

Scrutiny Standing Panel Agenda



Planning Services Scrutiny Standing Panel Thursday, 12th March, 2009

Place: Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Time: 7.30 pm

Democratic Services Officer: Mark Jenkins - Office of the Chief Executive
Email mjenkins@eppingforestdc.gov.uk Tel: 01992 564607

Members:

Councillors Mrs L Wagland (Chairman), K Chana (Vice-Chairman), A Boyce, M Colling, Mrs A Cooper, R Frankel, J Hart, Mrs C Pond, W Pryor, P Spencer and H Ulkun

A BRIEFING FOR THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PANEL WILL BE HELD AT
7.00 PM PRIOR TO THE MEETING

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

(Assistant to the Chief Executive) To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Assistant to the Chief Executive). To declare interests in any items of the agenda.

In considering whether to declare a personal or a prejudicial interest under the Code of Conduct, Overview and Scrutiny members are asked to pay particular attention to paragraph 11 of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements.

This requires the declaration of a personal and prejudicial interest in any matter before an Overview and Scrutiny Committee which relates to a decision of or action by another Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council, a Joint Committee or Joint Sub-Committee in which the Council is involved and of which the Councillor is also a member.

Paragraph 11 does not refer to Cabinet decisions or attendance at an Overview and Scrutiny meeting purely for the purpose of answering questions or providing information on such a matter.

4. NOTES FROM THE LAST MEETING (Pages 5 - 10)

To agree the notes of the last meeting held on 12 February 2009 (attached).

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE (Pages 11 - 12)

The Terms of Reference are attached.

6. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 13 - 16)

The Work Programme is attached.

7. PLANNING ENFORCEMENT SCOPING REPORT (Pages 17 - 20)

(Director of Planning and Economic Development). To note the attached report.

8. GYPSY AND TRAVELLER DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (DPD) UPDATE (Pages 21 - 22)

(Director of Planning and Economic Development). To note the attached report.

9. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK TIMELINE (Pages 23 - 24)

Go East have responsibilities for monitoring overall progress on such documents, and recently introduced a new template for highlighting this. Officers from EFDC, Harlow and East Herts have formulated the attached response for discussion with Go East, but this is the most detailed and brief summary of the position, and this is attached.

10. IMPROVEMENT PLAN (Pages 25 - 32)

(Director of Planning and Economic Development). To consider the attached report.

11. FEEDBACK FROM MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT CONTROL CHAIRMEN AND VICE CHAIRMEN

Report to follow.

12. STAFFING UPDATE

Update on current staffing situation.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

14. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

This is the last meeting of the Panel for this current year. The Panel will next meet on Thursday 18 June 2009 and then on the following dates:

Tuesday 8 September 2009;
Tuesday 10 November 2009;
Tuesday 5 January 2010; and
Thursday 11 February 2010

This page is intentionally left blank

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY STANDING PANEL
HELD ON THURSDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2009
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT TIMES NOT SPECIFIED**

Members Present: Mrs L Wagland (Chairman), K Chana (Vice-Chairman), K Angold-Stephens, M Colling, Mrs A Cooper, R Frankel, Mrs A Haigh and H Ulkun

Other members present: Mrs A Grigg

Apologies for Absence: A Boyce, J Hart, Mrs C Pond and P Spencer

Officers Present S G Hill (Senior Democratic Services Officer), D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive) and J Preston (Director of Planning and Economic Development)

Also in attendance:

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of Interest were made pursuant to the Code of Conduct.

34. NOTES FROM THE LAST MEETING - 18.11.08

The notes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record subject to the alteration of the 'fought' to 'sought' on page 5 paragraph 6.

35. MATTERS ARISING

(a) Crooked Mile (note 28)

It was noted that the Portfolio Holder had met with Councillor Hume (ECC) and had raised members concerns about the Crooked Mile directly. It was understood that County Officers were currently working on proposals for the road which would be published in April 2009.

Councillor Cooper stated that concerns about the road had been raised with ECC three years previously and nothing had been done. It was anticipated that the Safer Cleaner Greener Panel would receive the report.

36. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Haigh was substituting for Councillor Spencer and Councillor Angold-Stephens for Councillor Pond.

37. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of reference were noted.

38. WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel considered its work programme. The following actions were agreed for incorporation:

(1) EoEP and LDF

The Panel noted the current position on the Gypsy and Traveller consultation, work being undertaken on the proposed division of sites within the region, proposals coming to Council at its next meeting about a new LDF Cabinet Committee, work being done to extend regional strategies to 2031

Agreed: That an LDF timeline to be presented to Panel showing the key milestones to aid scrutiny of the process.

(3) Value for Money – Service based reviews

Agreed: That a scoping report be prepared for the next meeting for the Enforcement review

(8) Feedback from Development Control Chairmen and Vice Chairmen

Noted that meeting would be held on 26 February 2009. The Chairman of the Panel would attend to feedback to the Panel at its next meeting. Members requested a regular Development Control feedback item on future agendas.

Agreed: That the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen be asked to consider:

- (i) How appeals and costs can be improved; and
- (ii) How to improve the involvement of other statutory agencies (i.e. Highways)

(10) Gypsy and Traveller consultation

Agreed: Next Gypsy and Traveller consultation update to March meeting.

(11) Performance at Appeals.

Agreed: Report to come to 18 June meeting. The Panel requested that the report on probity in planning be considered again at that time.

39. PRESENTATION ON THE PLANNING PORTAL

The Panel received a presentation on the Planning Portal from Stephen Bacon, Planning Services.

The following issues were raised:

- (i) Having the Pinpoint technology made available at the Planning subcommittee meetings with links to the planning system being put in the agenda documents - This would be looked at;
- (ii) Considering the use of Multimap as the base mapping programme for the pinpoint system – The current system used Google mapping.

- (iii) Security of the system – it was noted that a recent third party check on system security had given the system a clean bill of health.
- (iv) Future compatibility – All images were in standard TIFF format and data within text files that could be exported to any future system.
- (v) Scheme Evaluation – it was proposed that once the e-Consultation system was up and running then a review would be undertaken
- (vi) Future system costs – It was noted that pinpoint was currently free as the Council were helping in the development of the system. The future cost of the mapping system had been built into the original systems costings.
- (vii) How were service users without internet access being catered for? Planning Services had a list of users with no access and they were provided with hard copies. At present Parish Council were on a dual system but could opt out of hard copies.
- (viii) How did the Council know who had responded electronically? The Council acknowledged all submissions and the new system would have a registration process.

The Panel also considered that formal training session should organised for members on the use of the system. Mr Bacon was thanked for his presentation.

Agreed: Member training to be organised.

40. UPDATE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE - REVISED ESTIMATE 2008/09 AND ESTIMATE FOR 2009/10

The Panel received a position statement on the Planning Services budget and noted that development control income was on or near budget for the year. It was proposed to increase Building Control charges by 8% to achieve the break-even requirement over a three year rolling programme.

There had been an increase in the budget for direct services which included allocations for the LDF. Additionally, revised estimates for the year included further sums for design briefs for Loughton Broadway and Epping.

The full budget for 2009/10 would be presented to Council on 17 February 2009.

J Preston also indicated that copy charges were being reviewed. In terms of the budget overall, he commented that LLC income was down as not as many people were buying or selling houses, building control workloads mirrored this. Changes in the permitted development rules meant that some applications no longer needed permission but some that previous had not, now did. Income was currently up on profile but it was a complex picture to understand and predict.

The Panel asked how it was proposed to address the current downturn. J Preston responded that this was a corporate issue to address but that Planning and Economic Development did have a Economic Development Officer and a Town Centre Officer.

The Panel asked that these officers come to a future meeting to discuss how the Council can address local issues in current downturn.

Agreed: Economic Development Officer and a Town Centre Officer to attend a future meeting.

41. SCRUTINY REVIEW REQUEST - COUNCILLOR A. COOPER

The Panel noted that a request for scrutiny had been referred to the Committee at its last meeting. The request was from Councillor Mrs Cooper and contained a series of questions about the planning application/appeals process.

The Head of Planning and Economic Development presented a report which contained answers to the questions together with advice about the process.

The Panel considered that the responses could be developed into FAQ style advice for members. Panel members discussed how the Council could improve advice from third party consultees particularly Highways. It was agreed that this issue should be raised with the Development Control Committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen and with the Portfolio Holder.

Agreed:

- (i) That the response be agreed and reported back to OSC;
- (ii) That the Head of Planning and Economic Development seek to develop the responses into a FAQ sheet for members;
- (iii) That the issue of attendance of highways officers at planning meetings (and other statutory bodies) if presenting objections to be raised with ECC thro PFH and at DC Chairs/Vice Chairs meeting on 26 February 2009 to include how consideration of how contentious applications can flagged in the weekly planning list.

