



Epping Forest District Council

PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY STANDING PANEL Monday, 10th January, 2011

Place:	Civic Offices, High Street, Epping
Room:	Committee Room 1
Time:	7.00 pm
Democratic Services Officer	Mark Jenkins - Office of the Chief Executive Email mjenkins@eppingforestdc.gov.uk Tel: 01992 564607

Members:

Councillors J Philip (Chairman), H Ulkun (Vice-Chairman), Mrs P Brooks, C Finn, Mrs A Grigg, Mrs S Jones, Mrs M McEwen, J Markham, W Pryor, A Watts and J M Whitehouse

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. TERMS OF REFERENCE (Pages 5 - 6)

The Terms of Reference are attached.

5. NOTES FROM THE LAST MEETING (Pages 7 - 18)

To agree the notes of the Panel meeting held on 11 October 2010 (attached).

6. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 19 - 24)

The Work Programme is attached.

7. HARLOW COUNCIL CORE STRATEGY ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION DOCUMENT (Pages 25 - 34)

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

8. REQUEST FOR DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT FUND (DDF) CARRY OVER TO 2011/12 AND 12/13 (Pages 35 - 38)

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

9. TOWN CENTRES OFFICER POST/FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF TOWN CENTRE (Pages 39 - 42)

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

10. THE PLANNING AGENTS AMENITY GROUP FORUM (Pages 43 - 50)

The Planning Agents/ Amenity Group Forum was held on 26 October 2010 and there was a good turn out with some Members of this Panel also in attendance.

Attached as an appendix are the notes of the forum which, if agreed, will then be forwarded on to those who turned up. The Panel may wish to comment on what actions may be taken forwarded to further improve the service to its customers.

11. PLANNING ENFORCEMENT (Pages 51 - 54)

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

12. ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL MINERALS DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT PREFERRED APPROACH PAPER (Pages 55 - 58)

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

13. CONSULTATION PLANNING FEES (Pages 59 - 114)

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

14. DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN (Pages 115 - 204)

Planning Services Scrutiny Standing Panel

Monday, 1

(Director of Planning and Economic Development) To consider the attached Draft Business Plan.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

16. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next programmed meeting of the Panel is on 3 March 2011 at 7.30p.m.

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TERMS OF REFERENCE - STANDING PANEL

Title: Planning Services

Status: Standing Panel

Terms of Reference:

1. To consider in detail the provision of Value for Money within the following Planning Services in focusing specifically on:
 - Development Control (including Appeals)
 - Forward Planning
 - Building Control
 - Enforcement
 - Administration and Customer Support
 - Economic Development
 - Environment Team
2. 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.
3. To review the measures taken to improve performance within the directorate.
4. 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, the provision of affordable housing, and the maintenance of the settlement pattern elsewhere in the District.
5. 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.
6. To establish whether there are any resource implications arising out of the topics under review and advise Cabinet for inclusion in the Budget Process each year;
7. To report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at appropriate intervals on the above. To report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Council and the Cabinet with recommendations on matters allocated to the Panel as appropriate.

Chairman: Councillor J Philip

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EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Planning Services Scrutiny Standing Panel **Date:** Monday, 11 October 2010

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.30 - 9.10 pm

Members Present: J Philip (Chairman), H Ulkun (Vice-Chairman), Mrs P Brooks, Mrs M McEwen, W Pryor, A Watts, J M Whitehouse, K Angold-Stephens, A Boyce and Mrs M Sartin

Other Councillors: Mrs D Collins, Mrs P Smith, Ms S Stavrou and Mrs L Wagland

Apologies: Mrs A Grigg, Mrs S Jones and J Markham

Officers Present: J Preston (Director of Planning and Economic Development), S King (Forward Planning Assistant), L McGann (Planning Officer) and M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant)

29. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillors K Angold-Stephens, A Boyce and Mrs M Sartin were substituting for Councillors J Markham, Mrs S Jones and Mrs A Grigg respectively.

30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

31. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Panel was informed that officers were working on a re-draft of the Terms of Reference. It was noted that the current Terms of Reference contained the name of Councillor Mrs L Wagland, and not the current panel Chairman, Councillor J Philip.

32. EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL CORE STRATEGY ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

The District Council had received a consultation document from East Hertfordshire District Council regarding its Core Strategy Issues and Options. Ms S King, Information and Technical Officer, presented the consultation to the Panel. The East Hertfordshire District Council had amassed a detailed evidence base for their Local Development Framework, including technical studies on topics like:

- Transport
- Employment
- Climate Change
- Landscape; and
- Housing

They had also conducted community stakeholder sessions, gathering local opinion on future planning policy. This groundwork had led to the preparation of an Issues and Options Stage Consultation document for its future Core Strategy.

As an adjacent local authority Epping Forest District Council could be affected by decisions made in the East Herts Core Strategy.

The consultation document addressed the proposed growth of housing and jobs in East Herts District and in and around Harlow, particularly the proposed development north of Harlow, and urban extension to the east, south and west of Harlow. The consultation was based on targets set by the East of England Plan (EEP), although this was in the process of being abolished.

Response to Consultation Questions:

Question 1: Sustainability Appraisal. Do you have any comments on the Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal?

Response: The Sustainability Appraisal appeared detailed and to assess the appropriate topics. There was concern regarding the severe additional stress on water resources in the local area, especially on the River Stort, and significant impacts on road and passenger rail capacity. The Council felt that a discussion of possible freight transport via waterways should be explored, as this would help to alleviate congestion and would be a sustainable form of transport.

Question 2: Habitats regulations Assessment. Do you have any comments on the Core Strategy Habitats regulations Assessment?

Response: The Habitats regulation Assessment appeared to be detailed, and to assess the appropriate topics.

The District Council was pleased that existing problems regarding the high level of NOx in and around the special area of conservation has been recognised. It was assumed that the potential impacts of increased traffic caused by large scale development in and around Harlow, would be carefully considered in future iterations of the Core Strategy. However there was concern about development to the north of Harlow, it was likely that large scale development within the district was more likely to affect the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation. It was also felt that water sustainability was a concern.

Theme 1: East Herts Energy and Climate Change

Question 3: Theme 1: LDF Strategic Objectives. Have we got the LDF strategic objectives for Theme 1 correct?

Response: This seemed appropriate, but should be more explicit in encouraging renewable energy generation.

Question 4: Theme 1: Policy Options. Is our approach to dealing with the policy options for Theme 1 correct?

Response: This seemed appropriate.

Theme 2: East Herts People and Community Safety

Question 5: Theme 2: LDF Strategic Objectives. Have we got the LDF strategic objectives for Theme 2 correct?

Response: These seemed appropriate.

Question 6: Theme 2: Policy Options. Is our approach to dealing with the policy options for Theme 2 correct?

Response: This seemed appropriate.

Theme 3: Housing East Herts

Question 7: Theme 3: Housing East Herts. Have we got the LDF strategic objectives for Theme 3 correct?

Response: The more general objectives seemed appropriate, but HOU2, relating to the now-revoked East of England Plan, should be removed, and replaced by an evidence-led local target. It was felt that the reference to a revoked policy was unhelpful. It was felt that this section should include some commentary on housing mix and tenure. East Hertfordshire, Harlow and Epping Forest Councils would need to work together to find the correct balance to suit the different needs of residents in all three districts. The recently completed Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) should help in this respect.

Question 8: Theme 3: Policy Options. Is our approach to dealing with the policy options for Theme 3 correct?

Response: This seemed appropriate.

Theme 4: East Herts Character

Question 9: Theme 4: LDF Strategic Objectives. Have we got the LDF strategic objectives for Theme 4 correct?

Response: These seemed appropriate.

Question 10: Theme 4: Policy options. Is our approach to dealing with the policy options for Theme 4 correct?

Response: This seemed appropriate.

Theme 5: East Herts Economy, Skills and Prosperity

Question 11: Theme 5: LDF Strategic Objectives. Have we got the LDF strategic objectives for Theme 5 correct?

Response: This seemed appropriate.

Question 12: Theme 5: Policy Options. Is our approach to dealing with the policy options for Theme 5 correct?

Response: This seemed appropriate.

Theme 6: East Herts on the move

Question 13: Theme 6: LDF Strategic Objectives. Have we got the LDF strategic objectives for Theme 6 correct?

Response: This seemed appropriate.

Question 14: Theme 6: Policy options Is our approach to dealing with the policy options for Theme 6 correct?

Response: This seemed appropriate.

Theme 7: East Herts Health, Wellbeing ad Play

Question 15: Theme 7: Strategic Objectives. Have we got the LDF strategic objectives for Theme 7 correct?

Response: This seemed appropriate.

Question 16: Theme 7: Policy Options. Is our approach to dealing with the policy options for Theme 7 correct?

Response: This seemed appropriate.

Theme 8: Green East Herts

Question 17: Theme 8: LDF Strategic Objectives. Have we got the LDF strategic objectives for Theme 8 correct?

Response: In general these seemed appropriate. It was suggested that an additional objective GRE5 should be added, "To safeguard existing nationally and internationally important habitats and areas of biodiversity (SACs, SPAs and SSSIs) from negative impacts associated with development."

Question 18: Theme 8: Policy Options. Is our approach to dealing with the policy options for Theme 8 correct?

Response: This seemed appropriate.

Theme 9: East Herts Monitoring and Delivery

Question 19: Theme 9: LDF Strategic Objectives. Have we got the LDF strategic objectives for Theme 9 correct?

Response: This seemed appropriate.

Question 20: Theme 9: Policy Options. Is our approach to dealing with the policy options for Theme 9 correct?

Response: This seemed appropriate.

East Herts LDF Vision

Question 21: LDF Vision. Is our emerging LDF vision for what East Herts will be like in 2031 correct?

Response: This covered all the pertinent issues.

Question 22: Broad Locations for Growth. Which development strategy do you think is the most appropriate to meet the challenges facing East Herts and achieve sustainable development?

Option A: Towns

Option B: Towns and larger Service Villages

Option C: Towns, larger Service Villages, and Smaller Service Villages

Option D: Towns, Larger Service Villages, Smaller service Villages and Other, Villages/Hamlets

Option E: Towns, Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City

Option F: Settlements within Transport Corridors

Response: It was noted that the targets in this section were predicated on were in the now – revoked East of England Plan and it was assumed that appropriate amendments would be made before the next iteration of the Core Strategy. It was felt that options A and E were preferred, as these concentrated growth to existing urban areas and extensions to existing towns, thereby locating development in a sustainable location with facilities, services and transport links nearby. Options B and C were less preferred, as they would result in a more dispersed, less sustainable pattern. Option F was seen as unsustainable as the smaller settlements were unlikely to have the services to support development, and Option D even more so, as it would result in even lower accessibility to services.

The Council was concerned that there was little reference to the potential Strategic Green belt Reviews at Stevenage and Welwyn, even though the potential for one at Harlow was mentioned. It was felt that the area to the north of Harlow should be considered as another option for a development location.

Question 23: Approaches to Housing Distribution. Which housing distribution approach do you think is the most appropriate to meet the challenges facing East Herts and achieve sustainable development?

Approach I: Proportional Distribution

Approach II: Adjusted Proportional Distribution

Approach III: reversed

Approach IV: Equal Distribution

Approach V: Distribution by Land Availability

Approach VI: Distribution by settlement Type

Response: Approaches I and II were preferred, as these allocated growth to settlements based on their existing size, thus concentrating development near existing services and infrastructure, which was sustainable. Approaches VI and V were less favoured, and approaches IV and III were the least favoured, as they did not make use of existing infrastructure and services.

Question 24: Growth Options for Bishop's Stortford. Please rank the growth options for Bishop's Stortford in order of preference.

Option 1: Town Centre/Within the Existing Urban Area

Option 2: To the Northeast

Option 3: To the East

Option 4: To the Southeast

Option 5: To the South

Response: The District Council did not have a view as to the form or direction of any potential development there, but pointed out that allocating development here

could alleviate some of the pressure to develop elsewhere, such as in Sawbridgeworth.

Questions 25 to 32 concerned developments in Bishops Stortford, Buntingford and Hertford, which were felt to be too far from Epping for consideration.

Question 33: Growth Options for Sawbridgeworth. Please rank the growth options for Sawbridgeworth in order of preference:

Option 1: Within the existing Built-Up Area

Option 2: To the South-West

Option 3: To the West

Option 4: To the North

Response: It was felt that Option 3 To the West, was preferred, as this directed development towards an area near to services, and where land had been identified as available. Members felt that more services would be needed in Lower Sheering before development there took place and that the separate identities of Lower Sheering and Sawbridgeworth should be preserved.

Question 34: Approach to Development in Sawbridgeworth. Please rank the approaches to development in Sawbridgeworth in order of preference:

Option 1: Lower density – therefore higher land-take

Option 2: Medium density – therefore medium land-take

Option 3: Higher density – therefore lower land-take

Response: A higher density was preferred, in order to effectively concentrate homes near services, and to minimise take up of Greenfield land, and land with national conservation value. It would also make use of the available land in the most efficient way. This preference was made subject to any higher density development being of very good quality design.

Question 35: Sawbridgeworth Vision. Do you agree with the emerging LDF vision for Sawbridgeworth?

Response: This seemed appropriate.

Question 36: Growth Options for Ware. Please rank the growth options for Ware in order of preference:

Option 1: Town centre/Existing Urban Area

Option 2: To the North

Option 3: To the east

Option 4: To the South East

Option 5: To the South West

Response: Options 2 and 3 were preferred as these were on land near to existing service, where land was available for development, and where transport links were nearby. Option was not preferred, as little land was available. Options 4 and 5 and the least preferred because they were in a flood plain and could cause coalescence. Members asked for the reference to Roydon in the proposed response to be deleted as it was not relevant.

Question 37: Approaches to Development in Ware. Please rank the approaches to development in Ware in order of preference:

- Option 1: Lower density – therefore higher land-take
- Option 2: Medium density – therefore medium land-take
- Option 3: Higher density – therefore lower land-take

Response: A higher density was preferred to effectively concentrate homes near services, and to minimise take up of Greenfield land, and land with natural conservation value. It would also make use of the available land in the most efficient way. This preference was made subject to any higher density development being of very good quality design.

Question 38: Ware Vision. Do you agree with the emerging LDF vision for Ware?

Response: This seemed appropriate.

Question 39: Approach to Development in the Villages. Please rank the approaches to development in the villages in order of preferences:

- Option 1: Lower density – therefore higher land-take
- Option 2: Medium density – therefore medium land-take
- Option 3: Higher density – therefore lower land-take

Response: A higher density was preferred for new development, in order to effectively concentrate homes near services, and minimise take up of Greenfield/Green belt land. It would also make use of the available land in the most efficient way. It had been shown that higher density did not necessarily mean a less pleasant living environment. Members felt that higher density needed coupling with good design skills. The development needed to be appropriate to the density. These preferences were made subject to any higher density development being of very good quality design.

Question 40: Identifying Types of Villages. Is our approach to identifying three types of village (Larger service Villages/Smaller Service Villages and Other Villages/Hamlets) correct?

Response: This seemed reasonable, as those larger settlements, with more facilities, have been classified as such.

Question 41: Village identification. Have we identified the correct villages under each village type?

Response: The identification of larger and Smaller Services Villages seemed reasonable. However, this Council cannot comment on “other villages/Hamlets” as these had not yet been listed.

Question 42: An Emerging Vision for the Villages. Subject to whichever development strategy with our emerging vision for the villages?

Response: The visions for each scenario seem to fit the development strategies proposed.

Question 43: Consultants Suggested Approach. (a) Do you agree with the consultant’s suggested approach in respect of growth to the north of Harlow?

Response: The consultants suggested approach should be reviewed because the east of England Plan has been revoked.

Question: If not, how would you distribute development in accordance with Policy HA1 of the East of England Plan and why?

Response: Growth in Harlow needed revisiting urgently, partly through senior management and Member level discussions and the three authorities involved. Growth would significantly impact on the district particularly given that the areas suggested in the consultation were predominantly rural and did not currently benefit from adequate services to accommodate this level of growth. Only a passing reference was made to the potential for a new junction/road link from the M11 to any development north of Harlow. This issue needed further coverage. The existing congestion of the A414 was not covered in detail in the consultation. Significant congestion existed where the dual carriageway part of the A414 ended.

(b) If development to the north of Harlow is no longer required by the east of England Plan, should we consider north of Harlow as a broad location to meet some of the East Herts district wide housing requirement?

Response: This location should be considered.

The Director of Planning and Economic Development advised that the only viable option for the District Council was to work with other councils more closely. The evidence base work carried out so far on the potential for growth around Harlow would still be helpful. More work was needed with Harlow. The District Council couldn't erect barriers with neighbouring councils.

It was confirmed that the draft response to the consultation would be circulated to members before final submittal in November 2010.

RESOLVED:

(1) That the potential impacts of the proposals contained within the East Hertfordshire Core Strategy Issues and Options Consultation Document be noted; and

(2) That officers circulate a re-worked draft response to the Consultation Document to members present at the meeting.

33. BROXBOURNE BOROUGH COUNCIL PRE-SUBMISSION CORE STRATEGY

The Panel received a report regarding the Broxbourne Borough Council Pre-Submission Core Strategy.

The Core Strategy was a planning document covering the period 2010-2026 setting out a vision for the future of Broxbourne Borough as a prosperous and sustainable community. The strategy explained the unique features of the borough identifying the main challenges and key drivers of change for the next 15 years.

In the short term, the strategy looked for development to focus on suitable urban sites making best use of land and helping achieve neighbourhoods regeneration. The Council would make use of the presence and legacy of the 2012 Olympic Games, raising prosperity in Waltham Cross and elsewhere. In addition, the development of Greater Brookfield was intended to provide high quality shopping and leisure facilities and housing development.

In the medium and long term, Broxbourne Borough Council's strategy was to complement suitable urban sites with Green Belt ones, with a focus on delivering more larger family and large homes. Regarding future employment, Broxbourne Borough Council stated that there were no specific job targets for the borough. Land would therefore be released at West of Hoddesdon, Goff's Oak, Bury Green and/or Albury Farm East for new housing, at Park Plaza West and/or Maxwells Farm West, for new employment opportunities depending on future requirements.

Having gathered together a robust evidence base and consulted with local people and interested parties to identify the most important planning related issues from the area, Broxbourne Borough Council set out a vision for the borough and consulted on the alternative ways of addressing the issues and achieving the vision in their Strategy Document (May 2007). After taking account of the responses, a preferred option was chosen by the Council, and following further consultation with the public, another strategy document was published in November 2008.

Following on from this, Broxbourne Council prepared a finalised Core Strategy which was subject of a final six week consultation period giving local people and other interested parties a final opportunity for comment. This pre-submission publication stage ran from 29 August – 15 October 2010.

Following analysis and discussion with members, the response to this consultation was as follows:

1. The consultation document key diagram on page 19 with respect to areas of Green Belt, were difficult to distinguish from other areas labelled as suitable for development. Clearer distinctions were needed of which areas would be developed and which were being preserved.
2. Broxbourne Borough Council was working with an individual to locate a suitable site for travelling show people. The document stated that "all new plots that may be needed during the plan period will be assessed using broadly the same search criteria as those set out for Gypsies and Travellers with new provision being made through the determination of development proposals or allocated in a Site Allocation DPD." However, the District Council viewed this as a vague summary of how Broxbourne Borough intended to address the issue.
3. Given that there were currently 110 authorised Gypsy and traveller pitches in Epping Forest District alone, and that Gypsies and Travellers often moved from place to place, it was wrong to target find suitable sites for current demand rather than future need. It was felt that the Core Strategy should be more pro-active as circumstances within the District would change significantly before the end of the plan period in 15 years' time.
4. Broxbourne Borough Council's housing trajectory indicated that 840 new dwellings were being built within Waltham Cross, the largest designation of houses within the Borough. Although would be benefits to the local economy, there was the possibility that gains here would be countered by commercial developments elsewhere.
5. Of particular interest to the District Council was the re-development of Hazlemere Marina along Lea Road. This was a designated employment area and ran along the border within the District Council. Policy CS5 of the Pre-Submission Core Strategy sought to "retain and improve" such areas. Broxbourne Borough Council was bringing forward the re-development of Hazlemere Marina and had drafted a Development Brief supporting the general policies in the Core Strategy. They viewed

the marina as an opportunity for a significant mixed use development which would be a catalyst for the wider regeneration of the area and the delivery of the Waltham Cross Regeneration Strategy which would utilize the economic and social benefits of the Olympic White Water Canoe Course planned in the immediate vicinity. Members requested that regarding Hazlemere Marina, local residents should be entitled to some of the monies raised through Section 106 Agreements, or be allowed to make a bid for them.

6. District Council officers believed that the development of Hazlemere marina would have an impact on the surrounding area. A prime concern was whether the main entrance along Station Road would remain here during re-development, or whether the proposed new entrance along Lea Road would be built before this took place. Station Road remained a key route into the west of the district and should re-development work result in the closure of the road or significant delays, this could potentially disrupt the function of Waltham Abbey's Town Centre.

7. It was noted that any future delays along Station Road would not justify the implementation of the formerly proposed link road between Mollison Avenue and Meredian Way in relation to the Northern Gateway Access Road. The scheme placed undue pressure on the Meredian Way. Assurance was required that there was no intention to pursue the Northern Gateway Access Road, and that appropriate consultation was undertaken with Essex County Council as the adjacent highway authority to Hazlemere Marina Scheme.

8. The development at Hazlemere Marina posed a threat to the prosperity of Waltham Abbey Town Centre. New homes close to the town centre could potentially encourage new customers into the area, however a major hotel, restaurant and ancillary retail on the proposed site could take consumers away from the already established services located in Waltham Abbey.

9. Assurance's were sought from Broxbourne Borough Council that new development at Hazlemere Marina aimed at the visitor economy would be well integrated with existing attractions in the area, contributing towards the regeneration ambitions of Waltham Abbey and Waltham Cross.

10. Officers found it questionable that the inclusion of a hotel within the proposed development mix of Hazlemere Marina was justified solely by reference to a low supply within the administrative Borough of Broxbourne. It was noted that this would include a supply of approximately 260 bedrooms within Waltham Abbey.

11. The District Council was concerned with Broxbourne's proposed development as to how Hazlemere Marina served by the existing sewerage pumping station on the opposite side of Station Road. It was believed that the pumping station was operating beyond capacity, with Town Mead suffering from significant discharge entering into Cobbins' Brook.

12. The proposed development to occur within Essex Road Gateway was of concern to the District Council. Within their Pre-Submission Core Strategy, Broxbourne's housing trajectory anticipated that approximately 3,840 new homes would be required within the Borough up until 2026 at a rate of 240 per year. This was the same figure as the minimum number of new houses Broxbourne were required to build per year under the defunct East of England Plan.

13. The Essex Road Gateway Brief stated that any development in this area would commence with works widening the existing Essex Road Alignment as the area was prone to peak hour congestion. The creation of a new access road to one

of two proposed land parcels targeted for new housing and commercial development within the location was also planned. This had the potential of creating road closures and delays. There was the potential for significant delays and increased traffic along Dobb's Weir Road which would have significant knock-on impacts throughout the north-west of the District. Members and officers sought assurances from Broxbourne that these suggested roadworks were completed before development began on two land parcels scheduled for housing and commercial development.

14. Additionally the District Council required assurance from Broxbourne that consultation with regards to these proposals had been undertaken with Essex County Council as the adjacent highway authority. Discussion with the County Council should consider whether the proposed improvements may cause more east-west traffic movements beyond the Essex road industrial area onto roads in Epping Forest District that were unsuited to heavy traffic.

15. Policy CS6 of the Pre-Submission Core Strategy stated Broxbourne's intention to deliver the objectives of the Waltham Cross Town Centre strategy. This increased the amount of supermarket floor space, the number of value/discount anchor stores, and the number of eating/drinking places within the town centre. This had the potential of taking customers away from Waltham Abbey Town Centre and needed monitoring. The District Council requested consultation on any major developments that could potentially have impacts upon the district. The District Council wanted Broxbourne to bear in mind that any adverse impacts caused within the District by developments in Broxbourne should be alleviated by appropriate Section 106 Agreement funding.

16. The proposal of increasing the capacity of the bus station in Waltham Cross may be beneficial to Waltham Abbey in increasing the frequency of services between the two towns. Broxbourne Core Strategy also mentioned the Highways agency plans on widening the northern quadrant of the M25 and introduce peak period use of the hard shoulder between Junction 23 (A1) and Junction 27 (M11) from 2012 onwards. The document highlighted that this was beneficial to Broxbourne although specific details were not given. When these works were completed they were likely to be beneficial to the District, given that the works included Junction 26 at Waltham Abbey.

Members advised that caution was required in approaching consultations. A proactive position was more advisable to a re-active one. There could be commercial threats to the District if the wrong approach was taken.

Members thanked officers for their report.

RESOLVED:

(1) That the potential impacts of the proposals contained within the Broxbourne Borough Council Pre-Submission Core Strategy be noted; and

(2) That officers circulate a re-worked response to the Consultation Document to members present at the meeting.

34. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor A Watts requested that the issue of Parish and Town Councils not objecting to a planning application, but that same planning application being allowed to go before a planning sub-committee, should be discussed fully at the Panel. The

item was being discussed at the forthcoming Local Council's Liaison Committee in November 2010. Members requested that the minutes from that meeting should be forwarded to this Panel.

RESOLVED:

(1) That Parish and Town Councils not objecting to a planning application, but that same planning application being allowed to go before a planning sub-committee, be scheduled into the Panel's Work Programme for a discussion; and

(2) That the minutes of the Local Council's Liaison Committee for November 2010 be forwarded to the Planning services Scrutiny Standing Panel.

35. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Panel was scheduled for 2 December 2010 at 7.30p.m.

CHAIRMAN

Planning Services Standing Panel (Chairman – Cllr J Philip)

Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress / Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(1) (a) Regional Plan (b) Local Development Framework (c) Current Staffing (d) Improvement Plan	Regular updating reports	Report on new LDF Scheme & implications for S106 agreements, new draft policy required. LDF timeline to be presented. Development Document Site Allocations Issues and Options Paper. Updated Staffing Family Tree.	3 June 2010 2 September 11 October – Extra Ordinary Meeting 2 December; 10 January 2011 – Extra Ordinary Meeting 3 March 2011

<p>(2) Value for Money Provision:</p> <p>(a) Administration & Customer Support</p> <p>(b) Building Control</p> <p>(c) Development Control (including Appeals)</p> <p>(d) Economic Development</p> <p>(e) Enforcement</p> <p>(f) Environment Team</p> <p>(g) Forward Planning</p> <p>(h) Performance</p>		<p>VFM Task and Finish report went to September 08 meeting and the November 08 O&S Cttee meeting where it was endorsed.</p> <p>Report submitted January 2011 Panel meeting</p>	
<p>(3) Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of Area Planning Cttees to be invited to a meeting to provide feedback.</p>		<p>Results fed back to Panel regularly. Meetings will take place on a frequent basis.</p>	
<p>(4) Report from Legal on performance at Planning Appeals</p>	<p>June 2009</p>	<p>COMPLETED</p>	

(5) Comments from the planning agents and amenity groups required matching		N Richardson, Asst Director of Planning, to arrange a date, time and venue.	
(6) That a report be produced for the Panel setting out the possible route any planning enforcement investigation could take.		A further report was required with financial implications.	
(7) 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.	February 2010 meeting		
(8) To review a selection of controversial planning decisions to see if lessons can be learnt from their consideration.		This item has been extracted from the Terms of Reference of the Provision for Value for Money within Planning Services Task and Finish Panel and the current Panel.	
(9) To consider whether the reporting arrangements for Terms of Reference sections and those from 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 recommend accordingly		This item has been extracted from the Terms of Reference of the Provision for Value for Money within Planning Services Task and Finish Panel and the current Panel.	
(10) Best Value Review	Received update in February 2010		

(11) Planning conditions controlling damage to highways infrastructure	December 2010	Referred from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – March 2010. Discussed at December 2010 Panel meeting.	
(12) Contributions to affordable housing (S106 Agreements)	New Item		
(13) Arrange visit to other planning authorities to learn from their work.	New Item		
(14) Countrycare	Submitted to 2 September 2010 Panel meeting.	COMPLETED - Future structure following the departure of Paul Hewitt.	
(15) Consultations from Hertfordshire Councils regarding Core Strategies	New Item – October 11 2010	COMPLETED - Consultations to be considered at extra-ordinary panel meeting on October 11 2010.	
(16) Tree Preservation Order Consultation	New Item - December 2010	COMPLETED - Government Consultation	
(17) New Homes Bonus Consultation	New Item - December 2010	COMPLETED - Government Consultation	
(18) Essex County Council Minerals Development Document: Preferred Approach Paper	New Item – January 2011		
(19) Planning Fees - Consultation	New Item – January 2011		

(20) Harlow Council – Core Strategy Issues and Options Consultation Document	New Item – January 2011		
(21) request for District Development Fund	New Item – January 2011		
(22) Town Centre Officer Post/Future Management of Town Centre	New item – January 2011		

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Report to Planning Services Scrutiny Standing Panel

Date of meeting: 10th January 2011

Portfolio: Leader

**Subject: Harlow Council – Core Strategy Issues and
Options Consultation Document**

Officer contact for further information: Ian White (ext 4066)

Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins (ext 4607)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) To consider the issues and options presented in the consultation document; and**
- (2) To agree the responses to the consultation.**

Report:

Context

1. The consultation, which runs for 10 weeks from 29th November 2010 to 28th January 2011, is the first formal stage of Harlow's preparation of its Core Strategy. It was preceded by a number of informal workshops and awareness raising events and exhibitions. There will be additional opportunities to comment before the Core Strategy is adopted, the next formal stage being a "Preferred Options" consultation. This consultation is accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulation Assessment, and all 3 documents are included as background papers to this report.
2. The exercise is proceeding at a time of significant disruption, and changes, to the planning system. These include (a) the Government's intention to abolish regional spatial strategies (RSSs) and their associated housing and employment land targets; (b) the introduction of the New Homes Bonus to stimulate housing delivery; and (c) a new tier of neighbourhood plans. The RSSs currently remain as part of the development plan, but the Government has indicated that they will be abolished at some time during the preparation of Harlow's, and this Council's, Core Strategies.

The consultation document

3. There are 5 main themes, divided into 26 objectives, each of these having several "policy areas to be considered":
 - Placeshaping – enhancing the quality of the built and natural environment (5 objectives);
 - Housing – delivering homes at the right scale, of the right type, and in the right location to meet the needs of the whole community (6 objectives);
 - Prosperity – securing economic growth and regeneration in order to improve employment and educational opportunities in the town and reflect its strategic role (7 objectives);
 - Infrastructure – ensuring growth and regeneration are supported by appropriate levels of infrastructure provision (6 objectives); and
 - Lifestyles – meeting the leisure, recreational and cultural requirements of the

community in a sustainable manner (2 objectives).

4. Analysis of the policy areas helps to identify the priorities of the Issues and Options. Economic development, regeneration and promotion of the town centre as a major location for employment, retail and leisure understandably feature very prominently. Infrastructure and the related phasing of new development, and the provision of a range of housing to meet local needs are also key issues. Environmental issues such as biodiversity, built heritage, energy conservation, landscape and Green Belt are included but with much less frequency. This is not intended as any sort of criticism because inevitably the priorities of authorities, even if they adjoin, are bound to differ, but it may point to potential difficulties in agreeing the location of future developments which are not contained wholly within the boundary of Harlow. This becomes more apparent when answers to some of the consultation questions are discussed below.
5. The document recognises “the sub-regional role of Harlow which extends beyond its administrative boundaries” and that “some of the development options may (sic) require land in the adjoining authorities.” (para 2.7.1). It is not clear whether the “whole community” and the “strategic role” of the Housing and Prosperity themes are intended to include the related needs of those adjoining authorities (primarily this Council and East Hertfordshire).
6. There is also little mention or recognition of the sub-regional Green Belt location of the town (para 5.8.1), or its wider landscape setting, and there is consequently no attention given to the relevant aims and objectives of adjoining authorities which will be affected by some of the development options. Harlow obviously wants the “Green Wedges” to be protected, as these are fundamental to the overall design and sense of place of the town. However, with the Government’s intentions for the future of the planning system gradually becoming clearer, and in particular the “localism” agenda, there has to be some concern from this Council’s perspective about potentially significant loss of Green Belt land while the Green Wedges are “strengthened” (para 2.8.2).
7. The only growth option in the consultation document is the continuation of RSS target of 16,000 homes, which would mean urban extensions into the district from the south-west, south and east of Harlow. The spatial options identified in the Harlow Options Appraisal (all based on the RSS target) are included as part of the consultation. The Appraisal was considered by Epping Forest’s LDF Cabinet on 17th June when it was recommended that it be added to the Evidence Base, with the proviso that “it had been based upon and influenced by policies and targets which may not be applicable in the future and might necessitate a review of (the Appraisal) in due course.”
8. The consultation document justifies (para 6.5.1) the inclusion of the spatial options on the grounds that there was a statutory requirement for them to be in general conformity with the RSS. Some options did not satisfy this requirement, but the revocation of the RSS gives Harlow Council the opportunity to reconsider the appropriateness of them all.
9. It is disappointing that the 16,000 homes target is the only definite growth option detailed in the consultation document. An open question (number 4 in the consultation) does ask for suggestions for other scales of growth, but it is difficult to see how meaningful responses can be given by any consultee without adequate evidence to back the figures up. This is an “Option” rather than an “Options” consultation. Paras 2.9.1 (8th bullet point) and 5.3.1 indicate that there is capacity for approximately 5,000 additional houses within the town’s urban boundary, but there is no analysis of what this, in association with employment growth and infrastructure provision, could mean in terms of the Prosperity theme, or addressing the regeneration needs of the town. Officers believe that Harlow should now be revisiting

the RSS figures and assumptions to determine if they are still relevant, and presenting reasonable alternatives as described in para 4.38 of PPS12.

10. There are 31 questions based around, from this Council's perspective, the following issues (the numbers in brackets refer to the number of questions);
- General issues and themes (including other Harlow Strategies) (6);
 - Delivering regeneration (8);
 - Spatial options around Harlow (7);
 - Infrastructure and congestion (4);
 - Green Belt (2);
 - Landscape (1);
 - Local Harlow issues (2);
 - Further comments (1).

These are not the divisions used in the document itself. Instead the questions are divided into the following sections: The issues; The strategic challenge; The vision, themes and objectives; Guiding future development; Spatial options for growth around Harlow; and Developing a delivery strategy.

The questions

11. The questions are discussed below. Similar issues arise with several of the answers, but this is inevitable given the inter-connectedness of many of the issues. The Appendix to this report also lists the questions with the proposed answers, and should be read in conjunction with the following paragraphs.

12. **Question 1:** Do you think the Council has identified all the relevant issues that need to be addressed by the Core Strategy?

Question 2: If you disagree, what additional issues need to be considered by the Core Strategy?

As outlined in earlier paragraphs, officers believe that the answer to Q1 must be "No". The sub-regional Green Belt location of the town, its wider landscape setting and the lack of growth options other than the RSS figures should be included as a response to Q2. Officers also feel that while the issues of climate change and carbon reduction, energy efficiency, and use of renewable energy are mentioned in the consultation document, they appear to be dealt with in a slightly offhand manner and should be a more prominent part of the Adopted Core Strategy.

Green Belt is only mentioned in the 3rd bullet point of 2.8.5 in the context of proactive uses. There is no recognition of the wider context of the Metropolitan Green Belt, or the purposes of including land within it. These two factors are of particular importance for adjoining authorities which will be expected to take the main part of the proposed growth.

Landscape receives three mentions (2nd and 4th bullet points (bp) of 2.8.2 and 2nd bp of 2.8.3), but these all relate to local issues. The wider landscape setting of the town, and particularly its containment within the bowl of the Stort Valley, is a key issue for this Council and officers hoped that the protection of the southern ridge (effectively from Epping Long Green to Latton Park) would have been recognised in the Issues for the Core Strategy. To be fair, the ridgeline to the south of Harlow is mentioned in paras 6.7.5 and 6.7.11, but this is in the context of quoting consultants' conclusions on the possible options for distribution of the 16,000 houses.

The Options consultation effectively amounts to consideration of different spatial distributions for 16,000 houses. Officers believe that other growth options should be included with an analysis of their impact on the town's regeneration, eg what is the actual capacity for development within existing urban boundaries, and what would be the outcome if current housebuilding rates were continued for the period of the Strategy. Leaving this as an open question makes it very difficult for respondents to give meaningful or practical answers. The comments made in para 9 above apply

equally here.

Phrases like “sustainable architecture and design” (para 2.2.3) and “sustainable location” (Objective 4 of para 4.5.2) are used but these need to be defined. The last bullet point of 2.8.3 seems particularly weak – “New development should be energy efficient where possible.”

13. **Question 3:** Would the provision of 16,000 new homes in and around Harlow meet the current needs of the local community and help secure the regeneration of Harlow?

Question 4: If you disagree/strongly disagree, what do you think the scale of growth should be, ensuring that the Core Strategy addresses the particular issues facing Harlow?

In answer to Q3, the Council supports the regeneration of Harlow and understands that the figure derives from the RSS which itself had an evidence base to justify the total. Nevertheless, the Government has made clear its intention to abolish the RSS and all associated targets, with future emphasis being placed on localism and greater community engagement. In this significantly changed, and changing, planning world, officers therefore believe that it is not now possible to answer this question, given that some at least of the 16,000 houses would have to be built in the district, and there has been no formal Council engagement with the local community to assess opinion. The current timetable for this Council's Issues and Options consultation is summer 2011, and it is at that point that community opinion on a range of spatial options (likely to include urban extensions to Harlow) will be sought.

Q4 - as stated earlier in this report, officers do not believe that an open question of this nature can be realistically answered without an evidence base.

14. **Question 5:** Do the visions and priorities set out in the Community Strategy, the Council's Regeneration Strategy and the Council's Corporate Plan provide the basis to develop the vision for Harlow's Core Strategy?

Question 6: If you agree/strongly disagree, what do you think the vision for the Core Strategy should be based on?

For Q5, the relevant details are listed in paras 4.2.1 to 4.2.3 of the consultation document. Officers consider that the visions and priorities, with the possible exception of “a university town” are fairly generic and uncontroversial. If they can be implemented they will help to develop Harlow's vision. As with Q1, however, it is strange that the Core Strategy does not take account of the equivalent documents of the adjoining authorities which will be expected to take some of the growth, and this gives the answer to Q6.

15. **Question 7:** Do you think the Core Strategy Themes cover the range of planning issues in Harlow?

Question 8: If you disagree/strongly disagree, what changes would you make to the Themes to ensure they address the range of planning issues in Harlow?

The Themes are listed in para 3 of this report. The answers to Qs7 and 8 are broadly similar to those for Qs 1 and 2. The Themes are essentially inward looking, and do not fully take account of the wider environmental and amenity implications of Harlow's expansion beyond its boundaries. The Themes should therefore include (a) appreciation of the regional purpose of the Green Belt, (b) the original design of the town recognising the need to contain southern growth within the landscape bowl, and (c) more prominent and positive support for sustainable construction, carbon reduction and renewable energy.

16. **Question 9:** Do the Strategic Objectives provide the necessary framework to deliver the regeneration of Harlow?

Question 10: If you disagree/strongly disagree, what changes would you make to the Strategic Objectives?

The 26 Strategic Objectives are listed in paras 4.5.2 to 4.5.6 of the consultation document. The key issues in Q9 are the use of the word “strategic” and the emphasis

on delivery. "Strategic" implies coverage broader than the town itself, which would be appropriate given that some of the proposed growth would have to be located in adjoining districts. The wording of the objectives, however, is again very Harlow-centric, and some phrases (eg "local needs", "the housing needs of the community" and "the employment needs of the town") need to be defined. If development is to take place in adjoining authorities, there would be an expectation that some of their needs would be met in these schemes.

In general, the objectives have the same failings as identified in some of the answers above – they cannot be considered to be properly strategic until they take definite account of the adjoining authorities' own objectives and policies. As before, this would include issues such as the Green Belt and the landscape setting of the town. It is disappointing to note that no mention is made of climate change, carbon reduction, sustainable construction, energy efficiency etc. These are surely important strategic issues which should be included in the objectives.

Delivery is obviously key to the themes of the Core Strategy, and this inevitably requires co-ordination with, and input from, other agencies and authorities. This is addressed to a limited extent in Objective 25 (Work with key providers to ensure that the infrastructure requirements ... can be met). Given Harlow's wish to expand beyond its existing boundaries, officers believe that co-operative working should be a theme of the Core Strategy, rather than just the 25th of 26 objectives, if delivery is to be successfully achieved. The Localism Bill includes a "duty to co-operate" in relation to planning of sustainable development, and if the Bill is passed into legislation, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 will be appropriately amended.

17. **Question 11:** Do you think the policy areas identified cover the range of issues that are relevant to the regeneration of Harlow?

Question 12: If you disagree/strongly disagree, what changes would you make to the policy areas?

The policy areas are listed in the tables in para 4.7.4 (pages 38 to 43) of the consultation document and have been briefly discussed in para 4 of this report. Comments on these cover the same issues, eg the one area dealing with Green Belt (3rd bp of 4th Strategic Objective of Placeshaping) merely states "Definition of extent of Green Belt". This does not imply a broader understanding of the Green Belt or its importance to the adjoining authorities. The only references to landscape (3rd bp of 1st Strategic Objective of Placeshaping, and 5th bp of 19th Strategic Objective in Lifestyles) refer mainly to the setting of the River Stort, so the importance to this Council of development not breaching the southern ridge defining the Stort Valley is again unrecognised.

