

Committee Agenda



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Local Development Framework Cabinet Committee Monday, 1st August, 2011

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

Time: 7.00 pm

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall
Tel: 01992 564470
Email: democratic.services@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Members:

Councillors Mrs L Wagland (Chairman), Mrs R Gadsby, J Knapman, Mrs M McEwen and J Philip

PLEASE NOTE THE START TIME OF THIS MEETING

BUSINESS

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Assistant to the Chief Executive) To declare interests in any item on the agenda.

3. MINUTES

To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting of the Cabinet Committee held on 13 June 2011 (previously circulated).

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

To note the Terms of reference for the Cabinet Committee, as agreed by the Council on 17 February 2009; minute 113(a) refers.

(1) That a Local Development Framework Cabinet Committee be appointed with the following terms of reference:

(a) To oversee and submit recommendations to the Cabinet as appropriate on:

(i) the preparation of the Local Development Framework (LDF);

(ii) the preparation of the Core Strategy including agreement of

consultation stages and documentation, and the responses that should be made to any representations received;

(iii) the preparation of other Development Plan Documents including agreement of consultation stages and documentation, and the responses that should be made to any representations received;

(iv) the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents including agreement of consultation stages and documentation, and the responses that should be made to any representations received; and

(v) the revision of the Local Development Scheme and monitoring the achievement of milestones;

(b) To consider and provide input to consultants' reports which contribute to the establishment of an up-to-date evidence base to influence preparation of the LDF;

(c) To consider options for joint or coordinated working with other councils, which best meet the needs of this District, as required by the East of England Plan and (where relevant) the London Plan and to make recommendations to the Cabinet thereon;

(d) To consider the comprehensive review of the East of England Plan, and make recommendations to the Cabinet on any responses to be made;

(e) To liaise with the Planning Services Scrutiny Standing Panel as appropriate; and

(f) To work within the budgetary provision for the LDF, as approved by the Cabinet and the Council.

5. STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (Pages 5 - 24)

(Director of Planning & Economic Development) To consider the attached report (LDF-002-2011/12).

6. CORE PLANNING STRATEGY - ISSUES AND OPTIONS (Pages 25 - 48)

(Director of Planning & Economic Development) To consider the attached report (LDF-003-2011/12).

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, together with paragraphs (6) and (24) of the Council Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution requires that the permission of the Chairman be obtained, after prior notice to the Chief Executive, before urgent business not specified in the agenda (including a supplementary agenda of which the statutory period of notice has been given) may be transacted.

In accordance with Operational Standing Order (6) (non-executive bodies), any item raised by a non-member shall require the support of a member of the Cabinet Committee and the Chairman of the Cabinet Committee. Two weeks' notice of non-urgent items is required.

8. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESSExclusion

To consider whether, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press should be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below on grounds that they will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the following paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) or are confidential under Section 100(A)(2):

Agenda Item No	Subject	Exempt Information Paragraph Number
Nil	Nil	Nil

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

Confidential Items Commencement

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

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

Background Papers

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

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

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

Report to the Local Development Framework Cabinet Committee



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Report reference: LDF-002-2011/12
Date of meeting: 1 August 2011

Portfolio: Planning

**Subject: Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)- Update
II**

Responsible Officer: Amanda Wintle (01992 564543)

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) To approve the further minor amendments to the draft methodology and site assessment form, as requested at the Local Development Framework Cabinet Committee meeting of 13 June 2011, and further discussed with the Chairman and the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Technology following the meeting

Executive Summary:

Minor amendments to both the draft methodology and the site assessment form for the forthcoming Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) were agreed by LDF Cabinet Committee on 13 June 2011. The Chairman of the Cabinet Committee, in discussion with the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Technology requested further minor amendments, in discussion with Forward Planning officers, after the 13 June meeting. These minor amendments are now brought before LDF Cabinet Committee for final approval.

The most significant changes proposed are to reinforce the importance and reliance on Green Belt policy when assessing potential sites, protection of Greenfield sites, and that accessibility distances are predicated on appropriately accessible terrain.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To finalise the draft methodology and site assessment form, thus allowing key local stakeholders to be consulted on the SHLAA draft methodology, and allowing the appointment of external consultants to undertake the assessments.

Other Options for Action:

To not approve these further minor amendments to the draft methodology and site assessment form.

Report:

1. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is an essential piece of evidence that will help determine the amount of land that is potentially available for housing purposes. The LDF Cabinet Committee considered a report in May 2010 which included the draft methodology and site appraisal form that would be published for a period of consultation, and would also form the basis of an invitation to tender for suitable

organisations to complete this study.

2. Officers' proposed changes to the original draft methodology and form were subsequently agreed at the LDF Cabinet Committee meeting of 13 June 2011. At that meeting, further amendments were requested, and were subsequently discussed with the Chairman and the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Technology. This report has been put to LDF Cabinet Committee for their final approval of these amendments.

3. The four proposed amendments will affect both the site appraisal form and the methodology, and are as follows:

- 'Greenfield sites within or adjoining an existing boundary' (Stage A, Question 5 on the site assessment form) – the proposal is to raise the score of this classification, from 'Amber' to 'Amber/Red', i.e. analysing it as even less suitable as a housing site;
- Reference will be made to the Council's recognition of the importance of the character and appearance of the Green Belt, and that it will refer to current Green Belt policy in the assessment of potential sites;
- Accessibility to shops and services (Stage C, Questions 14a to h) – the proposal is to include a note in the methodology that such accessibility distances, for example, 400m to the nearest bus stop, are on the basis of an appropriately accessible terrain being in place, such as a pavement. Also, a note has been added to explain why the range of distances proposed have been chosen; and
- A paragraph emphasising that the SHLAA process will only be an *initial* assessment of the potential suitability of sites for future housing; there would necessarily be much further testing of sites in future before they would have any planning standing.

4. Paragraph 25 in the methodology has also been altered, so that it now accurately reflects the 'Brownfield/Greenfield/settlement location' order of preference for sites, within 'Stage A, Question 5' of the site appraisal sheet, as agreed by the Cabinet Committee.

5. Should these amendments be agreed by the Local Development Framework Cabinet Committee, the Forward Planning team would commence a tender exercise to appoint suitable consultants to complete this study, and make the draft methodology available for consultation beginning in September 2011.

Resource Implications:

From the LDF Budget – estimated cost £30,000 as set out in [report LDF-008-2009/10 \(11/03/2010\)](#)

Legal and Governance Implications:

The preparation of a robust SHLAA supports the following corporate objectives:

- Cabinet 2011/12 Key Objective 6, as the SHLAA could help the future provision of affordable housing
- Cabinet 2011/12 Key Objective 8, as a robust SHLAA would be one of the key parts of the LDF Evidence Base necessary to produce a 'sound' Core Planning Strategy

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

The SHLAA is an essential part of the Local Development Framework Evidence Base. The LDF is charged with delivering sustainable development, which is in accordance with the aims of the Safer, Cleaner and Greener agenda.

Consultation Undertaken:

None

Background Papers:

[Report to LDF Cabinet Committee LDF-008-2009/10 \(11/03/2010\)](#)

[Report to LDF Cabinet Committee LDF-002-2010/11 \(27/05/2010\)](#)

[Planning Policy Statement 3: *Housing* \(as amended June 2011\)](#)

[Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Practice Guidance \(July 2007\)](#)

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

If procedures for carrying out the SHLAA were not followed correctly, there would be a risk that the Core Planning Strategy would not be found “sound” by an Inspector. The SHLAA must be robust in order to form a useful part of the LDF Evidence Base.

Equality and Diversity:

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

Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? No

What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?

The preparation of the SHLAA may actually impact positively on equality issues, as it could help to identify sites for the future provision of affordable housing. This could, in turn, improve the quality of life of people living in the district, particularly those who might be on lower incomes, who cannot afford market housing in this expensive part of the country.