42. PLANNING COMMITTEE 3 WEEK CYCLE

The Panel received a report which outlined the effect of the change to the 4-week planning committee cycle to a 3-week cycle. The change had begun effectively after the 21 May 2008 committee. The effect of the change had been to increase the proportion of cases considered by committee and within the eight week deadline to 55. This figure would have been 19 under the old four week cycle. This increase in performance was higher than had been anticipated.

The Council, however was still not in the top quartile and it was noted that issues such as increased delegation and Councillor call-in could be looked at.

The Panel noted that a full review of Council meetings was envisaged in time for the Meetings Calendar for 2010/11 at which time Planning Meetings would be reviewed.

43. REVIEW OF PLANNING PROTOCOL

The Epping Forest District Standards Committee was undertaking one of its regular reviews of the Council's Planning Protocol and was consulting members of the Council, planning officers, legal staff, planning agents and local councils to ascertain whether they had any new issues which should be covered in the Protocol or whether any existing provisions needed revision. This review was scheduled for completion by July.

The Standards Committee had itself already identified some aspects of the Protocol. In addition, the Panel highlighted the following matters as requiring consideration:

- (i) Sections 21.9-2.11 – Interests relating to campaigning on local issues that might fetter discretion. (Angold Stephens)
- (ii) What could be done by Parish/Town Council's at their meetings to make the position of dual hated members clear to those attending – could we issue advice? (Haigh)
- (iii) Sections 2.10 and 5.2 (a) and (b) conflict (Wagland)
- (iv) Section 5.2 (b) (second part) – Could a process be developed that the Chairman gives a general declaration at planning meetings (Wagland)
- (v) Section 8 – Clearer advice as to property related employments (Ulkun) and could we do more to tell applicants about this? (Wagland)
- (vi) Could advice be given about the membership of clubs where you area regular attender? Eg Football clubs?
- (vii) Advice about where a Councillor stands when addressing the Committee when he/she had a prejudicial interest (Wagland)

Agreed: Preceding matters to be referred back to the Standards Committee for consideration as part of the review.

(Councillor Cooper declared a personal interest in this item but remained in the meeting for duration of the item.

44. STAFFING UPDATE

The current staffing position was noted.

45. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Noted that the Improvement Plan would be considered in more detail at the Panels March meeting.

46. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Next meeting 12 March 2009.

This page is intentionally left blank

TERMS OF REFERENCE - STANDING PANEL

Title: Planning Services

Status: Standing Panel

Terms of Reference:

1. To consider matters which arise through the process that the Government is driving to bring in an East Of England Plan as issued in May 2008; these may range from how to respond to the initiatives or views of those who support or oppose us, and how we may support or oppose the views taken by others, and how to work in partnership with others to secure delivery of the plan with adequate infrastructure. In particular, this is to allow the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economic Development to remain tuned in to local views.
2. In association with 1, to keep an overview of work associated with securing a sound New Local Development Framework; in particular how the core strategy will cater for the adequate delivery of infrastructure of all types, the limited rolling back of the Metropolitan Green Belt to allow the regeneration and expansion of Harlow, the increased provision of affordable housing, and the maintenance of the existing settlement pattern elsewhere in the District.
3. To consider what changes are practical and desirable to Council policies concerning the Metropolitan Green Belt; including those concerning the extension of existing dwellings, and the reuse of redundant and other buildings; in particular, are further restrictions necessary (changes in policy required) to ensure that such developments are truly sustainable.
4. To consider in detail the provision of Value for Money within the following Planning Services focusing specifically on:
 - Development Control (including Appeals)
 - Forward Planning
 - Building Control
 - Enforcement
 - Administration and Customer Support
 - Economic Development
 - Environment Team
5. To gather evidence and information in relation to these functions through the receipt of:
 - performance monitoring documents,
 - Best Value Review of Planning Services (updated version)
 - benchmarking exercises,
 - consultation with Planning Committee Members, customers and IT Suppliers.
6. To identify problems, possible solutions, barriers to success;
7. To review the measures introduced since 2004 to improve performance within Development Control namely the success of
 - the 'Hit Squad',

- the Service restructure(s),
- the new IT system
- the application of the Planning Delivery Grant.