Sustainable development is mentioned or addressed in four policy areas (4th bp of 3rd Strategic Objective; 2nd bp of 4th Strategic Objective; 4th bp of 10th Strategic Objective; and 1st bp of 21st Strategic Objective). Officers again feel that the subject should be more prominent and that, in particular, "sustainable location" should be defined.

The policy areas are, perhaps more understandably, Harlow-centric, but they again should reflect that development in adjoining authorities is being suggested.

18. **Question 13:** Do you agree that new development should be directed to areas that will maximise regeneration of the town?

Question 14: Please rank, in order of priority (1 high, 5 low) where you think higher densities of development should go within the District:

- Around public transport hubs
- Appropriate locations within neighbourhood areas
- Hatches
- Neighbourhood centres
- Within the town centre

Question 15: Should the Council consider underused open spaces and other undeveloped land for development before considering releasing land in the Green Belt?

Question 16: The Green Wedges have performed a variety of roles in shaping Harlow. Should the roles of Green Wedges be reviewed to meet future development needs in the Harlow area?

Question 17: Please rank, in order of priority (1 high, 8 low) the most important things that you think should direct new development in and around Harlow:

- Areas with good access to public transport and other services
- Developing underused green spaces
- Maximising the use of previously developed land
- Meeting regeneration goals
- Protecting Green Wedges
- Protecting important landscapes
- Protecting the Green Belt
- Where there is existing infrastructure capacity

These five questions are intended to help to guide future development in the town. Similar answers are suggested for Qs 13 and 15 which are essentially “Yes, but”. In the case of Q13 it is not particularly easy to answer more definitely because the areas are not specified, but it is likely to involve the employment locations identified on page 50. These include The Pinnacles site which is close to, and now prominent from, Roydon. Any further expansion or intensification of this site is likely to raise concerns about coalescence of settlements, landscape impact and traffic generation. With Q15 the answer will ultimately depend on whether the spaces have other, currently unacknowledged, value eg for wildlife or informal recreation.

Officers propose not to offer a response to Q14, as this deals essentially with development within Harlow itself which is unlikely to raise issues of concern to this Council.

The importance of the Green Wedges to the design and layout of the town is acknowledged, but officers strongly support the suggestion of review in Q16, given that the growth aspirations affect Green Belt land in this district and East Herts. For Q17, officers suggest the following hierarchy: 1 – maximise use of previously developed land; 2 – protect Green Belt; 3 – protect landscapes; 4 – good access to public transport etc; 5 – meeting regeneration goals; 6 – existing infrastructure capacity; 7 – protect Green Wedges; 8 – underused green spaces (although as this is proposed as the lowest priority, this should mean protecting these spaces).

19. **Question 18:** Do the existing employment areas meet current and future employment needs?

Question 19: If you disagree/strongly disagree, please explain what changes you think should be made to Harlow’s employment areas.

Question 20: How do you think Harlow Council should shape future shopping development within the town?

If it remains Harlow’s intention to grow by another 16,000 houses, it seems very unlikely that the existing employment areas can accommodate future needs. Officers understand that there is already a lot of out-commuting, and a significant amount of in-commuting, but the consultation document is ambiguous about whether current needs are being met. Para 5.9.6 indicates that consideration would be given to further employment land provision being made within the urban extensions, which would include land within this district. Officers believe that this council should be concerned about extensions to The Pinnacles, for the reasons outlined above, and for any such proposals along the southern edge of the town. The employment needs of the wider area (ie at least the two adjoining authorities) should be included in any assessment. As regards Q20, the strategy proposed in the consultation document seems appropriate, ie the Town Centre remaining the main focus as a sub-regional centre, with the neighbourhood centres and hatches being managed to meet the future needs of their communities.

20. Questions 21 to 25 seek comments on the 5 spatial distribution options investigated

by consultants, and included in the Scott Wilson report “Generating and Appraising Spatial Options for the Harlow Area”, which was considered by EFDC’s LDF Cabinet on 17th June 2010. Q26 seeks views on the consultants’ preferred option, and Q 27 asks for any other comments on the approach to growth around Harlow. All the options are shown in diagrammatic form on pages 56 to 61 of the consultation document.

21. Option A (Q21) is described as “RSS: Northern-led” and focuses almost entirely on Harlow’s expansion into East Herts – ie up to 10,000 houses with 800 in east Harlow, and 100 each to the south and west. This should be this Council’s favoured option because the greatest part of the growth will be close to the town centre and railway station and two of the main employment sites (The Pinnacles and Templefields), which should benefit Harlow’s regeneration aims, and with obvious implications for reducing the need for car travel and the promotion of sustainable transport and development. There would be minimal intrusion on the Green Belt in this district, and no threat to the southern ridge line. The main drawbacks are the (understandable) objections of East Herts and Herts County Councils, and the need for significant infrastructure provision. The latter could include a northern relief road and a new junction (7A) with the M11.
22. Option B (Q22) is titled “Policy-led 2”, which shows that it is intended to reflect the broad directional and distributional intentions of RSS policy HA1, but with a greater emphasis on regeneration. The guideline figures are 3,600 houses to the north, 3,300 east, 1,300 south and 2,800 west. The consultants state that this would not breach the southern ridgeline and that this would be a “reasonable” option if some of the west housing could be re-allocated to the east and south. Officers agree that it would be difficult to accommodate this level of growth to the west without significant adverse effect on the character of the area, but also feel that the southern ridge line would be threatened. They also share the consultants’ concerns about the proximity to J7 of the M11 encouraging the use of the car.
23. Option C (Criteria-led) is based on criteria developed by the consultants, and did not follow the general locational guidelines of the RSS. This proposes 6,380 houses in the east (some of which would come into this district), 3,520 south and 1,100 west (ie none to the north). Officers feel this option is wholly unacceptable – the ridge line would be completely breached, and not only would there be significantly increased traffic using J7, but there could be pressure for a southern bypass to Harlow. The option would be likely to require a new junction 7A to deal with the eastern expansion of the town.
24. Option D (Regeneration-led) proposes 5,720 houses to the north, 2,310 east, 2,420 south and 550 west. This again is unacceptable because of the impact to the south, but if a substantial part of the southern allocation could be re-allocated to the east, this could be a reasonable option from this Council’s perspective. The northern distribution, and the adjusted eastern total would be likely to require road infrastructure.
25. Option E is “sustainable transport-led” which results in 2,530 houses to the north, 5,390 east, none to the south and 3,080 west. This may require some development in the Sheering/Matching area of the district, but of much greater concern is the possible coalescence of Harlow west with Roydon, rightly identified by the consultants, and wholly unacceptable to this Council.
26. The consultants’ suggested approach (Q26) is for 4,000 houses to the north (eventually expanding to at least 10,000), 5,000 to the east (increasing to 8,000) and 1,000 each to the south and south-west. While this addresses most of the environmental concerns of officers (although the southern ridge line may still be threatened), neither the south nor the west locations are strongly related to Harlow’s

town centre or the main employment sites, and it is likely that most of the new occupants would use cars for commuting, unless there is a step-change in public transport provision and management within the town.

27. To answer Q27 (other comments on the approach to growth) means repeating earlier points about why the consultation is only presenting one growth option. There must be concerns that, with the introduction of localism, Harlow's expansion into adjoining districts is likely at least to be strongly resisted by affected local communities, and this in turn could influence the decisions of those authorities. If Harlow is to persist with this option of 16,000 houses with related employment and infrastructure provision, this points to the need for formal collaboration or co-ordinated working with the adjoining authorities (including both county Councils), and for this to be at Member, as well as officer, level. By restricting itself to one option, the consultation is not considering alternatives which would contain new development within the existing district boundary – but this surely has to be considered to be a realistic option if there are negative responses from the adjoining authorities.
28. **Question 28:** Do you think all the key elements of infrastructure necessary to support the emerging Core Strategy have been identified?
Question 29: If no, what additional infrastructure do you think is needed to support the emerging Core Strategy?
Para 7.1.2 of the consultation document lists the infrastructure requirements under nine general headings, and officers are satisfied that this covers all of the essentials. Again, however, the wording of some categories is Harlow-centric and this should be amended to include the infrastructure needs of the adjoining authorities.
29. **Question 30:** Please rank, in order of priority, how Harlow Council should tackle Harlow's congestion problems (1 high, 9 low)
- Encourage use of public transport for work and leisure
 - Improve access to the town centre by sustainable modes of transport
 - Improve connections from Harlow to the Strategic Road Network (M11, A414)
 - Improve walking and cycling routes within the town
 - Manage future parking provision across the town
 - Measures to improve traffic flow along strategic routes and at roundabouts within the town
 - Public transport improvements
 - Rail enhancements
 - Other, please state below
- Officers are aware that a lot of work is already underway under several of these categories with significant inputs from the County Council. Other projects are dependent on the support of external organisations such as the Highways Agency and rail operators, so whatever priority results from the consultation will still be dependent on other agencies. Officers are not proposing to reply to this question, but Members may wish to identify what they see as the priorities.
30. **Question 31:** Do you have any further comments to make, at this stage, on how Harlow should be developed?
These points have been made elsewhere in this report, but:
- there really is a need for joint or co-ordinated working, at officer and Member level, of all the affected local authorities, including Herts and Essex County Councils, in the preparation of the respective Core Strategies;
 - officers are concerned that the Harlow Options consultation has not identified reasonable alternatives as described in para 4.38 of PPS12 (Local Spatial Planning);
 - officers believe that, in the light of the forthcoming abolition of the RSS, the evidence base which sustained it should be reconsidered to determine

whether a growth target of 16,000 new homes is the right figure.

Reason for decision:

To respond to the relevant questions in the consultation document to ensure that this Council's interests are considered as Harlow's Core Strategy is progressed.

Options considered and rejected:

Not to respond, but this would be a missed opportunity for the Council to state its interests and concerns.

Consultation undertaken:

Question 3 was considered at Management Board.

Resource implications:

Budget provision: From the established LDF budget.

Personnel: From existing staff resources.

Land: Urban extensions into the district, but it is unknown at this stage whether any Council land is affected.

Community Plan/BVPP reference: GU1, HN1, EP3

Relevant statutory powers:

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning

Background papers:

Harlow Council Core Strategy Issues and Options Consultation Document November 2010

Core Strategy Issues and Options Sustainability Appraisal Report October 2010 (Scott Wilson), and the Non-Technical Summary

Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report for Core Strategy Issues and Options October 2010 (Scott Wilson), and the Non-Technical Summary

East of England Plan 2008

Harlow Area Appraisal of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure Options 2010 (Scott Wilson) Report to LDF Cabinet Committee 17 June 2010 (LDF-004-2010/11)

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:

Assessed in the Sustainability Appraisal and the Habitats Regulations assessment

Key Decision reference: (if required)

Not applicable

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Report to Planning Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: January 10th 2011

Subject: Request for District Development Fund (DDF) carry over to 2011/2012 and 12/13

Officer contact for further information:
Kassandra Polyzoides ext 4119

Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins

SCRUTINY

 Epping Forest District Council

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Committee consider:

1. The carry over of DDF related sums totalling £45,800 to 2011/12 and 12/13 for the purpose of delivering and ensuring ongoing project delivery and service support and sustaining staff professional development and succession planning. More specifically:
 - a) Economic Development, LABGI funding of £16,000 for Town Centre Partnership (TCP) support and delivering outstanding commitments on Enhanced Business Contacts.
 - b) Conservation/Trees & Landscape, £10,000 for salary purposes (Technical Support Officer)
 - c) Business Management, £9,800 for non standard ICT items needed to maintain service delivery as part of the Directorate Electronic Document Management System.
 - d) Directorate Training £10,000 for ongoing commitments to meet essential training needs and succession planning within Planning and Economic Development.

Report:

1. As of mid December 2010 there has been a recruitment freeze on external recruitment to all vacant posts with the exception for posts that: have implications for health and safety, demonstrate that they generate surplus income and are externally funded. The current report is being submitted in parallel with a Town Centre Officer post extension request report. There is information contained within this document which is of relevance to the aforementioned report.
2. The amounts of DDF funding requested to be carried over for 2011/12 and 12/13 are as follows:
 - a) **Economic Development: £12,000 underspend for Town Centre support and £4,000 for Enhanced Business Contacts**
3. Cabinet agreed in December 2007 a support package using LABGI funds of £36,000 for 3 years from 2008/09. This has enabled each Town Centre Partnership to apply for a special projects grant of up to £2,000 per year to deliver a project. It is recognised that not every TCP has had its full allocation annually over this three year period. Discussions at TCP Chairs meetings, including 13 May 2009, have reflected upon this. Officer response has been that given uncertainties of future funding, particularly in the current economic climate, if there is money left in the budget in the

third year it is considered that this should roll forward for use in the following year i.e. 2012/2013. This was agreeable to all and officers had been continuing to work on this basis.

4. Another reason for this underspend, which was concentrated in the first two years of funding being allocated, was due to under staffing within the Town Centres/Economic Development team. This delayed progressing and implementing the TCP projects. It is requested that the outstanding £12,000 is carried forward into 2011/12 and 12/13. There is an additional £6,000 CSB amount per annum available to TCP's for special projects which is currently being utilised. This is available for all TCP's at a maximum bid of £2,000 per TCP, which means that in any given year not all TCP's have access to the funding.
5. It is considered essential to ensure the continuation of this important work in the current economic climate when our town centres are facing challenging times and in order to enable our town centres to capitalise on key events such as the London 2012 Olympics and when further sources of funding are hugely limited. There is however work in progress to investigate options to secure the longer term sustainability of EFDC Town Centres, through the work conducted in the Economic Development team.
6. Cabinet agreed in December 2007 that a £4,000 sum from LABGI payments be allocated for enhanced business contact related work. It remains key that work is delivered in this regard but on reviewing Economic Development priorities and in light of reduced staffing in early 2011 it is not possible for this work to be delivered in the current financial year but will be scheduled for 2011/12

b) Conservation/Trees & Landscape:

7. A technical support officer has been in post since July 2010 at Grade 5. The work that the postholder has assisted on includes developing and delivering Conservation Area, Management Plans and Character Appraisals, with great progress having been made.
8. Namely, the three Loughton Character Appraisals and Management Plans, York Hill, Staples Road and Baldwin Hill have all been progressed and are being completed. The Copped Hall documents are also being progressed satisfactorily. In addition to these tasks the technical support officer has taken on customer support functions, answering general enquiries and providing advice to the public. Furthermore the role also assists in statutory work that the service delivers, such as DC application site visits which are considerably detailed and time consuming. This has had a positive impact on the Conservation Officers workload allowing for more efficient, working and task delivery.
9. The current Conservation Officer will be retiring in February 2011. The £10,000 requested to be carried over to 2011/12 in addition to £7,000 already allocated for the technical support post will allow the postholder to remain until November/December 2011 and continue key work in the Conservation team in what is anticipated to be a challenging period for service and project delivery.

c) Business management

10. An essential part of the Directorate Improvement Plan identifies the need to improve planning processes that are directly linked to the Electronic Document Management System (EDRMS). The current £9,800 PDG Budget for ICT equipment and software is the only funding available to the Directorate for essential software upgrades to i-Plan and provision of non standard ICT equipment that is not funded/available from ICT.
11. This is divided into the following requirements;

- i. There is a need to have funding available for upgrades to Planning Specific Software such as Adobe Image Software, i-Plan and MVM , to ensure ongoing service delivery.
- ii. Secondly there is a need to actively move forward with EDRMS and provide a further six 24 inch monitors, essential for viewing detailed large plans and maps in Conservation, Trees and Landscape, Building Control and the Planning Support Team.
- iii. The purpose of not immediately spending this funding is to maximise value for money by targeting this funding towards software upgrades in the first instance and prioritising other spending accordingly up to 2012/13.

d) Directorate Training

12. Our ongoing CSB Training Budget is fully committed with previous commitments to meet the training needs of one trainee building surveyor in Building Control who is completing four year Bsc in Building Surveying from 07/08 to 11/12 at £1600 per year. He will then undergo certification by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors in 2012/13 at an estimated cost of £2,000. The balance of the CSB Training Budget is fully committed for a large number of short courses and seminars for Development Control, Forward Planning Conservation and Trees and Landscape. The frequency and priority of the short one/two day course has increased due to the numerous changes affecting Planning as a result of the Coalition Government changes.
13. Planning & Economic Development have been dedicating efforts to update the Directorate's Workforce Development Plan. The DDF sum requested will ensure ongoing succession planning within the Directorate to;
- i. Aid succession Planning in Conservation to allow the Technical Officer Conservation attend an MSc in Historic Conservation at £5700 per year for a two year course as identified via the PDR process.
 - ii. For the Corporate ICT Planning Trainee to undertake specific Information Technology training at £3000 per year for 10/11, 11/12 and 12/13.
 - iii. Sending some of our staff to University are key elements of how we have successfully in the past, managed succession planning within the Directorate. This is a key element of our Workforce Development Strategy. If we are unable to retain the above budget of £10,000 we may well be required to prioritise our CSB budget commitments with both items d (i) and (ii) above, being postponed indefinitely pending funding availability from other sources.

Reason for decision:

To allow for project delivery including Town Centre Partnership support, ongoing ICT operational support, professional development and succession planning in the Directorate. The DDF amounts referred to have not been spent either as a result of staffing shortages, the need for the funds to be spread out over time to cover ongoing needs i.e (training and staffing). Furthermore relating to Town Centres Partnerships it appears that they have not required the same amount of funding within each financial year.

Options considered and rejected:

To find alternative sources of funding. The alternative for these items is CSB funding; a request that would put an additional demand on existing budgets. External sources of funding are unlikely to be available for the identified needs.

Consultation undertaken:

With Planning & Economic Development and Finance officers

Resource implications:

Budget provision: Existing DDF budgets previously agreed by Cabinet 17/12/07

Personnel: Agreement to recommendations would allow for ongoing technical support to the conservation team and training and workforce development within the

Land: N/A

Community Plan/BVPP reference:

Relevant statutory powers: N/A

Background papers: Cabinet reports 17/12/07

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:

Key Decision reference: (if required)

Report to Planning Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: January 10th 2011

**Portfolio: Finance and Economic Development
Planning and Economic Development**

SCRUTINY

 **Epping Forest District Council**

Subject: Town Centres Officer Post/Future management of Town Centre

Officer contact for further information: Kassandra Polyzoides x 4119

Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

1) To decide on the options for the future of the Town Centres Officer (TCO) post:

- a) To budget for the continuation of the post for a further temporary period (eg 2 years);
- b) To make the post permanent as an addition to the establishment;
- c) To discontinue the post once the current budget has expired.

2) To note and consider options for the future operation of the Town Centres:

- d) Business Improvement Districts (BIDS);
- e) Membership Schemes;
- f) Social Enterprise

Report:

1. The Town Centres Officer post (PPC08S) has been funded for a 3 year period from 2008 by LABGI monies. Because the initial post-holder went on an extended period of sick-leave which included a period of reduced salary, the budget will extend for a short period into the financial year 2011/2012. The post is currently a Grade 8.
2. The main duties of the post are (a) to develop effective working partnerships with the district's 6 Town Centre Partnerships (TCPs) and other stakeholders such as Town Councils (b) to suggest and support programmes of activities, promotions and events specific to each locality; (c) to work closely with the Economic Development Officer and attract external funding for projects and other events.
3. The creation of the post, which was funded for its first 3-year period through Section 106 monies from the Sainsbury's development in Old Station Road, Loughton, reflects the Council's commitment to Economic Prosperity and, in particular, Corporate Objective EP6 of the Council Plan 2006 – 2010 (To maintain and improve the links between the Council, local town centres and the business community of the district). The post along with that of the Economic Development Officer plays a key role in delivering Objective 2 of the Council's key objectives 2010/11 (mitigating the impact of the current economic conditions on local people and businesses through the development and implementation of appropriate initiatives).

4. As of mid December 2010 there has been a recruitment freeze on external recruitment to vacant posts within EFDC. Exceptions have been made for posts that have implications for health and safety, demonstrate that they generate surplus income, or are externally funded. Whilst the Town Centre Officer post does not directly fall into these categories it provides added value to existing Council initiatives such as freezing car parking rates, in helping boost local economies and support business income generation specifically. So while there is no direct income generation for the Council, the work that the Economic Development Officer and the TCO provide assist in sustaining viable town centres, promoting businesses and ensuring shop units remain occupied. An aspiration is for the team to also assist in improving the skill base and employment potential for local residents.
5. The current post-holder, who has been in position since March 2010, is from an agency and has many years of town centre management experience with other authorities, mainly but not solely in Essex. She has introduced a number of initiatives including the Vacant Units Project (often known as "Pop-up" Shops) the first of these opened in October 2010 in Ongar. Loyalty Cards, which encourage shoppers to visit the district's 6 centres, were introduced in the New Year. Other current work includes (a) helping Buckhurst Hill TCP with a Special Projects Grant application to fund the creation of a website; (b) preparing a questionnaire for Epping businesses asking them how they would like the town centre to develop; (c) working with ARU students to design a re-branding for Loughton TCP (d) developing a marketing strategy for The Broadway (Debden) and (e) working with the Waltham Abbey Town Partnership on a marketing seminar to be held in Waltham Abbey in January and supporting their plans for celebrating events leading up to the Olympics and maximising the legacy especially for businesses in the area.
6. During the previous post-holder's period of sick leave, concern was expressed by a number of TCPs about the lack of cover for this post, and this included articles in the local press. This was reported to Cabinet in December 2009, when it was agreed that temporary cover should be provided. The current post-holder has established much better and closer working relationships with the TCPs, and it is therefore likely that concern will again be raised about the deletion of the post when the current budget expires.
7. Members are therefore asked to consider whether the post should be continued beyond its current 3-year term and how this could be budgeted. There appear to be 3 options: (a) to continue the post for another temporary period of at least 2 years; (b) to create a new permanent post on the establishment or (c) to abolish the post once the current budget is used up. (a) and (b) will obviously have budget implications for the Council as external sources of funding, notably LAGBI, have not been continued. (c) runs the risk of adversely affecting relations between the TCPs and the Council, with consequent negative publicity, and of being contrary to Corporate Objective EP6.
8. Option {(c) Social Enterprise} below may fund the Town Centre Officer post if successful as an option for managing the Town Centres. This option is currently being reviewed. It would be estimated that the Town Centre Officer post will be funded via this route from 2012/13 onwards when the Enterprise set up is fully established.

Review of options considered for the future management of Town Centres:

9. BIDS Business Improvement Districts – The 6 town centres are too small to make this a feasible option
10. Membership Schemes. Again the town centres are very small and would create an inefficient balance between administration and income. The Partnerships are very different and it would be difficult to create a generic membership scheme
11. Social Enterprise. This would be the most positive option and links in with the Government Localism and Big Society agenda. There are currently funding opportunities to set up and assist with the operation of Social Enterprises and these would be sought. Part of the concept is that the Social Enterprise for the 6 Town Centres would offer services to towns and to Town Centre businesses. These services would be offered by a variety of people, returners, trainees, semi-retired persons, who found main stream work difficult to access. The services would include:
 - a) event management
 - b) web design
 - c) administration
 - d) temporary sales assistant cover
 - e) marketing
12. There are a series of potential partners already expressing an interest in providing some of these activities and a Town Centre Partnership would be an ideal vehicle for moving things forward. Businesses would only have to pay for services they required and could afford, these services would be provided by local people who in time would build up skills and experience so that they were in a position to enter the jobs market independently.
13. Any profits from the social enterprise would be put back into the project supporting local businesses and local people. The enterprise would therefore use operational activities (stewarding at events, window cleaning, retail assistance) to finance strategic work provided by a Town Centre Officer.
14. As discussed, the Town Centre Officer would work within and on behalf of the Enterprise set up. It is envisaged that formal partnership agreements would exist between the Enterprise and associated partners including EFDC.

Reason for decision:

Current funding for the Town Centre Officer post is running out in July 2011. Given the recession and the ongoing work that the Economic Development team are delivering in order to boost local economies and town centre regeneration it was felt that the post of Town Centre Officer should be considered for continuation, even in light of the recruitment freeze. The role is seen as important by the Town Centre Partnerships and provides vital support for their function.

Options considered and rejected:

None

Consultation undertaken:

Within Planning & Economic Development and with Town Centre Partnerships

Resource implications:

Option (a) £39,260 per annum for a fixed term period from CSB budget or DDF

Option (b) £39,260 per annum from CSB budget or DDF

Option (c) No budget implications post July 2011

Budget provision:

Option (a) Grade 8 per annum salary, as above

Option (b) Grade 8 per annum salary, as above

Option (c) None

Personnel: N/A

Land: N/A

Community Plan/BVPP reference: EP6

Relevant statutory powers: N/A

Background papers: None

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: N/A

Key Decision reference: (if required)

Agenda Item 10

Notes of Planning Agents and Amenity Group Forum: 26/10/2010

430pm - 640pm

Attended	
ATTENDEE	COMPANY/GROUP
Alastair Allan	BRD Tech - Agent
Jackie Pepper	JSP - Agent
Jane Orsborn	Agent
Rachel Padfield	Sworders Agricultural - Agent
Phil Nicholas	BDC - Agent
Martyn Pattie	Architect - Agent
Cllr Ken Angold-Stephens	Loughton Residents Assoc.
Jacqueline Dodman	T. Bois Action Group
Terry Blanks	North Weald Residents
Sandra Fenton	St Winifreds Residents
Sue McKinley	Friends of Epping Forest
Nicola Wilkinson	Roydon Society
Sue Rigley	Conservators of Epping Forest
Steve Miller	W. Abbey Heritage Soc.
Dr Warren	T. Bois Action Group
Cllr Maggie McEwen	Member of PSSSP
Cllr Jon Whitehouse	Member of PSSSP
Cllr Syd Stavrou	Planning-Development Control Portfolio Holder
John de Wilton Preston	Director of Planning & Economic Development

Nigel Richardson	Assistant Director (Development Control)
Jill Shingler	Principal Planning Officer – Development Control (North Team)
David Baker	Planning Officer – Development Control (South Team)

Apologies received from:

Cllr John Philip – Chairman of Planning Services Standing Scrutiny Panel (PSSSP)

Steven Hayhurst (Planning Agent) and Pamela Merritt (Agent and Architect)

Agenda

1. Registration and validation of planning applications
2. Charging for planning applications/advice
3. Implementing planning policy
4. Impact of development on existing infrastructure
5. Impact of development on Green Belt/Open Spaces
6. Role of Members in planning decision making
7. Any Other Business

Cllr Philip at the last minute was unable to attend due to work commitments and Cllr Jon Whitehouse instead chaired the meeting in his absence.

The agenda was formulated following pre-forum comments received from the attendee's.

1. REGISTRATION AND VALIDATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Forum were asked whether we were doing this well compared with other planning authorities: were we too thorough?

Not surprisingly, the Planning Agents commented mostly on this aspect of planning, as this affects them and their clients at this stage of the planning process. Everyone agreed the importance of this process and the need to get this right, but it was felt we were too strict in certain areas:

- Requiring a street scene. Cannot gain access to neighbours properties to measure and therefore rely on photographs to draw street scene (neighbouring buildings either side of application building). Worry of agents that this may not be accurate when it comes to building and may be financial repercussions. **Officer** response is that this should be labelled up as "indicative" and streetscenes have been requested by Town and Parish Council's to help in decision making by seeing the proposed development in its context.
- Incorrect fees. There is sometimes some inconsistency. **Officer** response was that the fees are currently set by Government but whilst fee is dependent on development type/ size, some types of development are less easy to categorise. Website attention could be drawn to Government Circular 04/2008, which gives good examples of fee calculating, particularly for mixed development.
- Applications returned for initial reason and after rectifying and returning it to the Council, it is returned for another reason. The client is not aware of delays and blames the planning agent submitting the application. The example stated was the red-line identifying the planning application site was too thick and when returned, it was sent back then for a scale-bar and further fee. **Officer's** explained the statutory importance of the redline, particularly where the development is close to the site boundary and therefore should not be too thick so as to lose clarity for the distance between the development building and its nearest boundary of the site. The sending back of plans were quite common about a year ago where they did not include a scale-bar on all drawings, which is a validation requirement of EFDC, but most agents now doing this. The plans need to be clear and consistent as discrepancies will be picked up later in the process and officers can refuse or request you withdraw the application.
- Too much detail required to front-load a planning application. In some cases, tree survey asked after 3 weeks of application being submitted. Other surveys add considerably to the client's bill who is very reluctant to pay out at this stage, particularly if doubt over planning permission being acquired. Why not impose planning conditions as previous. Amenity Group member conversely concerned that one planning application did not include protected trees and should have had a survey, but officers in the end accepted the detail. **Officer's** explained that validation

requirement has toughened up as a response to pressure group concern that tree, ecology and biodiversity issues not being given sufficient weight in the application process and planning conditions ineffective if problem is identified after planning permission is granted. We also in the past have lacked expertise in biodiversity/ecology issues but CountryCare officer now provides this.

2 CHARGING FOR PRE- PLANNING APPLICATION ADVICE

This has been operating for the last 5 years with mixed results. It is £1500 + VAT and applies to Major category applications only. The agents did not think this was worth paying since the officers response was virtually a re-issue of planning policy with disclaimers at the end. It was felt by some that this should be part of a public service and the general professional duty of the planning officers. It does not necessarily speed up the process, although the example of 3 weeks to acknowledge and another 3 weeks before the pre-app meeting took place was not EFDC but Chelmsford. East Herts for example, charged less than EFDC, but included a fee for "Minor" category applications (£300 for Minor, £600 for Majors). One agent pointed out that not going through the pre-application process in some council's usually resulted in a refusal of planning permission. The matter of costs in producing a planning application was raised and pointed out to officers that EFDC are very strict on contamination issues and reports can be £2000 just for an initial assessment. Householder applications in particular do not justify contamination survey given someone is already living there. **Officer's** response in respect of contamination, we have a specific officer dedicated to this work and therefore it is other council's who are not carrying out this duty thoroughly enough. On the other matters, Members do not comment at pre-application stage for fear that they may prejudice themselves from taking part in the decision making process when the application is reported to a planning committee. However, officers have recently been bringing major applications to pre-committee meetings to make members aware of potential development and to seek local knowledge of importance that can be passed on to the developer. **Officer's** will review the charging and report to Members, but agree that a more worthy written response is required, which should include a way forward through amending the scheme, if there is one.

3. IMPLEMENTING PLANNING POLICY

John Preston explained timetable for production of Local Development Framework, upcoming consultation, its delay due to gypsy and travellers work, revocation of East of England Plan, Government indications via spending review etc. Protection of the Green Belt was raised by amenity group and defended: Officers pointing out that 94% of EFDC is Green Belt. The Chairman pointed out that big decision of tension re no development against need for housing - eg affordable housing.

It was questioned whether Landscape Character Appraisals, Village Design statements and Ward Profiles would be included in LDF process. It was reiterated that loss of bungalows in Theydon Bois should be resisted because there is still a need particularly by more elderly people and that officers do not use Local Plan policy H4A- Dwelling Mix to defend them.

Officer's response was that the loss of bungalows needs research and substantiating and was not in the policy itself. Also, did not have the resources to carry this out. Flat developments in Manor Road, Chigwell was harming the local area, though Officers pointed out that they had successfully resisted some proposals for flats here.

Other issues raised and briefly discussed included Community Visioning, but most people do not want change, despite all households, parish and town council's to be consulted; lifting of agricultural occupation conditions - rarely done but if prove lived at property and not been occupied in agriculture for more than 10 years, then there is little the council can do about it and it can be regularised through a process called certificate of lawful development; and finally, will EFDC require all developments to require Code Level 4 compliance, which Officers responded by stating that this would be dealt with as part of LDF process.

4. IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT ON EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

This was a specific discussion about Council's biggest asset, North Weald Airfield, and the question was posed that if redeveloped, the infrastructure would not be able to support new development and rumour is that there will be a waste transfer station relocated here from the current depot in Langston Road, Loughton. The Chairman pointed out that the Council has a North Weald Airfield and Asset Management Cttee that is looking into this matter and not really for discussion in this forum.

5. IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT ON GREEN BELT/ OPEN SPACES

There was a general agreement that the Green Belt was important in protecting the Forest and smaller woodlands because it provides areas for endangered species to thrive. A small development close by can have a large impact - e.g. large agricultural houses, and agricultural vehicles that damage roadside verges - perhaps this could be foreseen before necessarily granting planning permission. **Officer's** response was that there is a difficulty in balancing the agricultural requirements against ecology and biodiversity issues. They both have a role to play in the countryside. The planning permission granted to build St John School on green belt land in Epping was briefly discussed and pointed out that this was decided by a Planning Inspector, though there will be on rare occasions, very special circumstances that allow development to proceed in the Green Belt, such as in this case.

6. ROLE OF MEMBERS IN PLANNING DECISION MAKING

Agents commented that Planning Officers provide good advice and generally are available, which compares more favourably than most other council's where it is very difficult to contact an officer to discuss a pre-application proposal. One agent went as far to say we were one of the best he deals with, comparable to LB of Barnet and Enfield and better than other Essex authorities. However, there is endless frustration when a lot of time, money and resources have gone into negotiating a development through meetings with officers, only for

the officer's recommendation to be overturned by Members at Planning Committees. Councillors should be better educated on planning issues. Cllr Mrs Stavrou pointed out that there is an excellent training programme for Councillors, including local council members, run by officers, but unfortunately not all attend. Cllr Angold-Stephens thought this was mandatory but it was not being enforced. One of the Amenity Group attendees felt that planners also needed educating as there was not consistency in assessing planning developments.

Planning Agents felt that Members were not prepared before meetings and should be familiar with the plans beforehand. Brentwood arrange for Councillor to see sites. Members do occasionally defer at EFDC for a site visit.

Officer's stated that Planning Services Standing Scrutiny Panel are due to visit 3-4 sites where development has been built to assess planning issues and impact. There is a pre-meeting before the Committee takes place so that officers and members can raise issues and it is here that member representatives are shown plans and briefed over the development items.

There could be better information provided for objectors about how they could speak at committees. **Officer's** pointed out that there was a pamphlet sent out to objectors when they were notified an application was going to a planning committee, which informed of the arrangements for speaking at planning committees.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Website not that user friendly on planning pages. There is difficulty in finding what you want and agents did not feel I-Plan was totally reliable for planning history of a site. **Officer's** responded that a User group is being set up to look at the website and hopefully this will result in improvements.

Improved consultation on planning applications in the local area would make people more aware of what was on-going in their neighbourhood. **Officer's** - On request, weekly list of all planning applications received can be e-mailed out.

Planning case officers often do not respond to e-mails phone-calls even with repeated chasing up. This does vary as some are better than others. **Officer's** - Workload and constant deadlines prioritises work but the matter will be raised at Officer Team Meeting to see how this can be improved.

8-week target is too rigidly enforced. Agents sometimes advised near deadline that plans need altering and therefore should withdraw the application or have it refused. The result is an unnecessary delay when amended plans could have overcome the issue. Everyone agreed that quality of the decision should be more important than speed of delivery, but **Officer's** stated it is the performance by which the development control service is measured by Cabinet and Epping Forest. The Government have just announced scrapping of performance targets in respect of speed of decision making within 8/13 week parameters at the end of next March, but as yet it has not been announced what if any new national targets

will be set and indeed, whether the current ones will be retained as local performance measures specifically for EFDC. The Planning Agents wished that Officers could deal with the discharge of planning conditions in the same time limit, but it was not unusual for these to take longer. **Officer's** response was that unfortunately, because these were not performance measured, then these were not always such a high priority, although more straightforward conditions should be dealt with within a reasonable time period.

Finally, there was a suggestion that in the future, planning agents and the amenity groups could be held separately as separate forums, but the general consensus from those who were present is that the current forum worked well and indeed, there had been cross-learning and a better understanding of the issues facing each group.

This note of the forum meeting was compiled by Nigel Richardson

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SCRUTINY



Report to Planning Services Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting: 16 December 2010

Subject: Planning Enforcement Protocol

**Officer contact for further information: Jeremy Godden
Principle Planning Officer (Enforcement) 01992 564498)**

Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins (01992 564607)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

1. That the Planning Enforcement Protocol Code of Practise be reviewed as per the attached document.
2. That members confirm the revised notification procedures in the Members Bulletin for enforcement action, and whether they require further information from Planning Enforcement.

Report:

With regard to Minute 19 Item 4 of Planning Service Scrutiny Standing Panel dated 02 September 2010, Members have requested that a review is carried out of the Planning Protocol Code of Practise as it relates to the Enforcement Section.

This is due to concerns being raised about apparent delays in subsequent action once enforcement action had been authorised.

Enforcement investigation can frequently take a considerable amount of time to bring about a successful conclusion, in some cases taking 2 – 3 years to resolve. This is mainly due to the nature of the planning system, which allows for the submission and determination of retrospective applications and any appeals to be made against even self evidently unacceptable development, thereby allowing a contravener to elongate the time span of the investigation to the frustration of all other parties. Whilst the determination of applications and subsequent appeals is taking place it can seem to third parties that nothing is happening, or the case has been dropped, when in fact it is very much a live case.

The Enforcement Section provides full contact details of the investigating officer to the complainants with an invitation for them to contact the officer for updates on the progression of the case.

A Code of Practise is attached which is based on the current Local Charter and has been revised to reflect the current procedures within the Enforcement Section. The main changes are firstly the replacement of categorising complaints from 4 types for response purposes to 2 types of response, and secondly changes to how members are notified of enforcement action.

With regard to the first change, this is due to a streamlining of administrative procedures and internal working practises, but it should be noted that this is also reliant on the current levels of staffing within the Section remaining stable; should staffing numbers fall, then previous system would have to be reintroduced to allow a more discriminating time response to complaints on the basis of a far more detailed assessment of the harm each complaint was alleged to be causing to amenity.

The second change is that more comprehensive reporting and updating of Enforcement actions with regard to the issue of, compliance with, and prosecutions for breaches of Enforcement Notices in the Members Bulletin is taking place.

If there is any further information regarding the progress of cases that Members would like to see it would be helpful to know in what format they would like the information and to what level of detail, bearing in mind the possible resource implications for the administration of the Section.

Reason for decision:

Revise the Code of Practise to reflect the current working practises of the Planning Enforcement Section and to ensure greater transparency

Options considered and rejected:

Nil

Consultation undertaken:

Nil

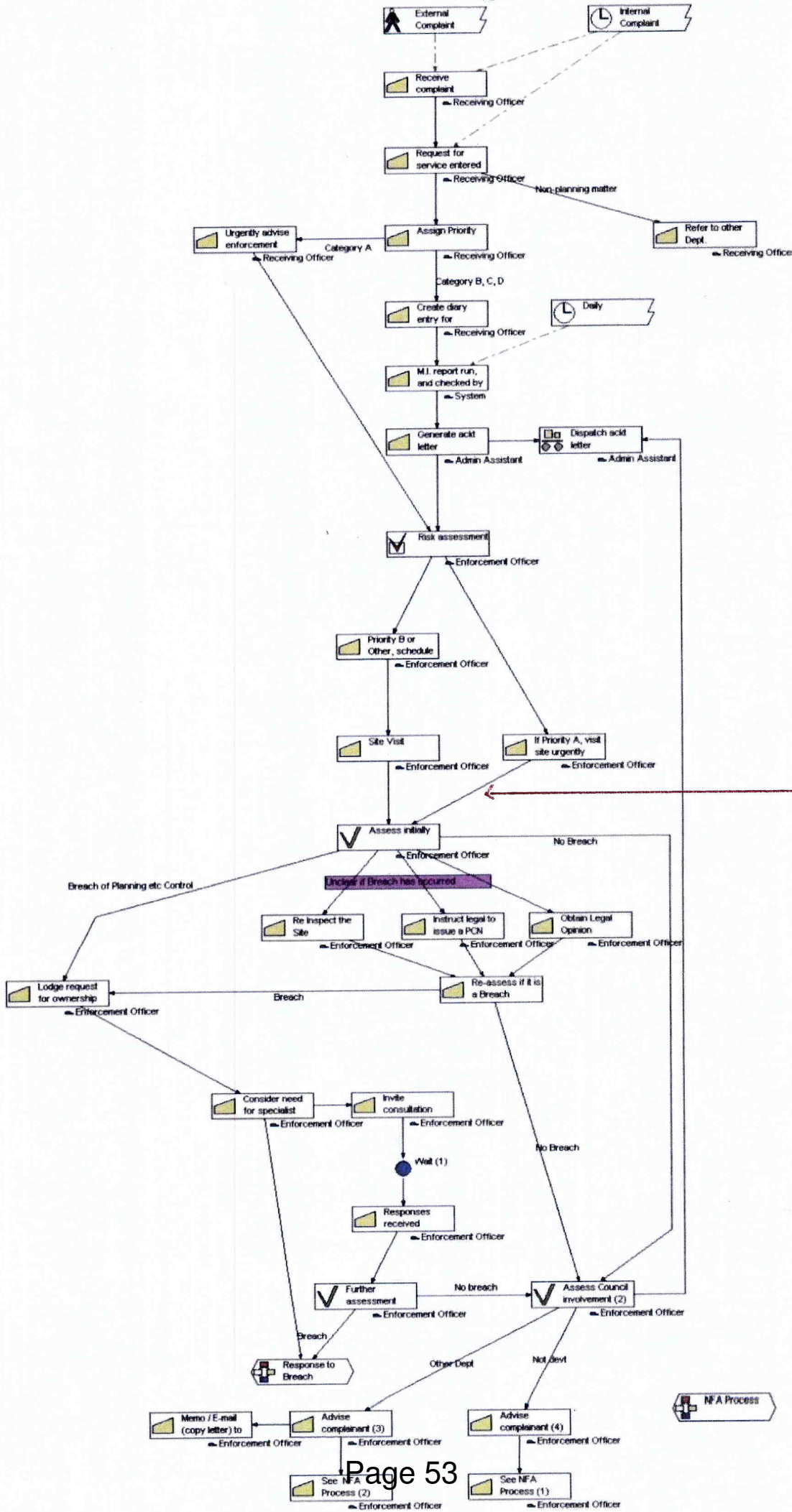
Resource implications:

Budget provision: Nil
Personnel: Planning Officers and Members
Land: Nil

Community Plan/BVPP reference: Nil
Relevant statutory powers: Town and Country Planning Act

Background papers: Planning applications as per report
Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: Nil
Key Decision reference: (if required)

Main Investigation Process:



4
24hrs
For A
cases

2 weeks
For B
cases

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Report to Planning Services Planning Scrutiny Panel

SCRUTINY



Date of meeting: 10/01/2011

Portfolio: Leader

**Subject: Essex County Council Minerals Development
Document: Preferred Approach Paper**

Officer contact for further information: Lewis McGann (01992 564493)

Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins (01992 564607)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) **To consider the potential impacts of the proposals from the Essex County Council Preferred Options Mineral Development Document and to formulate a response to the Consultation based on officers' comments.**

Report:

1. Essex County Council (ECC) is currently in the process of producing a Mineral and Waste Development Framework (MWDF) as required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004). This will replace the Essex Mineral Local Plan (adopted 1996) and the Essex Waste Local Plan (adopted 2001). The focus of this report is the Minerals Development Document. The document will set out the authority's vision, objectives, Core Strategy policies and plans (and how they will be delivered) for the area with respect to mineral related development over a 15 year period from the date of final adoption (estimated to be in 2013). The Mineral Development Document (MDD) Preferred Approach will be available for consultation between the 9th December 2010 to 17th February 2011.