Stage C ‘Other Constraints’ in the site assessment form gives preference to potential housing sites which have easy access to services such as shops and schools. Any preferred sites for future housing are therefore likely to provide easy access to essential services, and thus be suitable for a larger range of residents, including those with mobility issues.

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

The potential positive impacts listed above are not limited to any one particular group; they would affect anyone who was allocated any affordable housing provided, and indeed anyone living in any market housing provided.

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Epping Forest District Council
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
Draft Methodology for Consultation
September 2011

Introduction

1. This document proposes the method to be used for carrying out a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The SHLAA is an important part of the evidence base to support the delivery of sufficient land for housing to meet the local need for more homes.
2. The methodology has been prepared in accordance with Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments, Practice Guidance published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (July 2007)¹.

Local Planning Context

3. Local planning authorities in England and Wales are required to produce a Local Development Framework (LDF) containing policies to guide development within their area. Epping Forest District Council is in the process of producing an LDF to replace the existing Local Plan (1998) and Alterations (2006).
4. The key document in the LDF is the Core Planning Strategy which will make decisions about the locations for new housing, employment, infrastructure and community facilities within Epping Forest District. The SHLAA will provide information on potential housing sites within the district to assist the decisions that will be made in the Core Planning Strategy. It is important to note that the SHLAA will only provide background information on potential housing sites. The SHLAA is not a policy document.
5. The SHLAA process will only be an initial assessment of the potential suitability of sites for future housing; there would necessarily be much further testing of sites in future before they would have any planning standing.
6. The Government has publicised its intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies, including the review of the East of England Plan (EEP) which was intended to look forward to 2031, and all their associated housing and employment land targets. Abolition is now expected in early 2012 when the Localism and Decentralisation Bill is enacted. The Core Planning Strategy will therefore need to set new, locally derived, housing targets for the district for the period up to 2031.
7. The Bill also contains a provision concerning a “duty to co-operate” with adjoining authorities, and it is anticipated that this will be strengthened which means that continued co-ordinated working, particularly with Harlow, will be expected. Urban extensions of the town, but within this district, will therefore remain an option while the new housing targets are being established. The main difference will be

¹ Available at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/landavailabilityassessment>

that those housing numbers would now count towards this Council's figures rather than Harlow's, as was the case under the EEP.

National Planning Policy

8. The national approach to planning for housing is contained in Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3) which seeks to provide a ready supply of land for housing to meet future demand and needs. To ensure there is sufficient land available at the local level PPS3 requires planning authorities to carry out an assessment of land supply for housing in their area known as the SHLAA. The Assessment should identify:
 - specific deliverable sites for the first five years of a plan that are ready for development – this information is to be kept up to date and topped up as sites are developed;
 - specific developable sites for years 6-10, and ideally years 11-15, in plans to enable the five year supply to be topped up².
9. For years 11-15 broad locations for growth can be indicated where it is not possible to identify specific sites. An allowance for windfall sites³ should not be made for the first 10 years of the plan. However, where local circumstances make it difficult to identify specific sites, a windfall allowance may be justified.

Purpose of the SHLAA

10. The role of the SHLAA is to identify sites with potential for housing in appropriate locations; assess their potential; and assess when they are likely to be developed.

Overall aim of the SHLAA

11. According to the Practice Guidance the SHLAA should aim to achieve the following outcomes:
 - i. A list of sites, cross referenced to maps showing locations and boundaries of specific sites (or broad locations where applicable);
 - ii. An assessment of each site's deliverability/developability and a realistic timescale for when the site is expected to be developed i.e. during the period 0-5 years, 6-10 years or 11-15 years;
 - iii. An estimate of the potential number of houses that could be developed on the site;
 - iv. Provide details of any constraints on the site;
 - v. Recommendations on how these constraints could be overcome and when.

Partnership Approach

12. Where possible the SHLAA should be carried out at the level of the Housing Market Area which usually extends across the boundary of neighbouring local authorities. A number of Housing Market Areas have been identified in the sub-

² Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments, Practice Guidance – Department for Communities and Local Government (July 2007)

³ Windfall – a housing site that was not allocated by local planning policy and becomes available for development at a later date

region, and Epping Forest District actually falls within 5 separate areas, so it is not possible to adopt this approach.

13. A joint Housing Market Assessment⁴ has been carried out for the local authorities in the sub-region known as the M11/London Commuter Belt East. This area comprises the districts of Uttlesford, Epping Forest, Harlow, Brentwood, East Hertfordshire and Broxbourne. Given the different stages of preparation of their individual Core Planning Strategies, it was decided that it was not practical to prepare the SHLAA in partnership with these neighbouring authorities, so this SHLAA is to be prepared for the area of Epping Forest District only. This approach is acceptable under the Practice Guidance. The other authorities in the Housing Market Assessment Area will be consulted on the Epping Forest SHLAA, in particular East Hertfordshire and Harlow.

Key Local Stakeholders

14. The work of producing the SHLAA will include the input of key local stakeholders such as house builders, social landlords, planning agents, town/parish councils and any other agencies that have a recognised interest in the district. These key local stakeholders ('the SHLAA Partnership') will be consulted on this methodology and their views will help to shape the way in which the SHLAA is carried out. In addition, the views of key local stakeholders will be sought in assessing the deliverability and developability of potential sites.

Stages in the Methodology

15. These stages are set out below and follow the approach given in the Practice Guidance.
 - 1) Planning the Assessment
 - 2) Determining which sources of sites will be included in the Assessment
 - 3) Desktop review of existing information
 - 4) Assessing which sites and areas will be surveyed
 - 5) Carrying out the survey
 - 6) Estimating the housing potential of each site
 - 7) Assessing when and whether sites are likely to be developed
 - i. Assessing suitability for housing
 - ii. Assessing availability for housing
 - iii. Assessing achievability for housing
 - iv. Overcoming constraints
 - 8) Review of the Assessment
 - 9) Identifying and assessing the housing potential of broad locations (where necessary)
 - 10) Determining the housing potential of windfall (where justified)
16. The Forward Planning team at Epping Forest District Council will manage the production of the SHLAA via the appointed consultants. The team has extensive knowledge of local policies and the development of housing sites within the District which will be relayed to the appointed consultants. At different stages

⁴ The full SHMA is available at:

http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Council_Services/planning/forward_planning/LDF/Strategic_Housing_Market_Assessment.asp

other officers of the Council will be needed to provide specific assistance (see Stages 6 and 7). Consultation with key local stakeholders will ensure that the assessment is properly conducted to the expected level of detail and in accordance with the Practice Guidance.

Stage 2: Determining which sources of sites will be included in the Assessment

17. Table 1 below lists the sources of potential sites that will be considered in the assessment. If any other sources of potential sites become apparent during the Assessment these will also be investigated.