8. To review a selection of controversial planning decisions to see if lessons can be learnt from their consideration.
9. To consider whether the reporting arrangements for all of the above matters and those for the Section 106s (including how they are negotiated agreed and implemented strategically to secure community benefit), and appeals are sufficient (including how new legislation impacts on these) and to recommend accordingly.
10. To evaluate all relevant facts in relation to the topics under review in an objective way and to produce recommendations for future action accordingly;
11. To establish whether there are any resource implications arising out of the topics under review and advise Cabinet for inclusion in the Budget Process 2008/09;
12. To report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at appropriate intervals and to submit an interim report on Development Control in the June 2008 cycle, and a final report on all matters by March 2009.
13. To report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Council and the Cabinet with recommendations on matters allocated to the Panel as appropriate.

Chairman: Cllr Mrs Wagland

Planning Services Standing Panel			
Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress / Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
<p>(1) (i) New Local Development Scheme and East of England Plan – EFDC Response to Final Version</p> <p>(ii) To consider matters that arise through the East of England Plan</p> <p>(iii) In association with the above, to keep an overview of work associated with securing a sound New Local Development Framework</p> <p>(2) (i) Re use of buildings in the Green Belt/Traffic Issues in the Roydon and Nazeing Areas.</p> <p>(ii) To keep an overview on transport matters that were the subject of a focus day in Nazeing in March 2007, and the action plan.</p>	<p>Next report at the March 2009 meeting</p>	<p>(i) Final version of the East of England plan incomplete. Awaiting the results of a legal challenge and the results from the gypsy/traveller consultation.</p> <p>(ii) To receive a progress report at each meeting.</p> <p>(iii) LDF timeline to be presented.</p>	<p>15th July 2008</p> <p>9th September</p> <p>4th November</p> <p>6th January 2009</p> <p>12th February 2009</p> <p>12th March 2009</p>
	<p>March/April 2009</p>	<p>On going – VOSA attended meeting of the old Environment and Planning Standing Panel on 28 Feb 2008.</p> <p>Awaiting Essex C.C. transport freight strategy for the Nazeing area. A review of the action plan will come forward at the March/April 2009 meeting.</p>	

<p>(3) To consider the provision of Value for Money within the following Planning Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Control (including Appeals) • Forward Planning • Building Control Enforcement • Administration and Customer Support • Economic Development • Environment Team 	<p>Completed (Subject to annual review in August 2009) November 2008</p> <p>February 2009</p> <p>Review – Scoping Report due March 09.</p> <p>To be discussed at June meeting</p>	<p>The timetable of review was agreed at the September meeting of the Panel.</p> <p>To be re-scheduled.</p> <p>To include response to Economic Downturn.</p>	
<p>(4) Consultation with Residents and Amenity Groups</p> <p>Direct consultation</p>	<p>To be completed in time for August 2009 review. To be confirmed</p>	<p>Completed June 2008</p>	

<p>(5) To consider in detail the provision of Value For Money within the Development Control (Planning Services) function, focusing specifically on:</p> <p>(a) The success of the 'hit squad' established to focus on the backlog of planning applications;</p> <p>(b) How and to what extent performance in relation to the determination of planning applications has improved as a result of the 'hit squad' and other additional resources such as the new integrated computer system, the restructure of Planning Services and the application of Planning Delivery Grant; and</p> <p>(c) How unit cost and other benchmarking information in relation to the Development Control function can be obtained to increase the effectiveness of the Value For Money Analysis for 2006/07 and future years.</p>	<p>Completed report to November 2008 OSC meeting</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p>	
<p>(6) Update on current staffing situation</p>	<p>Regular agenda item. Next update to March 09 Panel.</p>		

(7) Improvement Plan	Detailed Review at March meeting	
(8) Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of Area Planning Cttees to be invited to a meeting to provide feedback.	Feedback at march 09 meeting	As an agenda item for the Development Control Chairmen & Vice Chairmen 26 February 2009
(9) IT Presentation	February 2009	Completed
(10) Update on Gypsy and Traveller Consultation	March 2009	
(11) Report from legal on performance at planning appeals	18 June 2009 meeting	
(12) Scrutiny Review Request – Councillor Mrs A Cooper		
(i) Report response back to OSC (ii) Seek to develop these into a FAQ for members	To April OSC Timescale – To be confirmed	
(13) Review of Planning Protocol	Feb 09	Completed



SCRUTINY



Report to Planning Services Scrutiny Standing Panel

Date of meeting: 12 March 2009

Subject: Introduction to Planning Enforcement

Officer contact for further information: S Solon (Principal Planning Officer – 01992 56 4103)

Committee Secretary: M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant – 01992 56 4607)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

To note the Introduction to Planning Enforcement Report

Report:

1. The Panel's Terms of Reference had indicated that they were to consider Value for Money within Planning Enforcement. This report is designed to give general background on planning enforcement and to allow the Panel to consider the scope of future discussion.

