

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Local Development Framework **Date:** 11 November 2010
Cabinet Committee

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, **Time:** 7.00 - 7.55 pm
High Street, Epping

Members Present: Mrs D Collins (Chairman), R Bassett, B Rolfe and Mrs L Wagland

Other Councillors: K Angold-Stephens, Mrs A Grigg and D Stallan

Apologies: Mrs M Sartin and Ms S Stavrou

Officers Present: A Wintle (Principal Planning Officer) and G J Woodhall (Democratic Services Officer)

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

38. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

(1) That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2010 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record; and

(2) That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2010 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

39. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Cabinet Committee noted its Terms of Reference, as agreed by the Council on 17 February 2009 (minute 113(a) refers).

40. EMPLOYMENT LAND REVIEW

The Principal Planning Officer presented a report upon the Employment Land Review.

The Principal Planning Officer stated that the Employment Land Review had been prepared jointly for Epping Forest and Brentwood Councils, and had considered the need for growth in employment land for the period up to 2031 across both areas, with district level figures for growth. The Review had focused upon on B class employment, which currently accounted for 78.6% of the total employment within the District, and included business (B1), general industrial (B2) and storage and distribution (B8). There was a high level of out-commuting by residents within the

District, particularly to London. There was also a high level of micro-businesses (less than ten employees) within the District and it would be imperative to cater for their needs within the Local Development Framework.

The Principal Planning Officer reported that the Review had identified a need for approximately 8.7 hectares of new employment land for the period up to 2031 in the Epping Forest District. Despite the current economic downturn, it was still considered important to provide opportunities for economic recovery, although the rate at which further employment land was made available would need to be kept under review. Following consideration of existing supply, the Review had also found that the majority of existing employment land in the District was in fair or good condition.

The Principal Planning Officer added that the Review would need to be considered in conjunction with the Town Centres Study to ensure a coordinated approach to economic development within the District. The Review would be an important part of the Evidence Base to underpin the preparation of the Core Strategy and would help to achieve corporate objectives for supporting economic development in the District, as well as a strong foundation for new planning policies in this respect.

The Cabinet Committee emphasised the possibilities of non-linked conclusions from different studies, and the possibility that the required expansion could be required at sites not identified by the Review. With an increasing number of people working from home, and food and drink (business class A3) being a primary area of growth, then there might not be the need to provide such large amounts of additional B-class employment land. The possibility of developing additional "Live-Work" Development Control policies in due course was also highlighted.

The Principal Planning Officer reiterated that the Review had studied the potential for growth within B-Class employment sectors. There would be a future study looking at the glasshouse sites within the District as Officers were aware of the problems in Nazeing and Roydon, and the potential for employment uses within rural areas would also be considered as promised at the previous meeting of the Cabinet Committee. The recently completed Town Centres Study also provides a source of information on employment uses outside of the B-classes. The Review had also only considered the existing established industrial areas within the District. The Council was aware that Essex County Council had previously stated they would produce a Freight Transport Strategy, which might help address some of the issues to do with freight serving local businesses using inappropriate local roads. It was acknowledged that different strands from the different studies would need to be brought together, and the Principal Planning Officer agreed to attempt to arrange a joint presentation to the Cabinet Committee from the consultants who had performed the Town Centres Study and Employment Land Review.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the findings of the completed Employment Land Review be noted; and
- (2) That the Employment Land Review report be added to the Evidence Base to support the preparation of the Local Development Framework, although it had been based upon and influenced by policies and targets which might not be applicable in the future and might necessitate a review of the report in due course.

41. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STUDY OF THE LEE VALLEY WHITE WATER CENTRE

The Principal Planning Officer presented a report upon support for the Lee Valley

White Water Centre Economic Study.

The Cabinet Committee was reminded that the Council was a member of the Lee Valley White Water Centre Legacy Board, which also included Broxbourne Borough Council, the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, Hertfordshire County Council and Essex County Council. It was proposed that a study considering the economic and social implications of the venue be undertaken and examine the impacts there might be on the surrounding area. The Council had been requested to contribute to the cost of the study, and it was considered that this contribution should be no more than £15,000. This work would also contribute to the Evidence Base of the Local Development Framework.

The Cabinet Committee felt that this was a good opportunity for the District, and Waltham Abbey in particular, but also had a number of concerns about the methodology being employed and the proposed engagement of consultants. It was felt that the Joint Olympic Officer should be involved in the process and probably should be managing it. The Cabinet Committee requested confirmation of the timetable for the appointment of the post and how the post would dovetail with the work now being done. There was a fear that abortive work might be undertaken if the brief for the study was issued before the role had been recruited to, and that the capacity of the Joint Olympic Officer role should be considered before assuming that consultants were needed to undertake the study.

The Cabinet Committee also thought that the District Council's Olympic Champion should be involved in the process, along with Town Councillors from Waltham Abbey and the Town Centre Partnership. In addition, it was reiterated that the Joint Olympic Officer should be providing the Cabinet Committee with regular updates, so that the Council could be assured that it was getting full and proper benefit from its share of the funding for the post. A request was made for the Joint Olympic Officer to present to the Cabinet Committee on the key priorities within their role when an appointment had been made.

The Principal Planning Officer confirmed that the Joint Olympic Officer post was expected to be filled before Christmas and verified that the District Council's Olympic Champion had been involved already whilst Town Councillors from Waltham Abbey would be involved in the near future.

RECOMMENDED:

- (1) That the Council be part of the commissioning of the Lee Valley White Water Centre Economic Development Study in combination with the other stakeholders;
- (2) That a financial contribution towards this study be provided by the Council, capped at a maximum of £15,000, and that this cost be met from the existing LDF budget, subject to the concerns previously expressed regarding the job description of the Joint Olympic Officer being satisfied; and
- (3) That, when appointed, the Joint Olympic Officer be invited to give a presentation to the Cabinet Committee on their key priorities within their role.

Reasons for Decision:

To seek to capitalise upon the potential opportunities presented to the District in relation to the new Lee Valley White Water Centre.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

To not part-fund this piece of work and therefore not contribute or secure any benefit from the study. However, this would risk potentially missing opportunities for Waltham Abbey and the broader District to benefit from Lee Valley White Water Centre.

42. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There was no other urgent business for consideration by the Cabinet Committee.

CHAIRMAN