

# Committee Agenda



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

## **Local Plan Cabinet Committee Monday, 25th March, 2013**

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

**Time:** 7.00 pm

**Democratic Services  
Officer:** Gary Woodhall  
Tel: 01992 564470  
Email: [democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

**Members:**

Councillors R Bassett (Chairman), W Breare-Hall, Mrs A Grigg, D Stallan and C Whitbread

**PLEASE NOTE THE START TIME OF THIS MEETING**

### **1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

The Chairman will read the following announcement:

"I would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be recorded for subsequent repeated viewing on the Internet and copies of the recording could be made available for those that request it.

By being present at this meeting it is likely that the recording cameras will capture your image and this will result in the possibility that your image will become part of the broadcast.

You should be aware that this may infringe your human and data protection rights. If you have any concerns please speak to the webcasting officer.

Please could I also remind members to put on their microphones before speaking by pressing the button on the microphone unit"

### **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

(Assistant to the Chief Executive) To be declared at the meeting.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**4. MINUTES**

To confirm the minutes of the last meeting of the Cabinet Committee held on 18 February 2013 (previously circulated).

**5. TERMS OF REFERENCE (Pages 5 - 6)**

(Assistant to the Chief Executive) To note the Cabinet Committee's terms of reference, as agreed by the Leader of the Council in June 2012.

**6. PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISIONS AGREED SINCE THE LAST MEETING**

To note that no Portfolio Holder decisions in relation to the Local Plan have been taken since the last meeting.

**7. FEEDBACK FROM THE LOCAL PLAN WORKSHOPS (Pages 7 - 10)**

(Director of Planning & Economic Development) To consider the attached report (LPC-009-2012/13).

**8. LOCAL PLAN COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY (Pages 11 - 38)**

(Director of Planning & Economic Development) To consider the attached report (LPC-010-2012/13).

**9. 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.

**10. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Exclusion

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.

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## Local Plan Cabinet Committee – Terms of Reference

- 3.1 To oversee and submit recommendations to the Cabinet as appropriate on:
  - (a) agreement of documentation for consultation on the draft plan/preferred option and documentation to seek pre - submission representations on the proposed Local Plan;
  - (b) the final form of the Council's Local Plan (ie the version to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination in Public); and
  - (c) responses that should be made to any representations received following consultation on the Local Plan and related documents and supplementary planning documents.
- 3.2 To be responsible for all aspects (except those matters specified in 3.1 above) including but not restricted to:
  - (a) monitoring of the achievement of milestones within the Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy preparation and review process;
  - (b) agreement of engagement strategies for consultation periods as necessary;
  - (c) agreement of documentation for consultation on the Issues and Options; and
  - (d) agreement of draft options and policy wording to be used as the basis for Sustainability Appraisal.
- 3.3 To note, receive and, if necessary, agree officer reports on consultants' studies which contribute to the establishment of an up-to-date evidence base to influence preparation of the Local Plan.
- 3.4 To agree options for joint or co-ordinated working with neighbouring Councils, which comply with the Council's duty to co-operate and which best meet the needs of this District.
- 3.5 To respond to the Planning Services Standing Scrutiny Standing Panel as appropriate.
- 3.6 To monitor within the budgetary provision for the Local Plan, as approved by the Cabinet and the Council.
- 3.7 That the membership of the Committee comprise of members of the Cabinet, the number to be determined by the Leader of the Council.
- 3.8 That the Committee will be chaired by the Portfolio Holder responsible for Planning matters.

N.B. (1) In the event that the Council's Cabinet is constituted according the pro rata membership requirements of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989, any political group not having representation on the Committee by virtue of one of the named Cabinet portfolios shall nominate one member of the Cabinet to serve on this Committee.

(2) In the event that seats on the Cabinet are allocated by the Leader of Council solely to one political group, or to an alliance of one or more groups forming an administration, seats on the Sub Committee shall only be allocated to members of that group or alliance who have seats on the Cabinet.

## **Report to the Local Plan Cabinet Committee**



**Report reference:** *LPC-009-2012/13*  
**Date of meeting:** *25 March 2013*

**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio:** Planning and Economic Development  
**Subject:** Feedback on the first three Local Plan Workshops  
**Responsible Officer:** **Kassandra Polyzoides** (01992 564119)  
**Democratic Services Officer:** **Gary Woodhall** (01992 564470)

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) That Members note the purposes of the workshops and activities undertaken;**
- (2) That Members note the feedback from the workshops;**
- (3) That Members note the proposed action on feedback and next steps in the engagement of District, Town and Parish Councillors through additional workshops; and**
- (4) To consider how to involve the Youth Council in future workshops.**

### **Executive Summary:**

The recent Saturday workshops open to District, County, Parish and Town Councillors and the Youth Council, were designed to assist in considering the options for the future growth of the district and provide a more detailed deliberation of the local areas. They were all well attended, and feedback was increasingly positive as the event programme progressed. The results are being written up to input to the development of the Local Plan, answers are being prepared to report back on the questions arising that could not be dealt with at the time, and lessons learned carried forward. The next two workshops will be on 1) the subject of population projections and the housing requirements for the Local Plan and 2) the results of further testing of options prior to LPCC consideration of the 'Preferred Options' or draft plan for public consultation. It is possible that other issues will arise during the course of production that will be beneficial to consider in a workshop format and this is the subject of a watching brief.

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

No decision to be made. Report for information.

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

Revert to engagement with District, Town and Parish Councillors through Council Bulletin, briefings and LPCC. However, the ability to consider matters in depth presented by a workshop format is considered most beneficial.

## Report:

### The Purposes and Activities Undertaken in the Three Workshops

1. The first three workshops were held on 26 January, 9 February and 9 March 2013 and were designed to take the participants through a process to enable members and key officers to input to the narrowing of options for the next stage of the Local Plan – the ‘preferred options’ stage or draft plan. They aimed to assist in refining the options for growth from the list set out in the Community Choices document for further testing through more detailed evidence assessments, in particular transport assessment and strategic flood risk assessment.

2. The ground covered was as follows:

(a) Workshop 1:

- Exploration of the context of plan making in terms of national policy;
- Understanding of the key Epping Forest evidence that will inform decisions on local policy;
- Understanding the key messages from the responses to the Community Choices consultation; and
- Consideration of the choices around the future location of housing, economic activity and the transport implications across the District.

(b) Workshop 2:

- Production of visions (possible futures) for the different areas of the District;
- Consideration of the strategic vision/aims and the priority objectives for the District (as factors critical to ultimately agreeing the preferred choices);
- Beginning to discuss and consider the impact of the vision and aims for the area on different potential patterns of development in the District; and
- Provision of a baseline for workshop three.

(c) Workshop 3:

- Consideration of what the visions (possible futures) for the different areas of the District that groups produced in workshop 2 mean for places in detail – what could happen where and when?;
- Firming up ideas on preferences for the development or protection of areas; and
- Consideration of some detailed issues around the need for development management policies for dealing with planning applications such as design, conservation and parking.

### Attendance and Feedback

3. The attendance levels at the workshops were good, with 52, 50 and 53 councillors attending the three workshops respectively. The split between District, County, and Parish and Town Councillors is set out below (to avoid double counting those only holding a County seat are noted separately to joint District or Parish and County Councillors). In the end, there were unfortunately no attendees from the Youth Council:

- Workshop 1: 36 District Councillors, 1 County Councillor and 15 Town/ Parish Councillors or Clerks.
- Workshop 2: 34 District Councillors, 1 County Councillor and 15 Town/ Parish Councillors or Clerks
- Workshop 3: 31 District Councillors, 1 County Councillor and 21 Town/ Parish Councillors or Clerks

4. Feedback on the workshops was sought each time and the following numbers of forms were received: Workshop 1 – 9 forms, Workshop 2 – 6 forms, Workshop 3 – 33 forms. The overall



assessments are set out in the table below in response to the question 'How useful did you find the workshop?'