1.1 The main purposes of the Councils' planning enforcement service is to:

- Investigate allegations of breaches of planning control.
- Remedy the harm caused by actual breaches of planning control.
- Regularise acceptable development carried out in breach of planning control.

1.2 In fulfilling its purpose the planning enforcement service has regard to relevant legislation, case law, national planning policy and adopted development plan policy. The planning merits of all actual breaches of planning control are assessed prior to an appropriate course of action being decided on. The service primarily draws on the resources of other sections within the Planning Directorate and on legal advice provided by and through the corporate Support Services Directorate.

1.3 Planning enforcement is a discretionary function of the Council. However, experience suggests the demand for the delivery of a planning enforcement service is high. The failure of a Council to take appropriate and timely enforcement action can lead to a Council being found guilty of maladministration and required to compensate those whose interests are harmed by the consequences of breaches of planning control.

2. PLANNING ENFORCEMENT TEAM

2.1 The Council's Planning Enforcement Team is part of the Development Control Group of the Planning and Economic Development Directorate and is made up of 7 staff. That comprises a Principal Planning Officer, Senior Enforcement Officer, 3 Enforcement Officers, a Compliance Officer and a dedicated administrative officer. The Compliance Officer post is a part time post that is currently vacant.

2.2 The Principal Planning Officer and Senior Enforcement Officer are the only posts where the post holder is required to have a relevant planning qualification.

2.3 The role of the Principal Planning Officer is not confined to dealing with planning enforcement and management of the Team. It includes responsibility for dealing with planning applications and preparing and presenting reports to Committee on a 3

weekly cycle resulting in approximately half that post being used for work outside of the Team.

3. PERFORMANCE

3.1 Indicators of planning enforcement activity include the numbers of investigations into allegations of breaches of planning control that have been started, the number of investigations completed, the number of notices issued and the number of prosecutions completed. Further indicators are numbers of notices defended at appeal and instances of direct action.

3.2 Comparable data exists from 1 January 2006. The performance data for the Team is set out on the following page.

Turnover of investigations: (provisional)

Year	Investigations started	Investigations completed	Investigations on hand at end of year
2006	999 (incl c/f cases)	657	342
2007	747	739	350
2008	715	759	306

Investigations completed on resolution of a breach of planning control:

2006	147	(22% of total for year)
2007	136	(18% of total for year)
2008	145	(19% of total for year)

Notices Issued: (Note – Planning Contravention Notices (PCN's) are requests for information)

	Notices other Than PCN's	PCN's
2006	23	20
2007	29	31
2008	27	16

Appeals against enforcement notices received:

2006	8	(2 inquiries, 4 hearings, 2 written representations)	2 allowed)
2007	20	(9 inquiries, 4 hearings, 7 written representations)	2 allowed)
2008	10	(2 inquiries, 8 written representations)	0 allowed but decision pending on 5 appeals)

Prosecutions started:

2006	15
2007	9
2008	11

Injunctions sought:

2006	1
2007	0
2008	1

Direct Action:

The Planning Enforcement Team has taken direct action on one occasion during the last 3 years. The action was to obliterate an advertisement painted on a single trailer parked in a field when the owner of the field and the trailer could not be traced.

4. ISSUES/CHALLENGES

4.1 Staffing:

- 4.1.1 Between August 2006 and February 2009 the Team has been fully staffed. However, some staff have had extended periods of absence due to illness/bereavement. Since February 2009 the Compliance Officer post has been vacant pending a decision on whether to replace that post with either a further Senior Officer post or a full time Compliance Officer post. At the same time, one Enforcement Officer has been taken seriously ill and is unlikely to return to work for a number of months.
- 4.1.2 To ensure the turnover of investigations is maintained in the short term the Teams' Principal Officer will no longer do Committee work, however, he will continue to jointly act up to cover the Assistant Director of Planning (Development Control) post.

4.2 Skills:

- 4.2.1 It is proposed to address a skills shortage in the longer term by seeking the creation of a new Senior Enforcement Officer post to replace that of the part time Compliance Officer. In the short term, the increased time given to planning enforcement work by the Teams' Principal Officer will partially address this issue.

