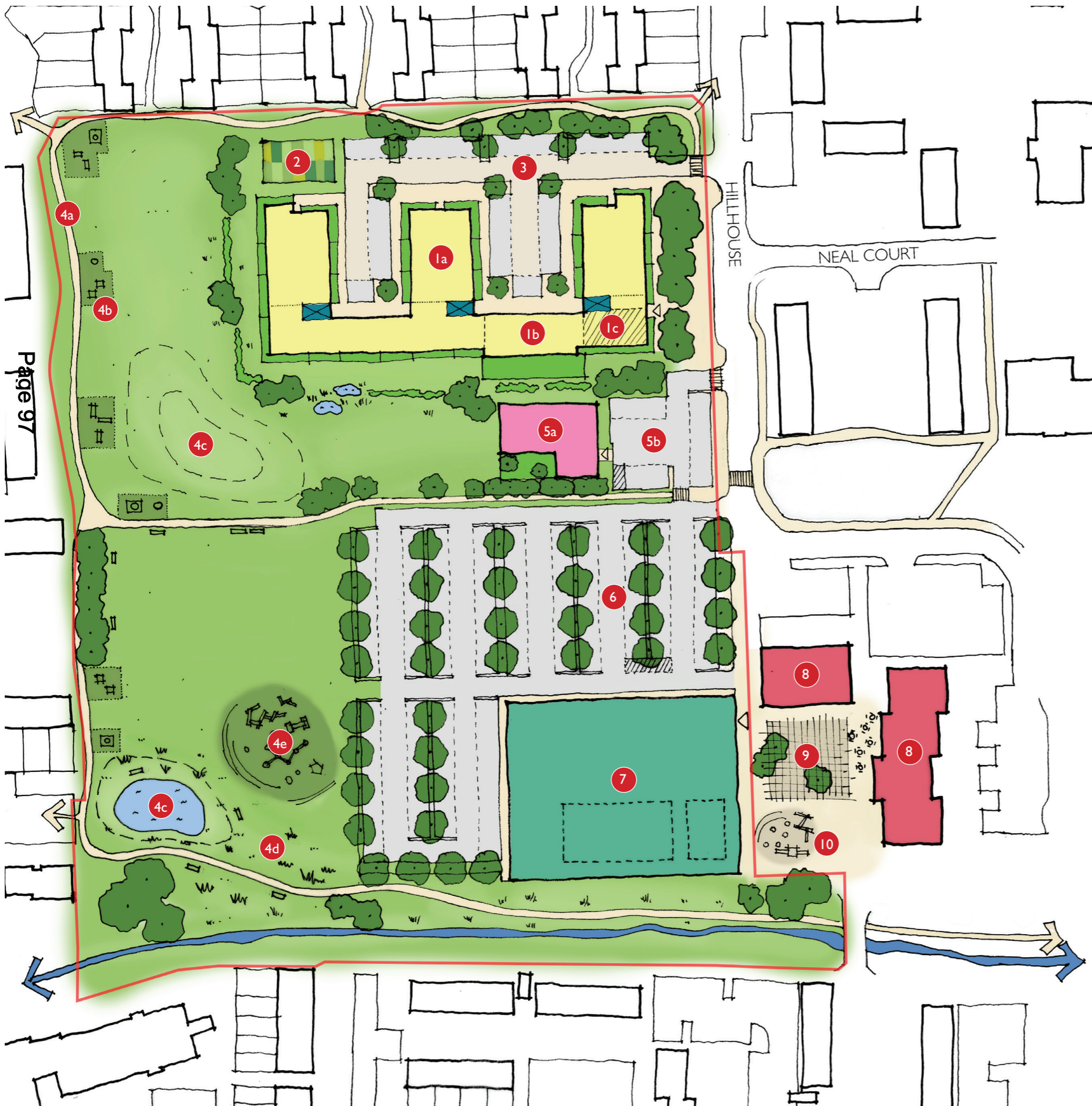
The Community Planning Weekend was used by the Council to pilot an equality and diversity exercise to capture data on the protected characteristics of those local people taking part, which has assisted in understanding the characteristics of those participating in the exercise.

The rationale for ECC pursuing the proposed independent living scheme for older people with care and support needs is based on a formal evaluation of the needs and demands of those older people with the protected characteristic of having disabilities who also, due to their age and circumstances, have difficulty in accessing such specialist accommodation themselves. ECC's proposed approach to offer the scheme with multi-tenures (i.e. affordable rented, market and shared ownership housing) increases the potential supply to meet the varying needs of this client group.

The proposed new health centre will also provide improved physical access to better health facilities, that will benefit a range of people with different protected characteristics, including: those with disabilities; patients with a range of ages (from young children to older people); pregnant women and, potentially, gender re-assignment.

An important part of the Outline Planning Application will be the Design and Access Statement, which will articulate, in general terms, how the various proposed facilities will be physically accessed - which will have particular benefit and regard to those with disabilities (including older people) and pregnant women who may be less mobile due to their condition.

It should be noted that detailed equality impact assessments will be undertaken by the three key partners in due course, through the development of their provision for the individual facilities that they will be developing themselves, should Outline Planning Permission be granted.



Page 97

KEY

- Site boundary
- 1a Independent living (60 units)
- 1b Resident's lounge
- 1c Potential café
- 2 Raised bed gardens
- 3 Independent living parking (36 spaces + 10 disabled)
- 4a Footpath
- 4b Trim trail / outdoor gym
- 4c Attenuation basin
- 4d Natural landscape
- 4e Play area
- 5a Health centre
- 5b Health centre parking (12 spaces + 3 disabled)
- 6 Public parking (180 spaces)
- 7 Leisure Centre / Swimming Pool
- 8 Existing retail
- 9 Improved community forecourt
- 10 New play area

Hillhouse, Ninefields
 Concept Masterplan
 For ECC, EFDC & NHS



Drawing No. 01131_SK_002
 Scale @ A3 1:1000 Rev E



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Report to Cabinet

Report reference: C-008-2016/17

Date of meeting: 21 July 2016



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Planning Policy

Subject: Neighbourhood Plan Examination Outcome - Moreton,
Bobbingworth and the Lavers

Responsible Officer: Kassandra Polyzoides (01992 564119).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) To note the Examiner's recommendation that the Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers Neighbourhood Development Plan does not meet the basic conditions;
- (2) To agree that the plan proposal should be refused and should not proceed to referendum;
- (3) To note that this decision will be publicised as soon as possible; and
- (4) To note that the Council will assist the Parish in the process of producing a revised proposal should it seek to do so.

Executive Summary:

The Examiner of the Moreton Bobbingworth and the Lavers Neighbourhood Plan has concluded that the plan does not meet the basic conditions required of a Neighbourhood Plan and therefore cannot recommend that the plan should proceed to referendum. Having considered each of the Examiner's recommendations and reasons for them, Officers agree with the Examiners conclusions. Whilst the Council could make modifications to the plan to put it forward for referendum these would be critical to the plan purpose and are therefore considered to be the purview of the Parish Council. Therefore, the Council should now refuse the plan proposal. It should be noted that the Council will continue to advise and assist the Parish Council of Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers in producing a revised plan should it seek to do so.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To comply with relevant regulations and in so doing make clear the Council's position. The Council considers that the plan does not meet the basic conditions. The magnitude of change to a key policy in the plan to enable it to meet the basic conditions is such that the Council considers the Parish Council should reconsider and re-consult on the proposals.