	<b>Not at all useful</b>	<b>Not very useful</b>	<b>Quite useful</b>	<b>Very useful</b>	<b>Extremely useful</b>	<b>Total responses</b>
<b>Workshop 1</b>	0	2	5	1	0	9 (1 gave no response to the question)
<b>Workshop 2</b>	0	0	3	2	1	6
<b>Workshop 3</b>	0	1	6	16	7	33 (1 gave 'between quite and very useful')

5. The collated responses will be placed in the Members' room. The overall tenor of the small proportion of responses to the first workshop received was patchy, the most common concern expressed in feedback related to too many presentations which were hard to read at the start of the day and the activity involving distributing development across the district. There was also concern expressed by one respondent regarding the handling of questions which was considered to be rushed and insensitive. However, most respondents commented that they had found the opportunity to discuss matters with others valuable. The feedback from the second workshop was more positive focusing on the welcomed ample opportunities to discuss areas local to the participants and formulate local visions. The feedback from the third workshop was almost overwhelmingly positive and many commented on the helpfulness of staff and the usefulness of the mapped information provided.

6. The matters that participants are interested to know more about are population projections and housing targets, brownfield sites, the ownership of certain sites, landscape appraisals and how the infrastructure will be provided to support development. A note on the work undertaken on the brownfield review and questions and answers raised has been circulated to all Members and will be published in the Council Bulletin.

### Next Steps

7. A record of all of the work undertaken at the workshops is being, or has already been, written up and this will be used by officers to test the options set out in the Community Choices consultation, and formulate proposals for the Plan. A series of question and answer papers are also being produced for wider use responding to questions raised.

8. As a result of the issues raised by Members and the feedback from the workshop, an additional workshop (workshop 4) is planned in the summer to cover the issues of population projections and housing targets for the plan. A report will then be brought to Local Plan Cabinet Committee for Members to provide a steer on which of the options should be tested further (including a transport assessment and strategic flood risk assessment of these options). A fifth workshop will be held when this further evidence testing of options for the plan has been undertaken and prior to recommendations to Local Plan Cabinet Committee on a preferred option or draft plan.

9. The experience of the workshops has indicated that they are a very valuable forum for the councillors and should be used more often to consider complex matters of the Local Plan. It is possible that other issues will arise during the course of production that will be beneficial to consider in a workshop format and this is the subject of a watching brief.

**Resource Implications:**

The additional workshops are to be resourced within current budgets and the benefit of this engagement with councillors far outweighs any costs involved since it engages key stakeholders in the process and enables them to both steer the outcome and have a good understanding of the plan to impart to constituents and other stakeholders.

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

The workshops operate within the governance procedures for the plan and are not decision making events.

**Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

The eventual Local Plan will have significant implications for the green characteristics of the District and recognises that there are tensions with achieving development to provide homes and employment for local families.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

None.

**Background Papers:**

Agenda and presentations for Workshops 1 on 26 January 2013, Workshop 2 on 9 February 2013 and Workshop 3 on 9 March 2013.

**Impact Assessments:**

Risk Management

Members were advised of lessons learned by other Councils from recent Inspectorate decisions on local plans. The workshops are part of the process of developing a sound plan.

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 new Local Plan will consider these 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?*  
N/A.

## **Report to Local Plan Cabinet Committee**

**Report reference:** *LPC-010-2012/13*

**Date of meeting:** *25 March 2013*



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio:** Planning and Economic Development

**Subject:** Local Plan Communications Strategy

**Responsible Officer:** **Kassandra Polyzoides** (01992 564119).

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

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) To agree the updated Local Plan Communications Strategy; and**
- (2) To note that it is a dynamic document to be updated as needed to meet the requirements of the Local Plan consultations.**

### **Executive Summary:**

An early version of the Local Plan Communications Strategy was submitted and approved as the Local Development Framework (LDF) Communications Strategy at the LDF Cabinet Committee in November 2010. Since then the Council has consulted on the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), that sets out the minimum consultation methods the Council will be required to undertake during the preparation of Local Plan. The Local Plan Cabinet Committee approved the SCI in February 2012 to go to April's full Council for adoption.

Many recommendations and feedback received as a result of the SCI consultation between July and October 2012 were more relevant to the communications strategy and have been incorporated in the current draft document. The Strategy sets out an approach for ongoing engagement with key stakeholders and interested parties including the community during the preparation of the Council's new Local Plan. The Communications Strategy outlines the engagement methods used for the Local Plan consultations to date. In looking forward it also identifies which successful approaches to carry forward, additional methods of engagement and issues that should be resolved. The main aim is to provide an array of methods by which our stakeholders can engage and for the Council to maximise the representations received during the preparation of the Local Plan.

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

Effective communication is key in order to engage successfully with stakeholders, particularly with the general public where consultation fatigue and previous negative consultation experiences can act as a barrier. The communications strategy will allow for more clarity and transparency in the Council's approach to community and wider stakeholder engagement.

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

To not approve the communications strategy and rely on the SCI should it be adopted by full Council in April 2013

## **Report:**

### Principles

1. A series of principles of engagement have been developed, based on experience to date and best practice aimed at providing clarity to our stakeholders of the Council's intentions when carrying out Local Plan consultations and in order to ensure a consistent approach:

- Public involvement should be transparent and accessible and seek to reach as many local residents and businesses as possible;
- Engagement with the local community should form part of a continuous programme, not be a one-off event;
- Consistent branding should be used across all Local Plan media. The Planning Our Future logo to be used on all communication material;
- Consultation and communication methods used should be appropriate to the communities concerned;
- Partnership working. Work closely with other departments within Epping Forest District Council. There may be opportunities to link in with other consultation activities and use the feedback received;
- Information gathered through other consultations should be used wherever possible – e.g. The Local Strategic Partnership consultation for a revised Sustainable Community Strategy in the past has formed part of the Local Plan evidence base;
- The level of community involvement should be appropriate to the role of the plan or study in question;
- Accessible report summaries of planning documents should be produced where appropriate; and
- Any consultation method should be designed to ensure that meaningful feedback is achievable within the Council's resources and Local Plan timescales.

### Duty to Co-Operate

2. The Duty to Cooperate (Localism Act 2011) outlines the requirement for Local Authorities to explore and act on their common strategic priorities and strategic cross boundary issues with their neighbours and statutory bodies. This involves engaging constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis in any plan making process. The interpretation of the fulfilment of this duty is such that authorities need to effectively resolve the strategic cross boundary issues not just discuss them.

3. A detailed programme of engagement under the Duty to Cooperate is being addressed separately to this document. It is envisaged that the Duty to Cooperate engagement programme will be incorporated in a future updated version of this document.

### Branding

4. The development of an identity or 'brand' for the Local Plan has been an important

element of our communication strategy and creating public awareness around the delivery of the Plan. It has enabled the Forward Planning team to demonstrate linkages between different components of the Local Plan and also provided the opportunity to project a more positive image for the Local Plan and highlight its importance.

5. All Local Plan materials now incorporate the Planning Our Future logo and colour scheme. Examples of this are:

- Formal letters (during consultation periods)
- Press ads
- Forester special edition and articles
- Internal Local Plan memos / meeting notes
- PowerPoint templates
- Consultation materials
- Workshop/drop-in session materials
- Exhibitions
- Local Plan website
- Social media-Facebook and Twitter

#### Consultee Groups

6. The Forward Planning department already maintains an up-to-date database of relevant consultees and this will be used to form the groups set out below. In order to tailor our approach to the needs of our stakeholders and in accordance to best practice and statutory requirements the Council has created three distinct consultee groups. The consultee database used for the Community Choices consultation contained 11,813 records of various bodies and individuals and this number has grown significantly over the past months with additional stakeholders being added.

7. The Council has a statutory duty to consult a range of consultees, some of which are residents and businesses, general consultees and others named as specific groups in the 2012 Plan Making Regulations.