Table 1

Sites in the planning process	
Source of potential sites	Source of information
Unimplemented planning permissions for housing	In-house database
Planning permissions for housing under construction	In-house database
Housing allocations	Local Plan and Alterations
All other land allocations	Local Plan and Alterations
Sites not currently in the planning process	
Vacant and derelict land and buildings	National Land Use Database Urban Housing Capacity Study 2002 Empty Property register Valuation office database LPA vacant property registers (industrial and commercial) Commercial property databases English House Condition Survey
Surplus public sector land	Essex County Council Land Terrier Primary Care Trust(s) Environment Agency British Waterways Contact Utility companies for Land holdings EFDC Land Terrier via Asset Management Group Register of Surplus Public Sector Land
Land in non-residential use which may be suitable for redevelopment for housing	Urban Housing Capacity study 2002 National Land Use Database Call for Sites Site visits Desktop survey
Additional housing opportunities in established residential areas	Urban Housing Capacity Study 2002 Desktop survey using Aerial Photographs Site visits

Large scale redevelopment and redesign of existing residential areas	Call for Sites Development and Design Brief St John's, Epping Broadway Options Development Brief, Debden Broadway Site visits
Sites in rural settlements and rural exception sites	Local Plan representations that were not allocated. Call for Sites Parish Council information Site visits
Urban extensions	Call for Sites
New free standing settlements	Call for Sites

18. Wherever possible the initial assessment will not exclude consideration of any type of land. The exceptions will be those sites that have particular designations and are protected from harmful development, for example Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Stage 3: Desktop review of existing information

19. The sources of information for potential sites have been listed in Table 1 above. A Call for Sites exercise was commenced in 2008 to enable landowners, developers and members of the public to put forward potential development sites. Due to the delay in producing the Core Planning Strategy, sites being put forward under the Call for Sites process are still currently being accepted.
20. Apart from setting out the sources of information, another key aspect is deciding the size of sites that will be included in the assessment. It is possible to look at all sites that have potential for at least one dwelling. However the total housing yield from that exercise would be unlikely to justify the amount of extra work involved. Analysis of the information for the 5 year housing land supply for the District shows that while there are a considerable number of small sites they contribute a relatively small number of dwellings to the overall housing supply. A 5 year housing land supply can still be achieved even when those sites with five or less dwellings are removed from the figures.
21. It is proposed that thresholds of 6 dwellings minimum per site, or a minimum site area of 0.2 hectares are set. This area allows for 6 dwellings at a density of 30 dwellings per hectare.
22. As part of the desktop review each site will be assessed against a Site Appraisal Sheet (see Appendix to this report). This asks a series of standard questions that draw out further information about each site and its potential suitability for housing development.
23. All the sites identified by the desktop review will be listed and mapped at the scale of 1:1250.

Stage 4: Assessing which sites and areas will be surveyed

24. All the sites identified by the desktop review will be visited. In addition to considering all identified sites attention will be paid to the following:
- Current development hotspots that are the focus of recent planning permissions which give an indication of current market demand;
 - Town and district centres and an area within 10 minutes walking time, via appropriately accessible terrain, of these centres (the CLG Best Practice Guidance defines a pedestrian catchment as 'the areas within a 10 minute walk (up to 800m) of an established centre'⁵)
 - Principal public transport corridors and their walking catchment areas.
25. The survey of potential sites will follow a sequence with the most sustainable sites considered first. In this context the sequence will be:
- Brownfield site within an existing settlement boundary
 - Brownfield site adjoining an existing settlement boundary
 - Brownfield site not within or adjoining an existing settlement boundary
 - Greenfield site within or adjoining an existing settlement boundary
 - Greenfield site not within or adjoining an existing settlement boundary
26. The above sequence is based on the guidance in PPS3 to give preference to brownfield sites in urban areas particularly where located close to existing public transport links and infrastructure, eg a town or district centre. Any site in the above sequence that is located close to existing public transport links will be considered more sustainable and preferred over a similarly located site that is not as close to such links. Sites within or around larger settlements will be prioritised over those within or around smaller ones, as there are likely to be more facilities available in larger settlements.
27. The Council recognises the importance of the character and appearance of the Green Belt, and it will refer to current Green Belt policy in the assessment of potential sites.

Stage 5: Carrying out the survey

28. A standard site visit sheet will be used by all those carrying out the survey, to ensure a consistent approach.

Stage 6: Estimating the housing potential of each site

29. The housing potential for each surveyed site will be guided by the dwelling densities that are appropriate to that particular area of the District. It may be worthwhile in some cases to consider a number of different densities, which will give a range of different housing figures, but all details and assumptions should be appropriately recorded.

⁵ See page 13 of Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments, Practice Guidance – Department for Communities and Local Government (July 2007)

30. Where an estimation of potential has already been made this will be used e.g. unimplemented planning permissions, pre-application discussions, development briefs.
31. For other sites the estimate will take into account the context of the location and existing dwelling densities. This will be combined with using examples of recent schemes in other similar areas to determine an appropriate density.

Stage 7: Assessing when and whether sites are likely to be developed

32. In deciding when and whether development is likely to occur consideration must be given to the suitability, availability and achievability of the site. Any constraints and whether they can be overcome should also be considered.
 - Suitability – a site would be considered suitable for housing development if it offers an appropriate location for development and would contribute to the creation of sustainable mixed communities. Factors to be considered include (a) planning policy restrictions; (b) physical problems or limitations such as access, flood risk or contamination; (c) potential impacts such as effect on landscape features or natural habitats; and (d) environmental conditions that would be experienced by prospective residents;
 - Availability – this depends on (1) there being no restrictions in terms of legal ownership, (2) an owner prepared to sell for development or (3) a developer expressing interest to develop the site. Planning permission does not necessarily indicate availability if, for example, a landowner is not willing to sell the site. Assessment will be made on the best available information on the ownership and legal status of a site;
 - Achievability – where the economic conditions allow for development at a particular time the site can be considered achievable. Essentially the cost of development needs to be balanced against the eventual value of the dwellings when sold. To gauge whether a site is economically viable for development, views will be sought from Council officers, housebuilders and developers/agents to gain an understanding of viability. Use of available empirical evidence will also be made. Their comments on the selected sites can then be used to check whether conclusions drawn on the economic viability of the remaining sites are correct;
 - Overcoming constraints – Any constraints and the actions needed to overcome them will be considered. For example a new road access may be needed to make development possible.
33. A conclusion can then be reached about whether, according to the Practice Guidance, the site is deliverable or developable.
 - Deliverable – this is where (1) a site is available immediately, (2) it offers an appropriate location for housing development and (3) there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years from the date of adoption of the plan.
 - Developable – this means that a site should be in an appropriate location for housing development, and there should be a reasonable prospect that it will be available for, and could be developed at, a specific point in time.

34. It is important to note, however, that the identification of a site in the SHLAA does not mean it will ultimately be found to be a suitable development site. Allocation of sites for housing purposes will be via the Local Development Framework.

Stage 8: Review of the Assessment

35. Once stages 6 and 7 are completed a list of sites will have been generated where the housing potential of each site has been assessed and a judgement made on when the site could come forward for development. A map showing the boundary of each site will also be produced.
36. The information collected will be used in updating the five year land supply of deliverable housing sites and will also be used to produce a housing trajectory showing when potential housing sites are likely to come forward up to 2031.
37. The collated information will be set out in a spreadsheet showing the likely delivery of the identified sites with housing potential over the periods 0 to 5 years, 6 to 10 years and 11-15 years as required. The 15 year period covered by the SHLAA would start in 2014 when it is intended the Core Planning Strategy will be adopted.

Stage 9: Identifying and assessing the housing potential of broad locations (where necessary)

38. If insufficient sites have been found the next step would be to identify broad locations for housing development. These would give some indication to the local community about where future development will be directed and provide some certainty to developers about where development will be encouraged. If it is necessary to find broad locations for housing development regard will be had to the nature and scale of opportunities in the area identified and market conditions.

Stage 10: Determining the housing potential of windfall (where justified)

39. PPS3 makes it clear that, where possible, the supply of land for housing should be based on specific sites or, where necessary, broad locations as these provide a more positive approach with greater certainty over the future direction of housing growth. The intention is therefore not to make an allowance for windfall sites as part of the housing supply. This position will be kept under review as the SHLAA progresses.