Other Options for Action:

Under the regulations the Council is able to make changes to the plan proposal, consult on these and put it forward for referendum or send it back for examination. It could therefore,

with the Parish's agreement, strike out the policies that are of concern to the Examiner and make the additional changes. However, given that the Council on the whole agrees with the conclusions of the Examiner and Policy MBL 1.1 is critical to the plan proposals, this is not a recommended course of action; it is considered that a revision of the plan by the Parish Council would be needed followed by all the relevant regulatory stages.

Report:

1. Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers Parish Council submitted the Draft Neighbourhood Plan to Epping Forest District Council on 8 November 2015. Following discussions the plan consultation ran from 12 February to 29 March 2016. The draft plan is published as a background paper to this report.

2. The examination of a neighbourhood plan is very different from that of the District's Local Plan and whilst it involves the examination of some procedural matters it turns on whether the plan meets the basic conditions set out in Paragraph 8 (2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The plan meets the basic conditions if:

(a) having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State it is appropriate to make the plan;

(b) the making of the plan contributes to sustainable development;

(c) the making of the plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area); and

(d) the making of the plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations and human rights requirements.

3. Epping Forest District Council made representations on the plan with respect to proposed policy "MBL1.1 Type, size, scale and design of new-build homes" in that officers did not consider it was in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework, the District Council's Affordable Housing Policy and Planning Policy Guidance. Officers also considered that there was insufficient local evidence underpinning the policy with regard to local affordable housing needs.

4. The Examiner provided his report by email on 18 May 2016. This is published as a background paper to this report. The District Council must now consider each of the Examiner's recommendations and decide what action is to be taken in response to each. It must also come to a formal view about whether the plan meets the basic conditions. If the District Council is not satisfied that the plan meets the basic conditions then it must refuse the plan proposal and publicise its decision. Within the scope of the legislation the Council could propose modifications to make the plan meet the basic conditions.

5. The Examiner found that the plan met the basic conditions in respect of its contribution to sustainable development, and it does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements. He made 21 recommendations - many of these were proposed amendments to the plan for the purposes of aiding the Parish Council should they seek to amend and resubmit the plan.

6. The Examiner found that the plan did not meet the basic conditions in respect of:

"Policies MBL 1.1 Type, size, scale and design of new-build homes" (refer Examiners Recommendation 9) and "MBL 1.3 Redundant Buildings" (refer Examiners Recommendation 13) and did not consider it possible to make modifications to enable

it to meet the basic conditions. The Examiner has therefore recommended that the plan does not proceed to referendum.

7. Officers agree with the conclusions of the Examiner with regard to Policy MBL 1.1 and whilst there is some debate regarding the Examiner's conclusions on Policy MBL 1.3, this is of little consequence given the importance of the conclusions on Policy MBL 1.1.

8. The scale of the changes to the plan required for it to meet the basic conditions are such that the Officers agree that they should be made by the Parish Council and consulted upon further. The Planning Policy Portfolio Holder has met with representatives from the Parish to discuss the outcome of the examination.

9. Officers therefore recommend that the Council does not proceed to referendum on the Plan, refuses to make the proposal for the Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers Neighbourhood Plan and publicises this decision as soon as possible. The Parish Council can choose to take account of the Examiner's recommendations in producing a new draft plan and put this forward for consultation and examination. The Council will support this course of action and advise the Parish should that choice be made.

Resource Implications:

The fact that the Examiner could not recommend the plan goes forward to referendum means that the District Council cannot make a claim for financial support on this last stage of the plan.

Legal and Governance Implications:

Local planning authorities are required to consider the Examiner's recommendations and decide what action is to be taken in response to each. It must also come to a formal view about whether the plan meets the basic conditions. If the District Council is not satisfied that the plan meets the basic conditions then it must refuse the plan proposal and publicise its decision or make amendments and publicise these. Refer Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Schedule 4B Paragraph 12 and 61J and 61L.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

No implications likely.

Consultation Undertaken:

None on the decision - this is a technical aspect of neighbourhood plan making.

Background Papers:

Our Neighbourhood Plan to shape the future of our parish 2015 to 2035 Moreton Bobbingworth and the Lavers Parish Council

Examiner's Report Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers Neighbourhood Plan Robert Bryan BA MRTPI.

A Guide for Councils – Meeting your authority's legal requirements for Neighbourhood Development Plans (March 2015) Planning Advisory Service

Risk Management:

The risk in taking alternative action lies in the inclusion of unsatisfactory policy within the Local Development Plan should an amended plan go through a successful referendum.

Due Regard Record

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The Neighbourhood Plan will affect all who live, work and visit the Neighbourhood Plan Area. As a document it will take into account the needs of the community and make provisions for their area up to 2035.

The Neighbourhood Plan was drafted taking into account the outcomes of public consultation undertaken by the Parish Council. The consultation statement provided by the Parish Council was submitted as part of the examination and no matters around equality impacts were raised by the examiner.

The examiner's report is clear that the draft affordable housing proposed by the MBL Neighbourhood Plan is not in accordance with national policy contained in the NPPF, and as such the report should not proceed to referendum. It could be argued that equality impacts arise from the reduction in potential to deliver affordable housing in the parish. However, an equality impact assessment was completed at national level to assess the likely impacts of this change to introducing a policy which determines that affordable housing cannot be sought on sites that deliver 10 units, and there is no reason to assume this impact assessment does not fully assess the possible impacts.

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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-004-2016/17
Date of meeting: 21 July 2016



Portfolio: Technology and Support Services
Subject: Home Working Policy
Responsible Officer: Paula Maginnis (01992 564536).
Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) That, as requested by the Joint Consultative Committee, the Home Working Policy attached at Appendix A be adopted.

Executive Summary:

Recently, the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) recommended adoption of the Smart Working Framework, the Flexible Working Policy and amendments to Council's Flexi Scheme, which have all been agreed by the Cabinet.

The Home Working Policy, which is out of date, is the outstanding document which requires consideration by the Cabinet.

Over several meetings the JCC considered the Policy and finally in April considered the final outstanding section, Section 7 – Mileage. The Committee voted separately on the individual paragraphs of the Section and the results are set out in paragraph 8 of the report.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The Council is moving towards implementing, home, remote and mobile working options for its employees. The main objectives of the Framework are to establish a more flexible workforce, enhance the service provided to our customers and assist the Council in reviewing its accommodation requirements.

The current Homeworking Policy is out of date and the proposed Policy reflects changes in technology, the Council's thinking and the practicalities of Home Working.

Other Options for Action:

Cabinet could amend the policy further or substitute other processes.

Report:

1. Since June 2015 Management Board and JCC have been considering a number of Policies regarding Home and Flexible Working. In addition, the Leadership Team reviewed the Council's Flexi Scheme in conjunction with employee comments from the 2013 Survey

specifically relating to the Flexi Scheme.

2. Recently, the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) recommended adoption of the Smart Working Framework, the Flexible Working Policy and amendments to Council's Flexi Scheme and all have been agreed by the Cabinet.

3. The current Home Working Policy is over 10 years old and has been updated to give managers more detailed guidance on:

- what should be considered by managers before agreeing home working;
- safety and ICT requirements;
- terms and conditions; and
- manager and employee responsibilities.

4. In addition, the current Policy provides allowances to staff working at home, the new Policy removes these allowances. The Council currently pays an annual, taxable contribution towards the additional costs of heating, lighting and power incurred by staff based at home. This allowance is paid monthly through salary. Currently the allowance is £64.41 for each half day designated to be worked on a weekly basis at home over a year. For example:

An employee is contracted to work at home for 1 day per week;

$£64.41 \times 2$ (1 day = 2 half days) = £128.82

Therefore the employee receives a taxable allowance of £128.82 per annum towards the cost of heating, lighting and power.