- **Specific and technical consultees** – Consultees in this group include adjoining local authorities, Parish Councils, English Heritage, Thames Water. All of these groups are involved during consultations and some are also invited to specialist technical workshops.
- **General consultees and residents** – The Council has discretion over precisely which general consultees it consults but they represent people with an interest in the local area. The Council has decided to get as many contacts as possible under this heading. These contacts include local residents, schools, commuters, local voluntary bodies, religious groups, residents' associations, local businesses and action groups. It is each groups responsibility to notify the Forward Planning team that they want to be on the general consultee list.
- **Other interested parties excluding residents and businesses** – In some cases this would include residents or businesses in neighbouring authorities expected to be directly affected by proposals in the plan. Others can include regional/national bodies including, Friends of the Earth, etc.

8. Targeted consultation methods used for each grouping are available in the Communications Strategy.

## Consultation Stages

- **Community Visioning**

9. The main consultation methods used for this stage of consultation were:
- (a) Leaflet/Questionnaire - this was sent to all households in district and special version was in the Forester magazine;
  - (b) Postcards/Photography competition - which was handed out at all stations in the district during am and pm peak hours; and
  - (c) Launch of Planning Our Future website and new logo-all material was re-branded and relevant information and consultation material was available online.

- **Community Choices-Issues & Options**

10. The main consultation methods used for this stage of consultation were
- (a) *Leaflets* sent via a distribution company to all households and business addresses within the district;
  - (b) *A summary of the consultation document* was prepared, of which we sent out email/paper copies to town and parish Councils and residents associations that we knew of, on 2 August;
  - (c) *Letters (2-sided)/emails* to anyone who has been involved in a planning policy consultation in the past (via the contact details they gave us at that time), and statutory consultees etc. notifying them of the consultation (over 8,000 people, bodies etc.). These were sent out on 26 July;
  - (d) *Letters (2-sided)/emails* to anyone who owns land within any of the potential development/ opportunity areas within the consultation document (from a Land Registry search), asking whether they are interested in their land being considered for potential future development and inviting their comments on the consultation;
  - (e) *Letters (2-sided)/emails* to all those who submitted land for consideration through the Call for Sites, stating whether or not their site had been included in the consultation at this stage and inviting their comments on the consultation. These were sent out on 26 July;
  - (f) *Static exhibition at the Civic Offices* and libraries for the whole of the consultation period, with banners, hard copies of consultation documents and a ballot box to leave comments in;
  - (g) *Drop-in sessions* held across the district;
  - (h) *Website* - online information and questionnaire;
  - (i) *Facebook/twitter*;
  - (j) *Press briefing and press releases*;
  - (k) *Information packs/documents* to all Town & Parish Councils and known residents' associations; and

(l) *Commuter postcards.*

11. Multiple copies of the Community Choices document, questionnaires and supporting documents were prepared for all the town and parish councils for collection. Additional copies of all the consultation material were available at libraries, the Council offices and at the drop-in sessions.

12. A full list of the engagement methods used during the Community Visioning exercise can be found in Appendix 1 of the Local Plan Communications Strategy document

#### Lessons Learned from the Community Visioning and Community Choices Consultation

13. There were some key lessons learned from the Community Choices consultation, which have been outlined below to be taken into account and addressed prior to the Preferred Options consultation:

(a) *Website* - The ease of navigation of the website will need to be improved. In particular the Council's homepage for the duration of the Preferred Options consultation will need to have a static one-click logo to a Local Plan consultation landing page;

(b) *Questionnaire* - The consultation software/online questionnaire will need to be simplified, streamlined and be in plain English;

(c) *Consultation Documents* - To be simplified and streamlined and where possible in plain English;

(d) *Letter distribution* - The approach of using leaflets will need to be reviewed. It may be more appropriate for a letter to be sent to each household and businesses, with clear markings of its content on the envelope. The use of an alternative distribution company will also be explored; and

(e) *Publicising the choice of response methods* - Consultation documents and online information to clearly outline all routes for representation submission.

#### Forthcoming Preferred Options Consultation

14. In addition to streamlining the consultation methods used during the Community Choices consultation, the Council is exploring additional methods of engagement for the next stage of the consultation. More investment in PR, emphasis on early engagement with the press and advertisement campaigns will be a key focus.

15. As the work progresses to complete the Preferred Options consultation material, it will become apparent which approaches and methods will be appropriate to be used during the consultation. The report to Cabinet and full Council on the Preferred Options consultation will also include a detailed breakdown of all the consultation methods to be used.

16. The key consideration is that the ongoing consultation programme is tailored to the requirements of the engagement activity at that stage and guarantees maximum stakeholder input. The need to simplify the consultation documents and plain English the text is key in ensuring stakeholder engagement and input. The list of consultees has been updated substantially following the Community Choices consultation and this will be used for the circulation of consultation information for the Preferred Options.

17. In addition to engagement methods used for the Community Choices consultation outlined in Appendix 1 of the Communications Strategy, the following may also be pursued:

(a) *Better use of the Forester magazine* - Both its current programmed editions and a special edition will be used to inform and engage with residents. In addition, more intensive media launches and engagement with the local press will be pursued with full ads being taken out in printed and online press and blogs as required.

(b) *Summary document* - This can accompany the letter informing consultees of the consultation launch. Sending the Preferred Options document to everyone in the district would be very expensive. Stakeholders will be advised of where hard copies of all consultation materials can be found. All relevant, supporting information will be made available on the Planning Our Future website at the launch and for the duration of the consultation.

(c) *Area focused consultation activities* – there may be cases where area based intensive consultation such as local workshops, door to door publicity or community presentations for directly affected communities will be suitable at the preferred options stage of the plan where sites will be proposed for allocation. Such approaches will be considered and balanced against the resources available and effectiveness of other, less resource intensive methods.

(d) *Cascade* – Dedicated briefing packs were provided for Town and Parish Councils for the Community Choices consultation. The use of briefing packs to enable Town and Parish councils and other groups to carry out their own detailed consultation event on the preferred strategy will be considered as this may prove a more cost effective way to develop more local approaches.

18. As mentioned the consultation questionnaires will need to be carefully developed to engage more widely with the desired audience and provide meaningful feedback. The questionnaire for the Preferred Options consultation will be designed to be helpful, engaging, accessible and user-friendly.

19. These approaches should ensure that previous issues are overcome, stakeholder input increases even further, the format of the feedback is manageable and our methods of engagement are robust enough to undergo scrutiny at the Examination in Public stage.

20. Consultation programme:

(i) Community Visioning – complete;

(ii) Community Choices – complete;

(iii) Preferred Options – TCB;

(iv) Pre submission publication - 6 week statutory period for representations on soundness prior to submission; and

(v) Examination in public.

#### Engagement of Elected Councillors

21. Whilst the councillors who sit on the Local Plans Cabinet Committee have a direct role in the approval of the Local Plan as it progresses through the production process this is not the sole area of engagement of councillors.



22. Councillors are given opportunities to attend briefings during the launch period of consultations to ensure that they understand the process, and content of the consultation.

23. A more active use of the councillor network for future consultations is being explored based on the idea of further enabling local councillors to cascade information to their constituents and supporting them in doing so.

#### Workshop Programme

24. A programme of workshops for elected members of the Council and Parish and Town Councils has been developed for the plan and will continue to be adapted as appropriate. These are not decision making events. The purposes of workshops are:

- To facilitate an in depth understanding of issues in relation to the evidence used to support the plan
- For Members to provide perspectives and steer on issues that the plan aims to address
- For Members to explore the policy choices that the plan aims to resolve
- To provide local perspectives on the potential proposals in the plan and explain the impacts at a local level

25. Three workshops have been held in the period January 2013 to March 2013 covering:

- (i) Update on the evidence base ;
- (ii) Local visions and choices; and
- (iii) Planning the local area.

26. Another two workshops are already in the programme:

- (iv) Population projections and housing targets; and
- (v) Taking the tested options to a preferred strategy.

27. As production of the plan continues it may be that other areas of work would lend themselves to further workshops with elected councillors and these opportunities will be taken and kept under review.

#### **Resource Implications:**

The delivery of a comprehensive communications strategy requires the input of officers from Forward Planning and PR. A detailed programme of tasks and events will be developed to allow for the timely allocation of resources to the Preferred Options consultation.

Some of the recommended improvements will add some time to the production of documents and consultation material. This would be offset by the benefits of improvements in their accessibility.