2. Prior to the publication of this document Essex County Council had previously undertaken consultation on the following documents:

- (i) MDD: Site Allocations – Issues & Options Paper (December 2005)
- (ii) MDD: Additional Site Allocations – Issues & Options Paper (March 2006)
- (iii) MDD: Further Issues & Options Paper (January 2009)
- (iv) MDD: Site Allocations– Issues & Options Paper (August 2009)

3. In all of their previous consultation documents, ECC had identified that an additional 39.025 million tonnes (mt) of sand, gravel, silica sand and brick clay aggregate were required within the County between 2007 – 2026. The MDD Preferred Approach Paper however now estimates that 42.225mt will need to be identified for the 20 year plan period (2009 - 2028 inclusive). This takes into account existing permitted reserves and subsequent permissions and committee resolutions to grant planning permission since 31 December 2008. The increased amount of aggregate required compared to the 39.025mt identified in the Further Issues and Options (2009) reflects a fall in reserves due to a recent reassessment at two sites and a longer Plan period to 2028.

4. To address this need, ECC issued two 'Call for Sites' in 2005 and 2009 from which 43 potential new or existing sand and gravel extraction sites were suggested, providing a potential 118mt of sand and gravel. Two of these suggested sites were located directly within or partly within Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) at *Patch Park Farm, Abridge* (Site A41) and *Land at Shellow Cross Farm, Elm Farm and Newland Hall Farm, Willingale, Ongar* (Site

A40). The suitability of all 43 sites were subject to public consultation between 17 September and 12 November 2009. Representations were considered at LDF Cabinet Committee (09/11/09) and Planning Scrutiny Panel (12/11/09) stating the Council's **objection** to both of the two proposed sites within the District. (See Appendix A for report).

5. Taking into consideration all of the consultation responses received in the previous rounds of consultation, the MDD: Preferred Approach Paper has now identified 20 new or existing sand and gravel extraction sites which ECC view as their preferred choices for future mineral extraction. This was achieved through the application of a site selection methodology described by ECC as being designed to provide an environmentally friendly set of evenly dispersed sites across the county, with an emphasis on extensions. (See Appendix B for site selection methodology details).

6. Looking at this selection methodology, one point of interest is the fact that at stage 4, ECC have indicated that when scoring each of the forty-three sites, those located in the west of the county were given an extra positive weighting. This method has been used by ECC in their bid to try and tackle what they perceive as a relative shortage of sites to serve the western part of the county, including areas defined for significant future growth, particularly Harlow.

7. Of the 20 sites initially selected as the preferred options to meet future mineral need within the county, the site known as *Land at Shellow Cross Farm, Elm Farm and Newland Hall Farm, Willingale, Ongar* (Site A40) has been included. Within the site assessment (see Appendix C to view this), ECC state that they currently view this site as suitable for consideration and anticipate that (if given the go ahead) it would be located to the west of Roxwell, and comprise of two parcels of land linked by a cross-country haul route. A new processing plant would be located within the northern parcel of land and a new access created onto the A1060. No access would be permitted from Elm Road to the south.

8. In response to these findings it is suggested that EFDC should therefore **object** again to the identification of this site for sand and gravel extraction. Whilst the Council note a decrease in the estimated yield of the site from 4.95 million tonnes to 3.5 million tonnes and a subsequent decrease in site lifespan from 23 to 14 years since the Site Allocations – Issues & Options Paper (August 2009), it is still wholly inappropriate to locate what would be the second biggest mineral extraction site in Essex in terms of its area, in a heavily rural area of Greenbelt which the Council believe to be highly environmentally and historically sensitive.

9. As highlighted in the Council's previous response a variety of key issues exist with this site which make it entirely inappropriate for development into a mineral extraction site. It is important to reiterate that none of these issues have been resolved since the last response to ECC in November 2009. Officers therefore find it extremely disappointing that despite recognising all these problems within the site assessment, ECC currently still intend to use site for mineral extraction. Officers are furthermore disappointed by the fact that the site is considered acceptable despite ECC having still not undertaken a number of vital assessments on the site. This includes an ecological assessment, a hydrological survey and assessment, a transport assessment, an environmental assessment and a historic environment. Officers are very keen to see these completed as they should highlight further to ECC the unsuitability of this site.

10. Another point officers wish to make is that ECC's plans to mitigate any negative impacts upon the site during extraction (should it go ahead despite the Council's objection) will need to be much more comprehensive and detailed than they currently are. The same can also be said for those plans to enhance the site once mineral extraction from it has been completed. Whilst officers appreciate that some of these matters will be dealt with through any subsequent planning application, the Council will be extremely resistant to any plans for mineral extraction in the area should we believe that the County Council have not fully addressed the significant negative impacts which such a proposal will cause.

11. The Council understands that those sites selected as 'Preferred Sites' at this Preferred Approach stage may not remain as 'Preferred Sites' when the final version of the plan emerges at the submission stage. We therefore remain hopeful that future detailed studies will confirm to the County Council the unsuitability of this site.

12. The Council similarly notes that sites currently rejected could later be included as 'Preferred Sites'. In light of this, officers suggest stressing our approval of the exclusion of the site known as *Patch Park Farm, Abridge* (Site A41) as one of the initial 20 preferred sites. Officers are keen to ensure that this decision is permanent as the site is highly unsuitable given the negative impact it would have on the local landscape and local ecology of this part of the Roding Valley, and the high risk of flooding, to name a few issues. None of the issues raised in November 2009 have changed and therefore this site should not be used for mineral extraction purposes.

13. Finally, officers still feel that the issue raised to ECC regarding the belief that the methodology for obtaining sites for mineral extraction within the county was flawed, has never been satisfactorily answered. ECC freely admit that neither they nor the British Geological Survey 'hold sufficient detailed geological data on the county to enable identification of potential mineral extraction sites' themselves. ECC have therefore been relying on an incomplete evidence base to locate potential mineral extraction sites. Officers are therefore very concerned that ECC may not have located the most appropriate deposits of sand and gravel within the this district which consequently has led to them selecting the site at *Land at Shellow Cross Farm, Elm Farm and Newland Hall Farm, Willingale, Ongar* (Site A40) which officers feel should not be included in the final list of 20 sites.

Reason for decision: To ensure that the comments and concerns raised by Forward Planning officers with regards to Essex County Council's consultation on its Mineral Development Document: Preferred Approach (December 2010) are noted and approved by members. Once approved these comments and concerns will then be sent to Essex County Council.

Options considered and rejected:

To not respond to the consultation period.

Not to accept the comments made by Council officers

Consultation undertaken:

None undertaken by Epping Forest District Council

Resource implications:

Consultation considered by Forward Planning officers

Community Plan/BVPP reference:

EP3

Relevant statutory powers:

N/A

Background papers:

The Mineral Development Document (MDD) Preferred Approach (December 2010). Hard copies are available in the members room. The document can also be accessed online [here](#).

Minerals Development Document: Site Allocation – Issues & Options Paper (August 2009)

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:

Sand and gravel extraction from either site would have significant local environmental impacts, and would increase HGV movements on some unsuitable roads.

Key Decision reference: (if required)

N/A



SCRUTINY



Report to Planning Services Scrutiny Standing Panel

Date of meeting: 10 January 2011

Subject: Proposals for Changes to Planning Application Fees in England Consultation

Officer contact for further information: Nigel Richardson, Assistant Director of Planning and Economic Development x 4110

Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins 01992 56 4607

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

1. To consider the consultation questions, issues and options raised by the principle of setting planning application fees at a local council level.

Background:

On 15 November 2010, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (CLG) issued a consultation paper seeking views on proposed changes to the planning application fees regime, which would decentralise responsibility for setting fees to local planning authorities. It also proposes to widen the scope of planning application fees to allow authorities to charge for applications which are currently free and to set higher fees for retrospective applications. The proposals, if agreed, would help to reduce the subsidising of planning applications by local taxpayers. If accepted and approved by Parliament, the changes would be implemented from April 2011, with a six month transition period until October 2011. The consultation period is from 15 November 2010 to 7 January 2011.

Report:

The handling, checking, administering, assessing, deciding and publicising of planning applications requires each one to have appropriate and careful consideration. Over 20 years ago, the Government introduced fee charging on planning applications in order to recover costs of processing most type of planning applications, and subsequently the fees have been increased, the most recent of which was a 23% increase in 2008 to help authorities recover more of their costs. So far, setting these fees has been restricted so that they are done only nationally. Many authorities though, including ourselves, are still not recouping their costs whilst a few are recovering more than it costs them. This means that nationally set fees are not taking account of differing local circumstances and market conditions, which the current Coalition Government considers is contrary to the spirit of localism.

Arup, over a number of years, have carried out independent research for the Government, the latest of which in February 2009 revealed that:

- authorities are recovering 90% of their costs, on average
- the average cost of handling and determining planning applications was £619, and the average fee was £569
- Around 35% of development control resources are being allocated to dealing with applications which do not currently incur a fee

Assumptions are made in Arup's research that all authorities are using the same cost make-up in determining their expenditure, which raises a fundamental issue over what costs are being included and how are each local authority making assessments and reporting what full cost recovery includes. The concern is that the real position is likely to be greater in cost shortfall between expenditure and income and therefore amounts to an under assessment of the position. The Consultation paper assumes that most local planning authorities will increase fees on average by 10% to 15%, but as stated in the response to question 1 below, the Epping Forest District shortfall is greater and requires a much greater fee increase to achieve full cost recovery. The assumption in the consultation paper that the 25% cap (option 2) on fee increases should see full cost recovery is not borne out at this authority.

Options

There are three options outlined in the Consultation paper.

Option 1 would decentralise the responsibility for setting fees for planning applications to local planning authorities, who would have to establish a charging scheme which reflects full cost recovery and the principle that the user should pay for the actual service they receive. Authorities would need to be able to demonstrate that charges are justifiable and based on a cost kept to a minimum and not be profit-making. It is also proposed to widen the scope of planning application fees so that authorities can charge for more of their services. This would enable authorities to charge further for free-go planning applications (resubmissions of the same development within 1 year of the previous application decision) and charge higher fees for retrospective applications.

Option 2 is similar to option 1 but with a cap of 25% on maximum fee levels imposed by Central Government.

Option 3 would be to maintain the current centrally set planning fee system, subject to a 10% to 15% increase in fee levels.

Recommendations:

Invitation to Comment

There are 8 questions posed in the consultation response. At the time of preparing this report, a request had been made to CLG to allow an extension of time in responding, given this panel does not meet until 3 days after the deadline date. Officers though have made a suggested response, which is highlighted, and comment made in the response box in the consultation paper that allows for a justification.

The Planning & Economic Development Directorate in consultation with the Finance & ICT Directorate comment as follows:

- 1. Do you agree that each local planning authority should be able to set its own (non-profit-making) planning application fee charges?**

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neither Agree nor Disagree / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

Explanation/Comment:

Despite the Arup investigation, Epping Forest costs and fees are higher than the average 10% shortfall being quoted. There is a question mark on how the Arup

surveyed local planning authorities measure expenditure and cost and the likelihood is that there will be discrepancies. Based on the budget for 2011/12, our current fee income would cover 49% of costs and the average fee is £708. By using an initial maximum 25% annual increase based on the budget set for 2011/12 of £481,000, the Council could expect to raise a further £120,000, plus a further £80,000 from areas not currently subject to charges. Current fee income would then cover 69% of costs, so the likelihood would be that a further fee increase would be required for 2012/13 and beyond, until full cost recovery is achieved. Option 1 for full cost recovery is therefore sought and currently we are therefore not at risk of fees increasing above cost recovery.

2. Do you agree that local planning authorities should be allowed to decide whether to charge for applications that are resubmitted following withdrawal or refusal?

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neither Agree nor Disagree / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

Explanation/Comment:

There are a number of costs still included in handling, administering and assessing these applications. In particular, the checking for completeness of the submission, further consultation, report writing etc. In effect, this results in re-assessment of the planning issues and still use of officer time as with any other type of planning application.

3. Do you agree that local planning authorities should be able to set higher fees for retrospective planning applications?

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neither Agree nor Disagree / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

Explanation/Comment:

It has been constantly raised by Members that there should be some type of penalty to applicants in those cases where development has been carried out in breach of planning control, in recognition of the investigation time and cost carried out by Planning Enforcement Officers, particularly as enforcement is an area of Development Control where there is low fee generated to the Council. A doubling of the fee would appear not to be unreasonable.

4. Are there any development management services which are not currently charged for but should require a fee?

Yes / No

Explanation/Comment:

Whilst not part of the CLG preferred consultation recommendation, fees should be chargeable for listed building applications and conservation area consents, particularly where these are not accompanied by a fee paying planning applications, because this Council has a large number of listed buildings and requires specialist advice to assess them. It may go some way to covering the astronomical advertising fee for these types of applications in the local newspaper (£58,000 in 2009/10). Also, a fee should be chargeable for development where Article 4 Orders or planning

conditions have removed permitted development rights (currently free) because an assessment by a planning officer is still required and the condition would have necessitated the original granting of planning permission. At Epping Forest, between 01/04/10 and 01/12/10, no fee application accounted for 30% of all type of submitted applications. We already charge for pre-application advice on Major category applications and we will be exploring other options in a bid to seek full cost recovery, i.e. charge for pre-application advice on other categories of development, a checking service to ensure validation of planning applications when deposited etc.

Apart from claiming for costs, there is no income return on planning application related appeals. Whilst appreciating the applicant has already paid a planning application fee, a fee payable to the Council to cover administration costs should be introduced and be variable depending on which procedure (written representations, hearings or public inquiry) is chosen.

5. Are there any development management services which currently require a fee but should be exempt from charging?

Yes / No

Explanation/Comment:

We are still in favour of not charging for applications relating to disabled access/ comfort issues. Works to trees in Conservation Areas and those that are Protected would also appear a little unreasonable given the Council protects these in the first place and there is the fear that a fee may encourage works to take place without submission of an application.

6. What are the likely effects of any of the changes on you, or the group or business or local authority you represent?

Comments:

It would allow for a move closer towards full cost recovery, reduce overall cost of the service by re-looking at our overheads and re-charges, staff retention and greater emphasis on pre-application advice and collaboration with various parties. Increase in administering this service at expense of professional time spent on dealing with planning applications. Setting fees locally would allow authorities to run a more efficient service since it will be a more transparent system, directly accountable to local residents.

7. Do you think there will be unintended consequences to these proposals?

Yes / No

Explanation/Comment:

Difficulty in accountability of cost recovery as a comparison across local authorities, depending on what is included in the budget make-up of Development Control/Management sections.

Potential disagreement and fluctuations of fees comparable to neighbouring authority, resulting in increased challenges of fees set.

Threat to general positive customer feedback as agents become disillusioned and confused by varying fees between authorities, particularly if the fees are substantially increased.

Possible increase in unauthorised development to avoid paying the fee.

8. Do you have any comment on the outcomes predicted in the Impact Assessment, in particular the costs and benefits (See Annex B)?

Yes / No

Explanation/Comment:

Cost Benefit impact Assessment

Option 1 - This would be our preferred option. The benefits for local planning authorities will result from being able to locally set fees and allow them to increase to a level where costs are fully recouped. The benefit for Epping Forest will be full cost recovery, based on local conditions and on current estimates, this would mean a further income in a full year of approximately £500,000.

The costs would be the additional cost burden imposed on applicants with an average estimate of 13% on fees paid by individuals and 87% on fees paid by businesses. Full cost recovery would in the case of Epping Forest possibly double the fees currently being charged.

Option 2 - The benefits for local planning authorities will result from a maximum 25% increase in fees initially, which in the case of Epping Forest will not fully recoupe all costs. The benefit for Epping Forest would be approximately £120,000 in a full year still leaving a significant gap between income and expenditure.

The costs would be the additional costs and burdens outlined in option 1 but limited to 25%.

Option 3 - The benefits for local planning authorities will result from a 10% to 15% increase in fees imposed by central Government. The benefit for Epping Forest will be approximately £70,000 in a full year, which would be a long way from full cost recovery.

The costs would be the additional costs and burdens outlined in option 1 but limited to 15%.

Reason for the Decision:

The CLG consultation requires a response by 7 January 2011. A request has been made to the CLG to allow a short extension of time in order that Members can comment on this report.

Options considered and rejected:

Not to respond to the consultation, but responding is in our interest as it would have potential fundamental implications for local government financing.

Consultation undertaken:

Management Board/Cabinet Members Session – 15/12/2010
Finance and ICT Service – Principal Accountant

Resource implications:

Budget provision: Significant, if allowed full cost recovery.

Personnel: Nil
Land: Nil

Community Plan/BVPP reference: Nil

Relevant statutory powers: Section 303 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as substituted by Section 199 of the Planning Act 2008

Background papers: CLG Consultation Paper: Proposals for changes to planning application fees in England, November 2010;

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: Nil
Key Decision reference: (if required)

Proposals for changes to planning application fees
in England
Consultation



Proposals for changes to planning application fees
in England
Consultation

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Contents

Introduction	7
The legal background	8
Resourcing the planning system	9
The changes we propose	10
Options	11
Invitation to comment	14
Annex A	
Fees for development management services	17
Annex B	
Impact assessment	19
Annex C	
Criteria for governmental consultation exercises	45

Scope of the consultation

<p>Topic of this consultation:</p>	<p>Planning application fees Local planning authorities received more than 450,000 planning applications in 2009-10, including everything from house extensions to large developments. It is resource intensive for authorities to handle, check and publicise applications and give each one appropriate and careful consideration. Local planning authorities charge fees in order to recover the costs of processing most types of planning applications. Fees are currently set nationally.</p>
<p>Scope of this consultation:</p>	<p>This consultation paper proposes changes to the planning application fees regime which would decentralise responsibility for setting fees to local planning authorities. We also propose to widen the scope of planning application fees so that authorities can charge for more of their services. This would enable (but not compel) authorities to charge for resubmitted applications, and would allow authorities to charge higher fees for retrospective applications. Both proposals will help to reduce taxpayer subsidy of planning applications.</p>
<p>Geographical scope:</p>	<p>Applies to local planning authorities in England.</p>
<p>Impact Assessment:</p>	<p>There is an impact assessment attached and it can be found at Annex B. We have undertaken an equalities impact assessment initial screening and no issues have been identified. If responses to consultation highlight any equalities issues with proposals, we will undertake a full equalities impact assessment as is necessary.</p>

Basic Information

To:	Local planning authorities, developers, businesses, householders and anyone else who makes planning applications.																	
Body/bodies responsible for the consultation:	<p>This consultation document is available on the Communities and Local Government website. If necessary, paper copies can be obtained from Julian Wheeler (see below). Your representations, by e-mail or in writing, should be sent – for receipt by the closing date of 7 January 2011 – to:</p> <p>Julian Wheeler Department for Communities and Local Government Zone 1/J1, Eland House Bressenden Place London SW1E 5DU e-mail: julian.wheeler@communities.gsi.gov.uk</p>																	
Duration:	15 November 2010 – 7 January 2011																	
Enquiries:	As above																	
How to respond:	As above																	
Additional ways to become involved:	<p>This policy change is a significant change for local authorities and developers and to help with the understanding of our proposals we have provisionally booked venues for a series of seminars for local authorities around the country. A separate event for developers and business interests will be held in London. This is aimed at chief planners or those with financial responsibilities to bring forward ideas about how to set up their own fees structure in time to meet the 1st October 2011 deadline.</p> <p>If you would like to take part in one of these workshops please email julian.wheeler@communities.gsi.gov.uk to book a place indicating your preferred venue (and a second choice). Please note that there are a limited number of spaces available at some venues so places will be allocated on a first come first served basis (or second choice venues will be allocated where possible).</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>Date</i></th> <th><i>Venue</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Friday 26 November 10.30 – 12.30pm</td> <td>London (businesses)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Monday 29 November 2.30 – 4.30pm</td> <td>London (local planning authorities)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wednesday 1 December 2 – 4pm</td> <td>Bristol</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thursday 2 December 2 – 4pm</td> <td>Leeds</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wednesday 15 December 2- 4pm</td> <td>Nottingham</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Monday 20 December 2 – 4pm</td> <td>Manchester</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tuesday 21 December 10.30 – 12.30pm</td> <td>Guildford</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		<i>Date</i>	<i>Venue</i>	Friday 26 November 10.30 – 12.30pm	London (businesses)	Monday 29 November 2.30 – 4.30pm	London (local planning authorities)	Wednesday 1 December 2 – 4pm	Bristol	Thursday 2 December 2 – 4pm	Leeds	Wednesday 15 December 2- 4pm	Nottingham	Monday 20 December 2 – 4pm	Manchester	Tuesday 21 December 10.30 – 12.30pm	Guildford
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After the consultation:	Responses to the consultation will be analysed and considered before the Government's response to the consultation is published on the DCLG website.																	

<p>Compliance with the Code of Practice on Consultation:</p>	<p>The consultation does not comply with the Code which recommends a 12 week consultation period. This consultation will be for a reduced period of eight weeks because of the need to prepare secondary legislation, which will need to be debated and approved by Parliament before it can come into effect on 4 April 2011. An eight week period will enable the Government to take into account representations before drafting secondary legislation.</p>
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Background

<p>Getting to this stage:</p>	<p>The Planning Act 2008</p> <p>The provisions for charging planning application fees are set out in section 303 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as substituted by section 199 of the Planning Act 2008. These provisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allow fees to be charged in relation to any function of a local planning authority and for matters ancillary to those functions • allow the Secretary of State to prescribe fees or a means of calculating fees to be set by someone else (such as a local planning authority) • allow the Secretary of State to prescribe when a service would be exempt from fees <p>Research on planning application fees was undertaken by the previous Government (see next section). It informs our proposals.</p>
<p>Previous engagement:</p>	<p>The District Councils Network has published a paper on local authority fees and charges, which includes proposals to decentralise responsibility for setting planning application fees. The Local Government Association is in favour of these proposals.</p> <p>In February 2009, the previous Government commissioned independent research from Arup¹ to look at whether planning application fees were covering local authority costs, and to identify methods that authorities could use to set their own charges. Arup's report is available on our website. It shows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that authorities are recovering around 90 per cent of their costs, on average • that between April 2006 and March 2010 (with projections used for 09-10) the average cost of handling and determining planning applications was £619, and the average fee received was £569 • that around 35 per cent of development management resources are being allocated to dealing with applications which do not currently incur a fee

¹ *Planning Costs and Fees*, Ove Arup & Partners for Communities and Local Government, November 2010

Introduction

1. Local planning authorities received more than 450,000 planning applications in 2009-10, including everything from house extensions to large developments. It is resource intensive for authorities to handle, check and publicise applications and give each one appropriate and careful consideration. Local planning authorities are able to charge fees in order to recover the costs of processing most types of planning applications.
2. Fees are currently set nationally, which means they do not take account of differing local circumstances and market conditions. This is contrary to the spirit of localism, and the principle that decisions should be taken at the lowest possible level, by people who are accountable to the public.
3. The majority of local planning authorities are failing to recover costs from fee income. Since planning permission often adds significant value to land, this means that local tax payers are subsidising applications which may make the applicant a considerable profit. On the other hand, some authorities are actually generating more income through charging fees than it costs to process applications, because the national charges exceed their local costs.
4. The only way to overcome this is to enable authorities to set their own fees which reflect local costs, and encourage them to run a fair and efficient system.
5. This consultation paper proposes changes to the planning application fees regime which would decentralise responsibility for setting fees to local planning authorities. We also propose to allow authorities to charge for some of those applications which are currently free. Both proposals will help to reduce the subsidising of planning applications by local residents.
6. If accepted and approved by Parliament, the changes would be implemented from April 2011, with a six month transition period until October 2011.

The legal background

The Planning Act 2008

7. The provisions for charging planning application fees are set out in section 303 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as substituted by section 199 of the Planning Act 2008. These provisions:
 - allow fees to be charged in relation to any function of a local planning authority and for matters ancillary to those functions
 - allow the Secretary of State to prescribe fees or a means of calculating fees to be set by someone else (such as a local planning authority)
 - allow the Secretary of State to prescribe when a service would be exempt from fees
8. Section 303 (10) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that the income from a fee must not exceed the cost of performing the fee-related function (handling, processing and determining planning applications, in this instance). This means that fees cannot be used to make a profit.

The basis for charging planning application fees

9. It is an established principle that local authorities should pay for activities that are purely or largely for the wider public good. The intention of development management is above all to promote the public good: since managing local development helps to secure the long-term benefits of sustainable, well-designed communities. Yet planning decisions often bring private benefit to the applicant as well; in particular, a property with planning permission may be much more valuable than it would be without. The power granted to authorities to charge planning application fees reflects the possible private benefit implicit in a planning permission. An applicant should expect to pay a fee for an application that could bring a measure of gain. The fee payable reflects the overall cost of handling, administering and deciding the application, including related overheads.

Resourcing the planning system

Research

10. In February 2009, the previous Government commissioned independent research from Arup¹ to look at whether planning application fees were covering local authority costs, and to identify methods that authorities could use to set their own charges. Arup's report is available on our website. It shows:
 - that authorities are recovering around 90 per cent of their costs, on average
 - that between April 2006 and March 2010 (with projections used for 2009-10) the average cost of handling and determining planning applications was £619, and the average fee received was £569
 - that around 35 per cent of development management resources are being allocated to dealing with applications which do not currently incur a fee

¹ *Planning Costs and Fees*, Ove Arup & Partners for the Department for Communities and Local Government, November 2010

The changes we propose

Decentralising planning application fees

11. Wherever possible, decisions should be taken at the local level, by people who are accountable to the public. There is no reason why charges for planning applications should be an exception. Local planning authorities should be able to set their own charges to recover their own costs. Applicants should be charged for the full cost of the application where they are paying a fee, rather than being subsidised by the general tax payer. **We therefore propose to decentralise responsibility for planning application fee setting to local planning authorities.**
12. In April 2008, fees were increased by 23 per cent in order to help authorities recover more of their costs. However, some authorities are still not recouping costs – as Arup’s research showed – while others are recovering more than it cost them. This variation is inevitable when fees are set nationally and has been raised as an issue by respondents to the Government’s Spending Challenge². Letting local planning authorities set their own fees will enable them to recoup their costs but not exceed them. At the same time, setting fees locally provides a stronger incentive for local planning authorities to run a more efficient service: since it will be a more transparent system, directly accountable to local residents.
13. If the proposal is taken forward there will be a six month transition period to give authorities time to develop charges which accurately reflect their costs.

Extending the scope of planning application fees

14. Some applications, such as those for listed building consent, are not currently subject to fees, because they provide significant public benefit. Annex A outlines the development management services for which a fee is and is not payable.
15. In some instances, applicants are receiving private benefits without having to pay a fee for their application. This isn’t sustainable for authorities and is unfair for the general tax payer, who is subsidising the application.
16. **We propose to widen the scope of planning application fees so that authorities can charge for more of their services.** This would enable (but not compel) authorities to charge for resubmitted applications, and would allow authorities to charge higher fees for retrospective applications. Specific proposals are outlined below.

² http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/press_23_10.htm

Options

Option 1 would decentralise the responsibility for setting fees for planning applications to local planning authorities

17. This would give local planning authorities control over setting planning application fees. We would set out in regulations the principal requirements for local planning authorities (which would include establishing a charging schedule) and exemptions from fees.
18. Local planning authorities would have to establish a charging scheme which reflects full cost recovery and the principle that the user should pay for the actual service they receive. Authorities should keep their costs to a minimum – helped by local democratic accountability – and should ensure that charges are based on efficient services which remain affordable.

Option 2 would maintain the current fee system

Preferred option

19. We believe that option 1 is the appropriate way forward. It would give local planning authorities the flexibility to charge fees that properly recover the costs they incur in determining planning applications. It is the option that is most consistent with the Government's commitment to localise and decentralise power. It will also introduce greater accountability and transparency into the planning fees system, as local planning authorities will need to be able to demonstrate that their charges are justifiable and based on cost.

Q1. Do you agree that each local planning authority should be able to set its own (non-profit-making) planning application fee charges?

Other proposals

Proposal (a) would allow local planning authorities to decide whether to give applicants a “free go” when resubmitting applications that have been withdrawn or refused

20. Currently no fee is payable for applications that are resubmitted following withdrawal before determination or refusal (this is known as the “free go”). This is principally because it was considered unfair to charge applicants twice for similar applications, which should theoretically not require as much work to determine as two separate, unrelated applications. However, in practice, a resubmitted application may be very different from the original application whilst still being entitled to a “free go”. Resubmitted applications, can represent substantial work, and therefore cost, for an authority. A comprehensive “free go” fails to reflect this cost. A better approach would be to allow authorities to make their own decisions about whether or not to allow a “free go”, depending on the local costs they expect to incur for resubmitted applications. This would also allow local authorities to deter repeat applications for development which already exists (retrospective planning applications).

Q2. Do you agree that local planning authorities should be allowed to decide whether to charge for applications that are resubmitted following withdrawal or refusal?

Proposal (b) would allow local planning authorities to charge a higher fee for retrospective planning applications

21. Currently no distinction is made between fees for routine applications and applications which are made retrospectively (after development has begun). Retrospective applications are sometimes made as a result of investigation by a local planning authority. In these instances, they impose a greater cost on authorities than routine applications. The principle behind planning application fees is that they should be set at a level that allows authorities to fully recover the associated costs. Authorities should therefore be able to charge a higher fee for retrospective applications where the application has come about as a consequence of investigatory work by the authority, in order to recover all of the related costs.

Q3. Do you agree that local planning authorities should be able to set higher fees for retrospective applications?

Any other comments

22. Applications for Listed Buildings, Conservation Area consent³ and for works to trees that are the subject of a tree preservation order (TPO consent) do not currently incur a fee. In developing our proposals we considered whether this position should change. We are not minded to make a change principally because owners cannot opt-out of having their building Listed or located within a Conservation Area designation, and because such designations confer burdens with regard to preservation and maintenance that are clearly in the public interest. Similarly residents cannot opt-out of the tree preservation order designation, it is a burden on those affected, and tree maintenance (which requires consent) is of public environmental benefit. However, we would welcome comments or suggestions about whether this is the appropriate approach, or about fees and concessions on fees for development management services that have not been discussed in this consultation paper. Annex A sets out the main types.

Q4. Are there any other development management services which are not currently charged for but should require a fee?

Q5. Are there any other development management services which currently require a fee but should be exempt from charging?

³ Conservation Area consent is required for the demolition of a building (within a Conservation Area) with a volume of greater than 115 cubic metres, although there are a few exceptions; and for the demolition of a wall, fence, gate or railing over 1 metre in height next to a highway (including a public footpath or bridleway) or public open space; or over 2 metres in height elsewhere.

Invitation to comment

23. We welcome your comments on this document. You might also want to look at *Planning Costs and Fees*, which outlines some of the evidence informing our proposals. It is on our website.
24. In summary, we propose:
- **to decentralise responsibilities for setting planning application fees to local planning authorities**
 - **to allow authorities to decide whether to provide applicants with a “free go” for applications that are resubmitted following withdrawal or refusal**
 - **to enable authorities to set higher fees for retrospective applications.**
25. The **options** and **proposals** are explained on pages 9–10. A summary of **questions** is below. If responding, please make clear which option, proposal, question or other element of the consultation paper each comment relates to. Ideally, comments should be supported with evidence or data, though anecdotal evidence can serve to illustrate a wider point or identify a risk.

- Q1** *Do you agree that each local planning authority should be able to set its own (non-profit-making) planning application fee charges?*
- Q2** *Do you agree that local planning authorities should be allowed to decide whether to charge for applications that are resubmitted following withdrawal or refusal?*
- Q3** *Do you agree that local planning authorities should be able to set higher fees for retrospective applications?*
- Q4** *Are there any development management services which are not currently charged for but should require a fee?*
- Q5** *Are there any other development management services which currently require a fee but should be exempt from charging?*
- Q6** *What are the likely effects of any of the changes on you, or the group or business or local authority you represent?*
- Q7** *Do you think there will be unintended consequences arising from these proposals?*
- Q8** *Do you have any comment on the outcomes predicted in the impact assessment, in particular the costs and benefits (see Annex B)?*

26. This consultation document is available on The Department for Communities and Local Government website. If necessary, paper copies can be obtained from Julian Wheeler (see below). A consultation response form is provided, and your representations, by e-mail or in writing, should be sent – for receipt by the closing date of 7 January 2011 – to:

Julian Wheeler
 The Department for Communities and Local Government
 Zone 1/J1, Eland House
 Bressenden Place
 London
 SW1E 5DU

e-mail: Julian.Wheeler@communities.gsi.gov.uk

27. Where possible this consultation follows the Government's Code of Practice on Consultation (see **Annex C** for further details). When commenting, please say if you represent an organisation or group, and in what capacity you are responding. A summary of responses will be published on the website following consultation. Hard copies of the summary can also be obtained thereafter, by contacting Julian Wheeler at the above address.

28. Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA)).
29. If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory code of practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.
30. The Department for Communities and Local Government will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties. Individual responses will not be acknowledged unless specifically requested.
31. Your opinions are valuable to us. Thank you for taking the time to read this document and respond.

Annex A

Fees for development management services

A fee is currently payable for:

- 1) Applications for:
 - full or outline planning permission
 - non-material changes to planning permission
 - approval of reserved matters
 - certificates of lawfulness of existing or proposed use or development
 - consent to display advertisements
 - determination as to whether prior approval will be required for permitted development
- 2) Requests for confirmation that conditions attached to a grant of planning permission have been complied with
- 3) Site visits to a mining or landfill site

A fee is currently not payable for:

- 1) Applications for Listed Building consent
- 2) Applications for Conservation Area consent
- 3) Applications for works to trees covered by a tree preservation order
- 4) Applications that are resubmitted following withdrawal or refusal
- 5) Applications for development to dwellinghouses, or buildings to which members of the public are admitted, for the purpose of providing means of access for disabled people (or securing the safety, health or comfort of disabled people, in the case of dwellinghouses)

- 6) Applications for development which is allowed under permitted development rights where those rights have been removed by an Article 4 direction or a condition
- 7) Second applications (made following the granting of planning permission) relating to development of the same character or description on the same site
- 8) Applications relating to the same use class which are made necessary because of a condition
- 9) Applications to consolidate subsisting minerals planning permissions

Fees for town and parish councils

Parish and town councils enjoy various rights under Schedule 2 Part 12 of the General Permitted Development Order to carry out works without the need to make a planning application. Where they do need to apply, they pay a 50 per cent fee.

Fees for playing fields

There is currently a flat-rate fee of £335 for applications made by non-profit making clubs or other non-profit-making sporting or recreational organisations, relating to playing fields for their own use. The term 'playing field' includes football, cricket, hockey or hurling pitches, but not enclosed courts for games such as tennis or squash, and not golf courses or golf driving ranges.

Annex B

Impact assessment

Title: Decentralisation of Planning Application Fees Lead department or agency: Department for Communities and Local Government Other departments or agencies: N/A	Impact Assessment (IA)
	IA No:
	Date: 14/09/2010
	Stage: Consultation
	Source of intervention: Domestic
	Type of measure: Secondary Legislation
Contact for enquiries: Alan Cornock 0303 44 41646	

Summary: Intervention and Options

<p>What is the problem under consideration? Why is government intervention necessary?</p> <p>Planning application fees are intended to be sufficient for local planning authorities to recover the costs of determining fee-chargeable applications. However, the majority of authorities are failing to recover costs from fee income. Fees are currently set centrally and have been repeatedly increased (most recently in 2008) in an attempt to address this shortfall, but it remains. Other authorities are actually over recovering through fees. This variation is inevitable when fees are set nationally because authorities face differing market conditions and incur variable costs. The only way to overcome this problem is to enable authorities to set their own fees which reflect local costs.</p>
<p>What are the policy objectives and the intended effects?</p> <p>Our objective is to reform the planning application fees system so that it enables each local planning authority to recoup the costs they incur in determining applications. This will help to achieve the Government's wider aim of reducing taxpayer subsidy of planning applications. It is consistent with the Government's intention to localise and decentralise power and introduce greater local accountability into planning. Setting fees locally will provide a strong incentive for authorities to run a more efficient service: since it will be a more transparent system, directly accountable to local residents.</p>

What policy options have been considered? Please justify preferred option (further details in Evidence Base)

Three options have been considered:

1. Decentralising responsibility for setting planning application fees to local planning authorities.
2. Decentralising planning application fees whilst setting a cap on maximum fee levels.
3. Maintaining the current system of centrally-set planning application fees whilst increasing fees by 10/15%.

Justification of the preferred option (1) is contained in the evidence base section. In summary it is the option that best achieves our objective of enabling each local planning authority to recover (through fees) the cost of determining fee-chargeable planning applications.

We also propose to extend the scope of planning application fees to allow authorities to charge for some of those applications which are currently free. This will include resubmitted applications. We also propose to allow higher fees to be charged for retrospective applications (than routine applications).

When will the policy be reviewed to establish its impact and the extent to which the policy objectives have been achieved?	It will be reviewed
Are there arrangements in place that will allow a systematic collection of monitoring information for future policy review?	Yes

SELECT SIGNATORY Sign-off For consultation stage Impact Assessments:

I have read the Impact Assessment and I am satisfied that, given the available evidence, it represents a reasonable view of the likely costs, benefits and impact of the leading options.

Signed by the responsible:
 SELECT SIGNATORY

Date:

Summary: Analysis and Evidence *Policy Option 1*

Description: Decentralising responsibility for setting planning application fees to local planning authorities

Price Base Year 2010	PV Base Year 2010	Time Period Years 10	Net Benefit (Present Value (PV)) (£m)		
			Low: £-1.5m	High: £-1.5m	Best Estimate: £-1.5m

COSTS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years	Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Cost (Present Value)
Low		£64m	£536m
High		£87m	£731m
Best Estimate	£1.5m	£76m	£634m

Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups'

Costs will be born by applicants, who will face increased planning application fees under the new regime. We expect there to be an average increase in fees of around 10% – 15% following decentralisation (based on research conducted in 2009, which suggested that the average shortfall between fees and the cost of determining applications was around 10% to 15%). This would lead to additional fee costs of £53m to £65m pa on average. If authorities choose to introduce charging for resubmitted applications, this could cost applicants (householder and other) an additional £11m – £22m pa (depending on the number of authorities that introduce charging and the fees that they decide to charge for resubmitted applications).

We assume that the proportion of costs born by businesses (approximately 87%) and individuals (13%) will remain consistent, based on an assumption that fee increases will be comparable across different fee categories. Based on the cost figures outlined above, this would result in an estimated additional cost to business of £54m – £73m pa and to individuals of £10m – £14m pa.

We estimate that there would be "one off" transitional costs of around £1.5m, distributed across all local planning authorities, for implementing a model that allows authorities to assess their development management costs.

Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups'

Authorities which choose to lower fees below existing levels will in theory face a new cost. However, we can assume that they will only do so if they are over-recovering through fees: any additional "cost" imposed is in effect a loss of surplus rather than a new cost burden.

BENEFITS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years	Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Benefit (Present Value)
Low		£64m	£535m
High		£87m	£730m
Best Estimate		£76m	£633m

Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'

Local planning authorities will benefit from being able to fully recover the costs of determining fee-chargeable applications. The specific gain will vary depending on authority. An average fee increase of around 10% – 15% would result in total additional revenue of £53m – £65m per annum. Any "benefit" will in effect be the making up of an existing shortfall in the funding for planning application processing costs. If authorities choose to introduce charging for resubmitted applications, this could generate an additional £11m – £22m pa for them.