An employee is contracted to work at home for 4 days per week;

$£64.41 \times 8$ (4 days = 8 half days) = £515.28

Therefore the employee receives a taxable allowance of £515.28 per annum towards the cost of heating, lighting and power.

5. There are two employees subject to the provisions of the current Policy and are in receipt of this allowance. It is proposed that these employees are formally consulted with and subject to the Council's Pay Protection Policy to move them onto the proposed new Policy.

6. The Council's Pay Protection Policy will provide:

- the first 6 months at 75% of difference;
- the second 6 months at 50% of difference;
- the third 6 months at 25% of difference; and
- at 18 months the new Policy will be implemented.

7. Whilst on Pay Protection the allowance rate will not be increased in line with the NJC pay award for administrative staff.

8. The JCC discussed this Policy a number of times, in particular Section 7 - Mileage. At April's meeting each of the amended paragraphs, 7.1 – 7.4 were voted on separately and the results were as follows:

- Section 7.1 was voted upon and agreed by a majority of the Committee;
- Section 7.2 was voted upon and agreed by a close majority of the Committee;
- Section 7.3 was voted upon and agreed by a majority of the Committee; and

- Section 7.4 was voted upon and agreed by a close majority of the Committee.

9. The Committee wished it to be specifically noted that sections 7.2 and 7.4 were only passed by a small majority of the Committee.

Resource Implications:

There are no resourcing issues regarding the implementation of the policies. No budget has been identified for ICT equipment. This will be subject to the annual ICT Capital Report or in some cases from the Invest to Save fund.

Legal and Governance Implications:

None.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

Not applicable.

Consultation Undertaken:

Consultation has been undertaken with staff, the Joint Consultative Committee and Management Board.

Background Papers:

7 April 2016 - Cabinet Report - Smart Working Framework, Flexible Working Policy and Flexi Scheme.

18 April 2016 – JCC Report – Home Working Policy and minutes.

Risk Management:

If the Council does not have up to date Policies on Smart and Home Working there is a risk that the Transformation Programme could be delayed.

Due Regard Record

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The Smarter Working Framework and associated Policies provides clear guidance to all managers and employees across the authority on the various options open to them regarding alternative working arrangements.

The Policies may assist employees balance their home/work responsibilities which in turn may assist the Council in retaining experienced and valued employees. In addition, by offering flexible working opportunities the Council could be seen as a fair and reasonable employer by potential candidates.

HOME WORKING POLICY

June 2016



CONTENTS	PAGE
1. Jobs considered for homeworking	3
2. Approval Required for Homeworking	4
3. Health & Safety/ICT Requirements	4
4. Change of Circumstances	7
5. Variation of Terms and Conditions	7
6. Pay	8
7. Mileage	8
8. Contribution Towards Costs	8
9. Hours of Work	9
10. Accident Reporting	9
11. Managers' Responsibilities	9
12. Employees' Responsibilities	11
13. Security	11
14. Security of Information/Data Protection	12
15. Insurance, Mortgages and Tenancy Agreements	13
16. Review	13
17. Further Guidance	13

1. Jobs which may be considered for homeworking

- 1.1 Employees will not be forced into accepting home working, as the option at this stage will be considered on a voluntary basis. For the avoidance of doubt this Policy will cover requests made by employees. This will be kept under review by the Council.
- 1.2 Homeworking can be requested/considered for 1 to 5 days per week. The request can be for ad hoc arrangements, set days or flexible days.
- 1.2 Any home working request will be made and considered through the Flexible Working Policy.
- 1.3 After deciding whether a role is suitable to be considered for home working by the Director/Assistant Director, the manager will consider the employee's Flexible Working/Retirement request and carry out an assessment of whether the employee's home environment is conducive to home working.
- 1.4 It is also important that consideration is given to how the home worker will be affected by the arrangement. In order to assess suitability for the role it may be useful to consider the following:
 - The suitability of an available internet connection (if a suitable, robust and fast fixed internet connection is not available it will not be possible to work from home).
 - Ability to ensure own health and safety in the home environment;
 - Ability to create an appropriate separation between work and home life (and knowing when to stop working);
 - Ability to arrange family commitments to provide a suitable working environment, without disruption (when work is being carried out in the employee's own home it will not be appropriate to combine home working with care of dependents during working hours).
- 1.5 In addition the manager must consider the following practicalities;
 - Ability to resolve problems and concerns at a distance with the line manager (by telephone/email);
 - Ability to communicate effectively with colleagues, and to function as part of a team, while operating remotely;
 - Ability to be self-motivated and to work to agreed deadlines without close supervision and in relative isolation from colleagues;
 - Ability to manage time and organise work effectively and with self-discipline;
 - Flexibility in work management and approach;
 - IT skills and self-sufficiency;
 - Potential for any Data Protection issues.
- 1.6 In addition to the above where it is a manager home working, consideration will be given to the arrangements to be put in place for effectively managing their employees, who may themselves be working from home/another location etc.

2. Approval required for homeworking

- 2.1 Directors in conjunction with Assistant Directors will be responsible for considering and agreeing which, if any, posts within their Directorate/Service Areas are suitable for homeworking. The Director/Assistant Director's permission will be dependent upon a satisfactory risk assessment and consideration of any associated costs which will be carried out by the employee and manager.
- 2.2 The employee must attend the Council's offices as required for contact with colleagues, management meetings, and any training or development courses required.
- 2.3 The Council reserves the right to withdraw home working from an employee, including circumstances where the needs of the service have changed and any concerns relating to the employee's capability/performance/conduct. In cases of changes to service need, staffing requirements etc., notice will be given, in line with the requirements of the contract of employment. In capability/ performance/conduct cases this will not always be necessary.
- 2.4 Where the employee wishes to cease home working, a written request, stating their reasons must be made to their manager. If employees wish to return to office based working there is no automatic right of return, however managers will consider each case on its own merits.

3. Health and Safety/ICT Requirements

3.1 Working at home

- 3.1.1 In every homeworking situation, health and safety arrangements must be in place to ensure that there is effective communication, planning and co-ordination of safety.
- 3.1.2 The Council has a statutory duty to apply the same health and safety standards to people working at home as for staff working in Council offices. Where an employee works for more than half their contracted hours a week at home, either on an ad-hoc or fixed pattern basis, will require a designated and safe area to work in.
- 3.1.3 There are some minimum standards in place for home working. Any employee working at home for any period of time will be required to conduct a VDU assessment. Any issues identified by the assessment will need to be addressed by the manager and/or other authorised person and arrangements may be made with the employee to visit their home to ensure the assessment is correct and any agreed action has been completed. Also the manager and employee will agree the suitability and viability of the home for undisturbed work
- 3.1.4 Employees who require special adaptations at their workstation in the office will be provided with the same special adaptations at home.
- 3.1.5 ICT will specify the minimum technical requirements and keep them under review. The IT hardware provided by the Council will operate the appropriate

configuration for home working. For the avoidance of doubt ICT will always provide the most cost effective solution, which for users where there is not requirement for PC based mobile working will mean the provision of a thin client and monitor.