Appendix 1

Key Stakeholders for Consultation

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Neighbouring Councils

Borough of Broxbourne
Brentwood Borough Council
East Hertfordshire District Council
Harlow Council
Uttlesford District Council

Other Neighbouring Authorities

Chelmsford Borough Council
Enfield Council
Havering London Borough
Redbridge Council
Waltham Forest Council

Housing Associations

East Thames Housing Group (Dan Read, 0208 522 2000 email: dan.read@eastthames.co.uk)
Hastoe Housing Association (Ulrike Maccariello, 01799 522901 email: umaccariello@hastoe.com)
London and Quadrant Housing Trust (Andrew Clarke, 0208 535 2931 email: aclarke.lqgroup.org.uk)
Moat Housing Group (Paul Martin, 01621 841180 email: paul.martin@moat.co.uk)
Warden Housing Association (Home Group) (Jay Rutnam, 01279 621621 email: jay.rutnam@homegroup.org.uk)

Town/Parish Councils

Abbess, Beauchamp and Berners Roding Parish Council
Buckhurst Hill Parish Council
Chigwell Parish Council
Epping Town Council
Epping Upland Parish Council
Fyfield Parish Council
High Ongar Parish Council
Lambourne Parish Council
Loughton Town Council
Matching Parish Council
Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers Parish Council
Nazeing Parish Council
North Weald Bassett Parish Council
Ongar Town Council
Roydon Parish Council
Sheering Parish Council
Stanford Rivers Parish Council
Stapleford Abbots Parish Council
Stapleford Tawney Parish Council
Theydon Bois Parish Council
Theydon Garnon Parish Council

Theydon Mount Parish Council
Waltham Abbey Town Council
Willingale Parish Council

Housebuilders or Planning Agents

Andrew Newman
BB Partnership
Bellway Homes Essex
Bidwells
BRD Tech
Clear Designs
Colin Southgate
Crest Nicholson (Eastern) Ltd
Darren Hunt
David Sadler
Hill Partnerships
Higgins Homes Plc
JB Planning
JCN Design Ltd
JSP Partnerships
JTS Partnership
Ken Fox
Ken Judge
Martyn Pattie
Redrow Homes Eastern Ltd
Sworders Agricultural
White & Mileson

Other Agencies/Bodies

Corporation of London
English Heritage
Environment Agency
Essex County Council
Lee Valley Regional Park Authority
Natural England

SHLAA Site Appraisal

Site Name/Address	Ownership

Method

The Appraisal sheet uses a traffic light scoring system to calculate the potential suitability of a site for housing development. A green light is where there is no impact or issue and scores 1. Amber is where there is an impact or issue although this can be mitigated or it is not significant – this scores 2. A red light is where there is a significant issue and scores 3. (There is one instance of an 'amber/red light', which is between amber and red, and scores 2.5).

After all questions have been answered the score for the site is totalled to allow comparison with other sites in terms of potential suitability for housing – the lower the total the more suitable the site should be. The figures should not be interpreted or otherwise used as a definite identification of development sites – any such decisions will have to be subject to full community engagement and consultation. The totals will, however, be used as evidence to inform future stages in the preparation of the Local Development Framework.

Stage A (Strategic Constraints) is a filter for the minimum requirements for a site to be suitable. Sites will be discounted if there is a red light for questions 1) or 2) or 3). They will also be separately discounted if there is a red light for both 4) and 5).

All remaining sites will be tested against Stages B and C (Local and Other Constraints). For Stage B one or more red lights means the site is unlikely to be suitable although it will not be discounted at this stage and further investigation will be required.

For questions where it is a subjective judgement as to whether it is a green, amber or red light the decision will be made on the best available information.

It should be noted that the Council recognises the importance of the character and appearance of the Green Belt, and that it will refer to current Green Belt policy in the assessment of potential sites.

NB the SHLAA process is only an *initial* assessment of the potential suitability of sites for future housing; there would necessarily be much further testing of sites in future before they would have any planning standing.

Stage A – Strategic Constraints

1) Is the site within Flood Risk Zone 3b (Functional Floodplain)?
 (Green - G) No – Zone 1, little or no risk
 (Amber – A) No – Zone 2, low to medium risk
 (Amber – A) No – Zone 3a, high risk - exception test required (Table D3 of PPS25)
 (Red – R) Yes – site is discounted

2) Is the site within or does it impact a European Site of Nature Conservation (Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Ramsar site), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserve (NNR), or Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)?

- (G) No
- (A) Yes – adverse impact/impacts that can be mitigated against
- (R) Yes – within or significantly impacts - site will be discounted

3) Would development of the site affect Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Historic Parks & Gardens?

- (G) Opportunity to enhance/no significant adverse impact
- (A) Significant adverse impact that can be mitigated
- (R) Significant adverse impact that cannot be mitigated – site will be discounted

4) Is the site in the Green Belt?

- (G) No
- (R) Yes

5) Is it a Greenfield or Brownfield[#] site and is it within or adjoining an existing settlement?

- (G) Brownfield site within an existing settlement boundary*
- (A) Brownfield site adjoining an existing settlement boundary*
- (A) Brownfield site not within or adjoining an existing settlement boundary*
- (A/R) Greenfield site within or adjoining an existing settlement boundary*
- (R) Greenfield site not within or adjoining an existing settlement boundary*

[#] Brownfield or previously developed land as defined in Annex B of PPS3 Housing

* This refers to those settlements shown on the Local Plan Proposals Map as being outside the area of Green Belt policy and which therefore have a settlement boundary.

Stage B – Local Constraints

6) How would development of the site impact on the character of the landscape?

- (G) Opportunity to enhance/no adverse impact
- (A) Adverse impact/impact that can be mitigated
- (R) Significant adverse impact that cannot be mitigated against

7) Is the site a Local Nature Reserve or Local Wildlife Site, or does it contain any Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species or Habitats?

- (G) Opportunity to enhance/no adverse impact
- (A) Adverse impact/impact that can be mitigated
- (R) Significant adverse impact that cannot be mitigated against

8) Are there any trees on the site protected by tree preservation orders (TPOs)?

- (G) No
- (A) Yes – adverse impact/impact that can be mitigated
- (R) Yes – significant impact on the protected trees that cannot be mitigated against

9) Is there any relevant planning history (planning applications/decisions/appeals and/or consideration at Local Plan Inquiries)?

- (G) No
- (G) Yes – relevant but does not preclude development
- (A) Yes – relevant issues raised that can be mitigated against
- (R) Yes – relevant issues raised that cannot be mitigated against

10) Is the site allocated/being considered for development in the Minerals and Waste Plan/LDF?

- (G) No
- (A) Yes – proposed

(R) Yes – allocated

11) Is the site (or part of it) within the boundary of the Lee Valley Regional Park (LVRP)?

(G) No

(A) Yes – impact on the LVRP is minimal

(R) Yes – impact on the LVRP is significant

12) Is the site within (a) 30m of an underground electricity transmission cable; (b) 100m of an electricity transmission overhead line; or (c) 150m of a high pressure gas pipeline?

(G) No

(A) Yes – distance scores 'Moderate' on relevant National Grid risk table

(R) Yes – distance scores 'High' on relevant National Grid risk table

13) Is the site within or adjacent to a Conservation Area?