<p>Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'</p> <p>We expect a small portion of applicants to benefit from reduced fees in those authorities which are currently over-recovering through fees.</p>	
<p>Key assumptions/sensitivities/risks</p> <p>We assume that the majority of local planning authorities will use their decentralised powers to increase fees and that the average increase will be between 10% and 15% above current fee levels, when the policy is introduced. Subsequently, it is assumed that fees will remain constant. It is assumed that fees remain constant in the counterfactual. We assume that fees will not increase above cost recovery. There are risks that authorities might try to increase fees above cost recovery or set excessive fees on the basis of an inefficient service (with high associated costs). We consider neither of these risks significant – there are sufficient safeguards to mitigate them. There are consequent risks (from increased fees) for viability of development and an increase in unlawful development. The response to previous increases in application fees suggests that these risks are limited.</p>	<p>Discount rate (%) <input type="text" value="3.5%"/></p>

Impact on admin burden (AB) (£m):			Impact on policy cost savings (£m):	In scope
New AB: 0	AB savings: 0	Net: 0	Policy cost savings: £-64m	Yes/No

Summary: Analysis and Evidence *Policy Option 2*

Description: Decentralising responsibility for setting planning application fees to local planning authorities, below a cap on maximum fee levels imposed by central Government

Price Base Year 2010	PV Base Year 2010	Time Period Years 10	Net Benefit (Present Value (PV)) (£m)		
			Low: £-1.5m	High: £-1.5m	Best Estimate: £-1.5m

COSTS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years	Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Cost (Present Value)
Low		£64m	£536m
High		£87m	£731m
Best Estimate	£1.5m	£76m	£634m

Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups'

Costs will be born by applicants, who will face increased planning application fees under the new regime. We expect there to be an average increase in fees of around 10% – 15% following decentralisation (based on research conducted in 2009, which suggested that the average shortfall between fees and the cost of determining applications was around 10% to 15%). This would lead to additional fee costs of £53m to £65m pa on average. If authorities choose to introduce charging for resubmitted applications, this could cost applicants (householder and other) an additional £11m – £22m pa (depending on the number of authorities that introduce charging and the fees that they decide to charge for resubmitted applications).

We assume that the proportion of costs born by businesses (approximately 87%) and individuals (13%) will remain consistent, based on an assumption that fee increases will be comparable across different fee categories. Based on the cost figures outlined above, this would result in an estimated additional cost to business of £54m – £73m pa and to individuals of £10m – £14m pa.

We estimate that there would be "one off" transitional costs of around £1.5m, distributed across all local planning authorities, for implementing a model that allows authorities to assess their development management costs.

Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups'

Authorities which choose to lower fees below existing levels will in theory face a new cost. However, we can assume that they will only do so if they are over-recovering through fees: any additional "cost" imposed is in effect a loss of surplus rather than a new cost burden.

BENEFITS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years	Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Benefit (Present Value)
Low		£64m	£535m
High		£87m	£730m
Best Estimate		£76m	£633m

<p>Description and scale of key monetised benefits by ‘main affected groups’</p> <p>Local planning authorities will benefit from being able to recover the costs of determining fee-chargeable applications. The specific gain will vary depending on authority. An average fee increase of around 10% – 15% would result in total additional revenue of £53m – £65m per annum. Any “benefit” will in effect be the making up of an existing shortfall in the funding for planning application processing costs. If authorities choose to introduce charging for resubmitted applications, this could generate an additional £11m – £22m pa for them.</p>	
<p>Other key non-monetised benefits by ‘main affected groups’</p> <p>We expect a small portion of applicants to benefit from reduced fees in those authorities which are currently over-recovering through fees.</p>	
<p>Key assumptions/sensitivities/risks</p> <p>A cap is set on maximum fee levels at 25% above current fee levels. We assume that the majority of local planning authorities will use their decentralised powers to increase fees and that the average increase will be between 10% and 15% above current fee levels, when the policy is introduced. Subsequently, it is assumed that fees will remain constant. It is assumed that fees remain constant in the counterfactual. We assume that fees will not increase above cost recovery. There are risks that authorities might try to increase fees above cost recovery or set excessive fees on the basis of an inefficient service (with high associated costs). We consider neither of these risks significant – there are sufficient safeguards to mitigate them. There are consequent risks (from increased fees) for viability of development and an increase in unlawful development. The response to previous increases in application fees suggests that these risks are limited.</p>	<p>Discount rate (%) <input type="text" value="3.5%"/></p>

Impact on admin burden (AB) (£m):			Impact on policy cost savings (£m):	In scope
New AB: 0	AB savings: 0	Net: 0	Policy cost savings: £-64m	Yes/No

Summary: Analysis and Evidence Policy Option 3

Description: Maintain the current system of centrally-set planning application fees, subject to a 10/15% increase in fee levels

Price Base Year 2010	PV Base Year 2010	Time Period Years 10	Net Benefit (Present Value (PV)) (£m)		
			Low: £0m	High: £0m	Best Estimate: £0m

COSTS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years	Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Cost (Present Value)
Low		£64m	£535m
High		£87m	£730m
Best Estimate		£76m	£633m

Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups'

Costs will be born by applicants, who will face increased planning application fees under the new regime. An increase of 10% – 15% in planning application fees would lead to additional fee costs of £53m to £65m pa on average. If authorities choose to introduce charging for resubmitted applications, this could cost applicants (householder and other) an additional £11m – £22m pa (depending on the number of authorities that introduce charging and the fees that they decide to charge for resubmitted applications).

We assume that the proportion of costs born by businesses (approximately 87%) and individuals (13%) will remain consistent, based on an assumption that fee increases will be comparable across different fee categories. Based on the cost figures outlined above, this would result in an estimated additional cost to business of £54m – £73m pa and to individuals of £10m – £14m pa.

Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups'

BENEFITS (£m)	Total Transition (Constant Price) Years	Average Annual (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	Total Benefit (Present Value)
Low		£64m	£535m
High		£87m	£730m
Best Estimate		£76m	£633m

Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'

Local planning authorities will benefit from being able to recover more of the costs of determining fee-chargeable applications. The specific gain will vary depending on authority. An increase of around 10% – 15% would result in total additional revenue of £53m – £65m pa. Any "benefit" will in effect be the making up of an existing shortfall in the funding for planning application processing costs. If authorities choose to introduce charging for resubmitted applications, this could generate an additional £11m – £22m pa for them.

Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups'

Key assumptions/sensitivities/risks

Discount rate (%)

The increase in fees will be centrally set at between 10% and 15% above current fee levels when the policy is introduced. Subsequently, it is assumed that fees will remain constant. It is assumed that fees remain constant in the counterfactual. We assume that fees will not increase above cost recovery.

Impact on admin burden (AB) (£m):			Impact on policy cost savings (£m):	In scope
New AB: 0	AB savings: 0	Net: 0	Policy cost savings: £-64m	Yes/No

Enforcement, Implementation and Wider Impacts

What is the geographic coverage of the policy/option?	England				
From what date will the policy be implemented?	04/04/2011				
Which organisation(s) will enforce the policy?	Local planning authorities				
What is the annual change in enforcement cost (£m)?	N/A				
Does enforcement comply with Hampton principles?	Yes				
Does implementation go beyond minimum EU requirements?	N/A				
What is the CO ₂ equivalent change in greenhouse gas emissions? (Million tonnes CO ₂ equivalent)	<i>Traded:</i>		<i>Non-traded:</i>		
Does the proposal have an impact on competition?	No				
What proportion (%) of Total PV costs/benefits is directly attributable to primary legislation, if applicable?	Costs:		Benefits:		
Annual cost (£m) per organisation (excl. Transition) (Constant Price)	<i>Micro</i>	<i>< 20</i>	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>
Are any of these organisations exempt?	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No

Specific Impact Tests: Checklist

Set out in the table below where information on any SITs undertaken as part of the analysis of the policy options can be found in the evidence base. For guidance on how to complete each test, double-click on the link for the guidance provided by the relevant department.

Please note this checklist is not intended to list each and every statutory consideration that Departments should take into account when deciding which policy option to follow. It is the responsibility of Departments to make sure that their duties are complied with.

Does your policy option/proposal have an impact on...?	Impact	Page ref within IA
Statutory equality duties¹		
Statutory Equality Duties <i>Statutory Equality Duties Impact Test guidance</i>	No	
Economic impacts		
Competition <i>Competition Assessment Impact Test guidance</i>	No	
Small firms <i>Small Firms Impact Test guidance</i>	Yes	
Environmental impacts		
Greenhouse gas assessment <i>Greenhouse Gas Assessment Impact Test Guidance</i>	No	
Wider environmental issues <i>Wider Environmental Issues Impact Test Guidance</i>	No	
Social impacts		
Health and well-being <i>Health and Well-being Impact Test guidance</i>	No	
Human rights <i>Human Rights Impact Test guidance</i>	No	
Justice system <i>Justice Impact Test guidance</i>	No	
Rural proofing <i>Rural Proofing Impact Test guidance</i>	No	
Sustainable development		
<i>Sustainable Development Impact Test guidance</i>	No	

¹ Race, disability and gender Impact assessments are statutory requirements for relevant policies. Equality statutory requirements will be expanded 2011, once the Equality Bill comes into force. Statutory equality duties part of the Equality Bill apply to GB only. The Toolkit provides advice on statutory equality duties for public authorities with a remit in Northern Ireland.

Evidence Base (for summary sheets) – Notes

Use this space to set out the relevant references, evidence, analysis and detailed narrative from which you have generated your policy options or proposal. Please fill in **References** section.

References

Include the links to relevant legislation and publications, such as public impact assessment of earlier stages (e.g. Consultation, Final, Enactment)

No.	Legislation or publication
1	The Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications and Deemed Applications) Regulations 1989
2	The Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications and Deemed Applications) Regulations Amendment 2008
3	Planning Costs and Fees Report (May 2007) – Arup for DCLG
4	Planning Costs and Fees Report (November 2010) – Arup for DCLG

Evidence Base: Option 1 (preferred option)

Ensure that the information in this section provides clear evidence of the information provided in the summary pages of this form (recommended maximum of 30 pages). Complete the Annual profile of monetised costs and benefits (transition and recurring) below over the life of the preferred policy (use the spreadsheet attached if the period is longer than 10 years).

Annual profile of monetised costs and benefits* – (£m) constant prices										
	Y ₀	Y ₁	Y ₂	Y ₃	Y ₄	Y ₅	Y ₆	Y ₇	Y ₈	Y ₉
Transition costs	1.5									
Annual recurring cost	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
Total annual costs	78	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
Transition benefits										
Annual recurring benefits	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
Total annual benefits	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76	76

* For non-monetised benefits please see summary pages and main evidence base section

Evidence Base

Problem under consideration

The basis for charging planning application fees

It is an established principle that local authorities should be prepared to pay for activities that are purely or largely for wider public good – such as plan-making. The intention of development management by authorities is above all to promote the public good: as managing local development helps to secure the long-term benefits of sustainable, well-designed communities. Yet planning decisions often bring benefit to the applicant as well; in particular, a development with planning permission may be much more valuable than it would be without. The power granted to authorities to charge planning application fees is a reflection of that possible private benefit implicit in a planning permission. An applicant, even one not in business, should expect to pay a fee for an application that will bring a measure of gain.

Planning application fee levels

However, the amount of fee payable is a reflection of the overall cost of handling, administering and determining the various types of fee-chargeable planning application. The fee amount chargeable is designed to include recovery of direct costs and an apportionment of overheads directly related to the cost of staff time involved in processing an application in the relevant fee category. Fees cannot be used to make a profit. They are intended to be set at a level that allows for full recovery of costs.

Setting planning application fees

Planning application fees are currently set by central Government. Current fees are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications and Deemed Applications) Regulations 1989, as amended. The regulations prescribe fees based on the type of application and the nature of the development, with the fee level varying for some types of development depending on floor space or quantity of building.

The failure to achieve cost recovery

Despite repeated increases in planning application fee levels, local planning authorities are still failing to recover the costs of determining fee-chargeable applications from application fees. This has been a consistent problem since the existing fees regulations were introduced in 1989. Since 1989, fees have been increased 10 times in an attempt to address the shortfall between costs and fee income, on the following occasions:

- January 1991 – (S.I.1990/2473) – 20% increase
- January 1992 – (S.I.1991/2735) – 20% increase
- January 1993 – (S.I.1992/3052) – 10% increase

- January 1994 – (S.I.1993/3170) – 15% increase
- January 1995 – (S.I.1993/3170) – 15% increase
- February 1997 – (S.I.1997/37) – 10% increase
- October 1997 – (S.I.1997/37) – 5% increase
- April 2002 – (S.I. 2002/768) – 14% increase
- April 2005 – (S.I. 2005/843) – 20–25% increase
- April 2008 – (S.I. 2008/958) – 23% increase

2007 Research

Fees were last increased in 2008 by approximately 23 per cent. This increase was in part based on research conducted for the Department by Arup on planning costs and fees, published in May 2007. This research suggested that the cost to local planning authorities of fee-related development management was between £298m and £365m during 2005-06. This range exists because two different approaches were taken to the assessment of overheads. Overheads are all costs other than staff salaries that are associated with enabling the planning service to function. The first approach taken was to subtract labour costs from the budget to give the figure for “gross” overheads. The second approach taken was to calculate “net” overheads by measuring additional costs beyond “productive” time labour costs. This second approach took into account the proportion of labour costs that represent “productive time” and entailed the transfer of what is often referred to as “downtime” to an overhead cost. The higher figure of £365m therefore took into account overheads such as leave, training, sickness and breaks and attributed them to the cost of fee-related development management in proportion to workload, whereas the lower figure of £298m did not.

Cost of fee-related development control in England in 2005-06 for (a) all labour costs (gross overheads) and (b) productive labour costs (net overheads)

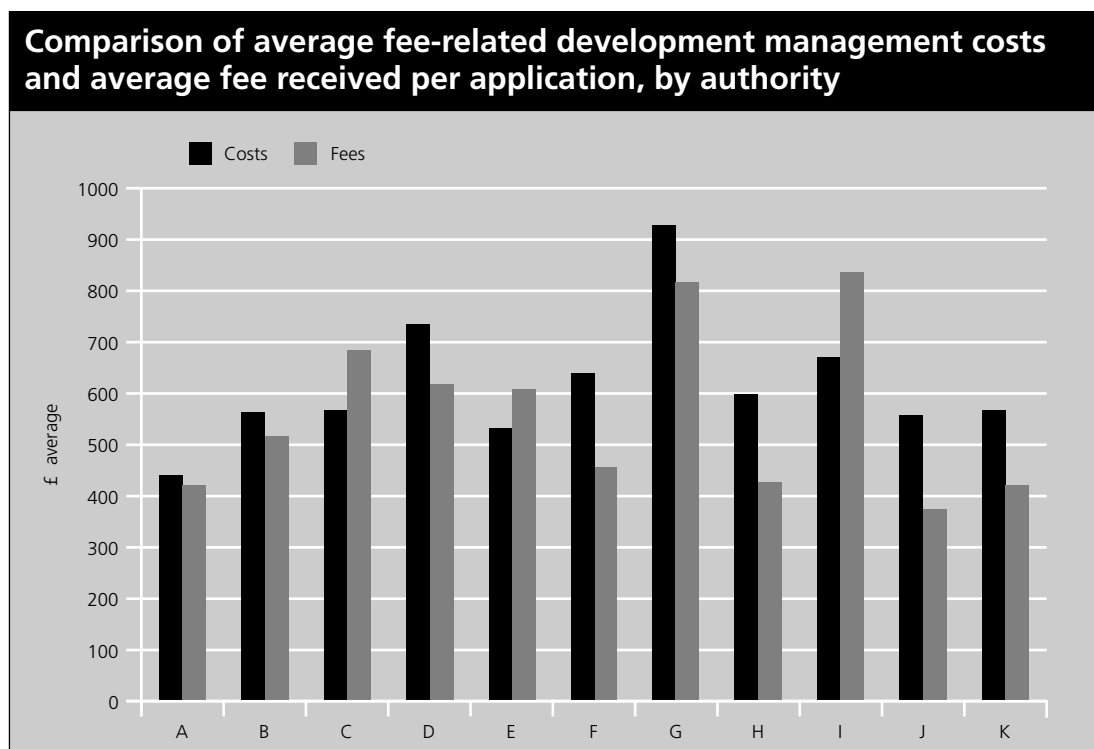
<i>Base Salary Cost</i> £	<i>All labour costs</i>		<i>Productive labour costs</i>	
	<i>OH Cost</i> £	<i>Total</i> £	<i>OH Cost</i> £	<i>Total</i> £
121,848,855	176,680,840	298,529,695	243,697,710	365,546,566

During the same 2005-06 period, income from planning application fees was approximately £232m. The research therefore suggested that there was a shortfall between fee income and associated costs of between £66m and £133m during 2005-06. The 2008 fee increase of 23 per cent was intended to help address that shortfall.

2009 Research

Further research commissioned from Arup in February 2009 to re-examine planning application costs and fees suggests that the 2008 fee increase has not proved sufficient: a significant proportion of authorities are still failing to recover costs through fees. Arup worked with a group of eleven local planning authorities to assess the average cost they each incurred over a period of four years in determining fee-chargeable planning applications and the average fee they received for those applications (the time period was 2006-07 to 2009-10, with the figures for the final year being projections). The sample was judged to form a good cross-section of authorities in terms of location, context, authority type and scale. Collectively the data relates to over 22,000 planning applications per annum. Overheads were considered alongside salary costs and as a percentage of direct salary costs.

The results of this assessment are attached in the graph below, which outlines the average cost incurred and fee received per application in each of those eleven authorities. Whilst the data showed that some authorities were over-recovering through fees, on a combined basis, fees were approximately 10 per cent below associated costs. This is based on an overall average cost of £619 per application and an average fee of £563.



This assessment was conducted in the first half of 2009. Whilst CPI inflation dropped to around 1 per cent in September 2009, it has since grown to 3.2 per cent (June 2010). Costs are likely to have increased with inflation since 2009, but fees have remained constant since April 2008. We can therefore reasonably assume that the shortfall between fees and costs has grown since Arup's assessment was undertaken.

Rationale for intervention

Our rationale for intervention is that nationally set fees fail to take account of variations in costs and application profiles between authorities. This is preventing the majority of local planning authorities from recovering costs.

Historically, the response to the shortfall between planning application fees and associated costs has been to increase fees periodically; the last increase of 23 per cent was in 2008. However, this approach can only offer a limited solution in the short term: because of inflation, the situation will soon arise when fees are again insufficient to recoup costs. This approach also increases the risk of over-recovery by some authorities (who are generating more in income than it costs to process applications), and fails to address the fundamental issue, which is that national fees take no account of differing local circumstances and market conditions. The only way to overcome these issues is to allow authorities to set their own fees which recoup (but do not exceed) costs.

The inability of authorities to recover costs means that the tax payer is subsidising applications which may make the applicant a profit (since planning permission often adds value to land). This is unfair to the general tax payer. We intend for applicants to cover the full cost of determining applications where they stand to gain from planning permission. This includes extending charging to applications which are currently free but provide private benefit to the applicant (that outweighs any general public benefit).

Policy objective

Our objective is to reform the planning application fees system so that it enables each local planning authority to recoup (but not exceed) the costs they incur in determining fee-chargeable applications. This will help to achieve the Government's wider aim of reducing taxpayer subsidy of planning applications. For the same reason, we also intend to extend charging where applicants are receiving private benefit from an application without having to pay a fee for it.

We also aim to reform the system so that fees are more transparent and locally accountable.

Options considered

We have considered three broad options for reforming the planning application fees system:

- Option 1 would decentralise responsibility for setting planning application fees to local planning authorities
- Option 2 would give local planning authorities control over setting planning application fees below a cap on maximum fee levels imposed by central Government

- Option 3 would maintain the current system of centrally-set planning application fees, subject to a 10 to 15 per cent increase in fee levels

Option 1 – Decentralisation

This option would give local planning authorities control over setting planning application fees. We would set out in regulations principle requirements for authorities and exemptions from fees. Authorities would be required to establish a charging schedule which reflects full cost recovery and the fact that the user should pay for the actual service they receive. Authorities would be expected to keep their costs to a minimum – helped by local democratic accountability – and to ensure that their charges are based on efficient services which remain affordable. They will have to be transparent about the costs they incur in determining applications and will be directly accountable to residents and applicants if they fail to offer an efficient service.

Option 2 – Cap on maximum fees

This option would give local planning authorities control over setting fees below a cap imposed by central Government. We would set the cap at 25 per cent above current fee levels to provide sufficient flexibility for authorities to recover costs. Our most recent evidence suggests that on average costs are approximately 10 per cent to 15 per cent higher than current fees. Setting the cap higher reflects the fact that the 10 per cent to 15 per cent is an average and so there will be authorities who need to further increase fees to fully recover costs. We would amend the fees regulations to state that fees are maximums, not set figures, and to introduce a requirement for authorities to establish a charging schedule. Authorities would be expected to keep their costs to a minimum – helped by local democratic accountability – and to ensure that their charges are based on efficient services which remain affordable. They will have to be transparent about the costs they incur in determining applications and will be directly accountable to residents and applicants if they fail to offer an efficient service.

Option 3 – Maintenance of centrally-set fees (with a 10 to 15 per cent fee increase)

This option would involve no change to the system of centrally-set planning application fees. We would amend the fees regulations to increase fees by 10 to 15 per cent (following on from a 23 per cent increase in 2008).

Costs and benefits of each option

Projecting the local impact of decentralised fees

In reference to options 1 and 2, it is difficult to estimate the costs and benefits of decentralisation at the local level. We do not hold data on the individual costs incurred by each local planning authority in determining applications (beyond those eleven authorities in the Arup sample) and so cannot predict what the impact of decentralisation might be in each locality, beyond assuming that

there is likely to be variation in the fees charged by different authorities. We can however try to project the overall change in application fee income at the national level, using the data taken from the eleven sample authorities and our knowledge of the historic trend in planning application fee income.

It is also important to note that under a fully decentralised regime, local planning authorities will not simply have responsibility for fee levels; they will also set fee categories. This variable complicates any attempt to predict the impact at the local level.

For reference, the table below outlines the total income from planning application fees over the last five financial years. Figures are estimates because not all authorities provided fee returns.

Planning application fee income in England (2005/6 to 2009/10)					
<i>Year</i>	<i>2005/6</i>	<i>2006/7</i>	<i>2007/8</i>	<i>2008/9</i>	<i>2009/10</i>
Income from planning applications (£)	232,000,000	245,000,000	255,000,000	233,000,000	209,000,000
Number of planning applications	644,000	645,000	649,000	507,000	466,000
Average fee per planning application (£)	360	380	393	460	448

Projecting the annual number of planning applications that will be made

Attempts to quantify costs and benefits must be based on assumptions about the number of planning applications that will be received in 2010-11 and future years. The table above outlines the trend in planning application numbers received over the last five years. Until the recession began, the number of applications had remained relatively constant at around 645,000 per annum. Since the recession began it has fallen, to 466,000 in the last financial year.

We assume that the number of applications correlates with economic growth, as there has been a relatively close correlation in the past. Scenarios of the number of planning applications over the next 10 years are based on 2009-10 data for planning applications correlated with projections of economic growth made by The Office for Budget Responsibility. This results in an estimated 472,000 planning applications in 2010-11 rising to 592,000 in 2019-20.

Projecting future income from planning application fees

The table below outlines projections of future income from planning application fees, based on a range of average increases in application fees that might realistically occur under a decentralised system. The short-term impact of Option 3 (maintaining centrally-set fees whilst increasing fees by 10 to 15 per cent) is covered in the table, as is the most radical scenario for Option 2 (cap on

maximum fees): that all authorities increase fees by 25 per cent, to reach the cap limit. Projections are calculated on the basis of fee levels, overall fee income (£209m) and planning application numbers (466,000) from 2009-10. The table illustrates the increase in overall fee income, given an increase in fee levels.

Projections of potential planning application fee income in England					
<i>Average increase in fees</i>	+10%	+15%	+20%	+25%	+30%
Income from planning applications (£)	229,900,000	240,350,000	250,800,000	261,250,000	271,700,000
Increase in fee income (£) (from 2009/10)	20,900,000	31,350,000	41,800,000	52,250,000	62,700,000
Average fee per planning application (£)	493	515	538	560	583

The monetised costs and benefits (outlined in the summary pages) **represent an increase in planning application numbers** as well as an initial 10 to 15 per cent increase in fees, after the policy is implemented. Following this initial fee increase, it is assumed that fee levels will remain constant over the rest of the 10 year period, as they remain constant in the counterfactual.

Option 1 – Decentralisation

Costs

If fees increase following decentralisation, as expected, an additional cost will be imposed on applicants. The extent of this cost is difficult to estimate. We assume that there will be an average increase in fees of around 10 per cent -15 per cent, which could result in an additional cost of approximately £53m-£65m per annum to applicants. Exact costs will vary depending on authority and application type. We assume that some authorities will increase their fees by more than 10 per cent -15 per cent, which will result in a higher cost to applicants in some local areas. It is difficult to project how the cost burden will be distributed across authorities. It is also difficult to project how this cost burden will fall upon particular applicants, and whether it will be more pronounced for business applicants than householder applicants (or vice versa). We estimate that the proportion of fees paid by individuals (approximately 13%) and businesses (approximately 87%) will remain relatively consistent, based on the assumption that fee increases will be comparable across different fee categories. This would result in an additional cost to businesses of £46m – £57m per annum and to individuals of £7m – £8.5m per annum. This estimation of the proportionate burden born by businesses and individuals also applies for Options 2 and 3. The average fee per planning application would increase from £448 to £493 – £515.

There will be ongoing costs to local planning authorities of approximately £550,000 per annum, distributed across authorities, for maintaining and updating cost and fee information. There will be one-off, transitional costs of implementation of around £1.5m, distributed across all authorities, for developing and introducing a model that allows authorities to assess their development management costs.

Benefits

Local planning authorities will benefit from being given responsibility for fee setting. This will allow them to increase fees so that they are sufficient to recoup the full cost of determining fee-chargeable applications. The exact financial benefit will depend on the extent to which fees are increased: we estimate that there will be an average increase of around 10 per cent – 15 per cent in fees, which would result in total additional revenue of £53m – £65m per annum, based on application scenarios correlated with economic growth projections. It is difficult to predict how much each authority will benefit financially, as this will be at their discretion and we do not hold the necessary data on authority costs. It should be noted that this “benefit” will in effect be the making up of an existing shortfall between resources from fees and planning application processing costs. We expect a small number of applicants to benefit from reduced fees in those authorities which are currently over-recovering through fees.

Option 2 – Cap on maximum fees

Costs

The costs imposed on applicants (and authorities) follow the detail outlined for Option 1. Thus, it is assumed that fees increase by 10 per cent – 15 per cent. Based on our sample data of local authority costs, we do not expect authorities to raise fees by 25 per cent.

Benefits

The benefits to authorities of this option are comparable to those outlined for Option 1. The principle difference is that potential benefit is limited by the cap, which could leave some authorities in a situation where they continue to fail to recover full costs. Whilst we consider this unlikely – the 25 per cent cap should provide sufficient flexibility for almost all authorities – it is possible in exceptional circumstances.

Local planning authorities will benefit from being given partial responsibility for fee setting. This will allow them to increase fees and thus recoup more of the costs of determining fee-chargeable applications. The exact financial benefit will depend on the extent to which fees increase. If all authorities make full use of the flexibility given to them by the cap and raise fees by 25 per cent, and charge for resubmitted applications, this would result in total additional revenue of £117m – £144m per annum. We do not consider this scenario likely, based on our sample data of the costs associated with determining applications. It is

difficult to predict how much each authority will benefit financially, as this will be at their discretion. It should be noted that this “benefit” will in effect be the making up of an existing shortfall between resources from fees and planning application processing costs. We expect a small number of applicants to benefit from reduced fees in those authorities which are currently over-recovering through fees.

Option 3 – Maintenance of centrally-set fees (with a 10/15% fee increase)

The costs and benefits would be equivalent to Option 1, given that Option 1 assumes local authorities will increase fees by 10 per cent -15 per cent; Option 3 assumes the same increase by central Government.

Costs

All applicants would be subject to a 10 to 15 per cent increase in costs for fee-chargeable planning applications. This will result in an additional cost of approximately £53m – £65m per annum to applicants. There will be no change in the proportion of cost burden born by business (87%) and non-business (13%) planning applicants, as the increase would apply uniformly across all types of application. Even with this increase, it is likely that there would still be authorities who could not recover costs through fees. A 10 to 15 per cent fee increase would exacerbate the existing risk of some applicants paying more for their application than the cost of processing it. This is unlikely to be a widespread risk, but would pose an additional, unjustifiable cost in cases where it does occur.

Charging for resubmitted applications has the potential to cost an additional £11m – £22m per annum in fees for applicants.

Benefits

A fee increase of 10 to 15 per cent would enable authorities to recover more of the costs of determining fee-chargeable applications. We estimate that they could gain additional revenue of approximately £53m – £65m per annum. This would help to address an existing shortfall in their resources. The benefit would apply across authorities as the increase would apply uniformly across England.

Charging for resubmitted applications has the potential to generate an additional £11m – £22m per annum in revenue for authorities.

Proposal to extend the scope of planning application fees to cover resubmitted applications

Currently no fee is payable for applications that are resubmitted following withdrawal before determination or refusal. This is known as the “free go”. We propose to allow local planning authorities to decide whether to provide applicants with a “free go”. It is difficult to accurately assess how much revenue authorities might generate through charging for resubmitted

applications. Arup's 2009 research suggested that approximately 15 per cent of all **householder** applications are resubmitted. We have applied this 15 per cent resubmission rate to our assumptions (outlined above) about the number of householder planning applications that we expect to be made over the next 10 years. We also assume that the current fee for householder applications of £150 will increase by 15 per cent following decentralisation, giving an estimated fee of £172.50. A reasonable calculation of revenue would assume that the "free go" continued to exist in some form. If we assume that (following decentralisation) half of all resubmitted householder applications require a full fee, or all resubmitted householder applications require a half fee, this would generate approximately £3m – £6m per annum in additional revenue for authorities.

Using this methodology and range, we have also projected what the additional annual revenue might be if some form of charging is introduced for **all other** (i.e. non-householder) resubmitted applications. If we assume that 10 per cent of **all other** (non-householder) applications are resubmitted, based on a conservative interpretation of the 15 per cent resubmission rate for householder applications, charging for all other resubmitted applications could generate approximately £8m – £16m pa in additional revenue for authorities (assuming that fees will increase by 15 per cent following decentralisation).

In theory, therefore, charging for resubmitted applications has the potential to generate an additional £11m – £22m per annum in revenue for authorities. An equivalent cost would be imposed on applicants.

In our estimates of the costs/benefits of this proposal over the next 10 years, we assume that the ratio of householder applications to all other applications (approximately 40% to 60%) will remain constant.

Risks and assumptions

We assume that fees will increase in the majority of local planning authorities. Based on our understanding of costs and Arup's data, we do not expect this increase to be significant: the overall average of +10 per cent forwarded by Arup seems realistic, increasing to +15 per cent if general cost inflation since the data was collected is taken into account. As this is an average, we would expect to see a greater increase under some authorities: +25 per cent would be a reasonable assumption, although the figure could be higher in exceptional cases. We also assume that fees will decrease in some areas, based on the Arup data suggesting that some authorities are over-recovering through fees.

We cannot make assumptions about the impact on fees in individual authorities, because of a lack of data on the costs of each authority. Whilst we can make some limited assumptions about the impact on fees within different fee categories, as outlined in the *costs/benefits* section above, this could be subject to local variation. Determination of fee categories will also be at the discretion of the local planning authority, which further limits our ability to make assumptions.

There are two risks to the proposal to decentralise. First, there is a risk that authorities might increase fees in excess of cost recovery. Whilst this risk is limited by the legal requirement that the income from a fee must not exceed the cost of performing the fee-related function, an authority could still claim that fees are set at cost recovery when this is not true. Two further safeguards exist which mitigate this risk. If an applicant felt that the fee they were being charged exceeded the cost of determining their application, they could complain (for free) to the Local Government Ombudsman. The financial data on which application fees are based would also be transparent and audited for each authority. We consider these safeguards sufficient to deter the risk of fees exceeding costs on a widespread basis.

Second, there is a risk that authorities might be “rewarded” for inefficiency. Authorities who work less efficiently than their peers might attempt to charge higher fees on the basis that they (the inefficient authority) require more resources to determine applications. The restriction on fees being charged at a rate higher than cost recovery does not act as a barrier to this risk. The Government expects authorities to keep their costs to a minimum and to ensure that their charges are based on efficient services which remain affordable. As the decentralised system proposed will be more transparent, authorities will be directly accountable to residents and applicants for their fee charges. This local accountability will mitigate the risk of inefficiency being rewarded. Authorities who charge significantly higher fees than comparable authorities will need to be able to justify that higher cost.

Both risks could have a consequent impact upon the viability of development. We do not consider this likely, principally because planning application fees constitute a minute portion of development costs: approximately 0.25 per cent, when we assessed the issue in 2005-06 (during which planning fee income was approximately £232m and development costs amounted to around £93bn). This calculation was made in another research report by Arup for the Department, entitled *The Private Sector Perspective on Development Control in the context of Planning Delivery Grant 2005-06*. The fee increase in 2008 would have had no discernable impact on this percentage. Whilst the most significant decline in the number of planning applications in recent years – from 649,000 in 2007-08 to 507,000 in 2008-09 – coincided with the fee increase in April 2008, the decline was most likely due to the impact of the recession, which began in the first quarter of 2008-09. There is no evidence that fee increases have a significant effect upon viability.

There is also a risk that the fee increases we expect to follow decentralisation will encourage people to circumvent planning permission. We do not think that this is probable, as there is no evidence that fee increases over the last 20 years have had a discernable effect on encouraging unlawful development.

Administrative burden and policy savings calculations (Option 1)

There are no administrative burdens to businesses due to this policy regarding the administration of planning applications. Policy costs are imposed on business in terms of planning application fees at £64m (average annual cost). This is based on estimated increases in planning application fees (£46m – £57m) and fees for resubmitted non-householder applications (£8m to £16m).

New Burdens

A new burden will be imposed upon some local planning authorities, who will need to clearly understand the costs they incur in determining each type of planning application in order to set fees. Authorities will also need to ascertain a robust understanding of their overheads, which factor into costs. Once the initial data has been gathered and mechanisms for collecting and updating it are in place, there should not be a significant ongoing administrative burden. It is difficult to assess the cost of the burden as some authorities are already collecting this data, whilst other authorities have less evidence of their costs. The Planning Advisory Service has been working on a project called “Managing Excellent Planning Services”, which is aimed at helping local planning authorities to assess their costs. The cost of this project equates to £4,000 per authority. We intend to build on the methodology for planning cost accounting developed through Managing Excellent Planning Services in a further Planning Advisory Service project, which will refine the methodology used and specifically target it towards local authority costs for development management. We estimate that the cost to each authority of implementing a finalised cost accounting methodology (and transitioning to the new fees system) will be significantly lower than the £4,000 per authority cost of Managing Excellent Planning Services. This estimation is based on the assumption that it should cost less to implement a methodology than to develop, test and implement it (which was the process followed in Managing Excellent Planning Services). The transitional cost identified of £1.5m (the sum total of £4,000 per authority) is therefore a theoretical maximum. We will re-examine this transitional cost when we have gathered data from the next Planning Advisory Service project, as we will then be in a better position to understand what implementation might cost and how we might keep costs to a minimum.

We estimate that the ongoing cost of the time taken for accounting for staff time costs within each authority would equate to approximately £1,500 per authority per annum. Authorities would be able to recover this ongoing cost through fees.

Summary and preferred option with description of implementation plan

Our preference is for Option 1 (decentralised planning application fees) as it is most likely to achieve our stated objective of enabling each local planning authority to recoup (but not exceed) their costs. It is the option that is most consistent with the Government’s intention to localise and decentralise power.

It will also introduce greater local accountability and transparency into the planning application fees system, as authorities will need to ensure that their charges are justifiable and based on actual costs incurred.

Option 1 (full decentralisation) has been chosen over Option 2 (part decentralisation) because it ensures that all decisions over fees will be taken at the local level, by people who are accountable to the public. If Government imposes a cap on fee levels, this would limit the extent to which authorities are responsible and therefore accountable for their fees. Whilst imposing a cap would help to ensure that authorities do not “over recover” through fees, we think that there will be sufficient safeguards under a fully decentralised system to mitigate the risk of over recovery. A cap should not be necessary.

We will go out to consultation on proposals for eight weeks. Following consultation, and depending on responses, we intend to lay draft regulations in Parliament in January 2011. Regulations will then come into force with common commencement at the beginning of April 2011. Those regulations will outline principle requirements for authorities, the first of which will be the need for authorities to develop and publish a schedule that sets out the fees they intend to charge for the various types of planning application, based on the principle of full cost recovery. The regulations will also outline universal exemptions from fees (i.e. for disabled people who are applying to develop their home to improve access). There will be a six month transitional period to October 2011 to give authorities sufficient time to establish the data needed to set their own fees. During this period authorities will be able to continue to use existing, centrally-set fees as set out in the 1989 fees regulations, as amended.

We intend to work with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountability (CIPFA) and the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) to develop a model and methodology that authorities can refer to when developing their charging schedules. CIPFA have already performed a similar function for the Government in relation to building regulations (a comparable charging regime which authorities are responsible for administering locally) and we hope to use their expertise for planning application fees. As stated above, PAS are currently working on a project which aims to help authorities understand the costs they incur in running their planning services. We intend to build on the data and expertise gained in this project in developing a methodology that authorities can use to identify costs.

Consultation with small businesses

We will undertake consultation on this proposal with small businesses and their representatives in parallel with consultation with the wider public.

Impact on equality

We do not believe that the proposed changes to fees would lead to a disproportionate impact on any particular group or section of the community. All people currently pay for planning applications, with the exception of certain cases relating to people with disabilities, parish councils and non-profit organisations.

The proposal to decentralise seeks to realise fees according to the costs incurred between fee categories. The emphasis is on increasing equity between fee categories. Decentralisation would increase revenue whilst reducing the disparity and cross-subsidy between different sizes of application.

Proposals have undergone an equalities impact assessment initial screening and no issues have been identified. If responses to consultation highlight any equalities issues with proposals, we will undertake a full equalities impact assessment as is necessary.

Specific Impact Tests

- Environmental impacts: We have not identified any impacts arising in this area from this policy.
- Social impacts: We have not identified any impacts arising in this area from this policy.
- Sustainable development impacts: We have not identified any impacts arising in this area from this policy.

Competition

In terms of competition, we do not believe that the proposed changes would have a disproportionate impact on any particular sector. It is therefore considered unlikely that there would be an appreciable competition impact arising from any increase in planning application fees.

Enforcement and sanctions

Failure to submit the correct fee with an application may mean that the application will not be considered by the local planning authority. The remedy in cases of dispute about a fee is to make it a preliminary matter to an appeal to the Secretary of State.

Annex 1: Post Implementation Review (PIR) Plan

A PIR should be undertaken, usually three to five years after implementation of the policy, but exceptionally a longer period may be more appropriate. A PIR should examine the extent to which the implemented regulations have achieved their objectives, assess their costs and benefits and identify whether they are having any unintended consequences. Please set out the PIR Plan as detailed below. If there is no plan to do a PIR please provide reasons below.

<p>Basis of the review: [The basis of the review could be statutory (forming part of the legislation), it could be to review existing policy or there could be a political commitment to review];</p> <p>Using statistical data contained in the PSF returns (see below) we will annually review national planning application fee income in order to assess the scale of and trend in planning application fee increases. This will allow us to determine the average increase in fees across England on an annual basis.</p>
<p>Review objective: [Is it intended as a proportionate check that regulation is operating as expected to tackle the problem of concern?; or as a wider exploration of the policy approach taken?; or as a link from policy objective to outcome?]</p> <p>Reviewing the national trend in planning application fee increases will help us to understand whether fee rises are proportional and reasonable and whether they remain within the scope defined by cost recovery.</p>
<p>Review approach and rationale: [e.g. describe here the review approach (in-depth evaluation, scope review of monitoring data, scan of stakeholder views, etc.) and the rationale that made choosing such an approach]</p> <p>Our approach will be to review national statistical data in order to understand the sum effect of changes. If further analysis is needed we will be able to refer to the charging schedules of individual local planning authorities, to examine the extent of fee increases at the local level. If fee increases were shown to have unreasonably exceeded estimations, we could undertake another examination of the cost of fee-related development management in local planning authorities, using similar methods to those undertaken in 2007 and 2009 by Arup for the Department.</p>
<p>Baseline: [The current (baseline) position against which the change introduced by the legislation can be measured]</p> <p>The baseline position is the current fees charged for planning applications, contained in the Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications and Deemed Applications) Regulations 1989 (as amended in 2008). The baseline position in terms of the total fee income and the total number of applications received will be the figures for the 2010/11 financial year. This will provide us with up-to-date data which we can compare the impact of reforms against (changes will come into force in April 2011).</p>
<p>Success criteria: [Criteria showing achievement of the policy objectives as set out in the final impact assessment; criteria for modifying or replacing the policy if it does not achieve its objectives]</p> <p>Our criteria for success would be to create a planning application fees regime that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) enables authorities to recoup the full cost of determining fee-chargeable planning applications; and 2) ensures authorities run an efficient service that keeps those costs to a minimum. <p>We will be able to assess whether success has been achieved by examining the cost data and fee charges of a sample of authorities.</p>

<p>Monitoring information arrangements: [Provide further details of the planned/existing arrangements in place that will allow a systematic collection systematic collection of monitoring information for future policy review]</p> <p>The Department collects statistical data on planning from local planning authorities on an annual basis, in the form of PSF returns. These collect information on the number of planning applications and the fee income received (per quarter). This enables us to determine an annual total of planning application fee income. We will use PSF returns to assess the sum of the impact of reforms to planning application fees.</p>
<p>Reasons for not planning a PIR: [If there is no plan to do a PIR please provide reasons here]</p> <p>N/A</p>

Annex C

The consultation criteria

The Government has a code of practice on consultations. The criteria below apply to all UK public consultations on the basis of a document in electronic or printed form, and will often be relevant to other sorts of consultation.