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

There are no recommendations on any changes to matters of governance contained in this report.

**Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

Nothing to report.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

The SCI was consulted on between July and October 2012.

**Background Papers:**

- LDF Communications Strategy November 2010
- Statement of Community Involvement- consultation document July 2012
- Statement of Community Involvement- consultation Questionnaire July 2012
- Statement of Community Involvement LPCC report February 2012

**Impact Assessments:**

Risk Management

Improving our engagement methods may reduce delays in the preparation and adoption of the Local Plan.

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?*  
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.



## **Local Plan- COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

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B- General consultees and residents

C- Other interested parties excluding residents and businesses

D- Businesses

E- Press

**6 Consultation stages:**

6 a) Community Visioning

6 b) Community Choices-Issues & Options

6 c) Key lessons learnt from previous consultations

6 d) Preferred Options

**7- Engagement of elected councillors**

**8- Consultation programme**

**9- Evidence base studies**

Appendix 1 –Engagement methods used for Community Choices (Issues & Options)

Appendix 2 – Local Plan Consultees

## 1 Overview

This strategy sets out an approach to engaging with key stakeholders, interested parties and the community during the production of the Council's new Local Plan the latter of which will cover the period to 2033. The Council is committed to providing the local community and other stakeholders with opportunities to shape the place in which they live and has developed an approach to engagement designed to make this achievable.

Effective communication is essential in order to engage successfully, particularly with the general public where consultation fatigue and previous negative consultation experiences can act as a barrier.

The Council's Statement Of Community Involvement (SCI) outlines the minimum required consultation methods EFDC is required to carry out with regard to engaging with stakeholders. This strategy builds on the SCI to explore further methods of engagement that are tailored to each consultation period, the needs of the community and other consultees and taking into consideration the timetable and need to deliver a robust Local Plan .

The Government's initiatives including the Localism Act and introduction of Neighbourhood Planning have made it a priority to involve local communities in the planning process and provide them with more say in the decisions that affect where they live. As a result of this and feedback from EFDC Council Members, the production of the Plan had included a Community Visioning exercise, designed to engage and involve stakeholders at the early stages of the process and took place in 2010.

The strategy focuses on engagement for all stages of production and was updated in March 2013 to reflect lessons learned from the Community Choices (Issues & Options consultation) that took place between July and October 2012, prior to the Preferred Options stage in Autumn 2013. It continues to be a live document and will be updated as we move through the production of the Plan including the Preferred Options consultation and be adapted to reflect any changes to National policy, Regulations and emerging best practice.

The devolution of decision making and increased requirements for public participation in policy making and planning is having an impact on officer time, resources and the Local Plan timetable. Therefore the aim is to produce an communication strategy that;

- a) Is focused using both tested and innovative methods;
- b) provides an adopted structure/format for officers, Members and the community to work with but is also flexible and
- c) is cost effective

## 2 Principles

A series of principles of engagement have been developed to ensure a consistent approach that allows the Council to meet and exceed its statutory consultation requirements. This approach also helps to tailor engagement activities to ensure that the Council gets as much useful consultation feedback as possible within the resources available:

- Public involvement should be transparent and accessible and seek to reach as many local residents and businesses as possible.
- Engagement with the local community should form part of a continuous programme, not be a one-off event.
- Consistent branding should be used across all Local Plan media. The Planning Our Future logo is being used on all communication material.
- Consultation and communication methods used should be appropriate to the communities concerned.
- Work closely with other Directorates within the Council. There may be opportunities to link in with other consultation activities and use the feedback received.
- Information gathered through other consultations should be used wherever possible – e.g. the Local Strategic Partnership consultation for a revised Sustainable Community Strategy in the past, has formed part of the Local Plan evidence base.
- The level of community involvement should be appropriate to the role of the plan or study in question.
- Accessible report summaries of planning documents should be produced where appropriate.
- Any consultation method should be designed to ensure that meaningful feedback is achievable within the Council's resources and Local Plan timescales.
- All communication throughout the Local Plan consultation should be directed through generic telephone and email contacts rather than named team members. e.g. **Contact the planning team on 01992 564517, email us on LDFconsult@eppingforestdc.gov.uk.**

## 3 Duty to Cooperate

The Duty to Cooperate (Localism Act 2011) outlines the requirement for local authorities to explore and act on their common strategic priorities and strategic cross boundary issues with their neighbours and statutory bodies. This includes:

- Engaging constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis in any plan making process
- working proactively to consider and actively support each other's strategic objectives and priorities
- taking into account views and needs of neighbouring authorities and showing that key parties have been engaged and consulted with throughout the process of delivery of a Local Plan.

When the Local Plans are being examined the Planning Inspector will need to see sufficient evidence that demonstrates that the requirement to fulfil the Duty to Co-operate has been met. The

interpretation of the fulfilment of this duty is such that authorities need to effectively resolve the strategic cross boundary issues not just discuss them.

A detailed programme of engagement under the Duty to Cooperate is being addressed separately to this document. It is envisaged that the Duty to Cooperate engagement programme will be incorporated in a future updated version of this document.

## 4 Branding

The development of an identity or 'brand' for the Local Plan has been an important element of our Communications Strategy and has raised public awareness around the preparation of the Plan. It has enabled the Forward Planning team to demonstrate linkages between different components of the Local Plan and also provided the opportunity to project a more positive image for the Local Plan and highlight its importance.

All Local Plan materials now incorporate the Planning Our Future logo and colour scheme. Examples of this are:

- Formal letters (during consultation periods)
- Press ads
- Forester special edition, press releases and articles
- Internal Local Plan memos / meeting notes
- PowerPoint templates
- Consultation materials
- Workshop/drop-in session materials
- Exhibitions
- Local Plan website
- Social media-Facebook and Twitter

## 5 Consultees

The Forward Planning team already maintains an up-to-date database of relevant consultees and this will be used to form the groupings set out below. The consultee database used for the Community Choices consultation contained 11,813 records. As the Local Plan has progressed the database has grown and the updated version will be used for the next stage Preferred Options consultation.

Engagement with all consultee groups seeks to understand the key issues for the plan period including what our vision for the future should be, the options on the appropriate level and distribution of growth for this district for the plan period as well as detailed policy proposals. In order to tailor the consultation accordingly and gain maximum input, stakeholders have been divided into groups. The Council has a statutory duty to consult a range of consultees, some of which are residents and businesses, others named as specific bodies in the 2012 Plan Making Regulations and others that fall into the category of 'general consultation bodies'.

- a) **Specific and technical consultees** – Consultees in this group include adjoining local authorities, Parish Councils, English Heritage and Thames Water. All of these groups are involved during consultations and some are also invited to specialist technical workshops. The groups are identified in Appendix 2
- b) **General consultees and residents** – The Council has discretion over precisely which general consultees it consults but they represent people with an interest in the local area. They fall into categories outlined in Appendix 2. The Council has decided to get as many contacts as

possible under this heading. These contacts include local residents, schools, commuters, local voluntary bodies, religious groups, residents' associations, local businesses and action groups. It is each groups responsibility to notify the Forward Planning team that they want to be on the general consultee list.

- c) **Other interested parties excluding residents and businesses** – In some cases this would include residents or businesses in neighbouring authorities expected to be directly affected by proposals in the plan. Others can include regional/national bodies, Friends of the Earth, etc.

The section below sets out appropriate methods that have been used when engaging with each of the groupings. Section six explores additional and improved methods of engagement.

## **A Specific and technical consultees**

**Formal letters** –Explaining the consultation stage we are at, signposting to relevant information on our website or hard copies of consultation and other documents where appropriate, inviting representations at each stage of the consultation process and providing a timetable for the consultations.

The letters will contain web links to the evidence base studies as appropriate and any summaries, underlining their relevance to the delivery of the Local Plan. Hard copies of relevant consultation materials are sent out to all these consultees.

**Technical workshops**- Programme of meetings with appropriate consultees (e.g. neighbouring local authorities) using a pro forma and dedicated workshops and presentations to seek their early input and highlight any concerns.

**Council website**- Will include information contained within the formal letter and links to evidence base reports, indicative timescales, link to Facebook page, future methods of engagement.