(G) No

(A) Yes it is adjacent to, or not prominent within, a Conservation Area

(R) Yes it is prominent within a Conservation Area

Stage C – Other Constraints

The distances below are assumed to equate approximately to the following times for walking:

400m – 5 minutes; 800m – 10 minutes; 1200m – 15 minutes; 1600m – 20 minutes; 2400m – 30 minutes; 3200m – 40 minutes

14) Accessibility – distance from the following:

(a)(i) bus stop (with at least hourly service)

(G) Within 400m

(A) More than 400m and less than 800m

(R) More than 800m

(a)(ii) Central Line station (recognising that this serves only 5 settlements in the district)

(G) Within 800m

(A) More than 800m and less than 1600m

(R) More than 1600m

(a)(iii) Railway station (recognising there is only one (Roydon) in the district, so take into account those close to the district boundary ie Waltham Cross, Cheshunt, Broxbourne, Harlow, Harlow Mills and Sawbridgeworth)

(G) Within 1600m

(A) More than 1600m and less than 3200m

(R) More than 3200m

(b) local employment provision (ie employment sites and principal, smaller or district centres as defined on the Local Plan and Alterations Proposals Maps)

(G) Within 1600m

(A) More than 1600m and less than 2400m

(R) More than 2400m

(c) nearest primary school

(G) Within 800m

(A) More than 800m and less than 1200m

(R) More than 1200m

(d) existing (village) shop/post office

(G) Within 800m

(A) More than 800m and less than 1200m

(R) More than 1200m

(e) GP surgery/health centre

(G) Within 800m

(A) More than 800m and less than 1200m

(R) More than 1200m

(f) nearest secondary school (recognising that only Buckhurst Hill, Chigwell, Epping, Loughton and Waltham Abbey have secondary schools)

(G) Within 1600m

(A) More than 1600m and less than 2400m

(R) More than 2400m

(g) nearest principal/smaller/district centre as defined in the Local Plan Alterations

(G) Within 800m

(A) More than 800m and less than 1600m

(R) More than 1600m

(h) nearest local centre as defined in the Local Plan Alterations

(G) Within 400m

(A) More than 400m and less than 800m

(R) More than 800m

15) Is there potential contamination on site?

(G) Opportunity to enhance/no adverse impact

(A) Adverse impact/impact that can be mitigated

(R) Significant adverse impact that cannot be mitigated against

16) Are there potential noise problems with the site?

(G) No

(A) Adverse impact/impact that can be mitigated

(R) Significant adverse impact that cannot be mitigated against

17) Could the topography constrain development of the site?

(G) No

(A) Adverse impact/impact that can be mitigated

(R) Significant adverse impact that cannot be mitigated against

18) Would development of the site be likely to affect, or be affected by, an Air Quality Management Area?

(G) No

(A) Adverse impact/impact that can be mitigated

(R) Significant adverse impact that cannot be mitigated against

19) Are there issues with car parking in the area?

(G) No significant issues

(A) Significant issues that can be mitigated against

(R) Significant issues

20) Is there sufficient access to the site?

(G) Yes - access is suitable

(A) No - however access issues can be overcome

(R) No - significant issues with access

21) Is the site used to access nearby properties/businesses/roads or pathways?

(G) No - not used for access

(A) Yes - however there are alternative means of access

(A) Yes - however alternative access can be provided

(R) Yes - providing alternative access may preclude against development

22) Do any nearby buildings overlook or front onto the site?

(G) No

(A) Yes although site could be designed to overcome this problem without reducing housing capacity

(R) Yes to overcome this problem housing capacity on the site would need to be reduced

23) Is the site part of a larger site or could it prejudice the development of any strategic sites?

(G) No

(A) Yes it is part of a larger site although this would not prejudice the development of strategic sites

(R) Yes it is part of a larger site and would prejudice the development of strategic sites

24) Would development of the site affect any locally listed buildings (e.g. Buildings of Local Interest)?

(G) No

(A) Yes - not adversely

(A) Yes - impact could be mitigated against

(R) Yes – significant impact

25) Would development of the site affect a Protected Lane (as defined by the Local Plan Proposals Map)?

(G) No

(A) Yes – impact could be mitigated

(R) Yes – significant impact

26) Would development of the site affect any archaeological remains and their settings?

(G) No

(A) Yes – not adversely

(A) Yes – impact can be mitigated against

(R) Yes – significant impact

27) Does the shape of the site impact upon its potential for development?

(G) No

(A) Yes – not adversely

(A) Yes – impact can be mitigated against

(R) Yes – significant impact

28) Does the site relate well with existing communities?

(G) Yes

(A) No – although the problems can be overcome

(R) No

29) Is the site (or part of it) Common Land?

(G) No
(R) Yes

30) Will development take place on Previously Developed Land?

(G) Yes
(R) No

31) Is the site identified in the Employment Land Review

(G) No
(R) Yes

32) Is the site Urban Open Space as shown on the Local Plan Proposals Map?

(G) No
(A) Yes, but impact or loss can be mitigated
(R) Yes – significant impact on, or loss of, open space

Report to the Local Development Framework Cabinet Committee



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Report reference: LDF-003-2011/12
Date of meeting: 1 August 2011

Portfolio: Planning and Technology

Subject: Core Planning Strategy - Issues & Options

Responsible Officer: Amanda Wintle (01992 564543)

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) To note the national policy position in respect of the Localism Bill and the expected draft of the National Planning Policy Framework;**
- (2) To note the evidence that has been completed to support the LDF, and that which is still on-going;**
- (3) To agree that no formal Local Development Scheme is submitted to the Secretary of State at this stage, for the reasons set out below, but that an informal timetable will be published on the website;**
- (4) To agree the draft vision, aims and objectives of the Core Planning Strategy;**
- (5) To agree that informal liaison with Harlow and East Herts District Council Officers continues; and**
- (6) To agree that informal meetings with the Cabinet Committee be arranged as necessary to discuss the emerging Issues & Options consultation document, and that any briefing papers provided will be published on the Council's website.**

Executive Summary:

The national planning policy position is changing rapidly, and further change is expected over the coming year. This change is being driven by the emerging Localism Bill and the proposed National Planning Policy Framework, and the impacts on the preparation of Local Development Frameworks at a district level are likely to be significant.

The existing evidence base that will be used to support the LDF will be kept under review in light of the continuing changes. No updates are required at present to existing studies, however this may become necessary in future. The LDF Cabinet Committee will be kept apprised of the need for any updates.

Further, in light of the changes it is not considered useful at present to prepare and submit a Local Development Scheme. There is too much uncertainty over the requirements of the emerging localism agenda to be able to set a timetable at present. This position will be kept under review, and an informal timetable will be published in the meantime.

The draft vision, aims and objectives to be included in the Core Planning Strategy are presented for discussion and agreement. These elements will form the structure for the document, setting out the key issues that have been identified, and the potential options which exist to address them.

Officers have worked informally with colleagues of Harlow and East Herts District Councils for a number of years, primarily on preparing joint evidence to determine how the growth required by the East of England Plan should be delivered. In light of the proposed abolition of the Regional Strategies, whether this arrangement should be continued needs to be discussed. As a higher order centre on the boundary of Epping Forest District, it is reasonable to expect that the continued aspiration of Harlow District Council for regeneration and growth should factor into the options considered while planning for the future of this District.

Given the complex nature of the preparation of the LDF as a whole, it is recommended that informal meetings may be needed on occasion to ensure that Members of the LDF Cabinet Committee and others are fully briefed and have the opportunity to have detailed discussions about the emerging consultation document. Briefing papers will be circulated to all Members and, with permission, published on the website to ensure transparency.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

It is important that Members are kept up to date with the emerging national policy position, and the potential implications for the preparation of planning policy in Epping Forest District, including the evidence base. The extent and timing of changes that will still be made to national policy are not yet clear, and therefore it is appropriate to delay the preparation of a formal Local Development Scheme until the implications are fully understood.

Whilst the process is still unclear, the key issues as identified by the “Community Visioning” exercise and existing evidence are apparent and progress can be made on furthering the Core Planning Strategy. Discussion of the draft vision, aims and objectives is the first stage of this.

The potential expansion of Harlow remains a key issue for the Core Planning Strategy to consider, despite the Government’s intention to abolish Regional Strategies. The mechanisms for ensuring a continued debate about this matter should be formally agreed.

The preparation of the LDF as a whole is a complex process, and informal meetings with the LDF Cabinet Committee may be necessary to ensure the key issues are fully understood.