Though they have no legal force, and cannot prevail over statutory or other mandatory external requirements, the instructions below should otherwise generally be regarded as binding on UK departments and their agencies, unless Ministers conclude that exceptional circumstances require a departure.

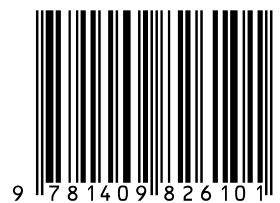
- 1 formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence the policy outcome
- 2 consultations should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible
- 3 consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals
- 4 consultation exercises should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach
- 5 keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained
- 6 consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation
- 7 officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience

The full consultation code may be viewed at:
<http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/better-regulation/consultation-guidance>

If you are not satisfied that this consultation has followed these criteria, or if you have other observations about ways of improving the consultation process, contact:

DCLG Consultation Coordinator
Zone 6/H10
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU

or by e-mail to:
consultationcoordinator@communities.gsi.gov.uk



Directorate of Planning & Economic Development

DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2011 - 2012

- FORWARD PLANNING
- CONSERVATION
- TREES & LANDSCAPE
- COUNTRYCARE
- DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
- BUILDING CONTROL
- SUPPORT TEAM

**Proposed Draft Business Plan
Planning and Economic Development 2011 – 2012**
(December 2010, subject to further change and revision)

Epping Forest District Council



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DRAFT PROPOSED OUTLINE BUSINESS PLAN 2011 – 2012

PART A

STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 6

SECTION ONE..... 6

1. INTRODUCTION 6

- (a) Title of Directorate/Service
- (b) Portfolio/Corporate Responsibilities
- (c) Date of commencement of the Business Plan

SECTION TWO 7

2. DIRECTORATE SERVICE BACKGROUND 7

- (a) Service Overview and Specification
- (b) Customer Focus and Profile
- (c) Improvement Plan
- (d) Financial review

SECTION THREE 8

3. DIRECTORATE SUMMARY..... 8

- (a) Key Cabinet Objectives and Priorities 2010/11
- (b) On the Horizon – Strategic Key Objectives for Planning and Economic Development 2011/12
- (c) Risk Management
- (d) Crime and Disorder
- (e) Equality and Diversity
- (f) Value for Money
- (g) Resource Requirements
- (h) Workforce Planning and Development

SECTION FOUR 13

4. CORPORATE OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES..... 13

- (a) Key Cabinet Objectives and Priorities 2010/11
- (b) On the Horizon – Strategic Key Objectives for Planning and Economic Development 2011/12
- (c) Risk Management
- (d) Crime and Disorder
- (e) Equality and Diversity
- (f) Value for Money
- (g) Resource Requirements
- (h) Workforce Planning and Development

PART B

DIRECTORATE SERVICE PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT 22

SECTION FIVE FORWARD PLANNING 22

- 5.1 KEY FUNCTIONS
- 5.2 STAFFING SUMMARY
- 5.3 KEY OBJECTIVES
- 5.4 CHALLENGES, TARGETS AND ISSUES LIKELY TO BE FACED IN 2011/12
- 5.5 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
- 5.6 ACTION PLANS

SECTION SIX CONSERVATION 31

- 6.1 KEY FUNCTIONS
- 6.2 STAFFING SUMMARY
- 6.3 KEY OBJECTIVES
- 6.4 CHALLENGES, TARGETS AND ISSUES LIKELY TO BE FACED IN 2011/12
- 6.5 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
- 6.6 ACTION PLANS

SECTION SEVEN TREES & LANDSCAPE	36
7.1 KEY FUNCTIONS	
7.2 STAFFING SUMMARY	
7.3 KEY OBJECTIVES	
7.4 CHALLENGES, TARGETS AND ISSUES LIKELY TO BE FACED IN 2011/12	
7.5 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	
7.6 ACTION PLANS	
SECTION EIGHT COUNTRYCARE	40
8.1 KEY FUNCTIONS	
8.2 STAFFING SUMMARY	
8.3 KEY OBJECTIVES	
8.4 CHALLENGES, TARGETS AND ISSUES ACTION PLANS	
8.5 LIKELY TO BE FACED IN 2011/12	
8.6 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	
SECTION NINE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL.....	47
9.1 KEY FUNCTIONS	
9.2 STAFFING SUMMARY	
9.3 KEY OBJECTIVES	
9.4 CHALLENGES, TARGETS AND ISSUES LIKELY TO BE FACED IN 2011/12	
9.5 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	
9.6 ACTION PLANS	
SECTION TEN BUILDING CONTROL.....	54
10.1 KEY FUNCTIONS	
10.2 STAFFING SUMMARY	
10.3 KEY OBJECTIVES	
10.4 CHALLENGES, TARGETS AND ISSUES LIKELY TO BE FACED IN 2011/12	
10.5 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	
10.6 ACTION PLANS	
SECTION ELEVEN DIRECTORATE PLANNING SUPPORT TEAM.....	60
11.1 KEY FUNCTIONS	
11.2 STAFFING SUMMARY	
11.3 KEY OBJECTIVES	
11.4 CHALLENGES, TARGETS AND ISSUES LIKELY TO BE FACED IN 2011/12	
11.5 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	
11.6 ACTION PLANS	

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE ORGANISATION CHART OVERVIEW PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	66
APPENDIX TWO ORGANISATION CHART POLICY & CONSERVATION PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	67
APPENDIX THREE ORGANISATION CHART DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	68
APPENDIX FOUR ORGANISATION CHART BUILDING CONTROL & PLANNING SUPPORT TEAM PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	69
APPENDIX FIVE STAFF ESTABLISHMENT MATRIX PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (64.54 POSTS)	70
APPENDIX SIX SICKNESS ABSENCE SUMMARY OCTOBER 2009 – SEPTEMBER 2010	71
APPENDIX SEVEN – WORKFORCE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT TEMPLATE	72
APPENDIX EIGHT DIRECTORATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS (PRIORITY ISSUES FROM WORKFORCE PLANNING	73
FRAMEWORK)	73
APPENDIX NINE – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY	75
APPENDIX TEN – BUILDING CONTROL APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY	76
APPENDIX ELEVEN – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL NEIGHBOUR FEEDBACK SUMMARY	77
APPENDIX TWELVE - RISK CAPTURE	78
APPENDIX THIRTEEN RISK MATRIX – PLANNING	82
APPENDIX FOURTEEN - RISK REGISTER	83
APPENDIX FIFTEEN - RISK ACTION PLAN	84
RISK ACTION PLAN	84
APPENDIX SIXTEEN FORWARD PLANNING EVIDENCE BASE UPDATE	86

Business Plan

Planning and Economic Development 2011 – 2012

PART A STRATEGIC OVERVIEW-PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SECTION ONE

1 INTRODUCTION

The Council has introduced arrangements for the alignment of its business, budget and workforce planning and development processes into a clear framework to enable the authority to focus on key priorities, improve the way that performance is managed, and to improve communication and consultation on key priorities.

This Business Plan is an important part of Planning and Economic Directorates planning processes as part of its performance management framework to ensure that the directorate's activities and services complement the overall aims and objectives of the Council.

Sections 1 – 4 of this Business Plan outline the strategic details about the directorate and council key priority objectives.

Sections 5 – 11 of the Business Plan provide further details of section reviews, objectives and operational plans for;

- (a). Forward Planning
- (b). Conservation
- (c). Trees & Landscape
- (d). Countrycare
- (e). Development Control
- (f). Building Control
- (g). Support Team

This plan seeks to establish a link between the strategic directorate and corporate objectives, the operational plans and the individual personal development plans of staff (PDR's).

CHALLENGES AND CHANGE IN 2011/12

A number of important and far reaching changes are already taking place with further developments expected to continue into 2011/12. These changes will significantly affect areas of strategic management within the Directorate relating to the Localism and Place Shaping Agenda with increased influence expected from locally elected members and the public in shaping the provision and costs of planning services.

This will impact strategically on the formulation of local government planning policies as it is expected that the Department of Communities and Local Government will be arranging for the passing of legislation that will have far reaching effects on the Local Development Framework.

In addition with the disbandment of the Audit Commission including the abolition of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) and the suggested reduction of the National Indicator Sets (NIS) means that although we no longer have to report performance against defined sets of performance indicators to Central Government; there is still a need to ensure that performance reporting takes place that meets transparency and accountability standards.

These changes will also have a major impact on Planning Service Charges as the Department of Communities and Local Government have published a consultation paper regarding proposed changes to the planning application fees regime to allow for the local level setting of fees by

local planning authorities by April 2011. This is welcomed as it will open the way to full cost recovery in the processing and determination of planning applications.

SECTION TWO

2 DIRECTORATE SERVICE BACKGROUND

(a) Background And Structure

This is the Business Plan for the Directorate of Planning and Economic Development, comprising of 63.5 fulltime equivalent posts, supplemented on occasion, divided into three service areas managed by the Assistant Directors; Policy & Conservation, Development Control and Building Control. The organisation charts Appendix 1 – 4 and staffing matrix Appendix 5; detail the structure for the following three service areas;

- POLICY AND CONSERVATION consisting of four sections, Conservation, Countrycare, Trees and Landscape, Forward Planning and Economic Development.
- DEVELOPMENT CONTROL covering Development Control Applications Validation and Control as well as Enforcement.
- BUILDING CONTROL responsible for Building Control, Contaminated Land and the Planning Support Team (which manages all support functions within the Directorate).

This plan follows on from previous year's Business Plan 2010 – 11, including the general strategies of the 2006 - 2010 Council Plan, itself informed by the Community Strategy and the Essex Local Area Agreement 1 and 2.

(b) Portfolio and Corporate Responsibilities

The day-to-day regulatory activities of Development Control and Building Control are not, however, Cabinet functions. All the above functions are the responsibility of the Director of Planning and Economic Development (J. Preston).

- Building Control - Cllr Syd Stavrou
- Development Control - Cllr Syd Stavrou
- Enforcement - Cllr Lesley Wagland
- Conservation, Trees & Landscape and Countrycare - Cllr Penny Smith
- Forward Planning - Cllr Diana Collins
- Economic Development & Town Centres - Cllr Chris Whitbread
- Planning Services Scrutiny Standing Panel Chair – Cllr John Philip
- Performance Management – Cllr Richard Bassett

(c) Timescale

This plan is operational from April 2011 to March 2012.

SECTION THREE

3 DIRECTORATE SUMMARY

(a) Overview, Functions & Vision

We are working towards achieving locality based effective and accessible planning services that promote carbon friendly processes. In addition we seek to achieve further sustainable development in the context of evolving strategic plans for the future. This is supported in the context of our responsibilities for Environmental Co-ordination and new Town Centre Enhancement projects.

Much of what the Directorate does is statutory, within the legislative framework set out in previous plans. We also provide care and advice on both the historic and natural environment of the district. In addition we remain committed to helping others to protect, enhance and manage the countryside; and operate the statutory controls over new development – its design, impact and construction.

We undertake our statutory Building Control responsibilities for the processing of building regulation applications and inspection of building work. This includes the enforcement of the Building Regulations and other relevant standards such as the investigation and removal of dangerous structures along with the provision of community building legislation advice.

Our Vision is as a Directorate we will seek to gain the respect and trust of our customers and the community by delivering a high quality service that is transparent and visible. We will do this by promoting courtesy, honesty, objectivity, professionalism and political impartiality.

We value our workforce and partners by working and learning from others.

We will seek to protect and enhance the environment for future generations by integrating the social and economic issues with sustainable environmental objectives. We will also seek to be accountable, responsive to empower communities to support a sustainable prosperous community strategy.

(b) Customer Focus and Profile

The Directorate of Planning and Economic Development operates for the benefit of the entire population of the district, and for businesses within and visitors to the district.

However, more directly, the customers of the services provided are those who engage with the specific activities of the services, e.g. those who make application for planning permission or building regulation approval, those who object to planning applications or local plan alterations, those who seek advice about any aspect of the services, or those who benefit from countryside projects or heritage grants.

Generally, the Council has no control over the numbers or type of these direct customers, and the Directorate simply has to react to the size of the customer base, and the nature and complexity of the casework. A clear example of this is the level of public interest and concern raised by the consultation on increasing pitch provision for gypsies and travellers. The Council had previously been directed by the Secretary of State to prepare the relevant document as a matter of urgency, and before the preparation of the Core Strategy (the key document of the Local Development Framework).

Customer Feedback

Formal complaints and compliments about the service we offer are logged before investigation. For the year the number received are as below:

	2009/10 (Q4)	2010/11 (Q1)	2010/11 (Q2)	2010/11 (Q3)
Compliments	24	11	13	12

Complaints	3	10	11	8
NB these are figures for each quarter, they are not cumulative				

Development Control operates a system of an annual agent panels to gain feedback directly from those who submit a large number of our applications. In addition the quality of Development Control service BVPI previously provided a very good indicator of performance, but at irregular intervals.

To gain more ongoing feedback, Customer Feedback is collected for a number of the key functions in the Planning Directorate. The full data for the first sampling period (January 2010) is appended to this business plan (appendices 7-9).

A summary of the performance on what are considered the key questions are as follows for **April 2010 - December 2010**;

QUESTION	RESPONSE	DC APPLICANT	BC APPLICANT
Overall Impression of Service	Positive	84%	84%
	Average	11%	15%
	Negative	5%	1%
How does this compare to previous experience	Better	26%	29%
	Same	67%	67%
	Worse	7%	4%

QUESTION	RESPONSE	DC NEIGHBOURS
How did you view the plans for this application	Planning Reception	25%
	EFDC Website	56%
Disregarding the decision taken in the case, do you feel your views were taken into account in the making of the decision?	Yes	71%
	Partially	15%
	No	14%
Based on your experience with this application, what is your overall impression of our service?	Positive	71%
	Average	17%
	Negative	12%

Customer Focus NI14 – Avoidable Contact

Work around NI14 Avoidable Contact continues to support the customer focus of the directorate in taking steps to reduce avoidable contact as part of improving customer service. We know that the web is potentially the cheapest way to provide services, and is already the preferred option for citizens with simple questions or straightforward business, such as finding out about Planning Applications in their local area. As a result we periodically measure 'avoidable contacts' for phone or face-to-face enquiries with our next sampling exercise due to take place in March 2011.

Previous NI 14 sampling exercises contained in our last Business Plan 2010-11, within one month suggested that nearly 22% of the 5439 contacts made with the Directorate were classified as Avoidable Contact. This is supported by data supplied by the Society for Information, Innovation and Improvement SOCITM, (an association of professional ICT managers, drawn primarily from local authorities that deliver public services) who in 2008 indicated that average 'Avoidable Contact' costs were; Face to face £6.56 per visitor, Phone £3.22 per visitor; and Website £0.27 per visitor

Current data shows that nearly 5000 persons per month are visiting the Planning Services and Building Control Corporate Website pages to access information they may well have obtained in previous years, by either visiting, telephoning or e-mailing us. ICT improvements have helped us to carry this out with a smaller support team.

(c) Improvement Plan, Planning and Economic Development.

In November 2008, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that the Planning and Economic Directorate would produce an Improvement Plan for the next eighteen months. This was produced to implement changes and improvement as part of the implementation of the Corporate Performance Management Framework for the Directorate. The Improvement Plan was updated in August 2010 with specific reference made to 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.

The following table lists the Improvement requirements and actions taken to comply with the outcomes required of the Improvement Plan.

SECTION	REQUIREMENTS	OUTCOMES
<p><u>ITEM ONE.</u> 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.</p>	<p>Implement a draft set of service standards for planning and economic development be forwarded to members at the earliest opportunity.</p>	<p>Partly completed, draft Neighbourhood Consultation and Service standards have been developed with progress on this expected in early 2011. Development Control and Enforcement service standards drafted and to be presented to Planning Services Scrutiny Standing Panel 02 December 2010.</p>
<p><u>ITEM TWO</u> Improving procedures For example; increasing the amount of information being held on i-Plan, so that more information is held electronically and is more accessible, otherwise bringing forward initiatives to reduce the costs of dealing with queries, by providing more information on the website, rather than via individual letters, or individual meetings, and by doing things right first time.</p>	<p>Improving Procedures specifically ICT and iPlan That a programme of works undertaken and to be carried out on I-Plan be submitted to the panel.</p>	<p><u>Phase 1 Completed by December 2010</u> Scanning old DC property files (21 000), all DC application files (10 000) and Enforcement files as well as old TPO's along with ongoing scanning of DC applications, enforcement files and current TPO's.</p> <p><u>Phase 2 completed by 31 March 2011</u> Back scan Large Site Files, Decision Registers, and Conservation Files</p> <p><u>Phase 3 to be completed after 01 April 2011</u> Back Scanning Contaminated Land files, Trees and Landscape misc files, Forward Planning & Area Plans</p> <p><u>Phase 4 to be completed in 2011-12</u> Set up Project to scan all Building Control Records</p> <p><u>Phase 5 to be investigated in 2011-12</u> Investigate the possibility of scanning all Microfiche records over a three to five year period due to high costs involved.</p>
<p><u>ITEM THREE</u> Create a Business Plan for 2011-2012, which meets Corporate requirements yet clearly indicates the future</p>	<p>Submit a draft of the Business Plan 2011-12 be submitted to the panel in</p>	<p>Draft scheduled for presentation to the Planning Services Scrutiny Panel 02 December 2010</p>

SECTION	REQUIREMENTS	OUTCOMES
direction for the Directorate, in particular recognising the revised local focus of the new Government.	December 2010.	
ITEM FOUR 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.	Implement measures to improve the Public Perception of Planning Services and address member concerns regarding enforcement action decisions. That the Planning Protocols be submitted to the panel for review	Choice of controversial sites agreed and site visit to be arranged with Members. Enforcement route flow-chart to be finalised at 02 December 2010 meeting of Planning Services Scrutiny Standing Panel
ITEM FIVE Green Issues, in parallel with work being undertaken by the Green Corporate Working Party to replace the Climate Change Strategy with a Carbon Management Strategy, make clearer what the different sections of the Directorate are doing to promote sustainable development.	Green Issues Policy & Conservation to provide information and updates on the activities of the Corporate Green Working Party	Policy & Conservation to provide an update for information on the activities of the Corporate Green Working Party to; (a). Planning Services Scrutiny Standing Panel. (b). Safer, Cleaner Greener Scrutiny Standing Panel

A summary of the updated Directorate Business Plan Milestones of the Improvement Plan are shown in Appendix 11.

(d) Financial review

Planning and Economic Development financial activities are primarily divided into four areas;

- Direct Services (Policy and Conservation)
- Regulatory Non Fee Earning (Planning Appeals, Enforcement and Building Control),
- Regulated Fee Earning (Development Control) and
- Regulated Full Recovery of Fee Earning work (Building Control).

Expenditure is estimated for 2011/12 to be £3.198 million met as follows;

CSB Budget	£2 668 000
DDF Budget	<u>£ 530 000</u>
Total Net Budget	<u>£3 198 000</u>

DIRECT SERVICES (£1 707 000)

Direct Services primarily consists of the sections within Policy and Conservation and includes;

- Forward Planning
- Economic Development
- Environmental Coordination
- Conservation Policy
- Trees and Landscape

- Countrycare

Forecast costs for Direct Services are likely to reach £1707 000 for 2011/12.

REGULATORY SERVICES NON FEE EARNING (£985 000)

- **Development Control Appeals**

The forecast cost of Appeals increased from £237 000 in 2007/08 to £421 000 in 2008/09. The forecast figure for 2011/12 is £343 000. There has been a slow down of planning appeals as a result of the economic downturn, though this is generally a low income earner, but the cost of an appeal can be considerable to the council if the appellant is able to demonstrate that the appeal was unreasonable and costs therefore are awarded against the Council.

- **Enforcement**

The annual costs of Enforcement has dropped in recent years from a high of £583 000 in 2007/08 to the forecast cost of Enforcement of £468 000 for 2011/12.

- **Building Control Non Fee Earning**

Building Control Non Fee earning activity costs are expected to reach £174 000 for 2011/12. This expenditure has been managed to ensure that £164 000 for 2007/08 has risen by less than 1.5% per year to 2011/12.

REGULATORY SERVICES FEE EARNING (£506 000)

This comprises of;

- **Building Control** (full fee earning recovery)

Local Authorities are required, by the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010, to bring in a new scheme of charges with effect from 1st October 2010. This is to ensure cost recovery continue to be achieved for the Building Control service. Building Control has been able to achieve full cost recovery of fee earning services in recent years.

- **Development Control** (regulated fee earning recovery)

Planning Fees for Development Control Planning Applications have in the past been nationally regulated and do not currently aim to achieve full cost recovery of fees. Currently Development Control Planning (Regulated Fee Earning) fees account for 49% of the full cost providing this type of Planning Service. Consultation is currently underway regarding a decentralisation to local planning authorities of the responsibility for setting fees. The proposals if agreed would reduce the subsidising of planning applications by local taxpayers. If accepted and approved by Parliament the charges would be implemented from 1 April 2011. Consultation finishes on 7 January 2011. The 2011/12 budget shortfall is £505,000, and to breakeven would require a substantial increase in fees and a reduction in costs. The forthcoming year will see a hopeful increase in fees, but also a review of expenditure. However, work is ongoing as a member of the CIPFA Benchmarking Club to establish the feasibility of working towards full cost recovery of Development Planning (Fee Earning) activities.

SECTION FOUR

4 CORPORATE OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

(a) Review Key Cabinet Objectives and Priorities 2010/11.

The following review of the Cabinet Key Objectives 2010/11 for Planning and Economic Development are set out below. Included in this are links, where applicable to the Medium Term Aims for 2010/11 to 2013/14. These outline the comments on how the services offered by the directorate contribute to them being met during the course of 2010/11.

CABINET CORPORATE KEY OBJECTIVES 2010/11	ACTIONS	LINKS TO MEDIUM-TERM AIMS AND OTHER CORPORATE PLANS/DOCUMENTS	CONTRIBUTION OF DIRECTORATE
(1) To deliver a Sound Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework;	To publish an issues and options consultation for the Core Strategy,	<p>Medium-Term Aims Aim 1 – Safeguarding frontline services; Aim 2 – Have the lowest Council Tax in Essex; Aim 3 – Be an innovative and a top performing Council in Essex; Aim 4 – Improve efficiency through partnership working and use of assets; Aim 5 – Community Leadership and Advocacy;</p> <p>The Local Development Framework links directly to the Sustainable Community Strategy for the district and informs other corporate plans and strategies including the Biodiversity Strategy, the Climate Change Strategy, the Safer, Cleaner, Greener Strategy and the Council's approach to the reduction of its use of natural resources.</p>	<p>Continuing priority from 2008/09 and 09/10 It is intended that, in co-ordination with East Herts and Harlow Councils, consultation on Issues and Options for the Core Strategy will take place in the summer of 2010. This was delayed due to the change in government.</p> <p>There needs to be Member and CEO level discussions about coordinated working with East Herts and Harlow in the likely absence of the Regional Spatial Strategy (that is to be formally abolished by the publication of a White Paper)</p> <p>The 1st stage consultation for LDF commenced in November 2010 with anticipated completion date of Summer 2011</p>
(2) To help mitigate the impact of the current economic conditions on local people and businesses, through the development and implementation of appropriate initiatives;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue to pay undisputed local supplier invoices within twenty days; To better publicise the contracts or opportunities available for the supply of goods and services to the Council; To continue to work towards the future development of key retail sites in 	<p>Medium-Term Aims Aim 1 – Safeguarding frontline services; Aim 2 – Have the lowest Council Tax in Essex; Aim 3 – Be an innovative and a top performing Council in Essex; Aim 4 – Improve efficiency through partnership working and use of assets; Aim 5 – Community Leadership and Advocacy;</p>	<p>The Council has identified a number of initiatives to support the local economy, including the continued faster payment of local supplier invoices and, once again, opting not to increase parking charges. The coalition Government has introduced Local Enterprise Partnerships in place of the recently abolished Regional Development Agencies. It is envisaged that LEPs will play a key role in promoting economic development and take on a variety of roles including, assisting in the development of national planning policy, working with planning authorities to develop strategic</p>

CABINET CORPORATE KEY OBJECTIVES 2010/11	ACTIONS	LINKS TO MEDIUM-TERM AIMS AND OTHER CORPORATE PLANS/DOCUMENTS	CONTRIBUTION OF DIRECTORATE
	<p>the district, in particular the St. John's Road area of Epping;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To consult upon and agree a Development Brief for the St. John's Road area of Epping; To introduce other measures introduced to lessen the impacts of the economic recession, which various panels of the Council, or the Local Strategic Partnership, have supported; 	<p>Budget 2010/11, and other corporate plans or documents relevant corporate plans and strategies or assessment reports</p> <p>Housing Strategy 2009-2013; Homelessness Strategy 2009-2012; Specific budgetary provision has been made for the preparation of the Development Brief for the St. John's Road area of Epping;</p>	<p>planning frameworks and potentially even taking on other planning related activities including 'enabling' the timely processing of applications for strategic development and infrastructure. Our district belongs to the East Sussex and Kent Essex LEP. The Directorate has agreed a programme of business events with partners for 2010/11, and is co-ordinating business survey work to better understand the needs and issues of the business community. There are ongoing projects such as St John's Epping Development brief and the Lee Valley White Water Centre Economic Development Study, which will aid economic development and aim to boosting local economies. The Directorate will continue to play an active role in the Sustainable Communities Group of the LSP.</p> <p>Continuing priority from 2008/09 and 09/10. The development brief for The Broadway was approved in September 2008. Although the economic recession has meant such major developments are treated with caution there are ongoing discussions with interested parties. The Directorate is leading on the preparation of the development brief for the St John's Road area of Epping. Work paused for a period in 2009 recognising the need to ensure integration with the Town Centres Study. Whilst there is a strong appreciation of the drivers to ensure swift progress, this must be balanced against the importance of this area to the town's future. Consultation strategy approved in Oct 2010. 1st stage consultation on options to be launched in Q1 10/11</p>
<p>(3) To further improve the Council's corporate procedures for safeguarding local children and young people as part of Essex County Council's Children's Trust arrangements;</p>	<p>To ensure that all appropriate members and officers of the Council are appropriately trained and aware of safeguarding responsibilities;</p>	<p>Medium-Term Aims</p> <p>Aim 3 – Aspire to be a top performing Council in Essex;</p> <p>Aim 4 – Improve efficiency through partnership working and use of assets;</p>	<p>The Council has a responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children and young people under section 11 of the Children Act 2004. The duty to participate in the safeguarding and promote welfare is part of the programme of Change for Children, which began with the publication of the Every Child Matters Green Paper in September 2003. At an organisational level, the key features of this duty of care are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A commitment by Senior Management to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

CABINET CORPORATE KEY OBJECTIVES 2010/11	ACTIONS	LINKS TO MEDIUM-TERM AIMS AND OTHER CORPORATE PLANS/DOCUMENTS	CONTRIBUTION OF DIRECTORATE
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear statement of responsibilities towards children and young people is available to all staff combined with appropriate training to promote the welfare of children and young people. • Effective inter-agency working and information sharing to safeguard the welfare of children and young people.
(5) To maintain the Council's sound financial position;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase the Council Tax for 2010/11 by no more than 2.5%; • To ensure that the Medium-Term Financial Strategy delivers a balanced budget in its final year; 	Medium-Term Aims Aim 1 – Safeguarding frontline services; Aim 2 – Have the lowest Council Tax in Essex;	The Council undertook a detailed corporate 'Value For Money Review' in 2008/09 order to explore the facts that underlie the views previously expressed by the Audit Commission on the authority's provision of value for money. A thorough review and updating of the Council's existing Value for Money Strategy is being progressed as part of this ongoing value for money process.
(6) To achieve the level of savings identified within the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop savings projects and an overall strategy for the achievement of the level of savings identified within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy; • To achieve efficiency savings of £600,000 for 2011/12; • To identify and develop mutually beneficial partnerships with external organisations. 	Medium-Term Aims Aim 1 – Safeguarding frontline services; Aim 2 – Have the lowest Council Tax in Essex; Aim 3 – Aspire to be a top performing Council in Essex; Aim 4 – Improve efficiency through partnership working and use of assets; These are expressed as net savings as they can be achieved through either reducing costs or increasing income.	<p>The Comprehensive Spending Review clearly highlights a tougher financial climate over the next four years, although the exact impact is not yet clear.</p> <p>The Council and the Directorate have been making savings and efficiencies for several years already and will continue to do so.</p> <p>The recovery of costs of operating by the charges levied and other new initiatives will play an increasingly important role in future financial stability.</p>
(8) To seek continuous performance improvement and the best use of resources;	<p>(a). To achieve an overall score of 3 (Performing Well) in the CAA Organisational Assessment for 2009/10 (to be undertaken in 2010/11);</p> <p>(b). To achieve overall improvement in respect of the Council's Key Performance Indicators for each of the four</p>	Medium-Term Aims Aim 1 – Safeguarding frontline services; Aim 3 – Aspire to be a top performing Council in Essex; Aim 4 – Improve efficiency through partnership working and use of assets; Budget 2010/11, and other corporate plans or documents The processing of	<p>Performance on the processing of planning applications, as measured by National Indicator 157, is behind target, in two out of three further categories as at the third quarter of 2009/10.</p> <p>Investigation of further means to improve performance is underway, but improvements is dependent on changes to the current scheme of delegation, which have been suggested such as tightening of the monitoring of caseloads and targeting committees.</p>

CABINET CORPORATE KEY OBJECTIVES 2010/11	ACTIONS	LINKS TO MEDIUM-TERM AIMS AND OTHER CORPORATE PLANS/DOCUMENTS	CONTRIBUTION OF DIRECTORATE
	years from 2010/11 to 2013/14; (c). To continue to improve performance on the processing times of all categories of planning applications, as measured by National Indicator 157;	planning applications is a statutory service, and is funded by the Continuing Service Budget;	
(10) To continue the improvement in the benefit the Council receives from its investment in information and communications technology;	To increase the use of the corporate document management system in order to improve administrative processes.	Medium-Term Aims Aim 1 – Safeguarding frontline services; Aim 2 – Have the lowest Council Tax in Essex; Aim 5 – Community Leadership and Advocacy;	Building on the initial feasibility work undertaken in 2005, the Customer Transformation Task and Finish Panel have developed a number of practical proposals to improve access to information and improve the customer experience when visiting the Civic Offices. In addition, the development of a Customer Relationship Management system will assist in the identification of areas for further improvement arising from National Indicator 14 (Avoidable Contact).

(b) On the Horizon – Strategic Key Objectives for Planning and Economic Development 2011/12

The following strategic action plan provides an outline of the key objectives for 2011/12

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES	KEY CORPORATE OBJECTIVE	WHAT ACTIONS WILL WE TAKE TO ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE?	INDICATIONS FOR SUCCESS
Responding to the Recession	As per KCO (1) & (2)	LEPs: What role will they play in informing local priorities and promoting local economy Economic Development and Town Centre projects	Revised Performance Measures
Economic Development	As per KCO (1) & (2)	Economic Development and Town Centre projects West Essex/M11 corridor economic Partnership/subregional LEP	Completion of Projects to timescales
Planning For Growth • Local Development Framework • Affordable Housing	As per KCO (1) & (2)	Continue to deliver on the Core Strategy Promote regeneration opportunities in Town Centres	Achieving milestones

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES	KEY CORPORATE OBJECTIVE	WHAT ACTIONS WILL WE TAKE TO ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE?	INDICATIONS FOR SUCCESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regeneration/Town Centres 		and wider District	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Shared Service Opportunities 	As per KCO (5), (6) & (8) Medium Term Aims 2010-2014 (1) & (4)	The Directorate already participates in shared services in some areas. We are receptive to considering shared services with other Local Authorities; however the overarching criteria is ensuring that this will produce real savings and/or efficiencies.	Achieving milestones in the Improvement Plan
The Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate Change Agenda 	As per the KCO doc	Complete the Corporate Climate Strategy and pursue energy efficiency improvements to Council stock	Complete the Corporate Climate Strategy
Value For Money	As per KCO (6)	Ongoing VFM (efficiency) Improvements and CIPFA Benchmarking	Minimise expenditure and maximise income
Performance/Efficiency Improvements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate Admin Support across the Directorate Promote VFM in procurement Consolidate ERDMS Programme 	As per KCO (8) As per KCO (10)	Meet Improvement Plan Objectives	Meet Improvement Plan Criteria
To improve access to and information and customer service	As per KCO (8)	Customer Response times Comms Strategy (LDF) Website and ERDMS Improvements	Meet Improvement Plan Criteria
Continue improvement of processing planning applications	As per KCO (8)	Ongoing. Likely that NI 157 will be retained as a LI once the NI's are abolished.	Revised Performance Measures

(c) Risk Management

Risks that arise in the Directorate fall broadly within three categories – risk to accommodation and records, risks to personnel and risks to service delivery. The full risk register is shown in Appendix Fourteen.

Appendix Twelve is the Risk Capture Analysis that identifies vulnerabilities along with triggers and consequences of the main risks, together with a Risk Matrix (Appendix Thirteen) plotting Impact against Likelihood.

It can be seen that a number of risks to service delivery are identified but only nine are above the 'tolerance' line. All others are considered to be either low probability or of low consequence. It is only necessary therefore to include management plans for those nine risks and these risks are identified and managed by the Risk Action Plan – Appendix 8.

RISK NO	CURRENT RISK SCORE	TARGET RISK SCORE	DESCRIPTION
8	B3	C3	Loss of budget and/or income DC, BC & P & C
12	B2	C2	Potential need to address Gypsy, Roma and Traveller incidents
14	B2	C2	Failure to attract sufficient community gains from s106 procedures
15	B2	C2	Fall in appeal success rate
24	B3	C3	Need to make B. Regs files available for public
33	B3	D3	Inability to 'backscan' additional files including secure destruction along with quality control processes due to insufficient funding
10	B3	D3	Lack of funding for Town Centre Officer
28	B3	D3	Lack of admin support for Trees and Landscape Team
30	B3	D3	Lack of admin support for Conservation team

Business Continuity

Business Continuity Planning is progressing with measures in place to cover the first main area of risk – the protection and recovery of records and working files lost through fire or other impact upon accommodation. Copies, including computer records, exist of much of the resources, though some current working file papers are at risk. Electronic copying of archived records is now well underway and further work in relation to e-government initiatives will significantly aid the storing and recovering of working files.

(d) Crime and Disorder

The duty to have regard to crime and disorder is continuing to be addressed. Various policies of the Local Plan relate to safety; new developments may have regard to crime prevention in their layout and design.

The advisory leaflet: Designing Out Crime, produced by the Directorate is in the process of being reviewed, and the Town Centre Officer role includes crime prevention in broad terms within town centres.

(e) Equality and Diversity

A Corporate Equalities Working Group is leading on this subject and Planning and Economic Development is represented by the Assistant Director (Building).

The Directorate initially undertook Impact Assessments during 2005 with action plans being produced from the assessments. The plans are now being updated.

In January 2010 the Directorate undertook an Equalities Impact Assessment Screening exercise which reviewed its policies, strategies and plans associated with the provision of its services from this was produced a new framework of assessments which is currently being carried out. This is scheduled over a period of the next three years, which will aid the development and adoption of the Council's new Equality Strategy.

As part of the Corporate Equalities Working Group we are investigating the practicality of including equality monitoring questions as part of our satisfaction surveys. If this is possible, we will analyse the outcome of this survey to see if there are significant differences in perception of the service by different groups of users.

(f) Value for Money

BENCHMARK OR COMPARATOR SOURCE	COMPARATOR GROUP	COMMENTARY
<p>Planning Services & Economic Development Department recognises the importance of Value for Money and is currently implementing measures to utilise CIPFA VFM data to monitor performance. Further work will be carried out to identify areas of under performance.</p>	<p>CIPFA closest fifteen authorities as generated by the new nearest neighbour model</p>	<p><u>DEVELOPMENT CONTROL:</u> Since 2008-09, the data for planning appeals has not been recorded as value for money comparison, given it is no longer a national performance indicator, but a benchmarking snapshot in 2009 from data collected revealed appeal performance to be just above average and the 3rd best in Essex. The number of appeals received has fallen, which in value for money terms means less expenditure on external consultants and planning officers gaining further experience and knowledge within own budget.</p> <p>Authority dealt with a substantial number of planning related applications compared with others, using very limited outside resources and therefore relying on core staff. Major applications are dealt with by the most senior officers and administration support deal with many certificates of lawful development applications which represents good value for money. Customer views have generally been satisfied and performance measures were achieved in one category of application types. There is a current CIPFA benchmarking exercise underway looking at service charges and may offer the opportunity for planning fees to be set at a local rather than a national level.</p> <p>To the customer generally, there is a substantial amount of document records available on-line that has been added to in 2009-10 and is aiming to be completed in 2011 in respect of Development Control. In terms of value for money, this has allowed for a more effective and efficient service, saving on officer time, paper and promoting avoidable contact.</p> <p><u>FORWARD PLANNING, TREES & CONSERVATION</u> In order to achieve value for money the sections ensure they follow EFDC's adopted procurement policies which are reviewed and benchmarked to industry standards. Officer performance on planning applications in target time is measured as part of collated DC data as stated above. Current CIPFA (Nov 2010) benchmarking exercise will provide more information on level/quality of service delivery in relation to current service charges</p> <p><u>BUILDING CONTROL</u> In order to achieve value for money the section makes sure that it is delivering cost effective services. It is recognised that, over time, people's needs and expectations change, therefore it is necessary to constantly review how services are provided by consulting with stakeholders and the local community, and to compare performance</p>

BENCHMARK OR COMPARATOR SOURCE	COMPARATOR GROUP	COMMENTARY
		<p>against other Essex Authorities.</p> <p>The section has local performance indicators to aid this comparison and reviews help improvement by setting new performance targets, together with the identification of financial savings, and comparing the cost of ways in which the service is delivered with other organisations in both the public and private sectors.</p> <p>Training and developing of the staff provides efficient and effective services and the section have upgraded their accreditation to the prestigious Quality Assured ISO 9001: 2008 standard.</p>

Outlook

Local Authorities have in the past been subject to annual assessment of their arrangements for ensuring the provision of Value for Money (VFM) services by the Audit Commission. As the Audit Commission is now being abolished there is a need to establish different ways of establishing Value for Money principles. This is now being progressively replaced by a greater emphasis on Localism, where benchmarking is being considered to assist in the setting of fair charges by calculating local unit process costs. In this way a link will be able to be established with unit costs and fees charged by examining how this compares with fees charged. The Planning and Economic Development Directorate supports the enabling of local authorities to set their own fees that reflect local costs.

This is in line with the Corporate Plan Medium Term Aims 2010/11 to 2013/14 which requires that the council works towards having the lowest District Council Tax in Essex (section 2) and continuously improves efficiency by adopting new ways of working with our partners (section 4).

A Planning Services Benchmarking exercise is presently being conducted from 1st to 26th November 2010. It has been set up to help establish useful, comparable information about the real costs of providing services. Part of this is the exchanging of information and ideas between 'like for like' authorities who experience similarities in service provision and standards and is a key element of informed performance management decision making. Planning and Economic Development has recently joined the CIPFA Benchmarking Club to target key areas of management information such as;

- Establishing the true costs of Planning services, particularly unit process costs and how this compares with the fees we charge.
- How our Planning Services productivity and performance compare with similar local authorities.
- Identify possible areas where it is strategically viable to work in partnership with other local authorities.

(g) Resource Requirements

A number of factors including the economic recession, IT Development and staffing developments have combined to create challenging issues significantly impacting on resource availability for Planning and Economic Development.

A key element in the adoption of Electronic Documents Records Management System (EDRMS) is the enabling of long term resilient electronic framework for electronic records. The aim is to provide easy access for the residents of Epping Forest District Council and other users of Planning and Economic Directorate services. This will enable the Directorate to move

over a period of time towards a "Paperless" office environment. However the short term costs in fully implementing this may well mean that ICT and records scanning will be high with significant savings not immediately apparent.

Clearly linked to ICT developments is the streamlining of the Planning Support Team with the proposed review of the administration support due to be implemented from 1st April 2011. Due to these changes, there will be a need to provide effective and efficient cross team support. Accordingly there will be a need for regular reviews to promote resilience and Value for Money at the same or less net cost to the Directorate.

Work continues in implementing efficiency savings, in reducing the use of paper by actively promoting the placing of electronic planning records on the Corporate Website, in restructuring the Countrycare Team and promoting self sufficiency within Building Control. Challenges that we wish to overcome are the issues of support for the Town Centre Partnership especially the ongoing funding of the Town Centre Officer post along with the benchmarking of Planning Services to aid in the charging of economic fees.

(h) Workforce Planning and Development

The Directorate has a clear program of staff development with a number of staff attending external training. The directorate considers that its staff development programme has contributed to the improved staffing position with a number of staff members qualified at Masters Degree level or above.

Continued Professional Development for professional staff is also supported. The combination of external development has helped staff in terms of their CPD and membership of professional bodies.

