

# ***Supplementary Committee Agenda***



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

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## ***Local Development Framework Cabinet Committee Monday, 12th April, 2010***

**Place:** Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

**Time:** 7.00 pm

**Democratic Services:** Gary Woodhall  
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### **8. EVIDENCE BASE - CONSIDERATION OF CORE STRATEGIES (Pages 3 - 14)**

(Director of Planning & Economic Development) To consider the attached report (LDF-012-2009/10).

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## **Report to the Local Development Framework Cabinet Committee**



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Report reference: LDF-012-2009/10**  
**Date of meeting: 12 April 2010**

**Portfolio: Leader**

**Subject: Consideration of Evidence Base reports for the Local  
Development Framework**

**Responsible Officer: Ian White (01992 564066).**

**Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).**

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### **Decisions Required:**

**(1) That, as outlined in the report, one of the following three options be chosen for considering Evidence Base reports:**

**(i) To select those reports to be considered in detail at additional meetings of the Local Development Framework (LDF) Cabinet Committee, with author briefings, and accept synopses of the remaining reports;**

**(ii) To receive author briefings on all the reports at additional meetings of the LDF Cabinet Committee throughout April, May, June and July; or**

**(iii) As option (ii), but with a two week period following each LDF Cabinet Committee meeting for Members to comment upon a particular report before acceptance is assumed; and**

**(2) To consider the future presentation to the LDF Cabinet Committee of the studies commissioned in conjunction with Harlow and East Herts District Councils.**

### **Executive Summary:**

The report presents options for Member involvement in the preparation of the Evidence Base for the Local Development Framework. Members are also asked to consider the implications for co-ordinated working with Harlow and East Herts Councils.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

The report presents options for Members to take a decision.

### **Other Options for Action:**

Officers believe that the options discussed are the only ones which will allow this Council to proceed at more or less the same time and pace as Harlow and East Herts Councils.

### **Report:**

1. For new planning policies to be judged sound, they must be based on robust and up-to-date evidence. Officers have therefore commissioned a number of technical studies which

will ultimately comprise the “evidence base” from which policies in the Local Development Framework will be derived. At the meeting on 11 March 2010 Members of this Committee requested greater involvement in the preparation, and therefore greater knowledge, of the content of these reports. The studies are not policy documents in themselves, but their content and conclusions will be used to identify issues and options for the initial consultation on the Core Strategy – it is at this stage that a start will be made on the development of new planning policies.

2. The evidence base will eventually include:

- Harlow Area Appraisal of Planning Transport and Infrastructure Options (known as the Harlow Options Appraisal);
- Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Core Strategy (preceded by the Scoping Report which is the subject of a separate report to this meeting);
- Harlow Stansted Gateway Transportation Model;
- Rye Meads Water Cycle Study;
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA);
- Viability Testing of the SHMA;
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA);
- Town Centres Study;
- Employment Land Study;
- Landscape Character Appraisal;
- Settlement Edge Landscape Sensitivity Study;
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;
- Local Wildlife Sites Study;
- Audit of Open Spaces, Sports and Recreation Facilities;
- Assessment of further needs for open space and sports/recreation facilities;
- Ward Profiles; and
- Review of policies which deal with the Lea Valley Glasshouse Industry.

3. More details of these studies are given in the schedule which is an appendix to this report. The Rye Meads study is relatively peripheral to the district but is important in terms of the urban extensions to Harlow. While most of the reports are either complete or nearing their final versions, a small number have yet to be commissioned, e.g. the SHLAA, the assessment of open space etc needs and the glasshouses study.

4. Policy HA1 of the East of England Plan requires this Council to work jointly or in co-ordination with Harlow and East Herts District Councils to deliver the envisaged regeneration and growth of Harlow. The three authorities have been working in a co-ordinated fashion at officer level for at least a couple of years with the intention of preparing individual Core Strategies which will be subject to public consultation at more or less the same time. Harlow and East Herts are intending to consult on Issues and Options over the main summer holiday period which will mean that these exercises will be slightly extended to allow for the fact that many residents will be unable to respond while they are away. While it is not possible for this Council to meet this timing, officers believe it would be sensible to aim for an October start for consultation on Issues and Options. This would mean that there was not much delay between the end of the Harlow and East Herts consultations and the start of this Council’s exercise.