Other Options for Action:

- In respect of the Local Development Scheme, a formal document could be prepared and submitted to the Secretary of State in the coming months. However, it is likely this would become quickly out of date given the emerging changes that are not yet clear.
- To not agree the draft vision, aims and objectives, or to agree them in an amended form.
- To not agree that the informal meeting arrangements continue with Harlow and East Herts District Council officers.
- To not agree that informal meetings of the LDF Cabinet Committee may be necessary to discuss the emerging Core Planning Strategy.

Report:

National Policy Position

1. This is an update of the report to the LDF Cabinet Committee on 7 February 2011. The Localism Bill is currently being considered in the House of Lords, and it is anticipated this will be enacted by spring 2012. The Bill is likely to cause significant further change in the way in which planning policy is developed at a local level, although the extent of further change is not yet clear.
2. The coalition Government has made clear that Regional Strategies will be abolished as soon as possible, and recent challenges in the High Court have not changed this position. The timescale for complete abolition of the Strategies is not yet clear, but further information will be provided when it is available. At present, the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England (*the East of England Plan – May 2008*) still forms part of the development plan for the District, and must be taken into account in preparing Local Development Frameworks.
3. The Localism Bill also introduces Neighbourhood Plans, and providing the required support to Town / Parish Councils to prepare these may have a significant impact on the resources of the Forward Planning team. It is important to continue focusing on the Core Planning Strategy, to provide the strategic framework to support any emerging Neighbourhood Plans.
4. Also arising from the Localism Bill is a Government intention to replace all the existing Planning Policy Guidance notes and Planning Policy Statements with a single National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). A draft of this NPPF is expected to be published for consultation later in the year, and LDFs must be in conformity with this once it is published in its final form.

Epping Forest District Core Planning Strategy Evidence

5. Significant work has been undertaken on collating a robust evidence base to support the preparation of the Local Development Framework. A list of the studies is attached at Appendix 1.
6. There are still a number of studies still in progress. These are:
 - (i) Assessment of the horticultural glasshouse industry in the District – this report is currently underway, and the final report is expected to be complete in October 2011;
 - (ii) Audit of Open Space (“PPG17 audit”) – an update of this work was provided on 15 March 2011. The Audit work will be fully completed by the end of August 2011, and consultants to complete the qualitative assessment work will be appointed by the end of September. It is anticipated that this work will be completed by the end of 2011;
 - (iii) Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) – this study is subject to a further report on this agenda. Consultation is required on the proposed methodology, and consultants need to be appointed to carry out the study work. This is a key piece of evidence for the LDF, and therefore care must be taken to ensure the outcomes from it are robust. Subject to appointment of suitable consultants, this study should be completed by Spring 2012;
 - (iv) Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) – a county-wide GTAA was produced in 2010, however following a recent public inquiry into the provision of a site for

Gypsies and Travellers it has become apparent that an updated assessment for the District may be necessary. An initial assessment of the GTAA and the desktop information held within the Council will be undertaken, and this will enable officers to make an assessment to determine whether additional specialised advice is required. The initial assessment will be completed by the end of October 2011, and Members will be asked to consider the findings once this work is complete;

(v) Settlement Edge Landscape Sensitivity Study (Chris Blandford Associates January 2010) and Water Cycle Strategy (Hyder Consulting 2009) – both of these studies were completed some time ago, and must still be brought to this Cabinet Committee for formal addition to the LDF evidence base. Other work pressures to date have not permitted these reports to be prioritised. It is anticipated these will be presented to LDF Cabinet Committee before the end of 2011;

(vi) Local Wildlife Sites – this completed report was presented to LDF Cabinet Committee in September 2010. There is still work outstanding to ensure that the newly designated sites are properly shown on a revised Local Plan map, and the owners of the land are appropriately informed. This is an area of work which needs to be delivered jointly between the Forward Planning team and Countrycare; and

(vii) Demographic Study – In light of the proposed abolition of the Regional Strategies, each district council will be required to identify its own growth rate. In order to do this, up to date information relating to population and household growth is required. Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA), recognising the importance of this work, has commissioned Essex County Council to lead a project which will provide this information. This is being funded from existing EPOA budgets. It is anticipated that new projections and estimates will be available by the end of the year. Once new data sets are available, the implications for the Strategic Housing Market Assessment will be reviewed.

7. It is vital that the evidence base to support the LDF is robust and kept up-to-date. In light of the changes that have occurred, and are likely to continue to occur for some time yet, officers consider that at present it is sensible to refrain from commissioning further work to update any existing studies until the position at national level becomes clearer. It is considered that the evidence base remains robust within the current parameters of existing national and regional policy, and guidance relating to the preparation of LDFs. This position will be kept under review, and the Cabinet Committee will be kept informed of any changes, or need to update any of the studies.

Timetable

8. It is a requirement of the LDF system that a Local Development Scheme is agreed by the Secretary of State, and made available to the public. A report was presented to this Cabinet Committee on 28 March 2011 which set out the proposed timetable to be included in a revised LDS. This timetable was based on the best available information at the time, and is included for reference at Appendix 2. It is apparent there is already slippage, caused by continued Government changes and staff losses from the Forward Planning team. It is also apparent, as outlined above, that changes are likely to continue in national policy, and some of these could be significant in terms of the preparation of the LDF.

9. It is therefore proposed that a revised LDS is not submitted to the Secretary of State, until there is more clarity on the changes that will be introduced and what this will mean for plan making in the District. It is suggested that an informal LDS is published on the Council's website to inform residents and those interested in the process of the timetable. However, any timetable that is produced will need to be carefully monitored to ensure that account is taken of further changes to the LDF system.

10. There is a significant risk to any timetable that is adopted at present, as the Forward Planning team is currently experiencing a severe staff shortage. Vacant posts have recently been advertised internally, and the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Technology will receive a further report shortly concerning any remaining vacancies.

Aims & Objectives

11. An initial public consultation exercise took place from November 2010 through to January 2011. This was intended to determine what residents considered to be the most important issues for the District. Although a simplistic approach was taken to the questions that were asked at this stage, it has provided a good indication of the key areas of concern. This information has been used to help identify an appropriate vision, and aims and objectives that will help to achieve this vision.

12. The Community Visioning exercise showed that the protection of green spaces was considered the most important issue for the District. It is with this in mind that the vision, aims and objectives have been structured. It is intended that a “green infrastructure” framework will support all of the policies to be contained within the Core Planning Strategy.

13. The draft vision, aims and objectives are in Appendix 3. There are six aims, each with a varying number of associated objectives. At present, these are initial drafts, and there is still work to be done to ensure that the objectives are “SMART” and can be properly measured. Aim 1 focuses on the protection and improvement of green spaces and the Green Belt, and protection of the character of the District. It is important that, within the parameters of needing to make provision for sustainable growth in the District, the features that are unique to Epping Forest District are properly protected.

14. Aim 2 concentrates on managing growth within the District. Growth to meet the needs of residents and businesses in the District must be properly managed and, in setting a broad framework for this growth, the Council will be in a much stronger position to manage proposals for growth.

15. Aim 3 seeks to support the economy within the District. There are a number of competing centres near to Epping Forest District, both in terms of employment and retail provision. The Core Planning Strategy must support businesses in the District.

16. The long term provision of housing is one of the key functions of the Core Planning Strategy, and this is covered by Aim 4. The District has varying housing needs and demands and, as already set out above, provision to meet these needs must be carefully managed within the overarching parameters of the vision which seeks to protect green spaces and the Green Belt.

17. In ensuring that Epping Forest District achieves sustainable developments, which bring benefits to both existing and new residents, Aim 5 considers the social aspects of managing growth. There are some considerable health inequalities across the District, and the Core Planning Strategy will seek to improve these.