94% of the Directorate Personal Development Reviews were completed by 1st April 2010, with the percentage increasing to 96% by 1st May 2010. As in previous years arrangements are in place to ensure that all managers who conduct PDR's, do not exceed the limit of six.

A strategy for absence monitoring is in place with absence reported regularly to Directorate Management Team Meetings. A table summarising absence levels for the period October 2009 to September 2010 is contained in Appendix Thirteen.

In the period under review September 2009 to October 2010, the directorate lost 164 days due to short term sickness, and 142 days due to long term sickness, totalling 296 lost days. This equates to just fewer than 2% of work days being lost due to all types of sickness absence. The average sickness absence per staff member has been maintained at 4.68 days which compares favourably with a similar period last year of 5.6 days per member.

Details of Workforce Planning Information, is contained in Appendices Seven and Eight attached.

PART B DIRECTORATE SERVICE PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

SECTION FIVE FORWARD PLANNING

5.1 KEY FUNCTIONS

Issues and Options consultation ;(summer 2011), on the Core Planning Strategy of the Local Development Framework.

Continue the preparation of the Evidence Base studies for the Local Development Framework, either by internal work or by commissioning additional reports and ensure that these are kept as up-to-date as possible (See Appendix 16)

Annual Monitoring Report, key requirements of the Local Development Framework. Housing completions are monitored via NI154 (Net additional homes provided), future land supply for housing monitored via NI159 (Supply of ready to develop housing sites)

Climate Change Strategy (incorporating NI 185, 186, 188 and 194, and Green Travel Plan)

Fuel Poverty Outreach Referral and the London Commuter Belt Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty Initiative (incorporating NI187)

Promotion of sustainable economic development and tourism

Partnership working to secure the future viability and vitality of the district's town centres

Engagement with the Local Enterprise Partnership.

Continued input and involvement with the Joint Investment Plan and Local Enterprise Partnerships, (LEPs)

5.2 STAFFING SUMMARY

Planning Policy includes Forward Planning, Economic Development and Environmental Co-ordination. The Forward Planning team comprises 6 permanent professional posts (FP Manager, Principal Planning Officer, Senior PO, PO, Information and Technical Officer, and Forward Planning Assistant) Due to resignation; the Senior PO post is currently vacant. There is also a Senior PO/Consultation Officer post on a 2-year contract which started in May 2010.

Economic Development has 2 professional staff, one concentrating on town centres. The EDO will be on maternity leave from late 2011. The TCO is funded for 3 years (from October 2008), but the current budget will be spent by the end of July 2011 because the post-holder, who is agency, is on a slightly higher rate of pay than that established for the post. It is intended that the TCO will take over the EDO's role for the period at least until July, but this will mean that some EDO and TCO projects will have to be given lower priority. The Environmental Co-ordinator is a permanent professional role. The full staffing profile is shown on Appendix 2.

5.3 KEY OBJECTIVES

Priority Service Objectives

This area of the Planning Directorate has identified the following priority service objectives for this business plan:

Objective	Council plan or other ref	Background
2 Core Planning Strategy	Cabinet Key Objectives 1 and 9; Council Plan GU1, GU4, HN1, EP3, EP5 LAA2 Priority 2, 5, 8, 9, 10	The Core Planning Strategy is a key part of the Local Development Framework, and will set the objectives and strategic directions for growth in the district up to 2031. There may be a need to consider co-ordinated working arrangements with neighbouring authorities to deliver aspirations for regeneration and growth.
3 Annual Monitoring Report	GU4; EP3	Key requirement of the Local Development Framework Must be completed by December each year for the preceding financial year. Will be considered

Objective	Council plan or other ref	Background
		by the Local Development Framework Cabinet Committee.
6 Climate Change Strategy	Housing KPO 13; Council Plan GU1, GU2 LAA2 Priority 9	National Indicators 185, 186, 188 and 194
7 Fuel Poverty	Council Plan EP5	National Indicator 187
8 Promotion of sustainable economic development and tourism	Cabinet Key Objective 5; Council Plan SC1, EP2; EP3, EP5, EP6 LAA2 Priority 8	The Council's commitment to economic development is set out in the Economic Prosperity theme of the Council Plan and is also evident in the recently approved KPOs. Beyond this, the Council will need to engage with the government's new Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) structure on economic development matters and is likely to formalise sub-regional partnership working at the M11/West Essex level in order to fully input into the broader LEP (which is currently set to cover Kent, Greater Essex and East Sussex).
9 Partnership working to help secure the future viability and vitality of the district's town centres.	Cabinet Key Objective 5; Corporate KPO 1; ? Planning KPO14; ? Council Plan SC1; EP2; EP3; EP5; EP6 LAA2 Priority 8	Objective 8 is intrinsically linked to this objective and vice-versa. The Council supported and promoted the establishment of Town Centre Partnerships in the late 1990s and remains committed to further developing them to continue to play a strong role in helping to address the challenges being faced by the district's centres (see EP6).
10.Engagement with the Local Enterprise Partnership.		The mechanism for this is currently being assessed. It is likely that there will be a sub regional West Essex LEP

The actions (and relevant targets) for achieving these objectives are detailed in section (d) of this part of the business plan.

5.4 CHALLENGES AND ISSUES LIKELY TO BE FACED IN 2010/11 and 2011/12

(a) Core Strategy:

- Should be prepared taking into account the Key Objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy published by the Local Strategic Partnership;
- Corporate recognition of, and contribution to, the LDF, and support for the establishment of the Evidence Base;
- Partnership working with other public sector organisations is required in the preparation and adoption of the Core Planning Strategy;
- The coalition government's emphasis on community engagement needs to be taken into account in the review of the Local Development Scheme;
- The East of England Plan has not yet been formally revoked (following the Cala Homes judgement of 10th November 2010). The government has stated that, despite this decision, it will revoke Regional Spatial Strategies as soon as possible after the enactment of the Decentralism and Localism Bill;
- LDF budget – given the number of changes that have occurred since the budget was allocated (eg all the work on the Gypsy and Traveller DPD, the change in government and the introduction of the "Big Society" agenda), it will be important to continue to monitor and review the budget, and the timescale;

- Reliance on consultants to prepare much of the Evidence Base (see Appendix 14).
- Public engagement – a Communications Strategy has been agreed by the LDF Cabinet Committee and this will form the basis for community engagement in the preparation of the Core Planning Strategy. There are concerns that the Issues and Options consultation for the Gypsy and Traveller DPD has had long-term negative consequences for the Council's relationship with the local community. It is hoped that the Communications Strategy will start to repair these relations.

(b) Climate Change Strategy

- Corporate so requiring input from, and implementation by, all Directorates
- Limited officer resource within Planning Directorate – four National Indicators deal with this issue (185, 186, 188 and 194)
- Funding not yet secured for a wide range of projects and initiatives

(c) Fuel Poverty

- Limited officer resource and budget – one National Indicator applies (NI 187)
- Implementation and completion of London Commuter Belt Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty Initiative

(d) Sustainable economic development and tourism

- Limited officer resource and budgets
- Challenge in formalising sub-regional (m11/west essex) working and in the establishment and effective operation of the new LEP structure
- Challenge in ensuring that the local area captures optimum benefit from the london 2012 games and most significantly the legacy operation of the lee valley white water centre.

(e) Town Centres

- Limited officer resource to work across the six centres to deliver initiatives and to help build capacity in the Town Centre Partnerships
- Time-limited funding of both the Town Centre Officer post and of the current increased Council contributions to the Town Centre Partnerships
- General lack of external funding available for local authorities/private sector partnerships to deliver/sustain projects and activities
- Work required to improve or gain the right representation on some Town Centre Partnerships
- Implementation of briefs for Debden Broadway and St John's Road, Epping could be affected by current economic climate, and limitations of influence on the private sector. St John's Road work is yet to proceed through broader stakeholder and public consultation phases and formal Council approval procedures.

(f) Engagement with Local Enterprise Partnerships

- The LEP for this area includes Essex, Kent and East Sussex – there is real concern that the needs of the M11 corridor, including this Council, will be lost or overshadowed by other major issues – eg Thames Gateway, a new Thames crossing, the Haven Gateway, coastal towns etc;
- Need to engage with LEPs covering north London and Hertfordshire, latter because of links with Harlow's potential growth;
- A "sub-regional" LEP including this Council, Harlow and Uttlesford should continue to meet to ensure that key priorities are identified and delivered;
- Monitor progress and status of Integrated County Strategy and its input to the LEP

(g). Strengths and Weaknesses

In the formulation of this Business Plan, a SWOT Analysis will be completed by the Forward Planning Team (To follow).

5.5 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

(a) National & Local Indicators

As the preparation of Business Plans for 2010/12 needs to be commenced before the end of 2010, performance against relevant indicators for the final quarter of the year cannot be reported, and will therefore be carried forward for inclusion in the review of the Business Plan in early 2011.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	TARGET 2010/11	PERFORMANCE		2009/10 (Q4 & OUTTURN)	
		2009/10 (Q4 & OUTTURN)			
NI151* – overall employment rate. VW to provide an update	2010/11 target 2.9% above England	Annual figure only 2009/10 – 73.3	NI151* – overall employment rate. VW to provide an update	2010/11 target 2.9% above England	Annual figure only 2009/10 – 73.3
NI154 – Net additional homes provided (cumulative figure collected quarterly)	180	176	NI154 – Net additional homes provided (cumulative figure collected quarterly)	180	176
NI159 – Supply of ready to develop housing sites (annual figure – collected in December)	100.00%	144.00%	NI159 – Supply of ready to develop housing sites (annual figure – collected in December)	100.00%	144.00%
NI163* – Proportion of population aged 19–64 for males and 19-59 for females qualified to at least Level 2 or higher.	2011/12 target 63.8	Annual figure only 2009/10 result – 65.8%	NI163* – Proportion of population aged 19–64 for males and 19-59 for females qualified to at least Level 2 or higher VW to provide an update	2011/12 target 63.8	Annual figure only 2009/10 result – 65.8%
NI164* – Proportion of population aged 19-64 for males and 19-59 for females qualified to at least Level 3 or higher VW to provide an update	2011/12 target 39.6	Annual figure only 2009/10 result – 40.3	NI164* – Proportion of population aged 19-64 for males and 19-59 for females qualified to at least Level 3 or higher VW to provide an update	2011/12 target 39.6	Annual figure only 2009/10 result – 40.3

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	TARGET 2010/11	PERFORMANCE			
		2009/10 (Q4 & OUTTURN)			2009/10 (Q4 & OUTTURN)
NI165* – Proportion of population aged 19-64 for males and 19-59 for females qualified to at least Level 4 or higher (Local indicator) VW to provide an update	2011/12 target 22.3	Annual figure only 2009/10 result 29.8	NI165* – Proportion of population aged 19-64 for males and 19-59 for females qualified to at least Level 4 or higher (Local indicator) VW to provide an update	2011/12 target 22.3	Annual figure only 2009/10 result 29.8
NI166 – Median earnings of employees in the area (Essex only target) VW to provide an update	District data not available due to low confidence at this level.	County 2010/11 target is £504.19/week (2009/10 result was £491.90/week)	NI166 – Median earnings of employees in the area (Essex only target) VW to provide an update	District data not available due to low confidence at this level.	County 2010/11 target is £504.19/week (2009/10 result was £491.90/week)
NI171 – New business registration rate VW to provide an update	2010/11 target is 90 per 10,000 adult population	2009/10 result available Jan 11/ 2008/09 result 95.6			
NI185 - % CO2 reduction from local authority operations	Not set				
NI186 – per capita CO2 emissions from the local authority area	3.0%				
NI187 – tackling fuel poverty - % people receiving income-based benefits living in homes with a low and high energy efficiency rating	11.5%	Annual figure only (2008/9) – 12.0%			
NI188 – Planning to adapt to climate change	Level 2	Annual measurement only (2008/9) – Level 1			
NI194 - % reduction in NOx and primary PM10 emissions through local authority's estate and operations	Not set				
LPI143 Completion of Local Development Scheme	Delayed by factors outside the control of the Council				
LPI144 Achievement of Milestones in Local Development scheme	Not set				

Indicators that do not have information will be updated as that information becomes available. Asterisks after the NI number indicate targets set by Essex Partnership/LAA2 for each Essex local authority in order to meet county-wide 2010/11 targets. Appear to exceed in 2008/9 but

seek to maintain/improve – the Council has committed itself to “have regard” to these indicators.

(b) Internal Indicators

No Internal Performance Indicators relate to this area of the directorate.

5.6 ACTION PLANS

(a) Action Plan 2010/11 - Review

Performance against previous Business Plan targets from the 2009/10 business plan shown below:

ACTION	SOURCE	TARGET	PROGRESS/ PERFORMANCE
Review and maintain Local Development Scheme	Requirement of PPS12 and Regulations	Review delayed due to recent uncertainty over East of England Plan, and thus growth around Harlow. Review will be completed as soon as possible.	Meeting between Members and senior Management of EFDC, East Herts and Harlow Councils is planned, in order to find way forward. Once this has taken place, structured timelines can be introduced for the LDF through a revised LDS.
Meet milestones in current LDS	GU4	No targets as current LDS is out of date.	
Publish Annual Monitoring Report	GU4	31/12/09	Achieved
Prepare and co-ordinate Evidence Base studies (Please see Appendix 16 attached)	GU1; GU4; HN1; EP3	May 2009	Strategic Housing Market Assessment completed January 2010. Landscape Character Assessment completed January 2010. Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report completed May 2010. Town Centres Study completed May 2010. Local Wildlife Sites Review completed May 2010. Strategic Housing Market Assessment Viability Testing completed August 2010. Employment Land Review completed September 2010. Work on Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Level 1 – area wide) continues, hoping for completion by end of December 2010. Work is progressing internally on the PPG17 Audit of Open Space. Consideration needs to be given to commissioning the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and an updated study of the glasshouse industry. Work on the Rye Meads Water Cycle Study, and the Settlement Edge Landscape Sensitivity Study is ongoing.
Assess implications of EEP review.	GU1; GU4; HN1	No longer relevant – EEP review will not be pursued by	No longer applicable.

ACTION	SOURCE	TARGET	PROGRESS/ PERFORMANCE
		Coalition Government, who intent to formally revoke EEP as soon as possible through legislation.	
Promotion of the Vision and Development Brief for Debden	EP2; EP3; EP5; EP6	Ongoing	Subject of ongoing work between the Council and various stakeholders. Forward Planning to continue to liaise externally and assist other Council offices (i.e. Estates, Development Control) & ensure proposals recognised in emerging LDF documents.
Preparation of the Design and Development Brief for the St John's Road area, Epping	SC3; EP3; EP6	Spring/Summer 2011	Work on Brief has progressed during 2010 with a period of public consultation on work and emerging development options expected to be undertaken from January 2011.
Publish combined Local Plan and Alterations document and revised Proposals Map	GU1	Spring 2011	Combined policies document was published in February 2008. Publication of amended Proposals Map delayed by other work priorities, but intend completion by Spring 2011
Member training on LDF issues	GU4	Ongoing	Take up of PAS and other appropriate courses, although again could be affected by change of government.

(b) Action Plan 2011/12 (Forward Look)

The action plan below sets out the actions to be carried out in this service area to meet:

- The Key Objectives set out in section (a) of this section of the Business Plan.
- Any recommendations made in internal audit or external inspection reports.
- The actions required to improve performance against indicators.
- Actions carried forward from the last plan.

This action plan will be reviewed and updated during January to March 2011, as part of the process for updating this plan for 2011/12.

ACTION OBJECTIVE	COUNCIL PLAN OR OTHER REF	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	TARGET DATE	RESOURCES/ BUDGET
Gypsy and Traveller DPD	HN2	IW	No longer relevant – Direction to produce DPD was formally revoked by Minister Greg Clark MP in July 2010. EFDC Members decided to cease all work on DPD	No longer relevant

ACTION OBJECTIVE	COUNCIL PLAN OR OTHER REF	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	TARGET DATE	RESOURCES/ BUDGET
			immediately.	
Revise Local Development Scheme	GU4; EP3; LAA2 Priority 2	IW/AW	As soon as possible - once joint Member/Management meeting take place between the three local authorities.	Existing staff
Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation	GU1; GU4; HN1; EP3	AW/IW	Summer 2011	LDF budget
Harlow Options Appraisal	GU1; GU4	IW/AW	Completed January 2010.	GAF
Review of East of England Plan	GU1; GU4; HN1; EP3	IW/AW	No longer relevant – EEP review will not be pursued by Coalition Government, who intent to formally revoke EEP as soon as possible through legislation.	Existing staff
Stansted G2 Public Inquiry	EP3; EP5	JP/IW	No longer relevant – BAA withdrew the applications for a second runway in May 2010.	
Revise draft Statement of Community Involvement	GU4	IW	Spring 2011.	LDF budget
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (part of Core Strategy evidence base)	GU1; GU4; EP3 LAA2 Priority 2	AW	Completed January 2010. Viability study completed August 2010.	LDF budget
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (CS evidence base)	GU1; GU4; EP3; LAA2 Priority 2	AW/KW	To be commissioned early 2011.	LDF budget
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (CS evidence base)	GU4	IW	(Level 1 – area wide) hoping for completion by end of December 2010	Existing staff
Town Centres Study (CS evidence base)	GU4; LAA2 Priority 8	KW	Completed May 2010.	LDF budget
Landscape Character and Sensitivity Analysis (CS evidence base)	GU4; LAA2 Priority 10	IW/ C Neilan	Landscape Character Assessment completed January 2010.	LDF budget

ACTION OBJECTIVE	COUNCIL PLAN OR OTHER REF	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	TARGET DATE	RESOURCES/ BUDGET
			Sensitivity Analysis planned for completion in February 2011.	
Review of County Wildlife sites (CS evidence base)	GU4	IW/	Completed May 2010.	LDF budget
PPG17 Open Spaces Audit (CS evidence base)	GU4; LAA2 Priority 10	AW/LM	As soon as possible.	Existing staff and LDF budget
Employment Land Review (CS evidence base)	GU4; LAA2 Priority 8	IW/AW/KW/SK	Completed September 2010.	LDF budget
Updated glasshouse industry study	GU4; EP3	IW/AW	TBC	LDF budget
Annual Monitoring Report	GU4	SK	December 2010	Existing staff
Completion of (i) strategic, (ii) planning, (iii) housing (private and social) and (iv) waste and recycling tasks in Climate Change Strategy (CCS). This includes cutting the Council's carbon footprint (from buildings and transport), and those tasks which will enable adaptation to climate change.	GU1; GU2; LAA2 Priority 9	SC	March 2011	Existing staff, but funding not secured for many projects/initiatives
Community engagement tasks in the CCS	GU1; GU2; LAA2 Priority 9	SC	On-going	Funding not secured
Completion of London Commuter Belt Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty Scheme	EP5; LAA2 Priority 9	SC/Lyndsay Swan	March 2011	Funding secured
Response to Audit Commission Key Line of Enquiry on Use of Natural Resources	GU2; HN5; IP5	SC	To meet Audit Commission deadlines	Corporate input and support
Finalising of St John's Brief		Economic Development Officer	Autumn 2011	LDF budget, Corporate input and support
Town Centre Improvement projects/business engagement		Town Centre Officer	Ongoing	Corporate input and support/LABGI
Olympics		Economic Development Officer/Town Centre officer	Summer 2012 and legacy work beyond	Corporate input and support and cross Council partnership working
Kent/East Sussex and Essex LEP including sub-regional M11/West Essex LEP working group		Economic Development Officer/Town Centre officer	Ongoing	Corporate input and support and cross Council and business partnership working

SECTION SIX CONSERVATION

6.1 KEY FUNCTIONS

- Give information and advice on new development in relation to historic buildings and conservation areas to development control
- Produce up to date character appraisals and management plans, including review of boundaries for our 25 conservation areas.
- Enable enhancement and joint grant schemes
- Maintain Local List initiative
- Enable Historic Buildings grants (EFDC)
- Provide advice on maintenance and repairs of historic buildings and buildings within conservation areas
- Advise on “curtilage” development in relation to historic buildings
- Advise members of the public on development in relation to historic buildings and conservation areas and FOI requests relating to same
- Produce and distribute up to date advisory leaflets and articles
- Issue urgent works and repairs notices and Building Preservation Notices
- Monitor Buildings at Risk Register
- Carry out Listed Building and Conservation Area prosecutions & enforcements
- Urban design advice

6.2 STAFFING SUMMARY

- (a). The conservation section consists of one Conservation Officer (PPC 13) although a Technical support officer for Conservation (PPC18C) has been in post since July 2010. This is a one year fixed term post There is also temporary administrative assistance in the Conservation team from September 2010 to January 2011
- (b). Essex County Council (ECC) provides advice on most applications for Listed Building Consent and all matters relating to archaeology and Scheduled Ancient Monuments under a service level agreement set up in 2008 (for period 2008/2011). The staffing resulting from this service level agreement is:
- 1 x Senior Historic Building Adviser (p/t)
 - 1 x Archaeologist (p/t)

Following discussions with ECC it is likely that a service level agreement will be agreed for 11/12 but not for a three year period. This is due to the fact that ECC and District Councils are in discussions over alternative service delivery options including joint working from 2012

6.3 KEY OBJECTIVES

(a) Priority Service Objectives

This area of the Planning Directorate has identified the following priority service objectives for this business plan:

Objective	Council plan or other ref	Background
1. Protect and manage the character and appearance of our conservation areas.	Local Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council is planning to publish management plans and character appraisals for Staples Road, Baldwins Hill and York Hill Conservation Areas in 2010. • Work is underway on the character appraisal and management plan for Copped Hall

Objective	Council plan or other ref	Background
2. Enhance the character of our conservation areas via minor enhancement schemes.	Local Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement scheme for Epping (installation of benches) has been achieved. • Other projects will be brought forward as the character appraisals are completed.
3. Protect the built heritage of the district	Local Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The successful Local List project will be continued • The Conservation team will also assist property owners or other interested parties who are interested in getting buildings formally listed in conjunction with English Heritage. • Continue Historic Buildings Grants Scheme – specifically targeting Buildings at Risk and Commercial buildings. One formal application has been received
4. Ensuring ECC responses are timely and accurate, and that the service given is cost effective.		Owing to the pressure on meeting performance targets it is essential to monitor the speed of ECC responses. This will be done through regular officer meetings and quarterly management meetings with ECC. The quality of service is also to be considered as this is equally as important as the speed of service.
5. Ensure internal responses to DC consultations are timely.		Owing to the pressure on meeting performance targets it is essential to monitor all DC consultations and ensure a timely response.

The actions (and relevant targets) for achieving these objectives are detailed in section (d) of this part of the business plan.

6.4 CHALLENGES AND ISSUES LIKELY TO BE FACED IN 2010/2011 AND 2011/12

(a) Character Appraisals and Management Plans.

Some of the backlog of work has been cleared by the Conservation Officer. The most significant area that remains outstanding is the production of Character Appraisals and Management Plans. A one year fixed term technical support officer post was created and filled in July 2010. This post has expedited the production of some of the character appraisals and management plans. However, the lack of a permanent Assistant Conservation Officer has an impact on the ability to meet targets, in the longer term.

(b) Strengths and Weaknesses

In the formulation of this business plan a SWOT analysis was carried out, the results of which are shown below

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Staff resource providing quality service to Development Control and general public Ability to respond to existing and future National Policy and Guidance Local Knowledge Dedicated team Familiarity with Council Aims and Objectives Availability of County support	Lack of staff resources No long term arrangement for staff coverage for absences from the office including annual leave and sickness (this is currently not an issue) Reliance on County support Lack of Urban Design expertise Reliance on intermittent temporary staff impedes forward planning
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
E-Government Develop in house skills Continuing Professional Development Develop Urban Design expertise Including up to date information on GIS layers and on website Opportunity for succession planning	Reduced resources to achieve targets, including delivery of up to date Character Appraisal and Management Plans and updating Conservation Area leaflets and website Growth of discharge of condition applications Increase in applications workload Conservation is unrecognized as a key issue and statutory duty with Members Increase in number of pre-application discussions

(c) Service reviews, and issues arising from them

This area of the service has not been the subject recent internal or external review.

6.5 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

(a) National & Local Indicators

There will be a general comment re National Indicators being abolished.

(b) Insertion of Performance Management Information in this Business Plan.

As the preparation of Business Plans for 2009/10-2010/11 needs to be commenced before the end of 2010/11, performance against relevant indicators for the final quarter of the year cannot be reported, and will therefore be carried forward for inclusion in the review of the Business Plan in early 2011. Targets have been underachieved due to the intermittent nature of temporary staff.

6.6 ACTION PLANS

(a) Action Plan 2010/11 - Review

Performance against previous Business Plan targets from the 2009/10 business plan is as shown below:

Action	Source	Target	Progress/ Performance
Complete Character Appraisal and Management plan for York Hill	GU3	Q3 2009/10	York Hill currently in progress – Completion anticipated Q4
Complete Character Appraisal and Management plan for Staples Road	GU3	Q3 2009/10	Staples Road currently in progress – Completion anticipated Q4
Complete Character Appraisal and Management plan for Baldwins Hill	GU3	Q3 2009/10	Baldwins Hill currently in progress – Completion anticipated Q4
Complete Character Appraisal and Management	GU3	Q4 2009/10	Held in abeyance due to lack of resources

Action	Source	Target	Progress/ Performance
Complete Character Appraisal and Management plan for York Hill	GU3	Q3 2009/10	York Hill currently in progress – Completion anticipated Q4
Complete Character Appraisal and Management plan for Staples Road	GU3	Q3 2009/10	Staples Road currently in progress – Completion anticipated Q4
plan for Waltham Abbey			
Publish Character Appraisal and Management plan for Epping	GU3	Q1 2009/10	Published in November 2009
Publish Character Appraisal and Management plan for Bell Common	GU3	Q2 2009/10	Published in February 2010
Identify priorities for future Character Appraisal and Management plan	GU3	Q3 2009/10	Identification carried out in Q4 of 2008/09
Next tranche of Character Appraisal and Management plans	GU3	Q3 2010/11	3 Loughton Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management plan being worked on – Q4
Epping Conservation Area Enhancements	EP2	Q3 2009/10	Completed Q3
Identify priorities for future enhancements from Character Appraisals	EP2	Q4 2009/10	In progress
Monitoring of ECC Specialist advice	PO16	Quarterly Ongoing	Ongoing
Establish system for prioritising and monitoring DC consultations	IP3 PO16	Q1 2009/10	Ongoing
Carry out ongoing monitoring of workload and performance	IP3 PO16	Q2 2009/10	
Investigate Development M3 enquiry system (or other) for recording pre-application discussion		Quarterly Ongoing	

(b) Action Plan 2011/12 (Forward Look)

The action plan below sets out the actions to be carried out in this service area to meet the Key Objectives set out in section (a) of this section of the Business Plan.

Any recommendations made in internal audit or external inspection reports.

The actions required to improve performance against indicators.

Actions carried forward from the last plan.

This action plan will be reviewed and updated during January to March 2011, as part of the process for updating this plan for 2011/12.

Action/Objective	Council Plan Or Other Ref	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Resources/ Budget
Complete Character Appraisal and Management plan for York Hill*		EH	Q4 2010/11	Existing Internal + temporary staff when available
Complete Character Appraisal and Management plan for Staples Road*		EH	Q4 2010/11	Existing Internal + temporary staff when available
Complete Character		EH	Q4	Existing Internal +

Action/Objective	Council Plan Or Other Ref	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Resources/ Budget
Appraisal and Management plan for Baldwins Hill*			2010/11	temporary staff when available
Identify Next tranche of Character Appraisals and Management plans		EH	Q4 2010/11	TBC
Epping Conservation Area Enhancements	EP2	EH	Q3 2009/10	Existing resource + Epping Town Council
Identify priorities for future enhancements from Character Appraisals	EP2	EH	Q4 2009/10	Existing resource
Monitoring of ECC Specialist advice	PO16	EH + AD (Development)	Quarterly Ongoing	Existing resource
Carry out ongoing monitoring of workload and performance	PO16	EH + AD (Environment)	Monthly ongoing	Ongoing
Update existing Conservation Area leaflets and publish on the website*		EH	Q4 2010/11	Temporary staff when available
Complete character appraisal for Copped Hall		EH	Q4 2010/11	Help from Copped Hall Trust

*These will only be achieved by employing an extra member of staff to carry out the necessary work

SECTION SEVEN TREES & LANDSCAPE

7.1 KEY FUNCTIONS

- Influence the strategic framework potentially affecting the future landscape of the District, through e.g. The Green Arc; The Harlow and Environs Green Infrastructure Plan;
- Generate Tree and Landscape policy;
- Protect trees, using Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) where necessary;
- Administer the making and confirmation of TPO's;
- Advise on the range of tree and landscape issues in relation to development;
- Deal with requests for works to protected trees, in Conservation Areas and where TPO's apply;
- Develop community engagement in Tree and Landscape initiatives, including the production of Tree Strategies; and (with Countrycare) direct the Community Tree Warden Scheme
- Deal with hedgerow cases, under the countryside Hedgerow Regulations and the High Hedge legislation;
- Deal with breaches of TPO, Conservation Area or Hedgerow Protection legislation, including prosecutions where necessary and appropriate.

7.2 STAFFING SUMMARY

The team comprises 1 Principal Officer, 2 professional Tree and Landscape Officers, 1 Technical Officer and 1 Future Jobs Fund (work experience) post to March 2010.

7.3 KEY OBJECTIVES

Priority Service Objectives

This area of the Planning Directorate has identified the following priority service objectives for this business plan:

Objective	Council plan or other ref	Background
1 Complete a Green Infrastructure Plan for the District	GU4	Essential for the LDF core strategy.
2 Protect landscape character within the District	EFDC Combined Policies Feb 2008, Land & Landscape	Landscape protection given high priority in the LDF.
3 Protect trees within the District	EFDC Combined Policies Feb 2008, Land & Landscape; &Tree Strategy, 2008	Landscape protection given high priority in the LDF, and a duty under S198 of The Town & Country Planning Act 1990.
4 Maintain public support for and involvement with the objectives of the team	IP4	Ensure delivery of customer focused service

The actions (and relevant targets) for achieving these objectives are detailed in section (d) of this part of the business plan.

7.4 CHALLENGES, TARGETS AND ISSUES LIKELY TO BE FACED IN 2011/12

(a) Green Infrastructure Plan

Work is continuing on the development of a Green Infrastructure Plan. Identifying and recognizing the special place of landscape in the identity of the district, within the LDF core strategy continues to be a major challenge. The team has also absorbed a major element of new workload, as a result of the revocation of all Essex County TPO's in 2010. The major

weakness within the team is the lack of any dedicated admin support. Up to March 2010 there is a FJF post assisting with work in both the Trees & Landscape and Conservation team.

(b) Strengths and Weaknesses of the Team

In the formulation of this business plan the existing SWOT analysis has been updated, as shown below

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>Strong Investment in development of team members, leading to retention of staff. Excellent team skills. Strong team identity and positive approach. Positive relationships with other teams. Good support for CPD. Ability to undertake strong community based initiatives, eg Tree Strategies; landmark trees, with Countrycare involvement and support. IT systems now embedded in procedures</p>	<p>Not resourced to be pro-active in relation to implementation of landscape schemes/ tree protection plans No dedicated administrative support. Not resourced to take on all enforcement cases without impact on other areas of work Out of date and limited Tree strategy for the District, not fully taking account of Planning issues Highway constraints have resulted in limited involvement in Town centre Enhancement schemes.</p>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Development of new District Tree Strategy could integrate planning priorities for trees and landscape into the wider strategic framework. Discharges of conditions applications allow impact on greater number of sites. Continuing program of Community Tree Strategies could extend effectiveness of work of the team, and degree of public involvement. Involvement in Safer Cleaner Greener initiatives could link team to wider agenda. Further development of 50 Favourite Trees database can support tree protection. Further development of ICT capabilities Develop involvement in Town Centre strategies by developing approaches that address concerns of Highways.</p>	<p>Inability to recruit new staff to react to increases in workloads. Not fully resourced to react adequately to new demands such as new discharge of conditions applications. Not fully resourced for increased workload of applications arising from increased number of TPOs. Not fully resourced for workload of Major applications, arising from the government's growth agenda. Changes to Permitted Development rights increasing threats to trees Hot and dry summer, leading to increased compensation claims for TPO tree decisions.</p>

(c) Service reviews, and issues arising from them

This area of the service has not been the subject recent internal or external review.

7.5 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

(a) National Indicators

As the preparation of Business Plans for 2011/12 needs to be commenced before the end of 2010/11, performance against relevant indicators for the final quarter of the year cannot be reported, and will therefore be carried forward for inclusion in the review of the Business Plan for 2011/12

(b) Local Indicators

No Internal Performance Indicators relate to this area of the directorate.

7.6 ACTION PLANS

(a) Action Plan 2010/2011 - Review

Performance against previous Business Plan targets from the 2009/10 business plan is as shown below:

Action	Source	Target	Progress/ Performance
Identify partners and funding for a further series of Community Tree Strategies		March 2010	Not achieved; deferred to allow completion of Essex TPO re-protection program by earlier deadline of March 2010
Implement and monitor review of all ECC TPO's, prioritising most urgent cases		Revised target of March 2010	On target as at February 2010. Likely to be achieved
Monitor all TPX applications to ensure response on 90% within 6 weeks	IP3	Monthly monitor	Ongoing
Ensure that all TPO and High Hedge applications (exc. Subsidence cases) are dealt with within 8 or 12 weeks respectively	IP3	Monthly monitor	Ongoing
Continue to monitor all DC consultations and ensure response on 90% within 14 days	IP3	Monthly monitor	Ongoing
Ensure that results of veteran tree hunt are shown as constraints in relation to DC applications		March 2010	In hand as of Feb 10, and likely to be achieved

(b) Action Plan 2011/12 (Forward Look)

The action plan below sets out the actions to be carried out in this service area to meet:

- The Key Objectives set out in section (a) of this section of the Business Plan.
- Any recommendations made in internal audit or external inspection reports
- The actions required to improve performance against indicators
- Actions carried forward from the last plan

This action plan will be reviewed and updated during January to March 2011, as part of the process for updating this plan for 2011/12.

Action/Objective	Council Plan Or Other Ref	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Resources/ Budget
Identify partners and funding for a further series of Community Tree Strategies		C Neilan	March 2011	From existing
Continue to monitor DC consultations and ensure response on	IP3	C Neilan	Ongoing	Conservation policy budget PP 100 3380

Action/Objective	Council Plan Or Other Ref	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Resources/ Budget
90% within 14 days				
Monitor all TPX applications and ensure response on 90% within 6 weeks		C Neilan	Ongoing	Conservation policy budget PP 100 3380
Ensure that all TPO applications and High Hedge applications (exc. Subsidence cases) are dealt with within 8 and 12 weeks respectively.		C Neilan	Ongoing	Conservation policy budget PP 100 3380
Contribute to revised Tree Strategy for the District		C Neilan	March 2011	From existing
Green Infrastructure Plan for the District	GU4 LAA2 Priority 10	C Neilan	March 2011	Existing DDF budget

SECTION EIGHT COUNTRYCARE

8.1 KEY FUNCTIONS

- To conserve and promote the landscape and biodiversity value of the Epping Forest District
- To improve public access to the countryside and provide for informal recreation
- To promote a greater understanding and respect for the countryside
- To involve and educate local communities and schools in all aspects of the Service's work
- To manage and guide the maintenance of the District's 9 Local Nature Reserves
- To promote and support the designation of new Local Nature Reserves and the Local Wildlife Sites network across the district
- To implement the goals of the Council's Community Plan
- To provide Development Control planning application advice
- To implement the targets set out in the Epping Forest Biodiversity Action Plan
- To co-ordinate the Epping Forest Tree Wardens Scheme

8.2 STAFFING SUMMARY

There are four permanent members of staff within Countrycare. Throughout the year Countrycare is supported by a range of volunteers. These include tree wardens, work placement students, practical conservation volunteers. Their support is fundamental to the service achieving many of its objectives. Two short-term contractors are working as Countryside Assistants until March 2011. In addition a Tree and Woodland Officer is in post until March 2011. Countrycare is also bidding for a post of Trainee Countryside Assistant in November 2010.

8.3 KEY OBJECTIVES

Priority Service Objectives

This area of the Planning Directorate has identified the following priority service objectives for this business plan:

OBJECTIVE	COUNCIL PLAN OR OTHER REF	BACKGROUND
1. Continue to produce an Annual Report highlighting the achievements of the service.	SC3, FL3	The annual review of the Services achievements will be posted on the Council's website. Celebrate 25 years of Countrycare.
2. Co-ordinate a review of Local Wildlife Sites (to form part of Local Development Framework Evidence Base).	GU4 LAA2 Priority 10	Essex Ecological Services (EECOS) has undertaken the review.
3. Obtain consent from Natural England for designation of Norton Heath Common as a Local Nature Reserve.	GU3	A LNR can only be declared with Natural England's (NE) consent. Following initial consultation with NE in August 2007, Countrycare was advised to undertake a number of actions and management works to the site before NE felt the site was suitable for declaration. These works have now been implemented. LNR status was applied for in September 2010.
4. Continue the veteran tree survey of the District. Record a further 1,000 trees.	GU3	It is Countrycare's aim to record all the veteran trees across the Epping Forest District. This is being undertaken on a parish by parish basis. As of November 2010 a total of 3,149 ancient, veteran and notable trees have been recorded.
5. Work towards the	GU3	This National Indicator was adopted by EFDC in March

OBJECTIVE	COUNCIL PLAN OR OTHER REF	BACKGROUND
achieving the targets of NI 197 improving biodiversity.	LAA2 Priority 10	2008. However, a system for progressing this indicator on a County level was only finalised in February 2009. EFDC is on target for March 2011.
6. Work towards the achieving the targets of Epping Forest Biodiversity Action Plan (EFBAP).	GU3	The EFBAP was adopted in March 2008. The Countryside Manager and Environmental Coordinator have established a Steering Group of partners' organisations and progress is being made towards achieving the plans objectives.
9. Continue to assist with the creation of a pocket park on Bobbingworth Former Landfill site.	GU3, SC3, FL2, FL3	The construction phase is completed and we are entering the maintenance period.
10. Secure a minimum of £40k in external grant funding for biodiversity projects across the district in the next two years?	GU3, SC3, FL2, FL3	£20,000 secured from ECC in April 2010 for works on Multifor Project and Lambourne Woods.

The actions (and relevant targets) for achieving these objectives are detailed in section (d) of this part of the business plan.

8.4 CHALLENGES, TARGETS AND ISSUES LIKELY TO BE FACED IN 2011/12

- (a). The economic slow down will be a challenge to everyone and it is likely to affect the service in different ways.
- (b). One negative impact on the service could be the securing of certain types of external funding. Many funding bodies are finding their budgets squeezed and large grants may be limited or be more competitive. Historically, the service has relied on securing large external grants for extra "one off" projects to enhance sites e.g. pathways or major habitat enhancement. However, Essex County Council are apparently still offering a range of smaller grants which the service may be able to access over the next two years. Working in partnership with parish and town councils they may be able to access further grants e.g. lottery. Overall, external funding will be a priority amongst the whole team.
- (c). A positive for the service, but not necessarily for the individuals concerned, is the rise in unemployment. Countrycare is well placed to offer volunteering opportunities for people looking to change careers or trying to get back into full time employment. With increased volunteer support the service is able to achieve more practical conservation management on the sites in its care. It will also enable the service to assist landowners with the management of Local Wildlife Sites. This will be crucial if NI 197 is to be achieved.
- (d). **Service reviews, and issues arising from them**
This area of the service has been subject to the review(s) shown below, which made the recommendations shown. These recommendations are reflected in the action plan in section (d) of this part of the business plan.

Review Date	Carried out by	Recommendations set
Sept 2008	Lena Chan Internal Audit	Identification and application for external funding Review its approach to the identifying and pursuit of external funding opportunities, and increase awareness of the external funding strategy and tool kit amongst relevant staff.

The Countrycare structure was reviewed following the departure of the Countryside Manager. Cabinet determined that the most efficient structure for the team was:

Countryside Manager x 1
 Assistant Countryside Manager x 1
 Countryside Assistant x 2

(e). Strengths and Weaknesses

A SWOT Analysis has been undertaken with the results as follows;

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong Investment in development of team members • Excellent team skills • Strong team identity and positive approach • Positive relationships with other teams and partners in the conservation sector • Strong volunteer base and one of EFDC's key service for community involvement in community projects • Strong commitment to environmental education and awareness raising • Provide EFDC with in-house Ecological support service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No dedicated administrative support • Skill base assessment for the team is needed • Langston road/Town Mead office site means that team do not work in close proximity with other Planning staff
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the volunteer base and community projects • Extend service delivery to more schools • Extend service delivery presently within district beyond EFDC projects • Recharge service/officer time for EFDC projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to recruit appropriate staff to react to increases in workloads • Reduced funding opportunities due to recession • Service not fully staffed at the moment and largely dependent on temporary staff • Current site at Langston road/Town Mead is not suitable for the team's needs and in breach of Health & Safety regulations

8.5 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

(a) National Indicators

The preparation of Business Plans for 2011 - 12 needs to be commenced before the end of 2010, performance against relevant indicators for the final quarter of 10/11 were not included It is important to note that NI 197 data became available from Q4 09.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	TARGET 2010/11	PERFORMANCE				
		2009/10 Q1 & Q2	2009/10 Q3	2009/10 Q4	2010/2011 Q1	2010/11 Q2
NI 197 Improved local biodiversity – active management of local wildlife sites (LoWS) by achieving Positive Conservation Management (PCM).	73 LoWS to be in PCM by 31 March 2011 (this is the target we are required to meet). Started with 6 as baseline Jan 2009.	13 LoWS into PCM (total 19)	8 LoWS into PCM (total 27)	19 LoWS into PCM (total 46)	2 LoWS into PCM (total 48)	19 LoWS into PCM (total 67)
LIB094 – in respect of Local Nature Reserves (LNR)	1ha of LNR per 1,000 of population			Phase 1 of designating Norton Heath as LNR completed		Phase 2 of designating Norton Heath as LNR applied for, awaiting outcome.