- 3.1.6 Employees using their own home PC or laptop to connect to the Council via VPN, are responsible for ensuring it has up to date anti-virus protection and firewall, and also any operating system patches are up to date. Failure to comply with either of these requirements will result in the connection being refused.
- 3.1.7 Employees using such personal equipment (and also using unmanaged EFDC equipment such as tablets) must also note that the level of access granted to them as the device is not managed by EFDC will result in the inability to access GCSX mailboxes. ICT will endeavour to support connection via VPN from all common hardware configurations, but this cannot be guaranteed.
- 3.1.8 IT support will be available and training will be provided. This training will be agreed between the employee and manager prior to any work arrangements being changed.
- 3.1.9 In the event of equipment, connection, communication failure the employee will be required to attend the office to work, complete suitable work off line or take lost time as annual or flexi leave, which will be in agreement with the manager.

3.2 Setting Up a Work Area at Home

- 3.2.1 Time should be planned for the setting up of practical home (and mobile working arrangements if in conjunction with home working). This process includes:
 - the ordering and installation of the appropriate IT solution, or IT connectivity solution, which would include either a softphone, mobile or desk phone depending on the role; and
 - the provision of any necessary Health and Safety assessment/training and IT training
- 3.2.2 Procedures for reporting and resolving problems (e.g. equipment failures, accidents) need to be agreed and fully understood by all parties concerned. A period of adaptation is often required for home working arrangements to bed down successfully. This period will also allow time for the employee to obtain any necessary clearances from mortgage lenders/landlords, home insurance companies etc. and to make any other relevant changes to domestic arrangements.

3.3 Maintenance of equipment and safety standards

- 3.3.1 The employee is responsible for the care of any equipment that is provided by the Council, and for the working environment. Employees must check the equipment regularly for signs of damage etc and report any problems immediately to their Line Manager. If Council equipment is damaged with no reasonable explanation (as determined by the Director/Assistant Director) employees may be required to contribute to the cost of replacing the item.

- 3.3.2 The Council will require periodic access to the employee's home for inspection of its equipment at reasonable notice. At least a couple of days' notice will be given by the manager in advance of the inspection.
- 3.3.3 It is the Council's responsibility to monitor health and safety, and this will be done periodically by the manager.
- 3.3.4 Employees must ensure that their Buildings and House Contents Insurance is appropriate, and must ensure that they notify their insurer that they are working from home. They shall provide proof of appropriate insurance cover. The employee will be responsible for any damages in the event that their insurance cover is not adequate.
- 3.3.5 ICT support of Council hardware will be based on a 'return to base' principle, if after consultation with the ICT Helpdesk it is agreed that a unit has failed the employee will need to return it to the Civic Offices for exchange/repair. Any support in excess of this will be provided on a best endeavours basis.
- 3.3.6 ICT will not support the employee's internet connection; it is the responsibility of the employee to raise faults with their provider. ICT support will only cover the hardware provided, any installed software and the physical (or wireless) connection of the device to the broadband router.
- 3.3.7 Home workers should not normally have meetings with customers/clients in their home and should arrange any meetings at a suitable alternative location instead. Meeting with their line or other senior manager would be permissible at home.
- 3.4 **Working in the office for home workers**
- 3.4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to protect the health and safety of employees. It is recognised that fixed desks should be provided for individuals in the following circumstances:
- (a) Where a special adaptation has had to be made to a desk. This will generally mean that the individual will have to use the desk when in the office but this should not preclude others using the desk when the employee is out of the office.
 - (b) Where there is a requirement to use a particular piece of ICT hardware or software on a desktop. Again this will mean the individual must use this desk when in the office but should not preclude others using the desk when the employee is absent.
 - (c) Home based employees visiting the Council's offices will have facilities made available to them for research and meetings, but a work station or desk will not be provided unless they are only working from home for part of their contracted hours. In this situation, they may be required to share a desk or work station with other home workers, or part time staff.

4. Change of Circumstances

- 4.1 All working arrangements should balance the requirements of the service, customer, employee and the Council.
- 4.2 If circumstances change, the arrangement may need to be reviewed. Managers should be informed immediately if circumstances are likely to change in any significant respects in order for the future impact on the working arrangement to be considered and assessed. This includes when an employee is appointed to a different role either within their current Directorate or Council. If the new role is not suitable for home working, as determined by the Director/Assistant Director, all Council equipment will be returned.
- 4.3 Employees who are home based should not move their residence without informing their line manager. The manager will decide whether the proposed new home location is acceptable to the Council based on the criteria of effective service delivery. If employees relocate to an area not acceptable to the Council their home based working arrangements will terminate. Where employees move home to an acceptable location, they will bear the cost and responsibility for the removal of any furniture and equipment used for home working.
- 4.4 A review would be appropriate if:
- the needs of the Council/customer changed, e.g. the nature of the job changes and it is no longer suitable for working away from the workplace
 - there is a change within the team which requires a review of each member's role
 - there are performance/conduct related issues
 - the employee intends to move house (the suitability of the proposed new premises must be assessed)
 - the home becomes unsuitable for working, for example, a change in family circumstances.
- 4.5 In the event that the employee resigns or the home working arrangements cease, any furniture and ICT equipment owned by the Council remains the property of the Council and must be returned. A mutually convenient time for the collection of any Council property will be arranged and collection of such property will be at the Council's cost. All reasonable costs incurred in removing the property from the employee's home will be reimbursed. The manager in conjunction with ICT will ensure all the Council's equipment is returned and in reasonable condition.

5. Variation of Terms and Conditions

- 5.1 Following all the checks, and if both parties have agreed to the introduction of home working, a change in work arrangements could represent a variation to the substantive terms and conditions of employment, unless otherwise agreed as part of a permanent change in service provision. In practical terms once the individual and manager have agreed the new arrangement then the manager will need to ensure that the Flexible Working/Retirement Acceptance Form is completed and send it to HR. If required HR will confirm the agreed variation in contractual terms in writing which will set out the provisions applying to the new working arrangements.

- 5.2 Unless there are changes to working hours, which will mean for example that salary and annual leave entitlement are calculated on a pro-rata basis, or a change to an employee's place of work, all other contractual terms will remain the same. Employees will still be required to follow existing procedures for example in reporting sickness and requesting holiday, i.e. Managing Absence and Annual Leave Policies.

6. Pay

- 6.1 Salary levels will not be altered by the change from office working to mobile/remote working. Any allowances or special payments will continue provided the agreement to work away from the workplace does not invalidate the reason for payment.
- 6.2 Home based employees will be eligible for inner fringe allowance, regardless of whether their home is within the district.
- 6.3 Employees who are home based will continue to be employed by the Council, and are not eligible for self-employed taxation status.

7. Mileage

- 7.1 Employees working the whole of their time at home will have their homeworking address as their contractual place of work. They will be entitled to claim home to office mileage if called to a meeting or to work at any Council Office. They will also be entitled to claim home to site mileage/meetings etc.
- 7.2 For employees working the whole of their time at home, the Council will only reimburse a maximum of 40 miles return travel (i.e. 20 miles each way) between home and the Council Offices. If the employee lives a greater distance from the Council Offices than this the excess for visits to the District will be borne by the employee.
- 7.3 The actual payment set out in 7.2 will be based on the highest casual rate of mileage. Any cost incurred by an employee on public transport based on the circumstances in 7.2 will be capped at the same monetary value.
- 7.4 Employees working less than their whole time at home will have a relevant Council address as their contractual place of work. All mileage will be in accordance with the Council's Car and Cycle Allowance Policy.
- 7.5 Travel direct from home outside of normal day to day activities, such as attending external training events, conferences etc. is likely to be outside of the geographic area of the district. In this situation the provisions set out in the Council's Car and Cycle Allowance or Subsistence Policies will apply.