18. Aim 6 focuses on movement in and around the District, and seeks to improve access. This will be achieved by encouraging and supporting improvements to the public transport network, and seeking development that will reduce reliance on private cars where possible.

19. These aims and objectives will be tested through the Sustainability Appraisal process, to assess whether they will lead to the most sustainable development possible.

Informal Engagement

20. The Council has previously adopted an informal joint working arrangement at an officer level with Harlow and East Herts District Councils in order to manage the growth of Harlow that is proposed in the East of England Plan. Harlow District Council is still positive in the need for development beyond the existing boundaries to support its aspirations for regeneration and growth. Given the forthcoming abolition of the East of England Plan, and with it the policy support for this approach, the Council must now consider whether this informal arrangement should still continue. Officers are of the view that as part of the preparation of the Core Planning Strategy it will be reasonable to consider some limited growth of Harlow, and therefore the informal arrangements should continue at this stage.

21. The Core Planning Strategy is a complex document, made more so by the continual changes being introduced by the Government. For this reason, officers consider it may be appropriate to arrange a series of informal meetings with the LDF Cabinet Committee through August and September to discuss emerging issues and options. This would allow members to be fully briefed and engaged with the drafting process.

Resource Implications:

Preparation of the Core Planning Strategy is from existing staff and financial resources, subject to all currently vacant posts within the Forward Planning team being filled.

The full impact of supporting the production of Neighbourhood Plans is not yet known, but the implications for both staff and financial resources could be significant to the Forward Planning team, and the Council as a whole.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The Council is required to pay attention to changing Government guidance and to implement new planning legislation as it emerges. The current overarching requirement is to continue to prepare and deliver the Council's Local Development Framework.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

No direct implications at this stage

Consultation Undertaken:

None

Background Papers:

LDF Cabinet Committee reports

Potential Impact of Pending Changes to the Planning System on Progress with the Core Planning Strategy LDF-017-2010/11 (07/02/2011)

Community Visioning results LDF-020-2010/11 (07/02/2011)

Local Development Framework – Local Development Scheme LDF-024-2010/11 (28/03/2011)

Localism Bill 2011.

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

Because of current vacant posts, there is a significant risk of not being able to deliver the Core Planning Strategy and other LDF documents in a timely fashion. The amount of work associated with the pending changes to the planning system could, in the current circumstance, add considerably to the workload of the Forward Planning team.

Potential impact on ability to achieve Corporate Objective 8 – Delivery of a sound Core Strategy.

Equality and Diversity:

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

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

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

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

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Evidence Base Update
August 2011

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

Study Title	Study Purpose/Content	Consultant	Cost	Anticipated / Actual Completion Date agreed by LDF CC	Length
<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>	<p>Scott Wilson</p>	<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-19 July 2010</p> <p>Scoping Report finalised November 2010 LDFCC 20 December 2010</p> <p><i>Assessment dependent on timescale for preparation of Issues & Options – Anticipated Autumn 2011.</i></p>	<p>153 pages</p>

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	<p>Total cost: £255,950 Stage 1 Transport Model Development. GAF3 – Programme of Development (POD), Essex and Herts County Councils, Highways Agency.</p> <p>No EFDC contribution</p>	<p>Model complete September 2010</p> <p><i>Initial findings expected January 2011</i></p>	Not yet known
Rye Meads Water Cycle Study	<p>The study assesses the impact of planned growth on water cycle processes, water infrastructure capacity and environmental capacity. It will recommend viable infrastructure options to accommodate planned growth and ensure water infrastructure is not a limiting factor to the growth of the area. As far as this Council is concerned, it is mainly of relevance with respect to the urban extensions to Harlow, as the south of this district is mainly served by the Beckton STW.</p>	Hyder Consulting	<p>Total cost: £250,000 – GAF3 - POD Partnership of East Herts, North Herts, Epping Forest, Broxbourne, Harlow & Stevenage Councils.</p> <p>No EFDC contribution.</p>	<p>Report complete : October 2009</p> <p><i>LDF CC : Autumn 2011</i></p>	Approx 180 pages including Appendices

Study Title	Study Purpose/Content	Consultant	Cost	Anticipated / Actual Completion Date agreed by LDF CC	Length
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)	The requirements of a SHMA are set out in PPS3: Housing (November 2006). This study was undertaken jointly with Harlow, East Herts, Uttlesford, Broxbourne and Brentwood Councils. It determines the Housing Market Areas across the sub-region, and makes an assessment of housing need both within each Housing Market Area, and in each Local Authority area.	Opinion Research Services & Savills	£59,950 (+ £3,117.40 advertising costs) EFDC contribution - £10,511	Report complete : January 2010 LDF CC : 17 June 2010	203 pages including Appendices
Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Viability Testing	PPS3: <i>Housing</i> requires that all policies requiring affordable housing provision are based on robust and sound evidence of need and viability. The viability testing of the outcomes contained in the SHMA still to be completed. Further study/tender process required. Broxbourne Borough Council have chosen to opt out of this work.	Level Ltd	£30,750 Funded from Programme of Development Fund.	Report complete : April 2010 LDF CC : 04 October 2010	Report – 301pages Appendices - 379pages
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	To identify land which could potentially be suitable for housing purposes over a 15 year period. This study does not guarantee that planning permission will ultimately be granted, but identifies possible sources of housing land supply. The proposed methodology is subject to a separate report on this agenda, but specifies a two-stage process, in which urban capacity is considered first.	To be confirmed following tender process	Estimated at £30,000. Funded from savings within existing LDF budget.	LDF CC : Agreement of principal 11 March 2010 Methodology 27 May 2010 ; 13 June 2011 ; 01 August 2011 Appointment of consultants expected September 2011	Not yet known

Study Title	Study Purpose/Content	Consultant	Cost	Anticipated / Actual Completion Date agreed by LDF CC	Length
Town Centres Study	To consider the vitality and viability of the town centres, the competition from centres in adjoining areas, and the future role of the district's centres. This will include an assessment of floorspace, range of goods, vacancy rates, and rent levels. Customer and visitor surveys will be undertaken. Potential opportunities for development or enhancement will be identified, and the current policy on restricting non-retail uses will be assessed. The study will also assess the need for commercial leisure uses.	Roger Tym & Partners	£39,038	Report complete : April 2010 LDF CC : 13 July 2010	Approx 113 pages, not including lengthy Appendices
Employment Land Study	The Employment Land Study, which has been commissioned jointly with Brentwood Borough Council, will consider the current employment land available and the opportunities for further provision. It will include an assessment of future needs and demands and a comprehensive stock-take of existing sites (quantitative and qualitative), and will make recommendations about the need for additional employment sites to create a balanced portfolio.	Atkins	£27,325 To be split equally with Brentwood BC	Report complete : September 2010 LDF CC : 11 November 2010	Report 88 pages Multiple appendices including maps

Study Title	Study Purpose/Content	Consultant	Cost	Anticipated / Actual Completion Date agreed by LDF CC	Length
Landscape Character Assessment	<p>This Assessment provides a comprehensive district-wide assessment of landscape character, which is intended to help planning and land management decisions. The European Landscape Convention (of which the Government is a signatory) encourages public authorities to adopt policies and measures for the protection, management and planning of all landscapes, whether outstanding or ordinary, that determine the quality of people's environment. The study therefore identifies key issues, sensitivities to change, and management strategy/objectives/guidelines for areas of different character. The quality of the rural landscape is generally recognised as one of this district's key features, and the study should help to develop long-lasting policies to protect and manage existing landscapes, and to create new ones. Seven landscape character types are identified.</p>	Chris Blandford Associates	£24,745	<p>Report complete : January 2010 LDF CC : 27 May 2010</p>	192 pages, including Appendices, and 10 district-wide maps.