5. If Members accept that this is a reasonable target, the Evidence Base reports should ideally be signed off by the end of July, or at least those which are in their draft final versions. Officers believe that there are three options for assessing the Evidence Base reports:

(i) Members to select from the schedule of reports those which they wish to consider in

detail, and to accept from officers synopses of the other reports. Detailed consideration would include a presentation by the authors to a series of LDF Cabinet Committee meetings from April to July (dates to be arranged);

(ii) Members to receive author briefings on all the reports with more frequent meetings of the LDF Cabinet Committee through April, May, June and July. A final meeting of the Cabinet Committee could sign off all the reports; or

(iii) Broadly similar to the second option, but Members would have a period of 2 weeks after the Cabinet Committee meetings to respond to the briefings, otherwise it would be assumed that the reports had been accepted.

6. In the case of consultant briefings, Members may wish to consider whether they would prefer these as part of LDF Cabinet Committee meetings, or as separate exercises along the lines of the recent briefing on the St Johns Road area in Epping.

7. If Members wish to have author presentations on all, or a selection of, the reports, it should be noted that these have not been budgeted for in the contracts agreed with consultants. There will therefore be additional costs of approximately £500/person involved in the presentations.

8. Members will also need to decide if and how they wish the studies commissioned by Harlow and East Herts Councils to be reported to this Committee.

#### **Resource Implications:**

Additional costs if members wish to have consultants presenting their studies to LDF Cabinet, as described in the report.

#### **Legal and Governance Implications:**

Some of the studies involve several authorities (eg the SHMA), or more than one (eg the Harlow Options and the Employment Land Studies). Some of the involved authorities have already accepted the reports, so there could be complications if this Council were to ask for amendments after other authorities have made decisions.

#### **Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

N/A.

#### **Consultation Undertaken:**

The reports have been subject to different degrees of consultation.

#### **Background Papers:**

N/A.

#### **Impact Assessments:**

##### Risk Management

As outlined in the report, the main risk is to the timetable for consultation on the Issues and Options of the Core Strategy.

Equality and Diversity:

*Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications?* No

*Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken?* N/A

*What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?*  
N/A.

*How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group?*  
N/A.

**Evidence Base Update**  
**April 2010**

Study Title	Study Purpose/Content	Consultant	Cost	Anticipated / Actual Completion	Length
Harlow Area Appraisal of Planning Transport and Infrastructure Options	<p>This study being completed in partnership with Harlow &amp; East Herts District Councils in accordance with policy HA1 of the East of England Plan.</p> <p>It will be used to inform the preparation of the Core Strategy Issues &amp; Options consultation papers for each of the three authorities.</p>	Scott Wilson	<p>£41,942.50</p> <p>Funded by Growth Area Fund – Round3 (GAF3) – no EFDC contribution</p>	Complete January 2010	
<p>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) / Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Core Strategy</p>	<p>To form the baseline information and then assess the options contained within the Core Strategy Issues &amp; Options paper.</p> <p>It is a legislative requirement for all plans and programmes to be subject to, and influenced by, this type of assessment.</p> <p>The framework used for this assessment is largely the same for Epping Forest, Harlow and East Herts Councils, to ensure the process is consistent across the three areas and will support the production of sound Core Strategies.</p>	Scott Wilson	<p>£134,899</p> <p>Funded by GAF3 – no EFDC contribution. Further SEA/SA for subsequent rounds of the Core Strategy &amp; other DPDs will need to be funded by EFDC. Budgetary provision for this exists within the LDF budget.</p>	<p>Scoping Report consultation received March 2010. Statutory 5 week consultation period required.</p> <p>Assessment dependent on timescale for preparation of Issues &amp; Options – Anticipated September 2010.</p>	