It is important to note that by Q3 10/11 66 LoWS are in PCM. It is anticipated that the target of 73 will be met by Q4 10/11

(b) No Internal Performance Indicators relate to this area of the directorate.

8.6 ACTION PLANS

(a) Action Plan 2010/11 - Review

Performance against previous Business Plan targets from the 2008/09 2009/10 business plan is as shown below:

Action/Objective	Council Plan Or Other Ref	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Progress/Performance
1. Produce an Annual Report highlighting the achievements of the service 2008/09	SC3, FL3	PH	September 2009	Achieved
2. Investigate the possibility of the Service taking on the management of Essex County Council owned woodlands on the Lambourne Estate, Abridge.	GU3	PH	September 2009	November 2010 negotiations in progress over LNR designation and Management Agreement between Countrycare and ECC
3. Co-ordinate a review of Local Wildlife Sites (to form part of Local Development Framework Evidence Base)	GU4	PH/AO/IGW	December 2009	Achieved

Action/Objective	Council Plan Or Other Ref	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Progress/Performance
4. Obtain consent from Natural England for designation of Norton Heath Common as a Local Nature Reserve	GU3	PH	March 2010	Phase 1 completed
5. Continue veteran tree survey of the District. Record a further 1,000 trees. (Baseline – Feb 09 = 1934 trees)	GU3	PH/AO	March 2010	November 2010 Achieved 3149 trees
6. Work towards the achieving the targets of NI 197 improving biodiversity – Ensure 29 Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) are bought into positive conservation management (pcm).	GU3	PH/AO	March 2010	31 March 2010 – 52 LoWS achieved pcm.
7. Review funding opportunities and secure a minimum of £20k in external grant funding for biodiversity projects across the district.	GU3, SC3, FL2, FL3	PH	March 2010	1 March 2010 – Achieved - £21,903 in external funding
8. Work towards achieving the targets of Epping Forest Biodiversity Action Plan.	GU3	AO/SC	Review March 2010 and March 2011	Revised Action Plan produced July 2010.
9. Produce an Annual Report highlighting the achievements of the service 2009/10	SC3, FL3	PH	September 2010	Achieved
10. Work towards the achieving the targets of NI 197 improving biodiversity – Ensure a further 23 Local Wildlife Sites are bought into positive conservation management.	GU3	AO	March 2011	November 2010 66 LoWS in PCM. On target for final 7.
11. Designate Norton Heath Common as a Local Nature Reserve	GU3	AO	March 2011	Application submitted to Natural England September 2010
12. Continue to assist with the creation of a pocket park on Bobbingworth Former Landfill site.	GU3, SC3, FL2, FL3	AO	March 2011	Construction phase completed. Discussions re maintenance phase have begun. Liaison group starting up December 2010.

Action/Objective	Council Plan Or Other Ref	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Progress/Performance
13. Review funding opportunities and secure a minimum of £20k in external grant funding for biodiversity projects across the district.	GU3, SC3, FL2, FL3	PH	March 2011	£20,000 already secured for 2010/11

(b) Action Plan 2011/12 (Forward Look)

The action plan below sets out the actions to be carried out in this service area to meet:

- The Key Objectives set out in section (a) of this section of the Business Plan.
- Any recommendations made in internal audit or external inspection reports
- The actions required to improve performance against indicators
- Actions carried forward from the last plan

This action plan will be reviewed and updated during January to March 2012, as part of the process for updating this plan for 2012/13.

Action/Objective	Council Plan Or Other Ref	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Progress/Performance
1. Produce an Annual Report highlighting the achievements of the service 2010/11	SC3, FL3		May 2011	
2. Continue Investigating the possibility of the Service taking on the management of Essex County Council owned woodlands on the Lambourne Estate, Abridge.	GU3		March 2012	November 2010 negotiations in progress over LNR designation and Management Agreement between Countrycare and ECC
3. Obtain consent from Natural England for designation of Norton Heath Common as a Local Nature Reserve	GU3		April 2011	Application submitted to Natural England September 2010
4. Continue veteran tree survey of the District. Record a further 1,000 trees. (Baseline – Nov 2010, 3149 trees recorded)	GU3		March 2012	
5. Review funding opportunities and secure a minimum of £20k in external grant funding for biodiversity projects across	GU3, SC3, FL2, FL3		March 2012	

the district.				
6. Work towards achieving the targets of Epping Forest Biodiversity Action Plan.	GU3		March 2012	
10. Continue to assist with the creation of a pocket park on Bobbingworth Former Landfill site.	GU3, SC3, FL2, FL3		March 2012	
9. Produce an Annual Report highlighting the achievements of the service 2011/12	SC3, FL3		March 2012	

SECTION NINE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

9.1 KEY FUNCTIONS:

- Regulate and manage development and use of land in the district
- Consider planning applications against the development plan and any other material planning considerations.
- Monitor development as it takes place.
- Take enforcement action against breaches of development or uses.
- Provide information and advice about development control system and proposals.
- Defend appeals against planning decisions made by the Council.

9.2 STAFFING SUMMARY

- (a). The Development Control team consists of professional officers only, apart from one exception, which is that the enforcement team has a dedicated administration support officer. The rest of the administrative support officers were separated off in April 2006 to form part of the Planning Support team under the Planning Business Manager, though the planning application registration team (2 officers), appeal administration officer (1 officer), technical officer, and two administration support staff involved with finalising decisions, committee reports and dealing with general planning enquiries etc are located within the working area of the professional officers.
- (a). There are 18 permanent posts within Development Control (see table 3.4.3 below) – 10 application case officers, two of which are effectively team leaders of a North and South Area teams and 5 enforcement officers with 1 Planner overseeing that service plus one dedicated enforcement support officer – all under the leadership of the Assistant Director (Development).
- (b). In addition, a budget for consultant and agency staff permits additional staff resources to cover some appeal work and workload. Agency planners finished working with us in May 2009, having been covering planning application workload and staff vacancies throughout 2008/09.
- (d). **Staffing Profile**
Throughout 2009 and 2010 there has been a series of internal promotions, following the retirement of the previous Assistant Director (Development) in May 2009. Development Control is therefore fully staffed for the first time in a couple of years. A new Senior Enforcement Officer post was agreed at the end of 2009, but this coincided with new efficiency changes in that section and financing, flowing demands from Member for improved registering and validation of planning applications, of a temporary administration post. It is hopeful this arrangement will be made permanent as the need for the additional senior enforcement officer has become a lower priority, whilst registering and validating of planning applications has become more complex and labour intensive to be carried out by one officer alone. The profile of Development Control for 2011/12 is further illustrated in Appendix Three.

9.3 KEY OBJECTIVES

Priority Service Objectives

This area of the Planning Directorate identified the following priority service objectives for the 2010/11 business plan and these remain still the objectives for 2011/12, but with the addition of objective 8, as services increasingly look to new income streams.

Objective	Council plan or other ref	Background

1. Refine and maintain the efficient and customer centred performance of the service through use of up-to-date technology and best practice.	IP3 & IP4	To increase accessibility and information for the general public and other users to planning applications, appeals and general development control held information/ guidance.
2. Improve planning application turnaround times	IP3 NI157a), b) & c) LAA2 Priority 2	Council set target of achieving upper quartile performance and likely to require this in this Business Plan year.
3. Return to high appeal success rate of previous years.	GU1 & LPI45	25% set in 2009/10 was not achieved and need to return to good decision-making and thus maintain and enhance the quality of the environment. A figure of 28% is the target for 2010/11.
4. Operate an efficient and responsive enforcement service	GU1, IP3 & IP4	To maintain and enhance the quality of the environment. If the council fails to take appropriate and timely enforcement action where it is expedient to do so, it could be found guilty of maladministration by the local government ombudsman and required to compensate members of the public.
5. To secure appropriate levels of community benefit through the use of Section 106 agreements and other means.	GU1, HN1, SC1. LAA2 Priority 2/5	Community benefits related to planning applications, although the economic downturn has limited such benefits since 2009 and there has only been a small improvement in 2010/11 as the impact of the recession still lingers on with a lack of major application submissions.
6. Maintain staff development to ensure the most proficient provision of the service to its customers	IP1, IP3	Training and development of staff to ensure IIP accreditation and improved staff experience and knowledge.
7. To provide improved communication with the public	IP4	Collection of Development control feedback will allow us to target how to use our limited resources effectively and deliver a more customer focused service. An annual agents/amenity group forum will also feed into this.
8. To explore ways of generating increased income		Planning application fee income is affected by submission of major type developments in particular, which is lower at present due to the economic climate, and we are likely to find other income streams to offset future potential spending cuts

The actions (and relevant targets) for achieving these objectives are detailed in section 9 (b) of this part of the business plan.

9.4 CHALLENGES, TARGETS AND ISSUES LIKELY TO BE FACED IN 2011/12

- (a). Performance targets, despite the recent announcement of their abolition as National indicators, have been the main focus of the Development Control team in recent years in respect of turnaround times of the 3 category of planning applications as the Council aims for top quartile performance across all district authorities. One of these, the “Other” category (NI 157c), was achieved in 2009/10 and therefore the Council priority regards performance for 2010/11 as focused on the two remaining planning application categories - “Major” and “Minor”, (NI 157a and NI 157b). The targets for these have proved hard to achieve, predominantly because these are the more likely applications to be reported to planning committees who meet on a three week cycle and particularly in the case of the “Major” category, can be subject to Section 106 planning obligations, which both delay the issue of the decision notice. At quarter 2, both categories are on target and if achieved by the end of the financial year, will represent an outstanding achievement by the team, who have daily deadlines for report writing and issuing the decision on applications. The challenge ahead will be how to maintain this, as well as secure community benefits through section 106 agreements where there is limited evidence base until the Local Development Framework is delivered, and improve communication with our clients and audience. Individual performance improvement plans have been drawn up for NI 157a, b and c and suggested changes to the service are being adhered to.
- (b). There is still a need to return to previous years good appeal performance. The target is more generous for 2009/10 (no more than 28% of appeals be allowed) and at Quarter 2 this is just about being achieved. Less officer recommendations being overturned by Members at planning committees would improve performance judging from the assessment of appeal decisions made over the last few years. Members have previously been presented with a summary of why decisions are allowed, but it is difficult to draw conclusions, other than this. Costs awarded against the Council for being unreasonable in refusing planning applications have been a little higher (3 examples) and there needs to be greater awareness at planning committees of this threat, particularly as costs can be made now at any appeal level.
- (c). The economic downturn has hit harder in 2010, compared with the previous year, because a lower number of fee generating major planning applications have been submitted, though signs are that for 2011, this is picking up judging from pre-application discussions. One impact has been the Government introducing a means by which existing planning permission can be extended before their permissions expire and in the case of major planning applications, the fee required is far lower if it was submitted as a new planning application. Overall, though income has been lower, the number of planning application submissions are higher (approximately 100 more), implying that extending existing homes rather than moving to new homes is a result of the current economic climate, but also the GPDO changes in October 2008 has increased the submission of certificate of lawful development applications. The Appeal workload remains lighter than in previous years, though a few complex appeals has required the employment of external consultants to defend appeals, for which a budget is provided and been used more than the previous low use in 2009/10.
- (d). The Directorate is currently undertaking a Benchmarking costing process of staff time and duties in conjunction with CIPFA, which will be compared with other similar local planning authorities. The exercise is of paramount importance should this Government, as suspected, give authorities the opportunity for Council’s to set their own individual planning fees for planning applications. In the coming years, increasing revenue from existing income streams is going to become more important as service cuts loom.
- (e). Since the departure of the previous AD (Policy & Environment), the directorate has had no specific urban design expertise for major planning applications. However, the low number of housing estate applications and the increasing reliance on multiple officer skills in assessing such planning applications has so far, not had a negative impact. For future years though, this may become more of an issue and consideration then will need to be given to further finance staff training and add to the staff level in this area in the Forward Plan team.

(f). As reported in the last business plan, the DC customer feedback on handling of planning applications has been in the main positive. Scanning of the backlog of planning files is well underway, but the development control files should be completed in 2011, so long as the budget for it is retained. There has been a set back in terms of E-government, with the Planning portal hub closing at the end of 2010. The electronic access of planning records and information by the public, the viewing of plans and records through the website will continue to increase.

(g). Strengths and Weaknesses - Development Control SWOT Analysis

In the formulation of this business plan, a SWOT analysis was carried out among the Development Control staff in November 2010 and the results of which are shown below

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>Availability of planning information on website. Information@Work – electronic document storage & management for ease and speed of finding information. Stable staff resource, providing quality response and decisions Low sickness absence. Availability of professional staff to respond to public/agents etc (Support staff, pre-application meetings and Duty Planner). Reception and permanent receptionists Good level of delegation resulting in high turnaround of planning applications in time, given level of professional staff and support. Admin. Support led by a Business Manager. Staff retention. Responsive and strong enforcement team. Joined up working between Development Control and Building Control. Validation process of Planning applications</p>	<p>Basis and evidence for s.106 contributions. Not achieving all upper-quartile performance targets. Some professional staff not setting time aside for answering or returning customer messages Delay in LDF and Core Strategy 3-week committee cycle delay on decisions affecting performance targets No specific urban design expertise in Directorate. Resourcing of staff training ICT support – inadequate availability, non-customer friendly service, poor knowledge of MVM3-Northgate Inadequate administration cover during absences. Continuing incompatibility of Information@Work, MVM3-Northgate and GroupWise e-mail. Statutory requirement to advertise certain applications results in high cost to service Under-performance of appeal process Planning history not complete using I-Plan on website</p>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Electronic consultation Scanning of all planning property files and applications Process and recognize feedback from Agents/Amenity group Forum. ICT and Website User Groups to improve service delivery More frequent District-wide committees Highway Officer hot-desk weekly Benchmarking and increase charging of planning fees Officer reports and third party representations be made available on the Website Improve press response to alleged criticism</p>	<p>Loss of consultants budget Service threat because of potential council budget cutbacks. Skill and resource shortage for complex cases in absence of key professional staff. Cost awards against Council in appeal cases. Planning image through bad press leading to criticism. ICT and website failure Administration staff on temporary contracts. Uncertainty of national planning guidance and strategic advice Cross-authorities service sharing Delivery of planning more locally without professional expertise or strategic guidance Government change to planning system resulting in need for re-training</p>

9.5 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

(a) National & Local Indicators

As the preparation of Business Plans for 2011/12 needs to be commenced before the end of 2010/11, performance against relevant indicators for the final quarter of the year cannot be

reported, and will therefore be carried forward for inclusion in the review of the Business Plan for 2011/12.

(b) Internal Indicators

The following internal measures are used in this area of the directorate to measure performance. Historically, the appeal performance of the Council has been within the threshold set by Government, but after the last two years slippage, the performance has slightly improved. It is difficult to explain why this has occurred, but the number of appeals has fallen reflecting the cost of submitting an appeal is a factor in the current climate.

Internal Measure	Target 2010/11	Performance			
		2010/11 (Q4 & Outturn)	2010/11 (Q1)	2010/11 (Q2)	2010/11 (Q3)
LPI45 Percentage of appeals Allowed following refusal of permission	28	30.9	36.4	28.1	TBA

9.6 ACTION PLANS

(a) Action Plan 2010/11 - Review

Performance against previous Business Plan targets from the 2009/10 business plan is as shown below:

ACTION	SOURCE	TARGET	PROGRESS/ PERFORMANCE
1. Maintain up-to-date procedures	Business Plan & IP3	Throughout 10/11	Ongoing, but there has been limited opportunity given other work commitments. It is hoped that time will be allotted in early 2011
2. Carry out Equalities Impact Assessment and Implement outstanding actions from Equalities Action Plan	Business Plan & IP4	March 2011	Ongoing, but passed on through team meetings and assessment from customer feedback, which has been taking place over the year.
3. Revising standard planning conditions	Business Plan, IP3 & IP4	June 2011	Completed November 2010 and now being used.
4. Improve planning application turn around times	Business Plan, IP3 & LAA2	April 2011	Individual Key Performance Indicators were drawn up for NI 157(a), (b) & c) and LPI 45 in July 10. Achieved target in 2009/10 for 157c and on course at Q2 stage for achieving 157a, 157b and LPI 45.

ACTION	SOURCE	TARGET	PROGRESS/ PERFORMANCE
5. Implement outstanding actions from Individual Key Perf. Imp. Plans.	Business Plan & IP3 & NI157	June 2010	On-going and performance is improving such that end of year targets are on course to be achieved
6. Regular review of appeal decisions and reporting to members	Business Plan & GU1 & LPI45	Report each 6 months	Achieved. Being reported.
7. Maintain turnover of enforcement investigations	Business Plan & GU1, IP3 & 4	Throughout 09-11	On-going and performance improving with increased use of enforcement powers.
8. Development built conforms to both Building Regs and Planning Application plans	Business Plan, GU1, IP3 & 4	Throughout 2011	Procedure in place and planning application plans being taken out on site by Building Inspectors. Any breaches being reported back to Enforcement Section.
9. Use all appropriate means to secure community benefits	Business Plan GU1, HN1, SC1. LAA2 Priority 2/5	Throughout 10-11	To be achieved through s.106 agreements attached to planning applications where appropriate. Progress hampered by low submission of Major applications and delay on LDF, though financial contributions secured in 2010 in some cases.
10. Meet training needs identified through PDR's	Business Plan, IP1 & IP3	Throughout 10-11	Training budget has been restricted because of existing commitments to staff, but training needs have been delivered where they were identified, both internally and externally, particularly in respect of planning appeal training, flooding awareness and affordable housing viability.
11. Staff development by introducing electronic Encyclopaedia of Planning Law	Business Plan, IP1 and IP3	May 10	Available to staff on-line which requires annual payment. Free training available and needs to be arranged. Development Control Practice also available for staff on-line and training use took place in June 2010.
12. User Group Forum	Business Plan & IP4	July 10	Planning Services Scrutiny Standing Panel (PSSSP) preferred mix Agents/Amenity Group Forum and this was held in October 2010. Notes of meeting to be reported to PSSSP in December 2010.

ACTION	SOURCE	TARGET	PROGRESS/ PERFORMANCE
13. Produce Development Control Feedback	Business Plan & IP4	July 10	Numerous reports to PSSSP and committee reporting being reviewed through Chair/Vice-Chair meeting. Assessment of example completed developments compared with planning application submission to be carried out in early 2011 by PSSSP with Officers.

(b) Action Plan - 2011/12 (Forward Look)

The action plan below sets out the actions to be carried out in this service area to meet: The Key Objectives set out in section (a) of this section of the Business Plan.

Any recommendations made in internal audit or external inspection reports

The actions required to improve performance against indicators carried forward from the last plan. This action plan will be reviewed and updated during January to March 2011, as part of the process for updating this plan for 2011/12.

ACTION OBJECTIVE	COUNCIL PLAN OR OTHER REF	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	TARGET DATE	RESOURCES BUDGET
KEY OBJECTIVE 1				
1. Maintain up to date procedures	IP3	AD(D) & DCMT	Throughout 2011-2012	Existing
2. Carry out Equalities Impact Assessment and Implement outstanding actions from Equalities Action Plan	IP4	AD(D) & support of PIU and CEWG	March 2011	Existing
KEY OBJECTIVE 2				
4. Improve planning application turn around times	IP3, NI157 (a-c) LAA2 Priority 2	AD(D) & DCMT	April 2012	Existing, but need to maintain full compliment of professional and support staff.
5. Implement outstanding actions from Individual Key Perf. Imp. Plans.	IP3 & NI 157	AD(D) & DCMT	November 2011	Existing
KEY OBJECTIVE 3				
6. Regular review of appeal decisions and reporting to members	GU1 & LPI45	AD(D)	May & Nov 2011	Existing
KEY OBJECTIVE 4				

ACTION OBJECTIVE	COUNCIL PLAN OR OTHER REF	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	TARGET DATE	RESOURCES BUDGET
7. Maintain turnover of enforcement investigations	GU1, IP3 & 4	PPO(ENFO)	Throughout 2011-2012	Existing and without Senior Enforcement Officer post
8. Development built conforms to both Building Regs and Planning Application plans	GUI, IP3 & 4	AD(D) & AD(BC)	Throughout 2012	Existing
KEY OBJECTIVE 5				
9. Use all appropriate means to secure community benefits	GU1, HN1, SC1. LAA2 Priority 2/5	AD(D), AD(P&E), DCMT	Throughout 2011-2012	Existing, S106 Monitoring Group and production of SPG through LDF process
KEY OBJECTIVE 6				
10. Meet training needs identified through PDR's	IP1 & IP3	AD(D) & DCMT	Throughout 2011-2012	Existing, but hopefully with a less restrained budget for DC staff.
KEY OBJECTIVE 7				
11. User Group Forum	IP4	AD(D)	By Dec 2011	Existing
12. Report Development Control feedback	IP4	AD(D)	March 2012	Existing
KEY OBJECTIVE 8				
13. Generate increased income: increase planning application fees, pre-application charging for minor applications		AD(D) & Business Manager	Dec 2011	Existing. Benchmarking process underway and Project Officer being funded from vacant Senior Enforcement Officer post.

SECTION TEN BUILDING CONTROL

10.1 KEY FUNCTIONS

- The checking of applications and work on site in relation to the Building Regulations and the associated legislation
- Enforcement action against illegal or non-compliant work

- Dangerous structures
- Demolitions
- Provision of advice and support on disabled issues
- The processing of initial notices from approved inspectors
- Providing pre-application and general advice
- Dealing with complaints

10.2 STAFFING SUMMARY

The Building Control Team has establishment strength of 9.59 FTE with 9 staff in post; however of these 9 staff, two are consultants, Paul Cattell and John Vanderloo who both work 2 days per week. Due to this the team functions with the equivalent of 7.4 full time posts.

10.3 KEY OBJECTIVES

Priority Service Objectives

This area of the Planning Directorate has identified the following priority service objectives for this business plan:

Objective	Council Key Objective & Medium Term Aims	Background
1. To consider shared services with other Authorities.	6 (e). To achieve savings as per Council's MTFS (4) Med Term aims	A joint partnership with Harlow District Council and Uttlesford District Council was considered and rejected. However scope may exist for partnership with other Authorities
2. To at least match income with expenditure for the charge earning account.	5 (b&d) To maintain the Council's sound financial position; (4) Med Term aims	Central government requires the income from building regulation charges to at least meet the cost of that part of the service and for the councils scheme of charges not to be designed to make any significant surplus
3. To improve on Performance targets in general	8 (b). To seek continuous performance improvement (4). Med Term aims	Staff training and constant evaluation of the service should improve performance.
4. To train and develop staff to ensure the most proficient provision of the service to its customers	8 (g). To seek continuous performance improvement (3) & (4) Medium Term Aims	A key part of the performance development review process is the identification of training needs. These are addressed through the Corporate Training Programme and external courses addressing changes in legislation, national initiatives and Continuing Professional Development, which is a requirement for RICS and Building Engineer members.
5. Improve Customer Care	8. To seek continuous performance improvement 3), (4). & (5). Medium Term Aims	Scope exists for further development.
6. Raise Building Control's profile	(4). & (5). Medium Term Aims	Scope exists for further development.

The actions (and relevant targets) for achieving these objectives are detailed in section (d) of this part of the business plan.

10.4 CHALLENGES AND ISSUES LIKELY TO BE FACED IN 2010/11 AND 2011/12

(a). The challenges facing the Building Control Team are:

- Maintaining service standards
- Maintaining Income
- Increases in expenditure
- Increased competition for work
- Changes in legislation
- Sufficient time for staff to keep knowledge current
- Shared Services
- Changes in local and global economy i.e. recession

(b). Strengths and Weaknesses Building Control SWOT Analysis

In the formulation of this business plan a SWOT analysis was carried out, the results of which are shown below;

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Local knowledge Professionally qualified team Experienced and dedicated team Ability to offer a one-stop shop Familiarity with Council aims and objectives Excellent networking at County, regional and National levels ISO accreditation Investors in People Strong customer loyalty Same day site inspections Timed site visits In-house contaminated land advice Partnership Scheme	Loss of some market share Limited online payments High cost of housing Number of different surveyors that visit the same site due to staffing levels Lack of capacity to follow up projects e.g. 3 monthly reporting and site visits. Lack of capacity to monitor district for illegal works Difference in approach from council to council in interpretation of the regulations No on-line submissions ICT system not fully utilised Weak National House Warrantee scheme
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
ICT system Increased market share Partnership Scheme Corporate development Programme Changes in legislation Remote on-line working Shared services Provision of additional services New fee regulations give the ability to be more competitive	Insufficient time for staff to keep knowledge current Increased competition for work Changes in legislation A test of customer loyalty Outsourcing of building control Changes in local and global economy i.e. recession Government directives/cuts Progressive and aggressive marketing by AI's Increasing number of AI's

(c). Service reviews, and issues arising from them

This area of the service has been subject to the review with the transition taking place in Quality Control Standards for Building Control from ISO 9001:2000 to ISO 9001:2008.

10.5 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

(a). National & Local Indicators

As the preparation of Business Plan for 2011/12 needs to be commenced before the end of 2010/11, performance against relevant indicators for the final quarter of the year cannot be reported, and will therefore be carried forward for inclusion in the review of the Business Plan for 2011/12

(b). Internal Indicators

The following internal measures are used in this area of the directorate to measure performance.

Internal Measure	Target 2009/10	Performance			
		2008/09 (Q4)	2009/10 (Q1)	2009/10 (Q2)	2009/10 (Q3)
REGISTRATION					
Full Plans: Initial registration, charge assessment and acknowledgement	3 Days	86%	72%	80%	98%
Building Notices: Initial registration, charge assessment and acknowledgement	3 Days	92%	90%	84%	92%
Initial Notice: Initial registration, assessment and acknowledgement	5 Days	100%	91%	100%	100%
PLAN VETTING					
Applicant notified of defects/amendments required	15 Days	88%	92.7%	86%	92%
Decision notified within statutory time limits	5 Weeks	93%	88%	89%	95%
Decision notified within statutory time limits	2 Months	89%	93%	89%	95%
Inspections (Building Regulations)					
'Same day' requests (received before 10.00 a.m.) satisfied.	Same Day	96%	96%	97%	96%
Detailed site inspection record to be made	1 Day	89%	94%	94%	93%
Person responsible, for unauthorised work, notified of discovery	5 Days	Not Monitored	Not Monitored	Not Monitored	Not Monitored
Non-requested in progress visits made to inactive Site	3 Months	Not Monitored	Not Monitored	Not Monitored	Not Monitored
Non-requested in progress visits to active sites	15 Days				

Internal Measure	Target 2009/10	Performance			
		2008/09 (Q4)	2009/10 (Q1)	2009/10 (Q2)	2009/10 (Q3)
OTHER ADMINISTRATION					
Dangerous structure call out: response time during working hours	1 Hour	100%	100%	100%	100%
Dangerous structure call out: response time outside normal working hours	2 Hours	100%	100%	100%	100%
Dangerous structure written record made	1 day	100%	100%	100%	100%
Inspection charge invoices raised and issued.	10 days	82.8%	84.7%	83.3%	97%
Demolitions issue of Section 81 Notice where appropriate	10 days	0%	N/A	N/A	0%
Non-application correspondence to be processed	8 days	Not Monitored	Not Monitored	Not Monitored	Not Monitored
Completion certificates issued	5 days	94%	75%	100%	100%

10.6 ACTION PLANS

(a) Action Plan 2010/11 - Review

Performance against previous Business Plan targets from the 2009/10 business plan is as shown below:

Action	Source	Target	Progress/ Performance
Recruit staff to fill vacancies	2010/11 Service Plan	N/A	On hold due to economic climate
To at least match income with expenditure for the charge earning account.	2010/11 Service Plan	Ongoing	This should be achieved by the start of the new financial year.
Improve performance targets	2010/11 Service Plan	Ongoing	To be advised
Staff Training	2010/11 Service Plan	Ongoing	This has been achieved through the Corporate Training Programme and external courses addressing changes in legislation, national initiatives and Continuing Professional Development.
Improve Customer Care	2010/11 Service Plan	Ongoing	Building Control takes part in regular stakeholder surveys and changes the way it operate accordingly
Raise Building Control's profile	2010/11 Service Plan	Ongoing	This has been achieved by adding new partners to the partnership scheme and by Its website.

(b) Action Plan 2011/12 (Forward Look)

The action plan below sets out the actions to be carried out in this service area to meet:

- The Key Objectives set out in section 10.3 of this section of the Business Plan.
- Any recommendations made in internal audit or external inspection reports.
- The actions required to improve performance against indicators.
- Actions carried forward from the last plan.

This action plan will be reviewed and updated during January to March 2011, as part of the process for updating this plan for 2010/11.

Action/Objective	Council Medium Term Aim	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Resources/Budget
To consider shared services with other Authorities.	Medium Term Aim 4.	AD(Building) DoPED CEF	Ongoing	Ring Fenced Account
Review of Building Regulation Fees and Charges	Medium Term Aim 4.	AD(Building) DoPED	Sept 10	Ring Fenced Account
Improve on Performance targets in general	Council Plan IP4	AD(Building)	Ongoing	Within Resources
Benchmark performance against other Essex Authorities	Council Plan IP4	AD(Building)	Ongoing	Within Resources
Consideration of staff training needs after PDR process	Council Plan IP4	AD(Building)	June 10	Within Resources
CPD/Training records for all staff	Council Plan IP4	AD(Building)	June 10	Within Resources
Extend the Partnership scheme for Architects	Council Plan IP4	AD(Building) DoPED	Ongoing	Within Resources
Continue customer satisfaction surveys	Council Plan IP4	AD(Building)	Ongoing	Within Resources
Improved use of web site	Council Plan IP4	AD(Building) Business Manager	Ongoing	Within Resources

SECTION ELEVEN DIRECTORATE PLANNING SUPPORT TEAM

11.1 KEY FUNCTIONS

- Provision of administrative and business support for the processing of applications and decisions for Development Control and Building Control.
- Maintenance of the electronic scanning and indexing of all departmental planning records.
- Management of Directorate's ICT systems.
- Management of departmental procurement, contracts along with the processing and reconciliation of all accounts/invoices.
- Customer focus and Freedom of Information lead in terms of reception, telephone, e-mail and internet contact.
- Maintenance of the Corporate Gazetteer.

11.2 STAFFING SUMMARY

2010/11 has been a challenging year with in an interim Administration Review implemented on 1st April 2011. A longer term Administration Restructure is due to be presented to the Management Board for consideration effective from 1st April 2011. As a result the Planning Support Team has been able to stabilise their activities after a period of uncertainty due to vacancy created by the departure of the previous Business Manager and Administration Supervisor in early 2009. The incoming Business Manager, who assumed post in November 2009 has been able to implement a number of positive changes, with the most important being the "backscanning" of Development Control records. This has significantly improved Planning Services data available on the Council Website with nearly 5000 persons viewing planning information every month.

The proposed long term restructure of the Planning Support Team will add further resilience to the team particularly in the areas of financial control and improved Quality Control of Electronic Records. These are key elements in promoting effective and efficient provision of customer focused frontline planning support services to work towards achieving Value for Money efficiency savings, particularly in reducing paper use and encouraging the use of electronic means of accessing planning information on the council website.

Part of the changes that are taking place within the Planning Support Team is to meet challenges created by the changes in focus where our reception activities in terms of face to face contact are declining. This is matched by a substantial increase in other customer contact via electronic access to Planning Information on the council website. As a result there is a need to consistently improve the quality and standard of electronic information particularly in terms of Freedom of Information and other related requests.

11.3 KEY OBJECTIVES

(a) Priority Service Objectives

The Planning Support Team has identified the following Corporate Key Objectives to focus on in this business plan:

OBJECTIVE	COUNCIL CORPORATE OBJECTIVE	BACKGROUND
Safeguarding frontline services and keep Council Tax the lowest in Essex;	(5). To maintain the Council's sound financial position; (6). To achieve the level of savings identified within the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote effective and efficient frontline services and participate in reducing planning support costs. • Encourage the robust use of Market Place procurement processes to ensure efficiency savings. • Take active steps to reduce the use of paper within the directorate.
Promote long term reductions in funding from the Continuing Service Budget;	(8). To seek continuous performance improvement and the best use of resources;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continually review and improve business processes within planning support services to provide better and more easily access to planning records. • Implement effective Quality Control processes for electronic records • Ensure structure of the Planning Support Team promotes VFM (Efficiency, Effectiveness and Economy). • Maximise income by ensuring timely reconciliation and charging processes.
To promote the use of Information Technology to improve administrative processes.	(10). To continue the improvement in the benefit the Council receives from its investment in information and communications technology;	<p>To play a role in promoting the lowest council tax in Essex and also safeguard frontline services by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilising Information Technology improve administrative processes. • Provide carbon friendly, accessible planning records on the Corporate Website. • Maximise income by ensuring timely reconciliation and charging processes.

(b). The actions (and relevant targets) for achieving these objectives are detailed in section (d) of this part of the business plan.

11.4 CHALLENGES, TARGETS AND ISSUES LIKELY TO BE FACED FROM 2010/11 TO 2011/12

- (a). The challenges facing the Support team in 2009/10 are largely external;
- There is an increasing sense of urgency in making Planning Services information available on the Council Website via i-Plan. Freedom of Information Requests are beginning to increase both in volume (amount of requests) and complexity (requests for large and detailed amounts of information)
 - A project to start the process of “scanning” Building Control Applications and historical microfilmed planning information may well prove to be challenging in terms of resources and budget availability.
 - E-consultation and streamlining the Appeals system into a faster electronic process.
 - Complete the “scanning” of Conservation, Contaminated Land Records and Forward Planning to aid the development of “paperless” back office capacity within Planning and Economic Development.
 - There is an ongoing requirement to meet the Quality Control standards of the NLPG BS7666 address standards.
 - Completion of back scanning all Development Control records.

(b). Strengths and Weaknesses Planning Support Team

In the formulation of this business plan a SWOT analysis was carried out, the results of which are shown below;

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>Committed Public Facing Team.</p> <p>Staff knowledge and expertise in terms of Development and Building Control Systems.</p> <p>Web based Planning records – iPlan.</p> <p>Robust financial procurement and commitment processes (Marketplace)</p> <p>Resilient ICT Scanning/Printing assets/equipment obtained via the PDG process.</p>	<p>Gaps in Staffing Structure awaiting implementation of the Admin Review.</p> <p>Dependence on ICT and lack of formalised ICT training & development for Planning Support Team</p> <p>Capability of Planning Support Team to maintain quality standards whilst running electronic and part paper records side by side.</p> <p>Inability to place all Planning Records on the Web with a possibility of being overwhelmed by Freedom of Information and other requests for planning information.</p>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Implement back scanning of Development Control Records – Large Sites, Contaminated Land Records, Conservation and Forward Planning Records.</p> <p>Improve Gazetteer to NLPG BS7666 standards</p> <p>Set up project to implement scanning of Building Control Records</p> <p>Improve Business Support Structure</p>	<p>Inability to restructure team to meet changed working conditions (Electronic Records)</p> <p>Maintaining and improving Gazetteer to NLPG BS7666 Standards</p> <p>Failure of Web based Planning records – iPlan.</p> <p>Delays in implementing electronic measures to work faster and reduce the use of paper such as implementing electronic appeals, e-Consultation and promoting Avoidable Contact.</p>

(c). Service reviews, and issues arising from them

This area of the service has been subject to the review(s) shown below, which made the recommendations shown. These recommendations are reflected in the action plan in section (d) of this part of the business plan.

REVIEW DATE	CARRIED OUT BY	RECOMMENDATIONS
January 2010	LRQA	Transition from ISO 9001;2000 To ISO 9001:2008
REVIEW DATE	CARRIED OUT BY	SELECTED THEME AND PROCESS
September 2010	LRQA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition to ISO 9001:2008 • Reviews and enhancement of documented management system • ICT and potential review and/or rationalisation of documentation.

11.5 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

(a) National & Local Indicators

As the preparation of Business Plans for 2009/10-2010/11 needs to be commenced before the end of 2008/09, performance against relevant indicators for the final quarter of the year cannot be reported, and will therefore be carried forward for inclusion in the review of the Business Plan for 2010/11

(b) Internal Indicators

The following internal measures are used in this area of the directorate to measure performance and workload.

Internal Measure	Target 2010/11	Performance				
		2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11 (Q1,Q2)
Planning Applications received	n/a	2259	2329	2155	2439	1893
Planning Appeals received	n/a	138	167	136	98	67
Building Control Applications received	n/a	1969	2104	2374	2356	1784
Percent of Planning Applications received online	30%	5.4%	9.7%	17.73%	21%	25%
'Neighbour' Comments Received	n/a	3521	2630	3167	2925	2278
% 'Neighbour' Comments Received via Northgate	25%	n/a	n/a	No Data available	No Data available	15%

11.6 ACTION PLANS

(a) Action Plan 2010-11 Review

Performance against previous Business Plan targets from the 2009/10 business plan is as shown below:

ACTION/OBJECTIVE	SOURCE	TARGET	PROGRESS/PERFORMANCE
Review and implement Restructure of the Planning Support Team to meet the requirements of the reduction in staffing levels	2010/11 Business Plan	March 2011	To be carried out by incoming Business Manager
Investigate outsourcing of ongoing scanning of applications –	2010/11 Business Plan	Ongoing	Preferred option taken by engaging temporary staff to undertake as they require access to MVM.

ACTION/OBJECTIVE	SOURCE	TARGET	PROGRESS/PERFORMANCE
Development Control			
Completion of Back Scanning of material from Planning File room	2010/11 Business Plan	March 2011	Existing temporary Staff arrangements large amount of DC files now scanned on target for almost all DC records (including Large Sites)& Existing staff subject to funding availability
Maintain Quality Assurance in Building Control,	2010/11 Business Plan	January 2010	Upgraded LRQA ISO BIN 2001:2000 to 2001:2008
Continue to Implement Anite@work	2010/11 Business Plan	Ongoing	Progress has been made in terms of scanning current workload into Anite@work
Creating of links between Anite@work and M3	2010/11 Business Plan	Ongoing	This is subject to further development and funding for ICT to implement.
Roll out of Northgate M3 Enquiry module to other parts of Planning Services	2010/11 Business Plan	Ongoing	Used in Trees, Enforcement and Conservation.
Support implementation of LDF module	2010/11 Business Plan	Ongoing	Forward Planning Responsibility
Promote improvements to NLPG BS7666 Quality standards	2010/11 Business Plan	Ongoing	Limited staff resource availability.
Electronic Consultation of Consultee's and neighbours	2010/11 Business Plan	April 2009	Subject to ICT implementation
Restructure and further improve Planning Service Website	2009/10 Business Plan	Ongoing	Ongoing improvements made subject to Corporate changes and improvements to Council Website.
Extend Quality Assurance to Development Control	2010/11 Business Plan	For consideration in 2011/12	Postponed, subject to funding and resources made available.
Implement PDA and tablet roll-out	2010/11 Business Plan	For consideration in 2011/12	Postponed, subject to funding availability.

(b) Action Plan 2011 – 2012 (Forward Look)

The action plan below sets out the actions to be carried out in this service area to meet:

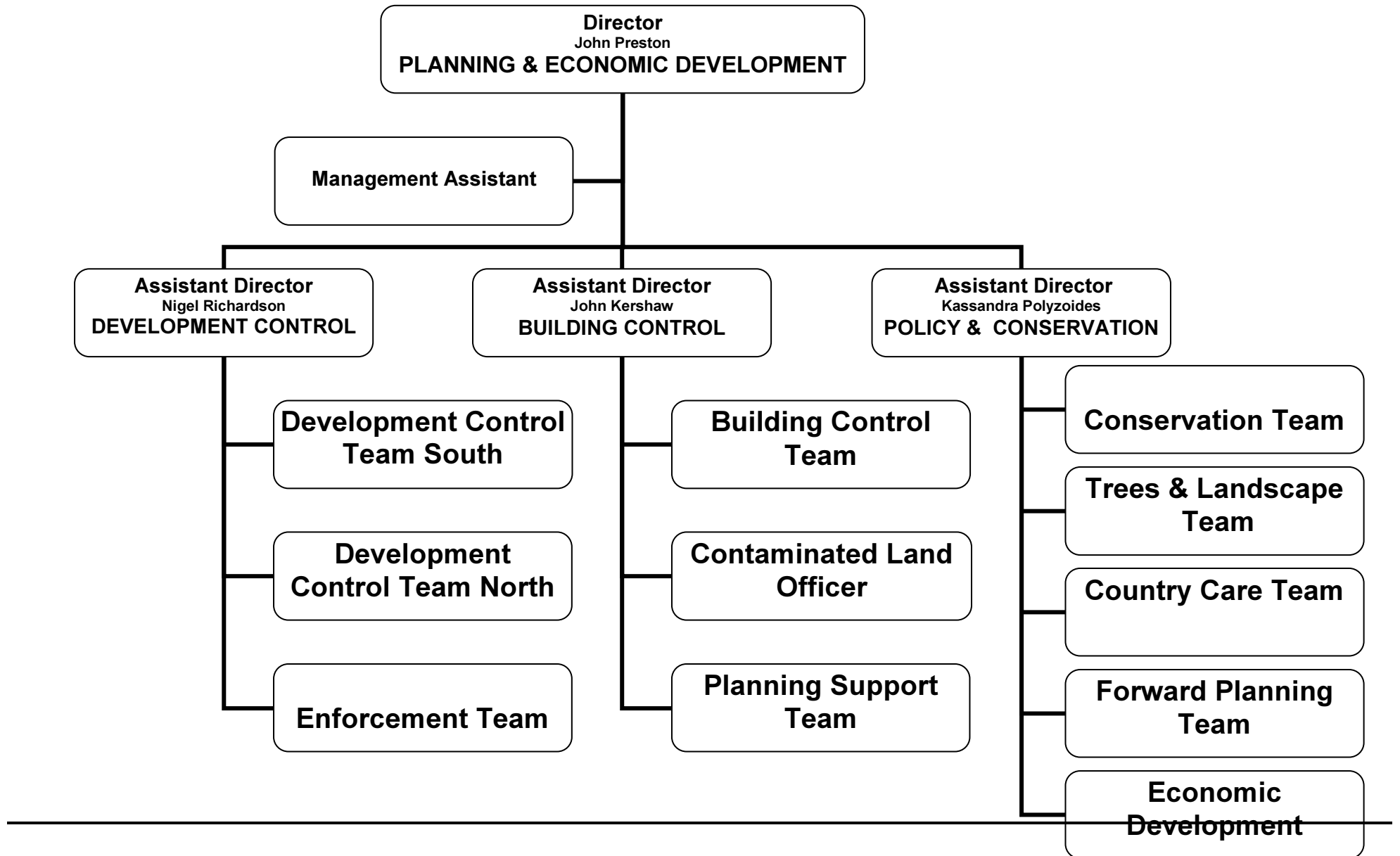
- The Key Objectives set out in section (a) of this section of the Business Plan.
- Any recommendations made in internal audit or external inspection reports
- The actions required to improve performance against indicators
- Actions carried forward from the last plan

This action plan will be reviewed and updated during January to March 2011, as part of the process for updating this plan for 2011/12.