## **B General consultees and residents**

**Formal letters to all residents in the district and all businesses and groups on the Local Plan database** –Explaining the consultation stage we are at, signposting to relevant information on our website or hard copies of consultation and other documents where appropriate, inviting representations at each stage of the consultation process and providing a timetable for the consultations.

The letters can contain details of upcoming drop-in sessions, where the consultation will be advertised and will provide the contact details of the Forward Planning team.

The letters will contain web links to the evidence base studies as appropriate and any summaries, underlining their relevance to the delivery of the Local Plan.

A point will be made for disabled groups to contact the Forward Planning team in order to make special arrangements if these are required e.g. one to one meetings and other special arrangements.

**Consultation summary leaflet-** Setting out the process followed so far i.e. timetable to date, outlining important facts and key Q&As and next steps in the process following the consultation end date.

**Stakeholder meetings-** with appropriate general consultees (e.g. forums for disabled people or ethnic groups), when requested, using a pro forma to seek their view on key issues.

**Drop in sessions-** These will be organised in advance, cover the whole district where officer levels allow and be held at appropriate times to ensure high levels of attendance. The sessions will include up to date information boards, consultation documents and questionnaires and background evidence studies as needed. Due to the expected high volumes of attendees Forward Planning will ensure appropriate levels of officer cover. The number of drop in sessions will be subject to the Forward Planning teams capacity at the time the consultation is launched.

**Council website-** Will include information contained within the formal letter and links to evidence base reports, indicative timescales, link to Facebook page, future methods of engagement.

**Council magazine-Forester-** The existing editions will be used as appropriate to keep people informed and ensure on-going engagement with residents and businesses. A special Forester edition is being considered for the Preferred Options consultation in Autumn 2013.

**Commuter post cards-**These have proven successful and are handed out at peak times at all tube stations and train station allowing us to reach a wider range of consultees.

**EFDC directorates-** Special invites via email to be sent to all Directors and Assistant Directors notifying them of consultations and providing information at key stages. District Lines to be used to publicise key events, keep colleagues in the know and gain information input as needed.

## **C Other interested parties excluding residents and businesses**

**Formal letters** –Explaining the consultation stage we are at, signposting to relevant information on our website or hard copies of consultation and other documents where appropriate, inviting representations at each stage of the consultation process and providing a timetable for the consultations.

The letter will contain web links to the evidence base studies and any summaries, underlining their relevance to the delivery of the Local Plan.

**Consultation summary leaflet-** Setting out the process followed so far i.e. timetable to date, outlining important facts and key Q&As and next steps in the process following the consultation end date.

**Council website-** Will include information contained within the formal letter and links to evidence base reports, indicative timescales, link to Facebook page, future methods of engagement.



## D Businesses

Businesses fall under the grouping 'General consultees and residents'

**Formal letters to businesses on our database** – Explaining the consultation stage we are at, signposting to relevant information on our website or hard copies of consultation and other documents where appropriate, inviting representations at each stage of the consultation process and providing a timetable for the consultations.

**Consultation summary leaflet-** Setting out the process followed so far i.e. timetable to date, outlining important facts and key Q&As and next steps in the process following the consultation end date.

**Dedicated business surveys-** Surveys will be devised to ensure engagement with companies on our business database. Special business workshops/events to be held to gain specialist input from businesses regarding their future needs, ideas and vision for the district.

**Council magazine-Forester-** The existing editions will be used as appropriate to keep people informed and ensure on-going engagement with residents and businesses. A special Forester edition is being considered for the Preferred Options consultation in Autumn/Winter 2013.

## E Press

**Launch event/presentation** to be held during designated 'launch week', at the Council offices as appropriate depending on the nature of the consultation and event. Invitations to be sent to local press and blog editors, outlining:

- the purpose of the event, providing background information as necessary
- the importance the Council places on stakeholder engagement
- the clear intention of the consultation and relevant consultation material as appropriate

**One to one sessions-** In some cases one to one or small group briefings to be held with the local press prior to launch week, to ensure there is appropriate local media coverage at the right time. This has the potential to be more beneficial than just sending out a press release or doing a wider press launch.

At the launch of the Community Choices consultation there was an opportunity to engage with the local press and communicate the intricacies of delivering a Local Plan. It allowed the Council to clearly outline what the intentions were for the consultation, including why it was important to understand the views of local people in order to deliver a sound Local Plan that reflects local aspirations.

**Ads in press-** Special ads to be taken out in local press advertising the consultation and providing useful information.

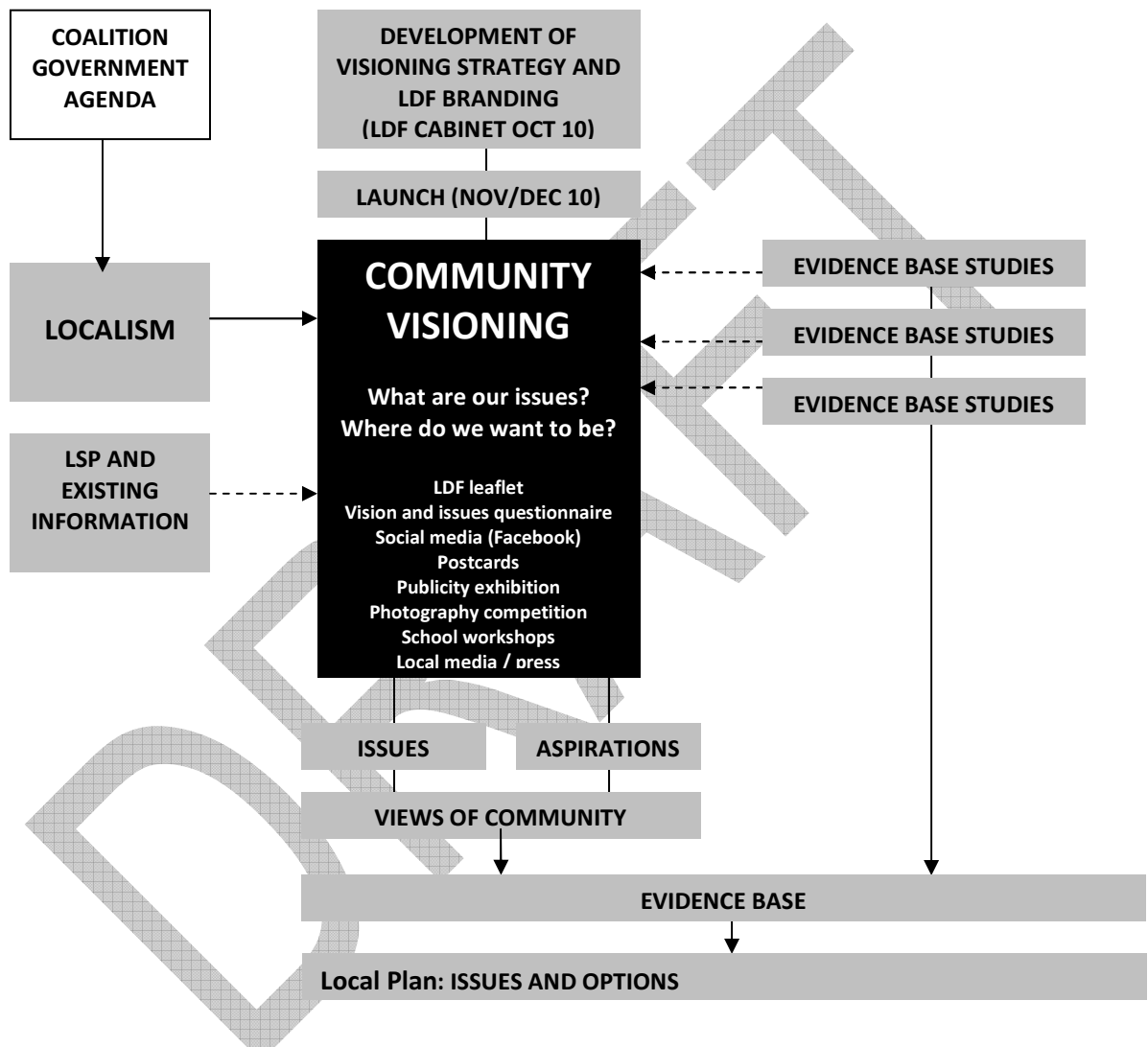
It is envisaged that similar approaches to the above will form part of the Council's engagement during the Preferred Options consultation. All content will be adapted to requirements of the consultation

**Press releases-** Issue of press releases and liaison with the local press takes place through the Council's PR department.