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Study Title	Study Purpose/Content	Consultant	Cost	Anticipated / Actual Completion	Length
Harlow Stansted Gateway Transport Model	<p>The project will create a transportation model of the Harlow-Stansted gateway area, capable of reproducing existing significant transport movements in the study area. This model will be used as the basis for forecasting the impact of significant housing and related developments and assist in assessing the transport infrastructure required to support the developments.</p> <p>EFDC are currently guests on the Harlow Stansted Gateway Transportation Board, but the outcomes of this work will help make strategic decisions about the growth of Harlow where there may be an impact on Epping Forest district.</p>	Faber Maunsell	<p>Total cost: £255,950 Stage 1 Transport Model Development. GAF3 – Programme of Development (POD), Essex and Herts County Councils, Highways Agency.</p> <p>No EFDC contribution</p>	Anticipated September 2010	Not yet known
Rye Meads Water Cycle Study	<p>The study assesses the impact of planned growth on water cycle processes, water infrastructure capacity and environmental capacity. It will recommend viable infrastructure options to accommodate planned growth and ensure water infrastructure is not a limiting factor to the growth of the area. As far as this Council is concerned, it is mainly of relevance with respect to the urban extensions to Harlow, as the south of this district is mainly served by the Beckton STW.</p>	Hyder Consulting	<p>Total cost: £250,000 – GAF3 - POD Partnership of East Herts, North Herts, Epping Forest, Broxbourne, Harlow &amp; Stevenage Councils.</p> <p>No EFDC contribution.</p>	Complete October 2009	Approx 180 pages including Appendices



Study Title	Study Purpose/Content	Consultant	Cost	Anticipated / Actual Completion	Length
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)	The requirements of a SHMA are set out in PPS3: Housing (November 2006). This study was undertaken jointly with Harlow, East Herts, Uttlesford, Broxbourne and Brentwood Councils. It determines the Housing Market Areas across the sub-region, and makes an assessment of housing need both within each Housing Market Area, and in each Local Authority area.	Opinion Research Services & Savills	£59,950 (+ £3,117.40 advertising costs)  EFDC contribution - £10,511	Complete January 2010	203 pages including Appendices
Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Viability Testing	PPS3: <i>Housing</i> requires that all policies requiring affordable housing provision are based on robust and sound evidence of need and viability.  The viability testing of the outcomes contained in the SHMA still to be completed. Further study/tender process required. Broxbourne Borough Council have chosen to opt out of this work.	Level Ltd	£27,600  Currently investigating if Programme of Development funds are available to pay for this work. Alternatively, each of the 5 authorities will pay an equal share	April 2010	Not yet known
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	To identify land which could potentially be suitable for housing purposes over a 15 year period. This study does not guarantee that planning permission will ultimately be granted, but identifies possible sources of housing land supply.  The proposed methodology is subject to a separate report on this agenda, but specifies a two-stage process, in which urban capacity is considered first.	To be confirmed following tender process	Estimated at £30,000. Funded from savings within existing LDF budget.	Urban capacity – June 2010  Urban fringes – September 2010	Not yet known

Study Title	Study Purpose/Content	Consultant	Cost	Anticipated / Actual Completion	Length
Town Centres Study	To consider the vitality and viability of the town centres, the competition from centres in adjoining areas, and the future role of the district's centres. This will include an assessment of floorspace, range of goods, vacancy rates, and rent levels. Customer and visitor surveys will be undertaken. Potential opportunities for development or enhancement will be identified, and the current policy on restricting non-retail uses will be assessed. The study will also assess the need for commercial leisure uses.	Roger Tym & Partners	£39,038	April 2010	Approx 113 pages, not including lengthy Appendices
Employment Land Study	The Employment Land Study, which has been commissioned jointly with Brentwood Borough Council, will consider the current employment land available and the opportunities for further provision. It will include an assessment of future needs and demands and a comprehensive stock-take of existing sites (quantitative and qualitative), and will make recommendations about the need for additional employment sites to create a balanced portfolio.	Atkins	£27,325  To be split equally with Brentwood BC	April 2010	Not yet known