8. Contribution towards Costs

- 8.1 The Council's current telephone system is able to be used from private numbers, mobile or land lines which will mean claiming for telephone expenses will be limited. However, the Council will reimburse all work related

calls from a private phone on receipt of an itemised bill detailing work calls if required.

8.2 The employee will be responsible for the following costs:

- Broadband connection
- Consumables
- Furniture, unless items are assessed as a reasonable adjustment
- Any additional costs incurred in terms of energy and other utilities at their home,
- Any existing and ongoing rental on equipment belonging to them such as the phone line for access to internet,
- Any additional costs in home content/building insurance.

9. Hours of work

9.1 Employees who are home based will be expected to fulfil their weekly contractual hours of employment with the Council, and if they work flexitime, the normal procedures will apply, unless individual working arrangements are agreed in advance with their manager.

9.2 All home based employees will be required to complete a standard monthly recording sheet for submission to their manager. During working hours, employees will be expected to be available for contact by their manager to discuss work related issues, including target setting and performance management, unless otherwise agreed. Equally, employees with child care and other caring responsibilities are required to make appropriate arrangements for the care of their dependants whilst they are working at home.

9.3 ICT support will only be guaranteed to be available in normal working hours, outside of these times, it will be provided on a best endeavour basis.

10. Accident reporting from home

10.1 Employees must report accidents involving an injury at work to their manager so that this can be recorded in the Council's accident database. They should consult their GP if they are concerned about the injury. The accident form and guidance can be found on the intranet.

11. Managers' responsibilities

11.1 Managers will;

- Consider requests for home working and assess the suitability of the role for home working.
- Consider any associated costs of providing special adaptations or equipment.
- Ensure that the Checklist is completed and all the arrangements have been considered.
- Carry out a risk assessment of the accommodation and work arrangements. Also periodic checks and monitoring.
- Feedback the results to the employee, so they can implement any improvement or modification required.

- Liaise with HR to ensure the contractual arrangements are confirmed, likewise if the arrangements come to an end.
- Carry out a full induction process for employees newly recruited who are to work from home, this will usually take place in the Council offices and may involve a period of time working from the office before homeworking commences.
- Liaise with ICT regarding the appropriate equipment required for working from home.
- Ensure that the employee has received information, instruction or training on relevant Health & Safety matters, including use of desk based and portable computer equipment (as appropriate) and action to take in event of failure of equipment.
- Agree arrangements with the employee for the provision of work, communication, regular contact, supervision, performance management and the number/frequency of visits to their work place and Council premises.
- Maintain managerial direction as appropriate during working hours
- Notify the Council's Insurance Officer of the home based working arrangement, to ensure that the employer's liability, third party and all risks insurance cover is in place. Also if/when the arrangements come to an end.
- Ensure that staff are re-issued with the Data Protection Policy and staff are aware of their responsibilities.
- Ensure a process for documenting paper files/documents removed from the Council's offices.

The above actions will be proportionate to the amount of time working at home.

11.2 Performance Management

11.2.1 Usual practice should be followed when managing an employee working from home for a significant proportion of their time, i.e. regular reviews take place, clear SMART objectives are agreed with suitable targets and performance measures to work towards are in place. Emphasis should be placed on defining measurable outputs for the post before working in a new way begins.

11.2.2 At least two performance review meetings each year are required to evaluate work completed in addition to regular feedback. This will include a mid-year and year-end review which will form part of the PDR process. Performance reviews will focus on outputs, objectives achieved and staff development. It is expected that these reviews will take place in the Council's office.

11.2.3 Employees working from home 1 or 2 days the usual practices of performance management i.e. regular 1-2-1 meetings will take place.

11.3 Communication and Contact

11.3.1 Managers will have the same responsibilities for ensuring that they are in regular contact with employees who work away from the office. Managers will need to ensure that a clear structure is in place to maintain communication, share information, offer management support and to avoid any sense of isolation. This will include any cover arrangements for leave etc.

- 11.3.2 Arrangements should be in place to ensure that home workers receive information at the same time as office-based staff.
- 11.3.3 Staff will continue to be required to attend meetings or other functions as necessary in one of the Council offices. This should be an understood and accepted part of working in a new way.
- 11.3.4 Care should be taken to ensure that communication with customers and stakeholders is maintained to the same standards as for office based staff

12. Employee's Responsibilities

12.1 Employees must:

- Comply fully with this policy and procedure.
- Attend the Council offices, or other designated venue, for management and team meetings, and training as required.
- Maintain a safe working environment in which to carry out the work of the Council.
- Report any concerns about equipment or working procedures immediately.
- Ensure that their IT equipment is maintained in good working order, and notify their manager immediately if there is a failure in either the equipment and/or the service. In the case of a failure involving Council equipment they notify the ICT Helpdesk.
- In the event of a communications/equipment failure either be prepared to attend the office to work, complete suitable work off line (in agreement with the manager) or take lost time as annual or flexi leave. Work should cease if failure with the equipment could lead to posture being compromised and/or other work related injuries.
- Report any accidents involving injury at work to their manager, so that it can be recorded in the Council's accident database and consult their GP if they are concerned about the injury.
- Obtain confirmation from their landlord/mortgage provider that they are aware of their intentions to work from home and grant access to the Council to view confirmation.
- Notify their home insurance provider that they will be working from home and grant access to the Council to view permission.
- Allow their manager or any other person authorised by the Council access to their home for the workplace assessment and for regular visits.
- Comply with the Council's HR policies including Managing Absence Policy with respect to the reporting of sickness, the Flexi Scheme, annual leave and performance management.
- Comply with all of the Council's ICT policies.
- Comply with the relevant Safety Policies including Work Station Assessments and Lone Working.
- Comply with the Data Protection Policy.

13. Security

- 13.1 Physical security of the proposed home office area forms part of the health and safety assessment procedure. It is the joint responsibility of managers and employees to ensure any adaptation required is completed before any work at home begins. The ongoing responsibility for following security procedures diligently rests with the employee.

- 13.2 Council technology and paperwork must be secured. All parties should be aware of the potentially increased risks (e.g. of theft or criminal damage to Council owned equipment and data, and risks to personal safety) associated with home working and should take all practicable steps to minimise these.
- 13.3 It is the employee's responsibility to ensure all normal data protection requirements are complied with, there are no breaches of confidentiality within the domestic environment and there is no inappropriate personal use of Council supplied equipment (including the telephone line).
- 13.4 In particular, Council owned IT equipment must not be used by anyone other than the employee (e.g. family members). Council provided ICT equipment must also only be used for Council business. All usage such as Internet browsing will continue to be monitored.
- 13.5 As the Council moves to new ways of working there will be an increase in technology being used away from the office environment. Sensible precautions should be taken to ensure that ICT hardware and data remains secure.

14. Security of Information/Data Protection

- 14.1 The Data Protection Act has implications on home working. If the Council does not comply with the act it could be fined directly by the Information Commission for any serious breach of the Data Protection Act. So it is essential employees are aware of the implications surrounding:
- Ownership of data
 - Access to data by family members and others
 - Electronic data at home and transferring this
 - Paper data/equipment and transferring/transporting this.
- 14.2 Employees must have read and considered the Council's Data Protection Policy.
- 14.3 Employees are also responsible for ensuring that sensitive/confidential information (hard copy or electronic) and equipment are transported and kept securely. When handling information they should follow good practice including:
- Treating all information in a confidential manner such as protecting information by passwords or encryption
 - Paper files should only be stored at home whilst they are being worked on and securely filed when not in use
 - Having security measures in place for dealing with document waste and the locking of their home, office and computer
 - Storing equipment so that it is not a risk to the home-worker or others visiting their premises.