## 6 Consultation Stages

Outlined below are the specific engagement methods used for each of the consultation stages and recommendations for the Preferred Options stage.

### 6 a) Community visioning -complete



The overall aim of the visioning exercise was:

To receive feedback from the community that allows the Forward Planning team to understand local people’s vision for the future of their area and what they consider to be the key issues for planning and development.

## Visioning exercise: objectives

This consultation exercise focused its approach on the residents in the District. The objectives of the visioning exercise were:

- To communicate clearly what the Core Strategy (at the time of the consultation EFDC was delivering a Local Development Framework) is and how it will influence the local area
- To communicate clearly the opportunities for local people to get involved
- To understand the views of as wide a range and number of residents as possible
- To understand views on a vision for the future of the area
- To understand views on the key planning issues for the area
- To ensure that consultation is not dominated by 'the usual suspects'

The methods of engagement that were used to communicate and engage with local people to achieve the aims of the visioning exercise are outlined below:

- **Leaflet/Questionnaire**-This was sent to all households in district and a special version was in the Forester magazine
- **Postcards/Photography competition**- which was handed out at all stations in the district during am and pm peak hours
- **Launch of Planning Our Future website and new logo**-all material was re-branded and relevant information and consultation material was available online

## 6 b) Community Choices (Issues & Options) consultation-complete

The Local Plan Community Choices consultation took place between 30<sup>th</sup> July and 15<sup>th</sup> October 2012. The following methods of engagement were used and some were tested for the first time:

- a) **Leaflet**- sent via a distribution company to all households and business addresses within the district;
- b) **A summary** of the consultation document was prepared, of which we sent out email/paper copies on 2<sup>nd</sup> August to Parish/Town Councils and residents' associations that we knew of;
- c) **Letters (2-sided)/emails** to anyone who had been involved in a planning policy consultation in the past (via the contact details they gave us at that time), and statutory consultees etc. notifying them of the consultation (over 8,000 people, bodies etc.). These were sent out on the 26<sup>th</sup> July;
  - **Letters (2-sided)/emails** to anyone who owned land within any of the potential development/ opportunity areas within the consultation document (from a Land Registry search), asking whether they are interested in their land being considered for potential future development and inviting their comments on the consultation;
  - **Letters (2-sided)/emails** to all those who submitted land for consideration through the Call for Sites, stating whether or not their site had been included in the consultation at this stage and inviting their comments on the consultation. These were sent out on the 26<sup>th</sup> July;
- d) **Static exhibitions** at the Civic Offices and libraries for the whole of the consultation period, with banners, hard copies of consultation documents and a ballot box to leave comments in;

- e) **Drop-in sessions- held across the district**
- f) **Website- online information and questionnaire**
- g) **Facebook/twitter**
- h) **Press briefing and press releases**
- i) **Information packs/documents to all Town & Parish Councils and known residents' associations**
- j) **Commuter postcards**

Sending the full Community Choices document to everyone in the district would have been very expensive. The Council produced a letter sent via email or hard copy to over 8,000 people and businesses previously registered on the consultation database, as outlined above. A leaflet was sent to the residents/ businesses and other stakeholders outlining the drop-in sessions and included the Forward Planning team's contact details.

Multiple copies of the Community Choices document, questionnaires and supporting documents were prepared for all the town and parish councils for collection. Additional copies of all the consultation material were available at libraries, the Council offices and at the drop-in sessions

The full detail of the Community Choices consultation methods are shown in Appendix 1

## **6 c) Key Lessons from Key Lessons from Community Visioning and Community Choices consultations**

There were some key lessons learnt from the Community Choices consultation:

- a) **Website-** The ease of navigation of the website will need to be improved. In particular the Council's homepage for the duration of the Preferred Options consultation will need to have a static one-click logo to a Local Plan consultation landing page. Access to documents and the supporting evidence should be made easy and online response tools be easy to understand and use.
- b) **Questionnaire-** The consultation software/online questionnaire will need to be simplified, streamlined and be in plain English.
- c) **Consultation documents-** To be simplified and streamlined and where possible in plain English. To contain clear messages about the timescales for the proposed developments, the plan period, and other basic headline messages such as the legal status of the plan at each stage and what will happen next. To be laid out and sign-posted in a manner that easily enables navigation through the document.
- d) **Letter distribution-** The approach of using leaflets will need to be reviewed. It may be more appropriate for a letter to be sent to each household and businesses, with clear markings of its content on the envelope. The use of an alternative distribution company will also be explored
- e) **Publicising the choice of response methods-** Consultation documents and online information to clearly outline all routes for representation submission.

## 6 d) Preferred Options

As the work progresses to complete the Preferred Options consultation material, it will become apparent which approaches and methods will be appropriate to be used during the consultation.

The key consideration is that the consultation programme is tailored to the requirements of the engagement activity at that stage, and guarantees maximum stakeholder input.

The list of consultees has been updated substantially following the Community Choices consultation and this will be used for the circulation of consultation information for the Preferred Options.

In addition to engagement methods outlined in Appendix 1 the following may be pursued:

- a) **Better use of the Forester magazine.** Both its current programmed editions and a special edition can be used to inform and engage with residents. In addition, more intensive media launches and engagement with the local press will be pursued with full ads being taken out in printed and online press and blogs as required.
- b) **Summary document.** This can accompany the letter informing consultees of the consultation launch. Sending the Preferred Options document to everyone in the district would be very expensive. Stakeholders will be advised of where hard copies of all consultation materials can be found. All relevant, supporting information will be made available on the Planning Our Future website at the launch and for the duration of the consultation.
- c) **Area focused consultation activities** – there may be cases where area based intensive consultation such as local workshops, door to door publicity or community presentations for directly affected communities will be suitable at the preferred options stage of the plan where sites will be proposed for allocation. Such approaches will be considered and balanced against the resources available and effectiveness of other, less resource intensive methods.
- d) **Cascade** – Dedicated briefing packs were provided for Town and Parish Councils for the Community Choices consultation. The use of briefing packs to enable Town and Parish Councils and other groups to carry out their own detailed consultation event on the preferred strategy will be considered as this may prove a better way to develop more locally tailored approaches.

As mentioned the consultation questionnaires will need to be carefully developed to engage more widely with the desired audience and provide meaningful feedback. The questionnaire for the Preferred Options consultation will be designed to be helpful, engaging, accessible and user-friendly.

These approaches should ensure that previous difficulties are overcome, stakeholder input increases even further, the format of the feedback is manageable and our methods of engagement are robust enough to undergo scrutiny at the Examination in Public stage

### **Key considerations and scene setting of the Preferred Options consultation document:**

The following matters have been identified as critical to the effectiveness of engagement on the preferred options or draft plan. Many relate to the document itself clearly explaining the thinking behind the proposals contained within it.

- 1) Re-emphasise the emerging vision for the district and each settlement in view of Community Choices feedback and input from all stakeholders including Members;
- 2) Outline key competing demands for land and strategic constraints in planning our future for the district based on all evidence gathered;
- 3) Outline the engagement programme to date and state facts about key evidence used and decisions made by Members, eg priorities for district and settlements, agreement on population figures, preferred growth distribution, preferred outcome for key land assets eg North Weald Airfield;
- 4) From the above show what the preferred options are and how they have been determined and why. Clearly show which options were on the table and considered for each area, how they were considered and why they were, or were not taken forward.
- 5) Find a simple and clear way of consulting on emerging policies- highlighting existing policies that need to be thoroughly reviewed and explaining why.
- 6) Forward Planning to create a diagram as per Community Visioning to show the process of going from Community Choices to Preferred Options.