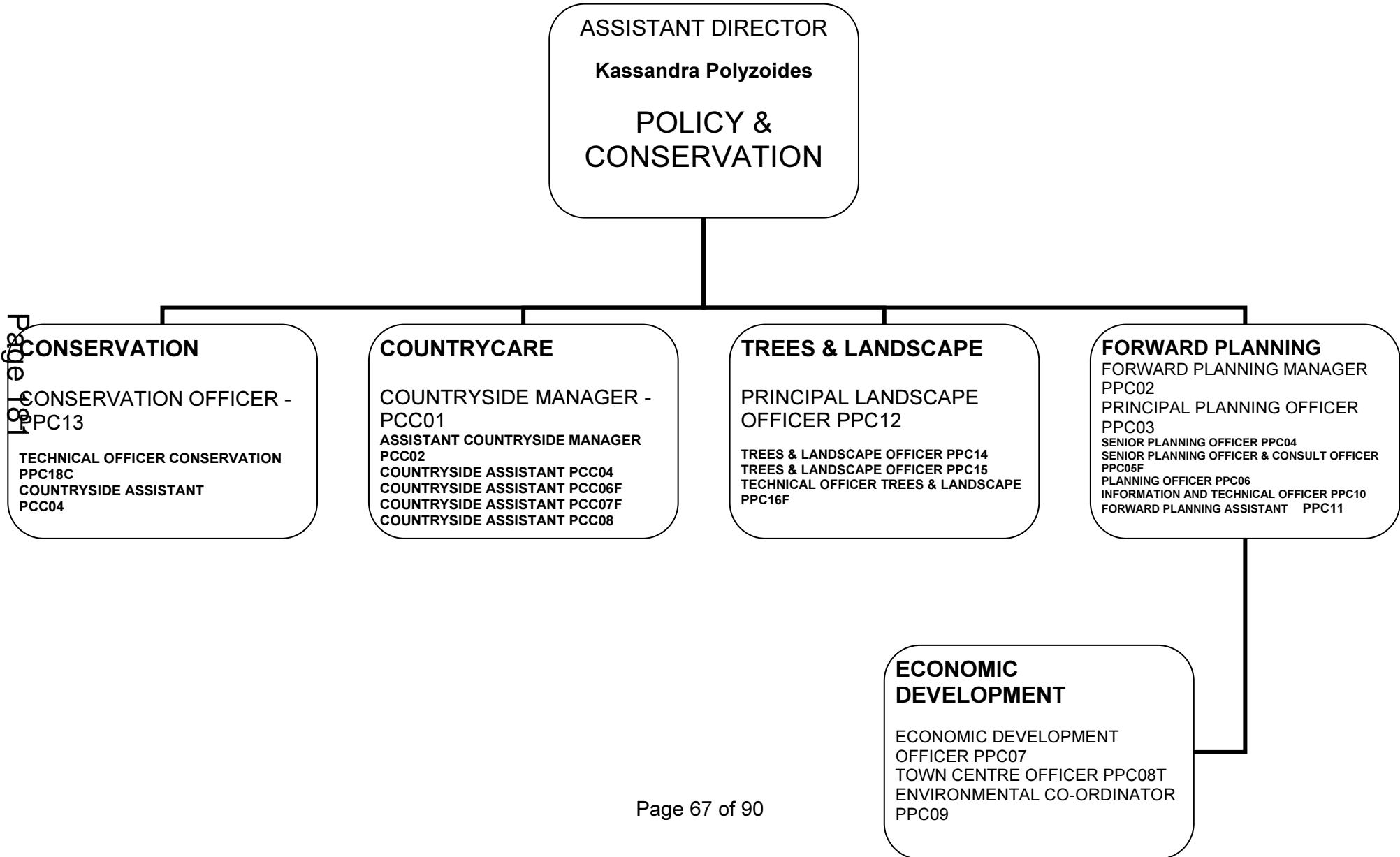
ACTION/OBJECTIVE	COUNCIL PLAN OR OTHER REF	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	TARGET DATE	RESOURCES/ BUDGET
Review and monitor workloads of teams in relation to reduced staffing levels	2011/12 Business Plan	Business Manager	Ongoing	Existing Staff
Maintain Quality Assurance in Building Control,	2011/12 Business Plan	Business Manager	September 2010	Existing Staff
Extend Quality Assurance to Development Control	2011/12 Business Plan	Business Manager/Asst Director (DC)	2010/11	Existing Staff
Continue to Implement Information@work & links between Information@work and M3	2011/12 Business Plan	Business Manager	Ongoing	Existing Staff
Completion of Back Scanning of material from Planning File room	2011/12 Business Plan	Business Manager	July 2010	Existing Staff/ Existing Funding/ Supplier resource
Roll out of Northgate M3 Enquiry module to other parts of Planning Services	2011/12 Business Plan	Business Manager/ Team Leaders	Ongoing	Existing Staff
Support implementation of LDF module	2011/12 Business Plan	Business Manager	Ongoing	Existing Staff/ Allocated Budget
Continue Gazetteer creation	2011/12 Business Plan	Gazetteer Officer	Ongoing	Existing Staff
Electronic Consultation of Consultees and neighbours	2011/12 Business Plan	Business Manager	Ongoing April 2010	Existing Staff, other costs offset by printing and postage savings
Restructure and further improve Planning Service Website	2011/12 Business Plan	Business Manager	Ongoing April 2010	Existing Staff
Implement PDA and tablet roll-out	2011/12 Business Plan	Business Manager	TBA Subject to PDG Funding	Existing Staff/ Allocated Budget
Mobile solution for all relevant staff	2011/12 Business Plan	Business Manager	TBA Subject to Funding	Existing Staff/ Budget to be allocated
Investigate provision of chip and pin terminal at planning reception, and extension of telephone payments to planning	2011/12 Business Plan	Business Manager	Ongoing	TBA

APPENDICES

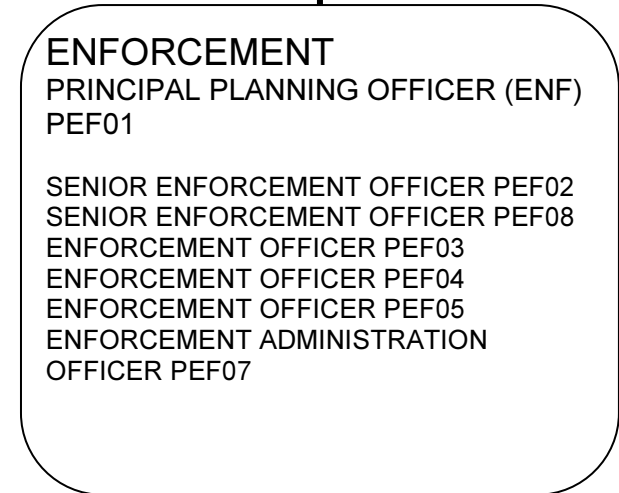
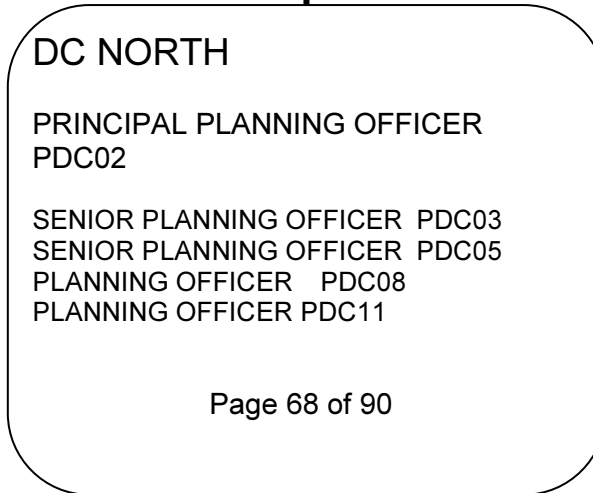
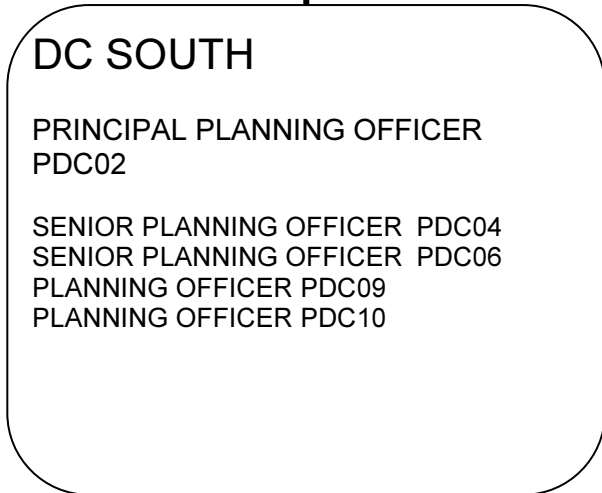
APPENDIX ONE ORGANISATION CHART OVERVIEW PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



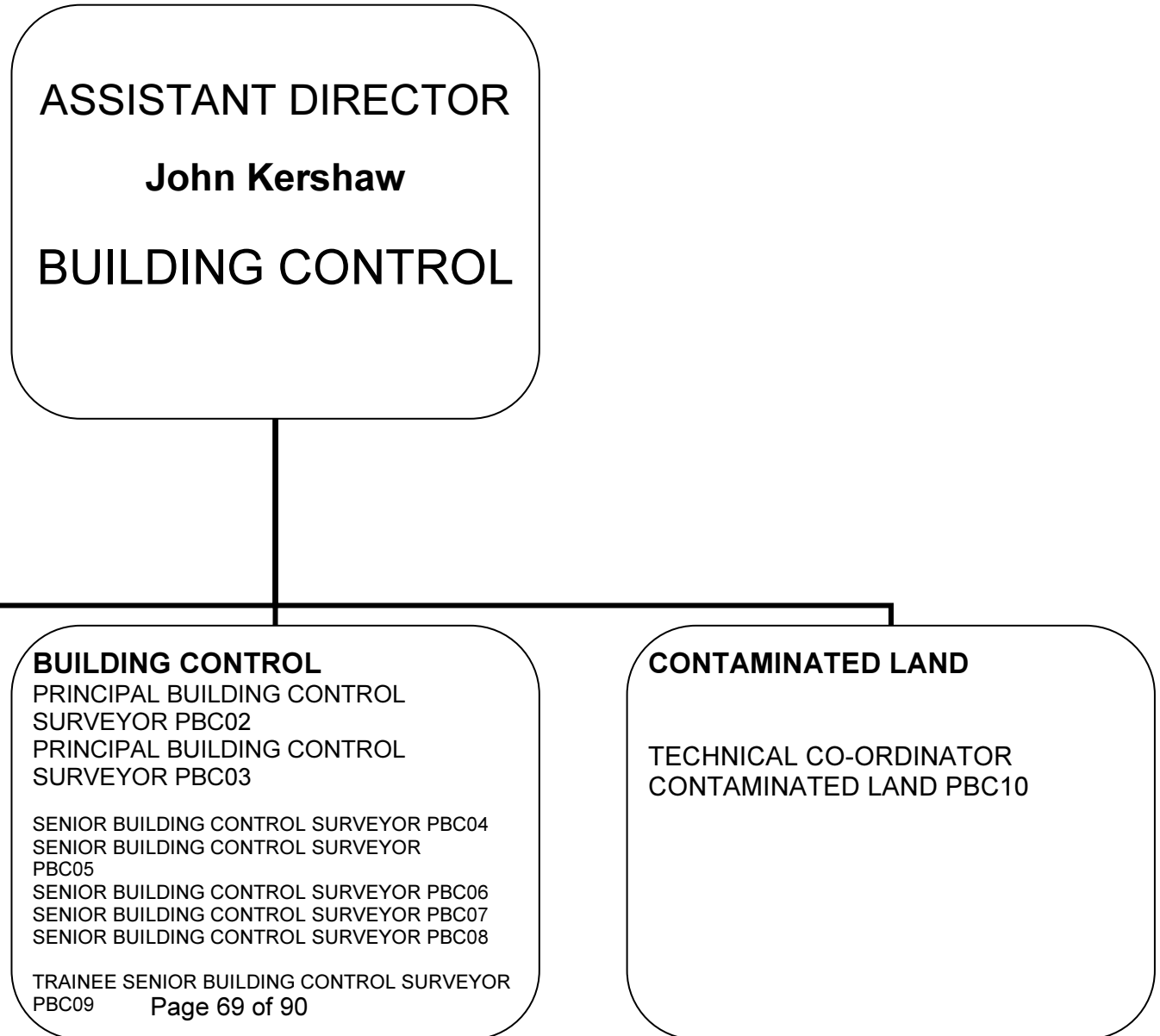
APPENDIX TWO ORGANISATION CHART POLICY & CONSERVATION PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



APPENDIX THREE ORGANISATION CHART DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



APPENDIX FOUR ORGANISATION CHART BUILDING CONTROL & PLANNING SUPPORT TEAM PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



APPENDIX FIVE STAFF ESTABLISHMENT MATRIX PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (64.54 POSTS)

POST TITLE	POSTS	POST TITLE	POSTS
DIRECTOR	1	MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT	1
<u>POLICY AND CONSERVATION (22)</u>		<u>DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (18)</u>	
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	1	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	1
FORWARD PLANNING MANAGER	1	PRINCIPAL PLANNING OFFICER DC	3
PRINCIPAL PLANNING OFFICER	1	SENIOR PLANNING OFFICER DC	4
SENIOR PLANNING OFFICER	2	PLANNING OFFICER DC	4
PLANNING OFFICER	1	SENIOR ENFORCEMENT OFFICER	2
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICER	1	ENFORCEMENT OFFICER	3
TOWN CENTRE OFFICER	1	ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION OFFICER	1
ENVIRONMENTAL CO-ORDINATOR	1	<u>BUILDING CONTROL & SUPPORT TEAM (22.54)</u>	
INFORMATION AND TECHNICAL OFFICER	1	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	1
FORWARD PLANNING ASSISTANT	1	PRINCIPAL BUILDING CONTROL SURVEYOR	2
CONSERVATION OFFICER	1	SENIOR BUILDING CONTROL SURVEYOR	4.59
TECHNICAL OFFICER CONSERVATION	1	TECHNICAL CO-ORDINATOR-CONTAMINATED LAND	1
PRINCIPAL LANDSCAPE OFFICER	1	TRAINEE SENIOR BUILDING CONTROL SURVEYOR	1
TREES & LANDSCAPE OFFICER	2	BUSINESS MANAGER	1
TECHNICAL OFFICER TREES & LANDSCAPE	1	TECHNICAL OFFICER DC/BC	3.81
COUNTRYSIDE MANAGER	1	RECEPTIONIST	0.58
ASSISTANT COUNTRYSIDE MANAGER	2	APPEALS & DC SUPPORT ADMINISTRATOR	1
TRAINEE ASSISTANT COUNTRYSIDE MANAGER	1	ACCOUNTS, INVOICE & PROCUREMENT OFFICER	0.56
COUNTRYSIDE ASSISTANT	1	ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS BC/DC	1.5
		GAZETTER & SCANNING OFFICER	0.5
		RECORDS & SCANNING OFFICER	1
		TRAINEE TECHNICAL OFFICER	1
		ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	2

APPENDIX SIX SICKNESS ABSENCE SUMMARY OCTOBER 2009 – SEPTEMBER 2010

	<u>TOTAL STAFF</u>		<u>SHORT TERM SICKNESS</u>			<u>LONG TERM SICKNESS</u>			<u>ALL SICKNESS ABSENCE</u>	
	<u>WORKING DAYS</u>	<u>DAYS LOST</u>	<u>% OF TOTAL WORK DAYS</u>	<u>DAYS PER EMPLOYEE</u>	<u>DAYS LOST</u>	<u>% OF TOTAL WORK DAYS</u>	<u>DAYS PER EMPLOYEE</u>	<u>DAYS LOST</u>	<u>% OF TOTAL WORK DAYS</u>	<u>DAYS PER EMPLOYEE</u>
OCTOBER 2009	1397.88	12.90	0.92%	0.20	11.15	0.80%	0.18	24.06	1.72%	0.38
NOVEMBER 2009	1334.34	16.23	1.22%	0.26	11.65	0.87%	0.18	27.87	2.09%	0.44
DECEMBER 2009	1334.34	4.06	0.30%	0.06	31.36	2.35%	0.49	35.42	2.65%	0.56
JANUARY 2010	1207.26	30.93	2.56%	0.49	8.35	0.69%	0.13	45.41	3.76%	0.71
FEBRUARY 2010	1270.8	7.11	0.56%	0.11	3.80	0.30%	0.06	10.92	0.86%	0.17
MARCH 2010	1461.42	17.75	1.21%	0.28	3.38	0.23%	0.05	21.13	1.45%	0.33
APRIL 2010	1270.8	5.30	0.42%	0.08	3.54	0.28%	0.06	8.85	0.70%	0.14
MAY 2010	1207.26	14.70	1.22%	0.23	14.70	1.22%	0.23	14.70	1.22%	0.23
JUNE 2010	1397.88	6.54	0.47%	0.10	2.54	0.18%	0.04	9.08	0.65%	0.14
JULY 2010	1397.88	18.72	1.34%	0.29	6.13	0.44%	0.10	24.85	1.78%	0.39
AUGUST 2010	1334.34	15.21	1.14%	0.24	19.80	1.48%	0.31	35.01	2.62%	0.55
SEPTEMBER 2010	1397.88	14.20	1.02%	0.22	25.37	1.81%	0.40	38.55	2.76%	0.61
	16012.08	163.65	1.02%	2.58	141.76	0.89%	2.23	295.82	1.85%	4.66

Page 185

APPENDIX SEVEN – WORKFORCE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT TEMPLATE

(a) Directorate Workforce Profile

FULL-TIME/ PART-TIME	%	41 – 50 (%)	27
Full-Time Male (%)	41.3	51 – 60 (%)	27
Full-Time Female (%)	49.2	>60 (%)	4.8
Part-Time Male (%)	0	TURNOVER	%
Part-Time Female (%)	9.5	Voluntary Leavers (%)	0
MALE/FEMALE	%	Dismissal (%)	0
Male (%) Early	41.3	Retirement (%)	0
Female (%)	58.7	End of Fixed-Term Contract (%)	0
AGE ANALYSIS	%	Projected Turnover (end of year %)	0
<21 (%)	1.6	DISABILITY/ ETHNICITY	%
21 – 30 (%)	23.8	Staff self-declared with disability (%)	0
31 – 40 (%)	15.9	Ethnicity (%)	3.2

Page 186

APPENDIX EIGHT DIRECTORATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS (PRIORITY ISSUES FROM WORKFORCE PLANNING FRAMEWORK)

(b) Directorate Workforce Development Implications (priority issues from Workforce Planning Framework)
(Information to follow)

ISSUE	ACTIONS (Include any partnership actions)	RESPONSIBILITY	BUDGET REQUIRED	TIMESCALE

Page 187

APPENDIX NINE – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

44 persons responded, comprising **55%** Residential, **9%** Commercial and **36%** who were both.

JANUARY 2010 – SEPTEMBER 2010

83% OF RESPONDENTS INDICATED POSITIVELY TO QUESTIONS BASED ON THEIR EXPERIENCE WITH DEVELOPMENT CONTROL APPLICATIONS.	EXCEEDED OR MET EXPECTATIONS	PARTIALLY MET OR FAILED TO MEET EXPECTATIONS
Quality of any pre-application advice given	82%	18%
Availability of staff	82%	18%
Availability of forms and information	100%	0%
Local knowledge	90%	10%
Speed of Validation Process	100%	0%
Clarity of any Invalid application Letter sent	27%	73%
Willingness of Case officer to negotiate	64%	36%
Quality of advice given during negotiation	73%	27%
Availability of Case officer	82%	18%
Overall Speed of decision process	100%	0%
Information provided about committee	64%	36%
Speed of dispatch of decision notice	90%	10%
Quality of response to telephone enquiries	70%	30%
Office opening times	100%	0%
Quality of service	90%	10%
Average response	82%	18%

Respondents also indicated that their overall impression of the service they received was;	Positive – 98%	Average – 2%	Negative – 0%
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APPENDIX TEN – BUILDING CONTROL APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

53 persons responded, comprising **84%** Residential, **6%** Commercial and **10%** who were both. JANUARY 2010 – SEPTEMBER 2010

89% OF RESPONDENTS INDICATED POSITIVELY TO QUESTIONS BASED ON THEIR EXPERIENCE WITH DEVELOPMENT CONTROL APPLICATIONS.	EXCEEDED OR MET EXPECTATIONS	PARTIALLY MET, FAILED TO MEET EXPECTATIONS OR NOT APPLICABLE.
Advice given	98%	2%
Availability of staff	95%	5%
Attitude of staff	100%	0%
Local knowledge	92%	8%
Speed of plan checking	97%	3%
Clarity of any Amendment Letter sent	77%	23%
Speed of Decision process	96%	4%
Speed of response to site inspections	84%	16%
Helpfulness of site inspections	88%	12%
Quality of service	94%	6%
Overall value for money	92%	8%
Quality of response to telephone enquiries	90%	10%
Office opening times	85%	15%
Average response	98%	2%

Respondents also indicated that their overall impression of the service they received was;	Positive – 89%,	Average – 10%	Negative - 0%
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APPENDIX ELEVEN – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL NEIGHBOUR FEEDBACK SUMMARY

92 persons responded JANUARY 2010 – SEPTEMBER 2010

RESPONDENTS FOUND OUT ABOUT THE APPLICATION AS FOLLOWS;	
66% were notified by Council	3% saw the local press report
2% saw the Site Notice	0% saw the EFDC Public Notice in newspaper
27% found out by 'word of mouth'	2% found out from the Epping Forest District Council Website

OF THOSE NOTIFIED OF THE APPLICATION BY LETTER THEY SAID;
100% felt the written notification was clear and understandable.
98% said the letter supplied enough information to understand what the application was for and where it was located
100% felt the letter directed them clearly as to how to find more information
93% said the letter arrived in good time after the start of the consultation period
Of those who viewed the plans for this application, they did so by;
93% viewing them at the Planning Reception at Civic Offices
91% viewing them at the EFDC Information Desk
4% who saw them at the Parish Council Office
35% who viewed them on the Epping Forest District Council Website
33% who viewed them by other means
98% of those who were advised in writing felt the letter was clear, gave enough information and directed them towards further information.
92% when notified of a Council Committee meeting felt the letter was clear, gave enough information and directed them towards further information.
95% felt the Decision Notice Letter was clear and arrived in good time after the decision was made.
88% felt their views were taken in account in making the decision.
88% of those who responded felt their experience with this process was positive.

APPENDIX TWELVE - RISK CAPTURE

RISK CAPTURE			
RISK NO.	VULNERABILITY	TRIGGER	CONSEQUENCES
1.	Planning Directorate not self-financing	Decision of Council to cut CSB budgets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of staff and Inability to deliver statutory and non-statutory services. • Failure to reach performance targets • Low staff morale and high stress levels • Increased complaints about level of service
2.	Heavy reliance upon existing staff for knowledge and expertise	Loss of staff due to Inadequate retention strategy and/or sickness of key staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of knowledge, inability to deliver services. • Inability to meet performance targets
3.	Potential staffing level shortfall that creates vulnerability when gaps in service provision arise as result of staff movement/mobility/sickness Particularly at Building Control level	Inability to maintain service provision when staff move either upward or outward due to the 'domino' effect of staff movement. Slow average response in filling vacant posts, specifically internal posts which creates downwards pressure on other posts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to deliver services efficiently • Failure to meet performance targets • Adverse effect on staff morale and stress levels • May Increase level of complaints from the public.
4.	Increasing Workloads largely determined by external factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receipt of increasing Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and/or planning enquiries. • Additional forward planning workload. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to meet FOI timescales and increased complaints/impatience directed at Planning Services. • Low staff morale and high stress levels Increased propensity for error
5.	Reliance upon historic records	Loss of historic records due to : Failure of ICT; Incident destroying records.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Errors in information given to enquirers leading to bad reputation of the Council and possible litigation; • Inadequate background information for decision-making leading to poor or incorrect decisions; • Low staff morale and increased stress levels.
6.	Office-based working environment	Loss of accommodation through: fire, flood or other disaster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption to work processes • Loss of records • Business continuity threatened

RISK CAPTURE

RISK NO.	VULNERABILITY	TRIGGER	CONSEQUENCES
7.	Reliance upon professional and specialist skills.	Skill shortage due to: Increased need for particular skills e.g. urban design, sustainability as a result of central government priorities or new legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor decision-making • Failing to meet performance targets • Overspending on consultants • Loss of special character of the district
8.	Loss of budget and/or income DC, BC & P & C	Loss of budget due to: Council seeking budget savings; Reallocation of available finance. Downturn in the economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to carry out statutory functions (e.g. site inspections) • Inability to meet performance targets • Increased workload for establishment staff leading to low morale and higher stress levels
9.	Under-resourced Economic Development strategy	Failure to adopt Economic Development strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of business investment • Imbalance of local job opportunities • Dissatisfaction of the business community
10.	Town Centre Officer non-permanent post	No budget continuing from year to year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat to sustainability and viability of the district's town centres. • Threat to Council's reputation
11.	Need for continuing external grant funding to Country Care	Many funding bodies are finding their budgets squeezed and large grants may be limited or be more competitive.	Historically, the service has relied on securing large external grants for extra "one off" projects to enhance sites e.g. pathways or major habitat enhancement. However, Essex County Council are still offering a range of smaller grants which the service will be able to access over the next two years and working in partnership with parish and town councils will access further grants e.g. lottery.
12.	Potential need to address Gypsy, Roma and Traveller incidents	Major influx of Gypsy, Roma and Travellers on unauthorised sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement officer staff time taken up by few high profile cases. • Increased complaints of other cases being low priority. Refusal of staff to enter hostile situations.
13.	Potential injury to enforcement officer or other member of staff on site.	Unexpected reaction of member of the public to Council visit with resulting injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and safety of staff member • Refusal of other staff to carry out duties • Compensation or litigation issues • Significant review of procedures
14.	Inability to attract sufficient local community gains from S106 procedures	Failure to meet housing targets; or other desired community benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to meet housing needs of community • Insufficient funding for environmental improvements
15	Planning and enforcement appeals rely upon external decision-making; and result from decision-making by members contrary to officer recommendations.	Reduction in appeal success rate through: increased number of decisions contrary to officer recommendation. Council policies not keeping up with Government policy	Poor LPI performance. Poor reputation Low staff morale. Likelihood of appeal Cost claims

Page 193

RISK CAPTURE

RISK NO.	VULNERABILITY	TRIGGER	CONSEQUENCES
16.	Possibility of Government-imposed URC on growth area of the district	Failure to convince government of Council's position over housing growth.	Inability to influence decisions over future development, character, infrastructure-provision for the district. Loss of capital revenue from Council-owned land (if involved).
17	Possible compensation claims against the Council arising from refusal to permit felling of preserved trees	Appeal decisions and tribunal cases	Awards of significant compensation to applicants
18	Reliance upon electronic systems from formerly separate suppliers	Lack of integration	Duplication of work; records not being allocated correctly; wrong information for public and decision-makers
19	Ability to provide planning records on corporate website	Inability to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conform to Data Protection guidelines Increase in Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests 	Failure to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet the Legal Admissibility Criteria (ISO BIP 10008) for Electronic Records. Provide FOI Requests within timescales
20	Issues with contract for Business Directory	Action brought against breach of contract	Costs of legal action and damages
21	Inadequate arrangements for dangerous structure inspections	Informal staff resource not being available	Danger to public; loss of reputation
23	Potential Difficulty in producing LDF to timetable	Deadlines missed	Ongoing strain on resources. Not achieving objective of delivering a sound core strategy.
24	Need to make B. Regs files available for public	Legislative change	Resource implications; procedure changes
25	Limited capacity for enhanced monitoring as required by government	Govt direction	Other workload given less priority
28	Lack of Admin Support for Trees and Landscape Team	End of Future Jobs Fund placement in March 2011 offering some admin support. Tree work requests regarding existing and new (previously Essex TPO's) trees covered by TPO's	Increased administrative tasks for existing senior staff relating to TPO's in turn affecting other workload. Falling behind on other tasks. Threat to reputation.
30	Lack of admin support for Conservation team	End of Future Jobs Fund placement in March 2011 and fixed term Technical support officer in July 2011, assisting on completing Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management plans and day to day admin tasks.	Increased administrative tasks for Conservation officer and lack off technical support on ongoing projects. Conservation officer focuses on statutory duties and therefore improvement projects, character appraisals and management plans fall behind or are not delivered
31	Delays in the Registration of Planning Applications & CLD's along with Enforcement actions and	Failure to gain Management Board approval for Admin Review/Restructure	Increased workload to professional staff in Development Control including Enforcement resulting in Planning, Enforcement and Customer Service delays. Negative

Page 194

RISK CAPTURE

RISK NO.	VULNERABILITY	TRIGGER	CONSEQUENCES
	Customer Support.		impact on Performance targets.
33	Inability to 'backscan' additional files including secure destruction along with quality control processes due to insufficient funding	Electronic Records Document Management (ERDMS) as a replacement for manual records requires adherence to Quality Control Standards - ISO 15489 and ISO 10008	Failure to meets minimum standards for legal admissibility of records
34	Destruction of Planning Files	Technical or human error.	Loss of information and records through incomplete scanning

APPENDIX THIRTEEN RISK MATRIX – PLANNING

Likelihood	High	A				
	High	B	4	10, 24, 28, 30, 33	8, 12, 14, 15,	
	Significant	C		13, 21, 25, 26, 31	1, 2, 3, 9, 11, 16, 17, 23	
	Low	D		18, 19	5, 28, 34, 30, 31	
	Very Low	E	20		6	
	Almost Impossible	F				
			4	3	2	1
			Negligible	Marginal	Critical	Catastrophic
			Impact			

TOLERATED RISKS	UNTOLERATED RISKS
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APPENDIX FOURTEEN - RISK REGISTER

RISK NO.	CURRENT RISK SCORE	TARGET RISK SCORE	DESCRIPTION
12	B2	C2	Potential need to address Gypsy, Roma and Traveller incidents
14	B2	C2	Inability to attract sufficient local community gains from S106 procedures
15	B2	C2	Fall in appeal success rate
8	B3	C3	Loss of budget and/or income DC, BC & P & C
24	B3	C3	Need to make B. Regs files available for public
33	B3	D3	Inability to 'backscan' additional files including secure destruction along with quality control processes due to insufficient funding
10	B3	D3	Lack of funding for Town Centre Officer
28	B3	D3	Lack of admin support for Trees and Landscape Team
30	B3	D3	Lack of admin support for Conservation team
23	B2		Potential Difficulty in producing LDF to timetable
4	B4		Increasing workloads determined by external factors
1	C2		Planning Directorate not self-financing
2	C2		Heavy reliance upon existing staff for knowledge and expertise
3	C2		Potential Staffing level shortfall
9	C2		Lack of funding for coherent Economic Development Strategy
11	C2		Loss of external funding for Country Care
16	C2		Potential for a UDC imposed for growth area
17	C2		Compensation from TPO cases
31	C2		Delays in registering Planning Applications, CLD's, Enforcement and Customer Support.
7	C3		Skill shortage
13	C3		Injury to staff on site
21	C3		Inadequate arrangements for dangerous structure inspections
25	C3		Limited capacity for enhanced FP and DC monitoring
5	D2		Loss of historic records
18	D3		Failure of e-systems to integrate
19	D3		Data Protection issues from website and scanning files
6	E2		Loss of office accommodation through fire, etc.
20	E4		Business Directory contract
34	D2		Destruction of Planning Files

APPENDIX FIFTEEN - RISK ACTION PLAN

RISK ACTION PLAN								
RISK NO.	RISK DETAILS	EXISTING CONTROLS TO ADDRESS RISK	EFFECTIVENESS OF CONTROLS	MANAGEMENT ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS	REVIEW FREQUENCY	KEY DATE
8	Loss of budget and/or income DC, BC & P & C	Manage BC and DC income Identify good use of resources to Members	Necessary budgets maintained to date	Monitor at regular intervals income of BC & DC. P & C to explore Income Opportunities	Asst Directors and Business Manager	Identification of Efficiency Savings	Monthly	Govt notice on planning fee increase
12	Potential need to address Gypsy, Roma and Traveller incidents	Resource-expensive travellers incidents	Potential changes in Government Policy Awareness of G, R & T issues in Neighbouring LA's	Revised Procedures in line with emergency legislation/guidelines to be adopted Maintain/liaison Neighbouring LA's on possible G, R & T developments	Asst Director (Dev) and Enforcement Team leader	Successful management of incident	6 monthly	Ongoing
14	Inability to attract sufficient local community gains from S106 procedures	Discussions at pre-application stage, running of Section 106 negotiation alongside Planning Application subject to final decision by members	Negotiations effective to date, subject to the economic downturn means that this cannot be guaranteed A need for S106 SPD has been identified and addressed by the emerging core strategy	Monitoring and early intervention if risk is realised	Asst Director (Dev) Asst Director (Policy & Conservation)	S106 continues to deliver community gains	3 monthly via Corporate Working Group	Ongoing
15	Fall in appeal success rate	Awareness of issue; Monitoring of performance	Issues have been highlighted with some areas of appeal performance	Continue to regularly report on appeal performance Identification of revised targets via the Improvement Plan LP1	Asst Director (Dev)	Improve performance	3 monthly	April 2010
24	Making BR files available to the public	Currently handled on case by case basis under FOI	Work effectively to date	Implementation of new charging regime and staffing	Asst Director BC and Business Manager	Successful implementation of change	6 monthly	Ongoing
33	Inability to 'backscan' & securely destroy files including quality checks due to funding shortfall	Monitoring limited scanning budget Prioritise scanning	Meet Quality Control Standards ISO 15489 ISO 10008	Manage Quality Control in terms of file retention. Investigation of other funding sources and implementation of this within the review of the Planning Support Team.	Asst Director BC and Business Manager	Integrate Quality Control as a key objective for the Planning Support Team.	3 monthly	March 2010
10	Lack of funding for Town Centre Officer	Limited options due to funding shortfall	Reduction in service	Investigate alternative options for funding	Asst Director (Policy & Conservation)	Identification of efficiency savings in P & C	3 monthly	Ongoing

RISK ACTION PLAN

RISK NO.	RISK DETAILS	EXISTING CONTROLS TO ADDRESS RISK	EFFECTIVENESS OF CONTROLS	MANAGEMENT ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS	REVIEW FREQUENCY	KEY DATE
28	Lack of Admin Support for Trees and Landscape Team	Monitor workload	Limited options available	Section to prioritise statutory obligations	Asst Director (Policy & Conservation)	Identification of efficiency savings in P & C	3 monthly	1 st April 2011
30	Lack of admin support for Conservation team	Monitor workload	Limited options available	Section to prioritise statutory obligations	Asst Director (Policy & Conservation)	Identification of efficiency savings in P & C	3 monthly	1 st April 2011

APPENDIX SIXTEEN FORWARD PLANNING EVIDENCE BASE UPDATE

See Action Plan 2010/11 –Section 5.6 (a) Action Plan Review 2010/11 Business Planning

FORWARD PLANNING EVIDENCE BASE UPDATE OCTOBER 2010

Study Title	Study Purpose/Content	Consultant	Cost	Anticipated / Actual Completion Date agreed by LDF CC	Length
Harlow Area Appraisal of Planning Transport and Infrastructure Options	<p>This study being completed in partnership with Harlow & 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 & 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>	<p>Report complete : January 2010</p> <p>LDF CC : 17 June 2010</p>	143 pages
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 200</p> <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 & 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 & 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. LDF CC 12 April 2010</p> <p>Statutory 5 week minimum consultation period held 17 May-19July 2010</p> <p style="color: green;">Assessment dependent on timescale for preparation of Issues & Options – Anticipated Summer 2011.</p>	

FORWARD PLANNING EVIDENCE BASE UPDATE OCTOBER 2010

Study Title	Study Purpose/Content	Consultant	Cost	Anticipated / Actual Completion Date agreed by LDF CC	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	Total cost: £255,950 Stage 1 Transport Model Development. GAF3 – Programme of Development (POD), Essex and Herts County Councils, Highways Agency. No EFDC contribution	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	Total cost: £250,000 – GAF3 - POD Partnership of East Herts, North Herts, Epping Forest, Broxbourne, Harlow & Stevenage Councils. No EFDC contribution.	Report complete : October 2009 LDF CC : ??	Approx 180 pages including Appendices
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)	<p>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.</p>	Opinion Research Services & Savills	£59,950 (+ £3,117.40 advertising costs) EFDC contribution - £10,511	Report complete : January 2010 LDF CC : 17 June 2010	203 pages including Appendices

Page 201

FORWARD PLANNING EVIDENCE BASE UPDATE OCTOBER 2010

Study Title	Study Purpose/Content	Consultant	Cost	Anticipated / Actual Completion Date agreed by LDF CC	Length
Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Viability Testing	<p>PPS3: Housing requires that all policies requiring affordable housing provision are based on robust and sound evidence of need and viability.</p> <p>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.</p>	Levvel Ltd	<p>£27,600</p> <p>Funded from Programme of Development Fund.</p>	<p>Report complete : April 2010</p> <p>LDF CC : 04 October 2010</p>	<p>Report – 301pages</p> <p>Appendices - 379pages</p>
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	To be confirmed following tender process	<p>Estimated at £30,000.</p> <p>Funded from savings within existing LDF budget.</p>	<p>Urban capacity – March 2011</p> <p>Urban fringes – June 2011</p> <p>LDF CC : Agreement of principal 11 March 2010</p> <p>Methodology 27 May 2010</p>	Not yet known
Town Centres Study	<p>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.</p>	Roger Tym & Partners	£39,038	<p>Report complete : April 2010</p> <p>LDF CC : 13 July 2010</p>	<p>Approx 113 pages, not including lengthy Appendices</p>
Employment Land Study	<p>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.</p>	Atkins	<p>£27,325</p> <p>To be split equally with Brentwood BC</p>	<p>Report complete : September 2010</p> <p>LDF CC : 11 November 2011</p>	<p>Report 88 pages</p> <p>Multiple appendices including maps</p>

Page 202

FORWARD PLANNING EVIDENCE BASE UPDATE OCTOBER 2010

Study Title	Study Purpose/Content	Consultant	Cost	Anticipated / Actual Completion Date agreed by LDF CC	Length
Landscape Character Assessment	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.	Chris Blandford Associates	£24,745	Report complete : January 2010 LDF CC : 27 May 2010	192 pages, including Appendices, and 10 district-wide maps.
Page 208 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	Report complete : January 2010 LDF CC : December 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: Development & Flood Risk. 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)	November 2010 Dependent on timetable of Core Strategy.	45 pages plus plans Not yet known

FORWARD PLANNING EVIDENCE BASE UPDATE OCTOBER 2010

Study Title	Study Purpose/Content	Consultant	Cost	Anticipated / Actual Completion Date agreed by LDF CC	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)	Report complete March 2010 LDF CC : 14 September 2010	37 pages plus plans and descriptions of 222 sites.
PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport & Recreation Audit	PPG17 requires that an audit of existing open space & recreation opportunities is undertaken.	In-house	From existing resources	Anticipated December 2010	Not yet known
PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport & Recreation Assessment	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 & recreation facilities. This further work will require the employment of consultants with expertise in this area.	To be confirmed	£20,000 (estimate)	Anticipated February 2011	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	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.	To be commissioned	Not yet known	Not yet known LDF CC : agreement of principal for tender 11 March 2010	Not yet known