15. Insurance, mortgages and tenancy agreements

- 15.1 Employees should ensure their building/contents insurance is not invalidated by the use of the premises as a place of work, or by the use of Council equipment.
- 15.2 The Council will remain responsible for any loss of or accidental damage to officially-supplied equipment and furniture, provided that it does not result from negligence on the part of the employee or their family members, and that security procedures have been complied with (see above).
- 15.3 Employees must not have meetings with customers/clients in their home and should arrange any meetings at a suitable alternative location instead. An employee may not be covered for accidents to other customers/clients entering their house on business and should check this point with their insurance company.
- 15.4 Employees should write to their mortgage provider or landlord to inform them they will at times be working from home to ensure that the occupation of the home is not subject to terms and conditions or covenants which will prevent any work being undertaken in the home.
- 15.5 If significant structural work is envisaged to adapt the home for remote working, planning permission may be required from the local authority. This would be the employee's responsibility and the Council would not contribute to any costs incurred.

16. Review

- 16.1 A review of this Policy will take place by December 2017.

17. Further Guidance

- 17.1 Further guidance on the operation, interpretation and application of the Smart Working Framework is available from HR.
- 17.2 Where relevant, each of the Smart Framework Policies has its own HR and Manager Toolkit which provides additional guidance, template letters and aids. The Toolkits can be found on the intranet.

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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-015-2016/17
Date of meeting: 21 July 2016



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Asset Management & Economic Development
Subject: Town & Village Centres Opportunities Fund Policy
Responsible Officer: Mike Warr (01992 564593).
Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the Town & Village Centres Opportunities Fund Policy be adopted;
- (2) That all decisions made under the Town & Village Centres Opportunities Fund be made by the Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Economic Development under the provisions for Portfolio Holder Decisions; and
- (3) That the continuation of the Town & Village Centres Opportunities Fund and Policy in future years be subject to the success of the annual bid for funding from the District Development Fund.

Executive Summary:

At its meeting of December 2015, Cabinet agreed that District Development Funding be requested from the Council in the sum of £35,000 for 2016/17 to continue the work of the Town & Village Centres Opportunities Fund.

Furthermore, in order to formalise the scheme and to support its extension to encompass a wider range of properly constituted groups and organisations Cabinet also agreed that a formal policy document be drafted setting out the full terms and conditions of the scheme and detailing the criteria for those groups that will be eligible to bid. This policy document will be submitted to the Cabinet for agreement before the start of the 2016/17 funding cycle.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

Making these funds available for the town centre partnerships, smaller district centres and other appropriately constituted organisations to bid for, encourages them to think creatively about how they can sustainably promote their town and district centres and create initiatives that have a lasting impact on the shopping centre economy. In adopting a formal policy for the fund, organisations are able to decide whether to apply with clarity, understanding and certainty as to whether they are eligible, what the scheme's objectives are, how applications will be processed and decisions made and how they will be expected to demonstrate the success of their proposal.

The policy also enables the council to demonstrate how it intends the funding to be used and to set out its expectations of each organisation so as to ensure the money is used in an appropriate and transparent way.

Other Options for Action:

To not adopt the policy.

To adopt the policy in a revised form.

Report:

1. Since 2013/14, the Council has agreed to make available a £35,000 fund which enabled town centre partnerships, including the chamber of commerce, to undertake projects to support the local main High Streets.

2. In 2015/16 the scheme was widened out into a Town & Village Centres Opportunities Fund to also enable smaller 'village' centres to bid for funding. This was in recognition that our smaller shopping centres, wherever they may be in the district have a crucial role to play in enhancing and developing the economy of the district. Whilst smaller than the town centres that have previously been able to bid, these local centres will also have their own issues that they wish to address and will create a wider pool of ideas from which to develop potential district-wide, cross-centre initiatives.

3. With effect from the 2016/17 it was proposed that the fund be opened up to all appropriately constituted bodies and organisations throughout the district that submit applications focused on benefiting the town and local shopping centres, whether locally or district-wide. Additionally, it was agreed that Epping Forest District Council Economic Development Officers (EDOs) could also put forward appropriate projects as well as allowing the EDOs to work with the centres to develop joint projects and applications.

4. The 2015/16 fund allocated funding to four schemes with total funding allocated of £14,856 with a further project accessing the seed-funding element of £1500 - £1800 which, as yet, has not been finalised due the extended nature of the discussions which have gone into setting up the proposed support package. The four schemes funded last year included:

- Two local town centres producing business directories or guides to the centre which were to be distributed widely throughout the surrounding area to raise awareness of the local offer and drive footfall.
- A village centre scheme to build a floral display area and seating facility, enhancing the visual attractiveness of the centre and encouraging shoppers and passers-by to dwell a little longer in the area and potentially increase footfall into the nearby shops.
- The procurement of a refreshed tourism website for the district which, as well as better promoting the district's key attractions, many of which are in or on the outskirts of our town centres, will also draw specific focus upon our towns and villages in order to raise awareness of their particular offers whether that be shopping, dining or heritage. It is therefore hoped to encourage the visitors to out of town attractions to extend their visitor experience by subsequently going on to the nearby towns and villages, driving up footfall, increasing dwell times and generating additional visitor spend in the local economy.

5. In agreeing the funding for 2016/17 on this expanded basis it was considered necessary and appropriate to establish appropriate controls and limits as to how such groups should demonstrate their eligibility to apply to the fund.

6. Cabinet agreed at its meeting in December 2015, that a formal 'Town and Village Centres Opportunities Fund Policy' be published to coincide with the launch of the 2016/17

scheme. This policy (attached as Appendix 1) sets out the requirements of all properly constituted groups and organisations, the specific criteria against which all applications will be assessed and decided upon and the ways in which the allocated funds will be monitored post-application.

7. The Town & Village Centres Opportunities Fund is intended to encourage partners to think creatively about how they can sustainably promote their centres and develop initiatives that have a lasting impact on their town or village centre's economy.

8. All applicants are encouraged to submit proposals which address three key objectives:

- ensure people are aware of what our centres have to offer and encourage more visits;
- enhance the visitor experience and encourage people to stay longer; and
- support our existing small businesses and help to encourage new investment and fill empty shops / business units

9. Additionally, bids will also need to demonstrate how the project contributes towards the delivery of one or more of the Council's adopted Economic Development priorities. Bids are encouraged that propose creative local bids that could be applied on a district-wide basis. This can therefore create local impacts that have wider benefits as they are implemented or adopted elsewhere. Finally, they are also asked to consider the longer-term impact and sustainability of their proposals thereby using investment in the present to secure ongoing benefits for their town centres in the future.

10. The expansion of the scheme to cover a wider range of eligible groups now allows that funding will be available to local voluntary groups and associations that are appropriately established with a constitution and bank account for their association to receive funds. Funds are not paid to an individual person or business.

11. Organisations eligible for assistance under the scheme could include the following:

- Town Centre Partnerships;
- Local Voluntary, Community and Not-for-profit business groups including district-wide organisations;
- Arts and Culture Groups;
- Social Enterprises; and
- Community Interest Groups with a specific focus written into their constitution on the economic wellbeing of the town or village centre.