## **7-Engagement of elected councillors**

Whilst the councillors who sit on the Local Plans Cabinet Committee have a direct role in the approval of the Local Plan as it progresses through the production process this is not the sole area of engagement of councillors.

Councillors are given opportunities to attend briefings during the launch period of consultations to ensure that they understand the process, and content of the consultation.

A more active use of the councillor network for future consultations is being explored based on the idea of further enabling local councillors to cascade information to their constituents and supporting them in doing so.

### **Workshop Programme**

A programme of workshops for elected members of the Council and Parish and Town Councils has been developed for the plan and will continue to be adapted as appropriate. These are not decision making events. The purposes of workshops are:

- To facilitate an in depth understanding of issues in relation to the evidence used to support the plan
- For Members to provide perspectives and steer on issues that the plan aims to address
- For Members to explore the policy choices that the plan aims to resolve
- To provide local perspectives on the potential proposals in the plan and explain the impacts at a local level

Three workshops have been held in the period January 2013 to March 2013 covering:

1. Update on the evidence base
2. Local visions and choices
3. Planning the local area

Another two workshops are already in the programme:

4. Population projections and housing targets
5. Taking the tested options to a preferred strategy

As production of the plan continues it may be that other areas of work would lend themselves to further workshops with elected councillors and these opportunities will be taken and kept under review.

## **8 Consultation programme**

Community Visioning- Nov 2010

Community Choices July-October 12

Preferred Options- TBC

Pre submission publication - 6 week statutory period for representations on soundness prior to submission

Examination in Public

In the upcoming months this item will be updated to contain more detail in line with the Local Development Scheme

## **9 Evidence base studies**

It is not considered best practice to consult the general public on technical evidence base studies, which are factual assessments, as this can be confusing and counter productive.

It is important however to engage with stakeholders in order to explain and outline the key findings of studies. This allows for a better understanding of processes and how emerging evidence informs the production of the Local Plan. The means by which engagement has taken place and will continue include:

### **Stakeholder workshops**

Are held to advise key stakeholders on the findings of certain studies such as the Strategic Land Availability Assessment and the Heritage Asset Review. These have included local amenity groups, Parish and Town Councils and agents for landowners or developers. In some cases separate workshops are held with certain technical stakeholders in order to seek expert views on emerging evidence.

**Elected councillor workshops-** as outlined in section 7 above

## Appendix 1- Engagement methods used for Community Choices Issues & Options

### General methods

- **drop-in sessions** in various locations throughout the district within September, held in the evenings to allow as many people to attend as possible, manned by Forward Planning staff so that local people can ask questions, discuss issues, and take consultation documents. In many cases local people have taken multiples copies of documents to give to neighbours, friends etc. The original 6 sessions arranged were:
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Sept – Sheering Village hall, Sheering
  - 5<sup>th</sup> Sept – Jack Silley Pavilion, Epping
  - 6<sup>th</sup> Sept – Roding valley Hall, Buckhurst Hill
  - 10<sup>th</sup> Sept – Fyfield Village Hall, Fyfield
  - 11<sup>th</sup> Sept – Waltham Abbey Town Hall, Waltham Abbey
  - 12<sup>th</sup> Sept – Abridge Village Hall, Abridge
  - 13<sup>th</sup> Sept – Roydon Marina Village, RoydonA further 7 sessions were arranged following demand, which were:
  - 17<sup>th</sup> Sept – Epping Hall, Epping
  - 18<sup>th</sup> Sept – Loughton Council Chamber, Loughton
  - 19<sup>th</sup> Sept – Bumbles Green Leisure Centre, Nazeing
  - 20<sup>th</sup> Sept – Chigwell Parish Council Offices, Chigwell
  - 25<sup>th</sup> Sept – Ongar Town Council, Chipping Ongar
  - 26<sup>th</sup> Sept – Theydon Bois Village Hall, Theydon Bois
  - 27<sup>th</sup> Sept – North Weald Village Hall Lounge, North Weald
- **letters (2-sided)/emails** to anyone who has been involved in a planning policy consultation in the past (via the contact details they gave us at that time), and statutory consultees etc. notifying them of the consultation (over 8,000 people, bodies etc.). These were sent out on the 26<sup>th</sup> July
- **letters (2-sided)/emails** to anyone who owns land within any of the potential development / opportunity areas within the consultation document (from a Land Registry search), asking whether they are interested in their land being considered for potential future development and inviting their comments on the consultation. The vast majority of these were sent out on the 26<sup>th</sup> of July. Results on searches for the potential development areas ONG-D, ONG-E ONG-G were received later from Land Registry. Due to this unavoidable delay, the letters regarding theses areas were sent out on the 16<sup>th</sup> August
- **letters (2-sided)/emails** to all those who submitted land for consideration through the Call for Sites, stating whether or not their site had been included in the consultation at this stage and inviting their comments on the consultation. These were sent out on the 26<sup>th</sup> July
- **our website** <http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/index.php/contact-us/consultation/planning-our-future> where comments can be made online, or electronic copies of documents can be downloaded and either filled in electronically or printed and



posted. The Consultation documents etc. were available on the website on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> July (the first day of the consultation period) and have been available ever since

- **hard copies** of consultation documents supplied to all the Parish and Town Councils in the district:

- 15 x Community Choices consultation document
- 5 x Community Choices questionnaire
- 5 x Frequently Asked Questions
  
- 5 x Statement of Community Involvement consultation document
- 5 x Statement of Community Involvement questionnaire
- 2 x Sustainability Appraisal
- 1 x A4 poster
- 25 x leaflets

We notified the Parish and Town Councils that they were available on the 27<sup>th</sup> July. Various District Councillors took these to deliver to their Parish Town Councils.

- **laminated leaflets** highlighting the consultation, supplied to Parish/Town Councils who requested them, which were then offered to all who were interested
  
- **hard copies** of consultation documents supplied to residents associations that we know of in the district

- 15 x Community Choices consultation document
- 5 x Community Choices questionnaire
- 5 x Frequently Asked Questions
- 5 x Statement of Community Involvement consultation document
- 5 x Statement of Community Involvement questionnaire
- 2 x Sustainability Appraisal
- 2 x A4 posters
- 25 x leaflets

We notified the Residents Associations/Groups through a letter/email on the 1<sup>st</sup> August stating that we had an information pack (contents as above) was available and asking would they please arrange for collection.

- **hard copies** of consultation documents at the EFDC Housing Offices in Loughton Broadway, and Limes Farm in Chigwell, as follows:

- 50 x Community Choices consultation document
- 50 x Community Choices questionnaire
- 100 x Frequently Asked Questions
- 10 x Statement of Community Involvement consultation document
- 10 x Statement of Community Involvement questionnaire
- 2 x Sustainability Appraisal
- 2 x A4 posters
- 100 x leaflets

- **a summary** of the consultation document was prepared, of which we sent out email/paper copies to Parish/Town Councils and residents associations that we know of, on 2<sup>nd</sup> August.
  
- **extra hard copies** supplied to Parish/Town Councils and residents groups on request.
  
- **leaflets** sent via a distribution company to households and business addresses within the district. The distribution began on the 27th July and was completed within a few days. Where reports of non-delivery have been received we have investigated with the distribution company via satellite trails of the people making deliveries. Investigation revealed a problem

with delivery in Chigwell. We instructed the delivery company to re-deliver to the whole of Chigwell and Chigwell Row which they did on 26<sup>th</sup> August. A problem with non-delivery in Sheering/Lower Sheering was identified, following this the Council arranged for re-delivery of new leaflets in Sheering/Lower Sheering on the 19<sup>th</sup> September.