4.3 Achieving improved performance:

- 4.3.1 Dealing with this issue depends on successfully addressing the staffing and skills issues. However, improved performance could create similar issues for other Directorates if demand for their support increases beyond their current capacity.
- 4.3.2 The Teams' Principal Officer is concerned that the number of investigations closed for the reason that a breach of planning control has been resolved is low and that the numbers of enforcement notices issued each year is low. He recognises there is a lack of control over the nature and number of allegations of breaches of planning control received and that enforcement action is taken as a last resort when all reasonable attempts to secure the cooperation of a contravener have failed. Nevertheless, there would appear to be a case for the adoption of local performance targets as a mechanism for driving up the Team's performance. Members should be aware that there are currently no performance targets for planning enforcement.

4.4 Expectations of the public and Members:

- 4.4.1 Experience suggests the expectations of the public and Members of the Council's planning enforcement service are high and goes beyond a service that is primarily reactive as at present. The capability of the Planning Enforcement Team to meet such expectations is limited by the resources available to it. Addressing staffing and skills issues would go some way to deal with that gap. In addition, measures to create a better understanding of the work of the Team on the part of the public and Members could assist in narrowing the gap between capability and expectation. However, improved performance would be a more effective way of doing so.

5. MATTERS FOR SCRUTINY

- 5.1 Officers have no fixed views on the issues and challenges set out above. They are

set out with the aim of stimulating discussion. Officers would welcome a clear statement from the Panel on their vision for the delivery of the planning enforcement service with particular reference to the following:

- What view do the Panel take of the above issues and challenges?
- Have efforts to reduce the number of investigations on hand been recognised?
- What is the Panels sense of the reporting of results?
- Do Members feel they adequately understand the planning enforcement processes?



SCRUTINY



Report to Planning Services Scrutiny Standing Panel

Date of meeting: 12 March 2009

Subject: Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Update

Officer contact for further information: J Preston (Director of Planning and Economic Development – 01992 56 4111)

Committee Secretary: M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant – 01992 56 4607)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That, the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Update, be noted.

Report:

Following extension of its deadline, the Gypsy and Traveller Consultation closed on 20 February 2009.

The consultation had generated the following broad area of response:

- In total, there were 9,700 responses to the consultation made;
- 8,100 group responses;
- 900 individual responses; and
- 700 responses were made online

Some of these responses are still being checked for duplication. The responses are being put through various processes for analysis. This will generate a report for the Council about the number of responses, and a second report reflecting on where the analysis suggests the Council can go in terms of a strategy, specific extra provision of sites, within the timescale of the Government 's Direction.

Some general themes are clear from the considerable response received. There appear to be few responses that needed returning so acceptable language can be used. Appendix 2 of the document appears to have aided this position.

Some technical responses are still awaited, in particular that from the Environment Agency. However, the work is far from over, and it has been very significant for Officers and Members already, not least because of the experience of processes being new, and because the timescale has brought its own pressures.

The Panel will need to consider a fuller report in due course.

This page is intentionally left blank

GO East - Quarterly LDF Monitoring Template									
- Please enter the Name of your authority and the date the template was completed. - Next please list each of DPDs that your authority are either currently producing or proposing to produce (please don't include those already adopted). - For each DPD please enter the date published in your "in effect" LDS for each of the four statutory stages required by PPS12 - Please note that "Commencement" means the date of consulting statutory bodies on the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal. - Then please enter either, for those stages already reached, the date that stage actually happened, or for those stages in the future, your nearest estimate of when each stage will occur. - Please note that all dates need only show month and year. - Finally, when saving please rename the spreadsheet indicating the LPA and the appropriate quarter and year before returning to GO East (eg LDF monitoring template ANYPLACE DC Q1 09.xls)									
Local Authority	Epping Forest District Council								
DPD title	Commencement			Publication of Submission Document		Submission to SoS		Date Completed	Adoption
	"In Effect" LDS	Actual/Planned	"In Effect" LDS	"In Effect" LDS	Actual/Planned	"In Effect" LDS	Actual/Planned	"In Effect" LDS	Actual/Planned
Gypsy & Traveller DPD	April 2008	September 2008	N/A	N/A	*	September 2009	*	December 2010	
Core Strategy & Development Management Policies DPD **	October 2007	March 2009	N/A	N/A	April 2011	July 2009	October 2011	December 2010	July 2012
Land Allocations DPD	March 2008	March 2012	N/A	N/A	September 2013	December 2009	May 2014	April 2011	October 2014
Area Action Plan: Lands Around Harlow	March 2008	March 2012	N/A	N/A	September 2013	December 2009	May 2014	April 2011	October 2014
Area Action Plan: Land at North Weald	No longer required by RSS								
S.106 Contributions SPD	Content of this document now to be included in Core Strategy & Development Management Policies DPD								
ECC Urban Places Supplement SPD	Content of this document now to be included in Core Strategy & Development Management Policies DPD								
Statement of Community Involvement ***								September 2007	December 2009