12. It has also been agreed that Economic Development Officers at Epping Forest District Council may submit bids to the fund for proposed projects and that these will be assessed and judged against the same criteria as all other proposed projects. Joint applications between any combination of the above groups, including projects supported by and developed with the Economic Development Officers at Epping Forest District Council, will also be acceptable.

13. However, all groups that wish to apply are required to meet a set of eligibility criteria, set out in the policy, covering how they are established, how they operate and how their membership is constituted. A copy of the constitution of any bidding organisation will need to be supplied and where this does not permit the organisation to be involved in projects to support town centre activity they will not be awarded any funding.

14. The policy also sets out how decisions on applications will be made and the timeframe within which these decisions take place. Decisions as to whether applications are successful are made by the Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Economic

Development at the conclusion of each bidding round. These decisions are made with advice and comment from the district council's Economic Development Officers (EDOs) where appropriate. Projects put forward by Economic Development Officers, whether independently or in collaboration with partnerships, will be assessed and decided upon by the Portfolio Holder using the same criteria as all other bids but without additional advice and comment from the EDOs. Should further clarification on the bid be required, as might happen with other external bids, this would be formally sought from the EDOs.

15. Details of all successful bids agreed by the Portfolio Holder will be formally published at the conclusion of each round of applications as Portfolio Holder Decisions subject to call-in.

16. The Town & Village Centres Opportunities Fund is seen as an important means of encouraging locally driven economic development initiatives which are owned and therefore supported by the local business community. It is however acknowledged that such an important fund requires clear guidance for applicants on the scheme's objectives, eligibility requirements and the criteria used for decision-making. It is therefore recommended that the draft 'Town & Village Centres Opportunities Fund Policy' be adopted and launched alongside the launch of the 2016/17 funding cycle.

17. The continuation of the Town & Village Centres Opportunities Fund and Policy in future years will remain subject to the success of the annual bid for funding from the District Development Fund.

Resource Implications:

The 2016/17 Town & Village Centres Opportunities Fund required a District Development Fund allocation of £35,000 to be approved. Underspends from previous years funds are retained and should the 2016/17 fund be oversubscribed appropriate bids will be still be funded through the use of these carried forward funds.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The policy establishes a formally agreed set of standards covering group eligibility, application requirements, decision making criteria and the stages and procedures groups must follow to acknowledge any funds awarded.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

None.

Consultation Undertaken:

None.

Background Papers:

None.

Risk Management:

Establishing the policy enables the council to provide evidence as to how it will determine the eligibility of groups to apply to the fund, what key objectives and economic priorities it expects bids to address and to set out the procedures through which its decisions are made. In doing so it is hoped that the risk of challenge to any decisions made can be mitigated.

Due Regard Record

This page shows **which groups of people are affected** by the subject of this report. It sets out **how they are affected** and how any **unlawful discrimination** they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how **access to the service(s)** subject to this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to **understand each other better** as a result of the subject of this report.

S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

Applications approved under the Town & Village Centres Opportunities Fund provide much needed investment and the stimulation of the economy in town and village centres throughout the District.

Some of those centres are based in less affluent areas, with others located in more rural parts of the District. Consequently, local residents in those centres can sometimes experience the effects of deprivation, albeit for different reasons.

Clearly establishing, through the proposed policy document, the criteria for groups to apply will enable groups in some of these less affluent areas to understand what is expected of their group as well as of any bid. It also sets out transparently how the decisions will be made and within what timeframe. It is hoped that this clarity, certainty and transparency will encourage such groups to apply and successfully develop proposals that support their centre and alleviate some of the effects of deprivation.

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Epping Forest District Council Town & Village Centres Opportunities Fund Policy 2016/17 (Draft)

We have a fantastic mix of vibrant town and village centres here in Epping Forest District. These centres are vital in providing residents with access to shops and services locally and have a broader function in contributing to the quality of life of our residents. Our town and village centres are key in providing significant local employment and injecting money into our local economy. In some cases there is also real scope to support our centres and further our local economic development by capitalising on a currently underexploited visitor economy.

The Town & Village Centres Opportunities Fund is intended to encourage partners to think creatively about how they can sustainably promote their centres and develop initiatives that have a lasting impact on their town or village centre's economy.

If you are keen to explore this opportunity but are unsure of whether your project or group will be eligible it will help to contact us about your plans. We'll be glad to help.

Purpose of the Fund:

In providing the fund we are looking for creative bids to deliver initiatives that will:

- Ensure people are aware of what our centres have to offer and encourage more visits
- Enhance the visitor experience and encourage people to stay longer
- Support our existing small businesses and help to encourage new investment and fill empty shops/business units

The Fund covers the following town and village centres:

Abridge	Nazeing
Buckhurst Hill	North Weald
Chigwell	Ongar
Epping	Roydon
Loughton Broadway	Theydon Bois
Loughton High Road	Waltham Abbey

Any bid will also need to demonstrate how the project contributes towards the delivery of one or more of the Council's Economic Development priorities. As a District Council we currently have ten agreed key economic development priorities for the district and its economy. These are:

- 1/ providing support for local food production
- 2/ marketing our tourism offer to the visitor economy
- 3/ infrastructure needs including superfast broadband and transport
- 4/ enhancing the local level of skills attainment
- 5/ exploiting interesting development opportunities at North Weald Airfield
- 6/ analysing and understanding our business base
- 7/ making links to the West Essex Enterprise Zone
- 8/ promoting the district's unique character
- 9/ developing plans for our council-owned assets
- 10/ linking with sources of inward investment

To help ensure that we make best use of available funds, we encourage bids which seek to have impact across the Epping Forest District area, enhancing more than one town centre and involving more than one group working together.

There is a second element to the fund which we refer to as **one-off seed funding**. Only the Town Centre Partnerships may submit a bid to this element of the fund and, specifically, only Town Centre Partnerships that are experiencing acute difficulties in continuing to operate. Under the seed funding element, partnerships are able to bid for monies which will enable them to buy-in practical, professional and independent guidance to help them re-establish and reinvigorate their partnership. It should be stressed that the emphasis here will be on any concerned partnership securing active support (rather than, for example, commissioning a consultancy study) and that there is a core group of representatives with the commitment to help take forward recommendations and actions. If you are considering a bid to this element of the scheme please contact us to discuss.

Please note that, should a partnership seek to access this seed funding, it is not considered appropriate that they simultaneously bid for support funding for other projects given the implied difficulties they are facing elsewhere.

Who can apply?

Funding is available to local voluntary groups and associations that are appropriately established with a constitution and bank account for their association to receive funds. Funds are not paid to an individual. Organisations eligible for assistance under the scheme include the following:

- Town Centre Partnerships
- Local Voluntary, Community and Not-for-profit business groups including district-wide organisations
- Arts and Culture Groups
- Social Enterprises
- Community Interest Groups with a specific focus, written into their constitution, on the economic wellbeing of the town or village centre

It is acknowledged that there may often be more than one organisation or group in a town or village that is concerned with the economic wellbeing of the town or village and that this may therefore lead to competing bids for funding. Whilst competition for funding is acceptable, we do not wish to create a situation where proposals duplicate, conflict or work against the ongoing work or planned projects of other local organisations. As part of the application process we will therefore be looking to see evidence that the group has consulted with or liaised with other local organisations in preparing their bid. The support and involvement of other organisations will strengthen the likelihood of the project's success and could also contribute towards the match-funding contribution element of the bid.

It has also been agreed that Economic Development Officers at Epping Forest District Council may submit bids to the fund for proposed projects and that these will be assessed and judged against the same criteria as all other proposed projects. Joint applications between any combination of the above groups, including projects supported by and developed with the Economic Development Officers at Epping Forest District Council, will also be acceptable.