- **leaflets** given out either during the early morning or early evening outside tube stations and rail stations which are within or immediately adjacent to the district, to engage commuters
    - 30<sup>th</sup> July a.m. peak - Loughton Underground
    - 31<sup>st</sup> July p.m. peak - Epping Underground
    - 1<sup>st</sup> August a.m. peak - Chigwell Underground & leaflets left at Chigwell newsagents.
    - 1<sup>st</sup> August a.m. peak - Buckhurst Hill Underground
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> August a.m. peak - Roydon Station
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> August a.m. peak - Epping Underground
    - 7<sup>th</sup> August a.m. peak - Epping Underground
    - 9<sup>th</sup> August a.m. peak - Buckhurst Hill Underground
    - 14<sup>th</sup> August p.m. peak - Roding Valley Underground
    - 15<sup>th</sup> August p.m. peak – Broxbourne Station
    - 17<sup>th</sup> August p.m. peak – Sawbridgeworth Station
    - 30<sup>th</sup> August a.m. peak - Waltham Cross Station
  - **2 sets of information exhibitions** (with banners, hard copies of consultation documents and a ballot box to leave comments in) touring various libraries and other locations in the district as follows:
    - 30<sup>th</sup> July to 10<sup>th</sup> August - Loughton Library
    - 30<sup>th</sup> July to 10<sup>th</sup> August - Theydon Bois Village Hall
    - 13<sup>th</sup> August to 24<sup>th</sup> August - Ongar Library
    - 13<sup>th</sup> August to 24<sup>th</sup> August - Waltham Abbey Library
    - 28<sup>th</sup> August to 7<sup>th</sup> September - North Weald Library
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> September to 14<sup>th</sup> September - Stapleford Abbots Primary School
    - 10<sup>th</sup> September to 15<sup>th</sup> October - Sainsbury's, Loughton
  - **hard copies** at libraries (not including exhibition supplies at various locations in the district as follows (supplies topped up on request via telephone):
    - Epping Library
    - North Weald Library
    - Ongar Library
    - Loughton Library
    - Chigwell Library
    - Waltham Abbey Library
    - Buckhurst Hill Library
    - Loughton Broadway (Epping Forest College)
- At the start of the consultation period, each library received:
- 40 x Community Choices consultation document
  - 100 x Community Choices questionnaire
  - 50 x Frequently Asked Questions
  - 5 x Statement of Community Involvement consultation document
  - 20 x Statement of Community Involvement questionnaire
  - 1 x Sustainability Appraisal
  - 2 x A4 posters
  - 100 x leaflets
- **static exhibition** at the Civic Offices for the whole of the consultation period, with banners, hard copies of consultation documents and a ballot box to leave comments in There is also a supply of documents at Planning Reception in the Civic Offices

- **briefing for Parish/Town Councils** on 18<sup>th</sup> June, at which information was distributed. Invitations for this briefing were sent on the 11<sup>th</sup> June
- **meetings with any Parish/Town Council** in the district who wishes to meet with us (many Parish and Town Councils are then disseminating information themselves through their newsletters etc.). We invited them to request a meeting via letter/email invitations sent out on 26<sup>th</sup> July. We have attended the following meetings:
  - Waltham Abbey Town Council – 6<sup>th</sup> August
  - Nazeing Parish Council – 9<sup>th</sup> August
  - Theydon Bois Parish Council – 16<sup>th</sup> August
  - North Weald Parish Council – 20<sup>th</sup> August
  - Epping Town Council – 21<sup>st</sup> August
  - Buckhurst Hill Parish Council – 30<sup>th</sup> August
  - Loughton Town Council – 3<sup>rd</sup> September
  - Ongar Town Council – 7<sup>th</sup> September
  - Sawbridgeworth Town Council (re: Lower Sheering/Sheering) – 24<sup>th</sup> September
  - Moreton, Bobbingworth & the Lavers Parish Council - 24<sup>th</sup> September
  - Epping Upland Parish Council - 24<sup>th</sup> September
- **meetings with residents groups when requested** – officers have already met with Waltham Abbey Residents Association and Thornwood Action Group
- **our consultation telephone line** 01992 564517 (which is on all of our consultation materials, website etc.) - for anyone who wishes to be sent hard copy documents or electronic copies of documents, or ask any questions about the consultation
- **our consultation email address** [LDFConsult@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:LDFConsult@eppingforestdc.gov.uk) (which is on all of our consultation materials, website etc.) - for anyone who wishes to be sent hard copy documents or electronic copies of documents, ask any questions about the consultation, or submit comments. We also receive and reply to queries and comments through an older email address [ContactFP@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:ContactFP@eppingforestdc.gov.uk), and have received and replied to others through the Council's generic [ContactUS@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:ContactUS@eppingforestdc.gov.uk) email address and our personal work email addresses
- **technical workshops** held on 7<sup>th</sup> August, for the County Council, neighbouring authorities, government departments, utility companies, health bodies, environmental agencies etc. Letters/email invitations were sent for these on 27<sup>th</sup> July
- **non-technical workshops** held on 8<sup>th</sup> August, for residents groups, amenity groups, action groups, conservation groups, BME groups, business groups etc. Letters/email invitations were sent for these on 27<sup>th</sup> July
- **speaking with members of the public at reception** at the Civic Offices, outlining the consultation and giving out consultation documents
- **press briefings** on the 18<sup>th</sup> (Ongar Gazette) attended by Tom Carne, Cllr Bassett and IW, and on 20<sup>th</sup> July (the two Local Guardians) attended by Tom Carne, Cllr Bassett, JP and IW. these were held on these dates in order for information to be included in the 26<sup>th</sup> July newspapers
- **press releases** the first of which was made on 22<sup>nd</sup> July, so that it would be in time for the agenda deadline of 28<sup>th</sup> July for Local Plan Cabinet Committee

- **meeting with the Youth Council** (young people elected by their peers) on the 11<sup>th</sup> September
- **video on the EFDC website** by Cllr Bassett, explaining the reasons for the consultation, outlining issues and urging people to respond to the consultation (further videos to help people to comment online, and to engage Gypsy Roma Travellers are also being produced)
- **EFDC Facebook page** updated re: consultation events etc.
- **EFDC twitter account** updated re: consultation events etc.
- **Updates at other meetings** which officers attended such as those with amenity groups, on progress with the new Local Plan

***Other methods organised for EFDC Councillors:***

- **letters to Members** including hard copy consultation documents sent directly to home addresses via the courier system on 26<sup>th</sup> July
- **briefings for Members** on 18<sup>th</sup> June on the consultation period, content of the consultation etc.
- **briefings for Members** on 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> January on progress with the Local Plan and ideas for future consultation
- **workshops/briefings for Members on Evidence Base documents** held as and when these documents have been progressed, e.g. the Open Space Sport and Recreation Study, and the Strategic Land Availability Assessment
- **updates in the Council Bulletin** for Members, on progress with the Local Plan, progress with Evidence Base documents, workshops, consultation events etc.
- **updates to Local Plan Cabinet Committee** on a regular basis, on progress with the Local Plan, budget, progress with Evidence Base documents, workshops, consultation events etc.
- **Local Plan Cabinet Committee minutes** which are regularly placed on the agenda for Cabinet meetings

## Appendix 2 -Local Plan Consultees

For full details refer to The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

Regulation 18 explains that a local planning authority must notify each of the bodies or persons specified below and invite them to make representations:

- The specific consultation bodies that the local planning authority consider may have an interest in the subject of the proposed plan
- The general consultation bodies that the local planning authority consider appropriate
- Such residents and other persons carrying on business in the local planning authority from which the local planning authority consider it appropriate to invite representations.

The Local Planning Authority must also take into account any representation made in response to invitations.

### Specific and technical consultees:

- The Coal Authority
- The Environment Agency
- The Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Commission for England (known as English Heritage)
- The Marine Management Organisation
- Natural England
- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
- The Highways Agency
- A relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the local planning authority's area, namely
  - A local planning authority
  - A county council
  - A parish council
  - A local policing body
- Any person to whom the electronic communications code applies
- Any person who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in the local authority's area
- If it exercises functions in the local area:
  - A Primary Care Trust
  - A person holding a license under the Electricity Act 1989 or Gas Act 1986
  - A sewerage undertaker
  - A water undertaker
- The Homes and Communities Agency

### **General consultees and residents:**

- **Voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the local planning authority's area**
- **Bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the local planning authority's area**
- **Bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in the local planning authority's area**
- **Bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the local planning authority's area**
- **Bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in the local planning authority's area.**

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