* Clarification has recently been sought from GO East concerning the terms of the Direction, given that the Regulations have changed in respect of the public engagement that must be undertaken prior to Submission.

** Addition of Development Management Policies element

*** Commenced under previous Regulations, further consultation now needed prior to adoption by Council.

This page is intentionally left blank

Report to: Planning Services Scrutiny Standing Panel

Date of meeting: 12 March 2009

Subject: Improvement Plan

Officer contact for further information: J Preston (Director of Planning and Economic Development – 01992 56 4111)

Committee Secretary: M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant – 01992 56 4607)



Recommendation/Decisions Required:

To consider and comment on the proposed Planning and Economic Development Directorate Improvement Plan

Report:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6 November 2008 had agreed that the Planning and Economic Directorate would produce an Improvement Plan for the next eighteen months.

The Panel's investigations had shown that there had already been significant change within Planning over the last few years. However, there is scope for further change and improvement.

Attached is an updated draft of a previous version of the Improvement Plan put before this Panel in November 2008. The Plan is based on that used for other exercises, such as the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. The Plan seeks to identify 13 areas of potential improvement with indicative timescale and resources required which is based on feedback on current performance.

The Panel's continued input into the content and scope of the plan is sought.

This page is intentionally left blank

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN (UPDATE FEBRUARY 2009)

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT	ACTION(S)	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET FOR COMPLETION	RESOURCES AVAILABLE/ REQUIRED	PROGRESS
1. Review the measures used within Planning and Economic Development to ensure that Staff are maximising the performance of the Directorate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that processes are in place to implement the Corporate Performance Management Framework within Planning and Economic Development to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of Key Cabinet Objectives for the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio. • To produce a Directorate Business Plan for 2009/2010. • To identify Key Performance Indicators for inclusion in the KPI 2009/2010. • To produce Action Plans for Key Performance Indicators. 	Director of Planning and Economic Development	Feb 2009	Within existing resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Achieved <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Achieved <input type="checkbox"/> Limited Action
			April 2009		<input type="checkbox"/>
			Mid March 2009		<input type="checkbox"/>
			April 2009		<input type="checkbox"/>

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN (UPDATE FEBRUARY 2009)

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT	ACTION(S)	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET FOR COMPLETION	RESOURCES AVAILABLE/ REQUIRED	PROGRESS		
					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
					Fully Achieved	Partially Achieved	Limited Action
2. Develop and promote a set of service standards for Planning and Economic Development, outlining the minimum levels of service that external and internal customers will receive.	Review previous protocols, (e.g. those re DC and Enforcement) Set new Standards Report Compliance	Directorate Business Manager	End Mar 2009 April 2009 Quarterly	Within existing resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Include Staff in the Development of Service Business Plan. Undertake Staff Survey to assess effectiveness of current communication channels. Raise as part of Staff PDR Process	Directorate Management Team	Jan-March 09 June 2009 By end of May 09	Within existing resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		
3. Check the effectiveness of the channels of communication used to ensure that all staff are aware of service priorities and quality standards.							

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN (UPDATE FEBRUARY 2009)