Study Title	Study Purpose/Content	Consultant	Cost	Anticipated / Actual Completion Date agreed by LDF CC	Length
Settlement Edge Landscape Sensitivity Study	Informed by the district-wide Landscape Character Assessment, this study provides a more detailed understanding of sensitive landscape and environmental features around the edges of the 22 principal settlements (ie those excluded from the Green Belt plus Moreton and Sewardstone) in the district. The report will inform options for settlement growth and also outlines the extent to which these areas of landscape contribute towards the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.	Chris Blandford Associates	£24,980	Report complete : January 2010 <i>LDF CC : Autumn 2011</i>	138 pages including Appendices, and 73 detailed maps, dealing with visual character, historic landscape, environmental constraints and landscape sensitivity.
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – Level 1 Level 2	A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) is the ‘categorisation’ of flood risk on an area-wide basis in accordance with PPS25: <i>Development & Flood Risk</i> . This first stage is being undertaken jointly with Harlow Council. Level 2 assessments will be required on a site specific basis when the Council is considering land allocations. These will be needed to support later stages of the Core Strategy if strategic development sites are to be allocated.	Level 1 – In-house Level 2 – to be confirmed	From existing resources £40,000 (estimate)	December 2010 LDF CC : 15 Mar 2011 Dependent on timetable of Core Strategy.	45 pages plus plans Not yet known

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: <i>Planning for Open Space, Sport & Recreation Audit</i>	PPG17 requires that an audit of existing open space & recreation opportunities is undertaken.	In-house	From existing resources	<i>August 2011</i>	Not yet known

Study Title	Study Purpose/Content	Consultant	Cost	Anticipated / Actual Completion Date agreed by LDF CC	Length
PPG17: <i>Planning for Open Space, Sport & Recreation Assessment</i>	<p>Following completion of the audit, an assessment of surpluses or deficits within any of the categories will need to be carried out. This must also be accompanied by an assessment by seeking public opinion of the quality of existing open space & recreation facilities.</p> <p>This further work will require the employment of consultants with expertise in this area.</p>	To be confirmed	£20,000 (estimate)	<i>Anticipated December 2011</i>	Not yet known
St John's Road Development Brief	To determine the most appropriate future use of land currently available for redevelopment at St John's Road, Epping. Working with Essex County Council.	Urban Practitioners	£84,636.41 (including additional transport assessment study)	<i>December 2011</i>	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. Project budget agreed at £30,000	Report due to be completed October 2011 LDF CC : December 2011	Not yet known

Study Title	Study Purpose/Content	Consultant	Cost	Anticipated / Actual Completion Date agreed by LDF CC	Length
Lee Valley White Water Centre – Economic Development Study	To assess and quantify the potential economic impacts of the Lee Valley White Water centre on the local economy. Partner arrangement with Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, Broxbourne Borough Council, Essex County Council & Hertfordshire County Council.	To be commissioned	Not yet known. Maximum EFDC contribution £15,000.	Report due to be completed July 2011 LDF CC : agreement of contribution & principle of work 11 November 2010 LDF CC : October 2011	Not yet known

Proposed timetable as agreed at LDF Cabinet Committee 28 March 2011

Local Development Scheme : Draft March 2011																								
		2011				2012				2013				2014				2015				2016		
		Summer	Autumn	Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
PD1 Core Planning Strategy																								
Issues and options																								
Preferred options																								
Submission																								
Examination																								
Adoption																								
PD2 Site Allocations DPD																								
Issues and options																								
Preferred options																								
Submission																								
Examination																								
Adoption																								
PD3 Development Management DPD																								
Issues and options																								
Preferred options																								
Submission																								
Examination																								
Adoption																								
PD4 Community Infrastructure Levy SPD																								
Consultation (with CPS)																								
Adoption																								
PD5 St John's Development Framework SPD																								
tbc																								
PD6 Statement of Community Involvement																								
Draft to LDF Committee																								
Final SCI adopted																								
PD7 Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans																								
tbc																								
PD8 Neighbourhood Plans																								
tbc																								

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Draft Vision, Aims & Objectives

Draft Vision

“To protect and enhance green spaces within the district, whilst encouraging appropriate levels of growth to provide for the housing, employment and social needs of the district.”

Draft Aims & Objectives – how will we deliver the vision?

Aim 1 - To protect and enhance the natural, historic and built environment of Epping Forest district

1. Protect and improve the Green Belt, whilst recognising its five purposes
2. Protect and enhance the general rural character and landscape of the district including Epping Forest and its setting, and the edges of market towns, villages and other rural settlements
3. Secure means to improve the quality of green spaces and to protect, enhance and extend the existing ‘green infrastructure’ network
4. Protect biodiversity across the district and in particular local wildlife habitats, and secure means for their improvement
5. Protect and enhance the built heritage and character of the district
6. Encourage development proposals to contribute to or enhance local distinctiveness and to be built in appropriate local materials.
7. Mitigate the adverse environmental and social effects of any existing and proposed mineral works

Aim 2 – To manage sustainable growth in Epping Forest district

1. Utilise previously developed land in sustainable locations, before considering development in the Green Belt
2. Manage and mitigate flood risk and water management, including the use of sustainable drainage systems where appropriate
3. Deliver planned growth whilst making the best use of existing and proposed infrastructure
4. Maximise opportunities to seek investment to support existing communities and further planned growth
5. To prepare for, adapt to, and reduce the impact on, climate change
6. Ensure that any issues relating to contaminated land are safely addressed before sites are developed

Aim 3 – To support and enhance the economy of Epping Forest district

1. Retain existing good quality employment land and premises
2. Ensure new employment sites (a) are sustainably located to minimise environmental and amenity impacts; and (b) will encourage local firms to relocate and expand, and attract other innovative businesses
3. Create conditions locally which seek to retain and attract innovative firms and people into the district to help create a diverse and competitive economy
4. Support the district's rural economy in a way which also helps to protect the natural environment
5. Encourage sustainable economic growth in the district and improve the prestige, performance, vitality and viability of the town centres in The Broadway, Loughton; Buckhurst Hill; Chipping Ongar; Epping; High Road, Loughton; and Waltham Abbey
6. Promote the district as a tourism destination, making the most of the existing assets, including Epping Forest and the Lee Valley Regional Park, and support the identification and creation of other attractions

Aim 4 – To deliver the right number of houses in the right places

1. Provide for the release of sufficient land in the right places to meet local housing targets
2. Ensure land allocated for housing is used in the most efficient manner possible, whilst still respecting the existing character of the area
3. Provide housing types and tenures to meet specific local needs and widen housing choice, thereby helping to ensure that people are able to live in good quality affordable housing appropriate to their domestic circumstances and way of life
4. Support the improvement and redevelopment of housing in areas where there are regeneration needs
5. Create residential environments where people are proud to live and a sense of community spirit can be created

Aim 5 - To maintain safe, healthy and inclusive communities

1. Seek to reduce health inequalities across the district.
2. Recognise the contribution that green spaces make to healthy and inclusive communities, and encourage walking and cycling over private car use
3. Recognise the need for, and facilitate the redevelopment and improvement of, key local services

4. Promote the provision of 'Lifetime Homes' which are designed to meet people's needs at different points in time
5. Work in partnership with the community in formulating long term plans for the district
6. Investigate and introduce options with other agencies for maintaining rural services, including public transport, schools, post offices etc

Aim 6 - To improve access and movement within and around Epping Forest district

1. Reduce reliance on private car use where possible and encourage alternative methods of transport such as cycling and walking
2. Address disparities in urban and rural public transport accessibility within the district and to major urban areas beyond its boundaries (e.g. London, Harlow, Waltham Cross, Chelmsford)
3. Consider the improvement of road and rail links where evidence indicates significant improvements for businesses and local residents
4. Ensure new developments reduce and keep the need for parking provision to a minimum

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