It should be noted that a copy of the constitution of any bidding organisation will need to be supplied and where this does not permit the organisation to be involved in projects to support town centre activity they will not be awarded any funding.

In applying to the fund, it is expected that all organisations:

- Are properly governed by a constitution and managed through the appointment of elected post-holders and regular meetings

- Have been established for at least one full year with a full set of accounts and AGM minutes
- Operate on a charitable or non-profit-making basis
- Are based or are primarily active in Epping Forest District, specifically in one or more of the listed town and village centres
- Offer their services, events and facilities to all eligible local businesses and residents
- Have no unfair restrictions on membership or participation
- Are able to show a clear need for financial support
- Have a bank or building society account in the name of the applicant organisation
- Have not been established solely in order to apply to this fund

What the fund does not cover

- The fund is not open for applications from individual people or businesses.
- The fund will not directly support Christmas decorations/lights and/or contribute towards costs associated with lights switch-on Christmas functions in any town or village centre.
- Epping Forest District Council operates a scheme called 'Grants for Sports, Arts, Leisure and Community Groups'. This scheme is open to voluntary and community groups. In some instances a potential town/village centre project might fit better under the criteria for this scheme rather than the Town and Village Centres Opportunities Fund – see link for more details - <http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/index.php/out-and-about/our-activities/community-development/grants-for-sports-arts-leisure-and-community-groups>

How much can you apply for?

The total fund available each year is £35,000. There is no defined upper or lower limit to the amount of funding that can be applied for, however, support is provided on a 'match-funding' basis and we will provide up to a maximum of 50% of the total cost of your proposed initiative, matching each pound that you raise locally, although in some circumstances we may be able to apply discretion. (In exceptional instances where the amount requested exceeds 50%, applicants will be required to provide extra justification as to why EFDC support is integral to the project moving forward and how it represents best value for money to the local resident council tax payer).

Volunteer time and in-kind support can be taken into account as match-funding and should be outlined in the application form. We would generally expect applications to range from several hundred pounds up to a few thousand pounds, depending on the nature of the proposed initiative.

Payment of Grant Funding

Please note that payment of funding will normally be made on receipt of evidence of expenditure such as copies of receipted invoices related to works carried out on the scheme or project concerned. As such, the organisation will need to be able to fund the works until funding is received. However, we acknowledge that many projects occur in stages and it may be possible, with prior agreement, to allow staged funding whereby funding is paid on the reaching of agreed milestones and the provision of receipted invoices relevant to that stage of the project.

Grant Decision

Your application will be considered by the Council's Portfolio Holder that has responsibility for deciding Town & Village Centres Opportunities Fund applications.

Once we have received your application we will write to you acknowledging receipt and requesting any information which may have been omitted. The initial consideration by the Portfolio Holder will usually take place within six weeks of receipt of the application. At that stage your application may be approved (subject to certain conditions in some instances), refused or deferred pending the

receipt of further information. Usually, deferred applications will be considered within a further six week period.

We will advise you of all additional information required and, in any event, liaise with you regarding our information requirements on an ongoing basis.

Once the decision has been made there is a 'call-in period' of approximately two weeks during which District Councillors have the right to 'call-in' and review the decision being made. We will then write to confirm the decision and, if successful, request invoices before payment is made.

If we refuse a grant we will let you know the reasons for the decision. If appropriate, we will give you information of other funding organisations that may be able to help.

Decision-making criteria

- We will assess bids to see how well they reflect the three stated purposes of the funding scheme.
- We will also consider how bids actively contribute towards the delivery of one or more of the Council's Economic Development priorities. Greater priority is likely to be given to bids that meet the greatest number of our ED priorities and purposes of the fund.
- We encourage bids which are district-wide or which involve several centres in order that the economic impact of investment can have a broader reach. Groups receiving funding should commit to sharing perspectives and learning with other groups locally via established networks and greater priority will be given to projects that can be easily replicated in other areas.
- We will be looking for evidence that the group has consulted with or liaised with other local organisations or groups in preparing the bid to ensure the project is locally supported and does not conflict with other ongoing work. If appropriate, we may require further consultation and liaison with other local groups prior to final approval of a bid.
- We encourage centres to apply for funding to deliver new initiatives rather than necessarily repeating previous ones.
- Any bid to deliver an event or activity on a given day or days must demonstrate how the project will continue to have an impact after the day.
- Any bid to deliver an initiative which will have ongoing operational or maintenance costs must indicate how these will be met.
- Where initiatives proposed are ongoing they should aim to become self-sustaining over a reasonable time.
- We will also consider the track record of past projects funded through the scheme both in terms of the experience of their delivery and the impact that any outstanding projects may have on an organisation's capacity to deliver new projects.
- All decisions on funding are made for the projects specifically as detailed within the application. Any significant proposed changes to the project must be notified to the Council whether before or after a decision has been made. Failure to do so could affect the decision to provide funding.

If, for any reason, a project is not delivered or cancelled, the funding cannot be allocated to a substitute project without a full application being made which will be assessed as if a new bid was being made.

Grant Conditions

On receipt of your funding and completion of your project, you will be required to incorporate some form of acknowledgement that the project has been funded in part by Epping Forest District Council.

This will vary depending on the nature of your project and should be discussed with the District Council prior to completion of the project.

If you have an official launch of your project we will expect an invitation addressed to the appropriate Council official(s). We will expect you to keep the District Council informed of the progress and achievements of your initiative and to complete an End of Grant form setting out how the grant was spent and what was achieved.

How to apply

Each year we will invite bids in two stages as follows:

A deadline will be set for the first round of bids. This will be announced at the time of the launch of the fund for that year and will be open to any constituted voluntary groups and associations, including Town Centre Partnerships, that wish to undertake projects in one or more of the 12 town and village centres covered by this Fund. Subject to available funding, initiatives may be proposed by Epping Forest District Council Economic Development Officers and these would be considered in the same manner as all other applications. All applications received before this deadline will be considered together and in the event that the fund is oversubscribed some bids may be prioritised over other bids that might otherwise have been successful. It may also be that a reduced amount of funding is offered. (Please note there is a degree of flexibility with regard to accepting bids ahead of this deadline where the timing is crucial to your project – please contact us to discuss.)

Thereafter, (allowing a period of six weeks for the first round applications to be considered and providing monies are still left after the first round) **the fund will continue on a rolling basis until the end of the year with all applications considered as and when they are received.**

In the first instance it will help to contact us about your plans. We'll be glad to help:

Email: economicdevelopment@eppingforestdc.gov.uk / Telephone: 01992 564339

To take your application forward there will be a short form to complete that asks you to briefly set out your plans, including how much funding you are asking for and how much you will raise locally. Following approval, we will then send a letter of agreement for you to sign and return. We will then pay you on production of an invoice or invoices.

As outlined above we are inviting bids in two stages for 2016/17 with the deadline for the first round applications to be announced when the scheme is launched.

Please note there is a degree of flexibility with regard to accepting bids outside of these deadlines where this is crucial to your project – please contact us to discuss.

Monitoring

We would like to keep in touch to understand how plans are progressing. We may ask for you to share evidence of your local match-funding and how you've spent the funds. The funding agreement letter will set out any other requirements.

Events equipment - Please note that staging equipment for events was procured in 2014 for the use and benefit of all Town Centre Partnerships. If you would like to use this for your event please contact the Chair of Loughton Broadway Town Centre Partnership on admin@broadwaypartnership.org.uk

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