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT	ACTION(S)	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET FOR COMPLETION	RESOURCES AVAILABLE/ REQUIRED	PROGRESS		
					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
					Fully Achieved	Partially Achieved	Limited Action
<p>4. Improve the mechanisms for regular on-going feedback from users on the quality of service they have received.</p> <p>Ensure officers with the appropriate level of responsibility act upon complaints.</p>	<p>Officer Group within Planning to be established to review Customer Services Issues and recommend areas for improvement.</p> <p>Refresh Training on Customer Complaint Handling to be undertaken</p>	<p>Directorate Business Manager</p> <p>Director of Planning, Assistant Directors</p>	<p>End of November 2008</p> <p>July 2009</p>	<p>Within existing resources.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>5. Improve ownership of problems and accountability amongst the Senior Management Team within Planning and Economic Development.</p>	<p>Individual Responsibilities to be clearly articulated at appointment. Part of Performance Development Review interviews to be undertaken by Director of Planning.</p>	<p>Director of Planning</p>	<p>At appointment</p> <p>End of May 2009</p>	<p>Within existing resources.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>6. Implement appropriate measures to raise morale and increase staff motivation in achieving service improvements.</p>	<p>Explore the production of a Directorate Newsletter to improve awareness and celebrate success.</p>	<p>Director of Planning</p>	<p>By end Sept 2009</p>	<p>Within existing resources.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN (UPDATE FEBRUARY 2009)

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT	ACTION(S)	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET FOR COMPLETION	RESOURCES AVAILABLE/ REQUIRED	PROGRESS		
					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
					Fully Achieved	Partially Achieved	Limited Action
7. Develop a systematic approach to workforce planning to address recurring recruitment and retention difficulties.	Update the previous Workforce development plan. Review recruitment procedures, so that there is an essentially up to date package of information open to all staff that can be used to quickly commence appropriate recruitment campaigns.	Reconvene previous team. Management Assistant	By end June 2009 By end Mar 2009	Within existing resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Improve the standard, content, presentation and consistency of reports to Development Control, Planning Standing Panel and Area Sub Committees.	Meet regularly with the Chairmen and Chairwomen of these. Review the "Standard template" for reports to Committees. Arrange refresher training for all those compiling or agreeing such reports.	Director of Planning and Assistant Directors	1st Meeting February 2009	Within existing resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
			May 2009	Within existing resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
			End June 2009	Within existing resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN (UPDATE FEBRUARY 2009)

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT	ACTION(S)	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET FOR COMPLETION	RESOURCES AVAILABLE/ REQUIRED	PROGRESS		
					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
					Fully Achieved	Partially Achieved	Limited Action
<p>9. Review the Corporate Planning protocol with respect to dealing with applicants, agents, developers and the local business community to ensure that the highest standards of probity and governance are achieved.</p>	<p>Report to Standing Panel for their consideration, in liaison with Constitutional Affairs Panel.</p>	<p>Director of Planning and Assistant to Chief Executive</p>	<p>February 2009</p>	<p>Within existing resources.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The existing Planning Protocol is already intended to remind staff, and to assure the public that officers, and members, have codes of conduct, professional training requirements, financial training and various registers of interests. The protocol is being reviewed/ amended and are being brought to Standing Panel for their consideration.</p>	
<p>10. Implement practical measures to improve the public perception and reputation of the Council's Planning Service, particularly with respect to high profile/controversial applications and enforcement action.</p>	<p>To instigate regular reporting on enforcement performance to Members. To publicise the outcome of enforcement action more widely.</p>	<p>Director of Planning and Economic Development</p>	<p>Quarterly Reporting Ongoing</p>		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>		

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN (UPDATE FEBRUARY 2009)

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT	ACTION(S)	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET FOR COMPLETION	RESOURCES AVAILABLE/ REQUIRED	PROGRESS		
					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
					Fully Achieved	Partially Achieved	Limited Action
11. Take positive action to raise confidence amongst elected Members of the Council with respect to the performance of the service area.	To report planning performance on a regular basis to the Standing Panel and Overview and Scrutiny Performance Management Committee	Director of Planning & Economic Development	Quarterly	Within existing recourse	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		There needs to be better communication of the successes, such as ICT.
12. Routinely review costs for the different elements of the service, set challenging targets for improved performance and implement effective monitoring arrangements.	To incorporate Value for Money considerations to include Benchmarking and Comparative Data from the Audit Commission within the Service Business Plans	Director of Planning and Principal Accountant	Business Plan completed by 31.3.09	Within existing Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>		The Scrutiny Panel has considered costs; further one off reviews are planned. Challenging targets already exist and the monitoring of these has been audited and found to be acceptable.
13. Ensure that there is a clear focus on the actions contained within the improvement plan by all senior staff within Planning and Economic Development and that priority is given to delivery.	To monitor the Improvement Plan at Directorate Senior Management Team Meetings. Provide updates at the Scrutiny Standing Panel	Director of Planning and Senior staff.	Regular Team Meetings When Standing Panel Meet	Within existing resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	