Study Title	Study Purpose/Content	Consultant	Cost	Anticipated / Actual Completion	Length
Landscape Character Assessment	<p>This Assessment provides a comprehensive district-wide assessment of landscape character, which is intended to help planning and land management decisions. The European Landscape Convention (of which the Government is a signatory) encourages public authorities to adopt policies and measures for the protection, management and planning of all landscapes, whether outstanding or ordinary, that determine the quality of people's environment. The study therefore identifies key issues, sensitivities to change, and management strategy/objectives/guidelines for areas of different character. The quality of the rural landscape is generally recognised as one of this district's key features, and the study should help to develop long-lasting policies to protect and manage existing landscapes, and to create new ones. Seven landscape character types are identified.</p>	Chris Blandford Associates	£24,745	Complete January 2010	192 pages, including Appendices, and 10 district-wide maps.

Study Title	Study Purpose/Content	Consultant	Cost	Anticipated / Actual Completion	Length
Settlement Edge Landscape Sensitivity Study	Informed by the district-wide Landscape Character Assessment, this study provides a more detailed understanding of sensitive landscape and environmental features around the edges of the 22 principal settlements (ie those excluded from the Green Belt plus Moreton and Sewardstone) in the district. The report will inform options for settlement growth and also outlines the extent to which these areas of landscape contribute towards the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.	Chris Blandford Associates	£24,980	Complete January 2010	138 pages including Appendices, and 73 detailed maps, dealing with visual character, historic landscape, environmental constraints and landscape sensitivity.
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – Level 1  Level 2	A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) is the 'categorisation' of flood risk on an area-wide basis in accordance with PPS25: <i>Development &amp; Flood Risk</i> . This first stage is being undertaken jointly with Harlow Council.  Level 2 assessments will be required on a site specific basis when the Council is considering land allocations. These will be needed to support later stages of the Core Strategy if strategic development sites are to be allocated.	Level 1 – In-house  Level 2 – to be confirmed	From existing resources  £40,000 (estimate)	April 2010  Dependent on timetable of Core Strategy.	45 pages plus plans  Not yet known

Study Title	Study Purpose/Content	Consultant	Cost	Anticipated / Actual Completion	Length
Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) review	This study updates survey work last undertaken during the early 1990s – which identified Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) or County Wildlife Sites (CoWS). A comprehensive field survey, in conjunction with a desk-top study and a consultation exercise, has identified new sites, validated most existing ones, and led to the deletion of some. All the LoWS were assessed against current selection criteria (developed through reviews in other Essex districts and modified in line with national guidelines). Species and habitats now afforded attention via county or national Biodiversity Action Plans were specifically considered and their representation within the LoWS network was ensured.	Essex Ecology Services	£49,660 (payment over 2008/09 and 2009/10)	Complete March 2010	37 pages plus plans and descriptions of 222 sites.
PPG17: <i>Planning for Open Space, Sport &amp; Recreation Audit</i>	PPG17 requires that an audit of existing open space & recreation opportunities is undertaken.	In-house	From existing resources	Anticipated April 2010	Not yet known

Study Title	Study Purpose/Content	Consultant	Cost	Anticipated / Actual Completion	Length
PPG17: <i>Planning for Open Space, Sport &amp; Recreation Assessment</i>	<p>Following completion of the audit, an assessment of surpluses or deficits within any of the categories will need to be carried out. This must also be accompanied by an assessment by seeking public opinion of the quality of existing open space &amp; recreation facilities.</p> <p>This further work will require the employment of consultants with expertise in this area.</p>	To be confirmed	£20,000 (estimate)	Anticipated May 2010	Not yet known
Ward Profiles	To provide background information at a ward level to support the preparation of the Core Strategy (and future DPDs) and the Community Strategy.	In-house	From existing resources	Complete January 2010 (to be updated annually)	
Review of Lea Valley Glasshouse Industry policies	<p>The policies in the Local Plan Alterations (2006) were derived from a study completed in 2003. The Alterations indicated that the policies would be reviewed again, as some areas were identified for "potential de-designation" the time of the next review. There is a current application for residential re-development of one of these sites. Since the Alterations were published, there has been a very significant amount of glasshouse development in Thanet, and officers believe that both these factors justify a further review.</p>	To be commissioned	Not yet known	Not yet known	Not yet known