

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL
HELD ON TUESDAY, 14 APRIL 2015
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.00 - 8.10 PM**

Members Present:	G Chambers (Chairman), Ms Y Knight (Vice-Chairman), D Dorrell, H Kauffman, J Knapman, Mrs M McEwen, B Sandler, Mrs G Shiell, B Surtees and D Wixley
Other members present:	R Bassett (Planning Policy Portfolio Holder)
Apologies for Absence:	A Watts
Officers Present	D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), N Richardson (Assistant Director (Development Management)), Bean (Planning Policy Manager), P Millward (Business Manager) and M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant)

47. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

In addition to the apologies indicated above, the Panel had also received apologies from Councillor J Philip Governance and Development Management Portfolio Holder.

48. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitutions made for the meeting.

49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

50. NOTES FROM THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the last Panel meeting held on 26 February 2015 be agreed.

51. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Panel's Terms of Reference were noted.

52. WORK PROGRAMME

It was noted that the Panel Work Programme for this municipal year was completed.

53. ELECTRONIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

The Panel received a report from the Business Manager regarding the Development Management of Electronic Information and Systems.

The re-structure of the Planning Support Team, agreed in October 2014, had led to a Senior Technical Officer Electronic Information and a Technical Officer Applications Systems being appointed. The key focus was to implement business process improvements in the use of the primary planning database Northgate M3 and information@work which managed plans, maps, photographs and documents.

Web mapping on the District Council website linked to planning and building control information was scheduled for 2015/16. Work was continuing on scanning of large site, conservation and contaminated land files with progress having already been made in scanning large site files.

Significant progress had also been made in the electronic conversion of historical microfiche planning records. It was estimated that by December 2015, 93,000 jackets comprising nearly 5 million historical planning images, would be converted to electronic format.

A key element in making progress towards mobile and flexible working was the roll out of tablets for Development Control, Trees and Building Control.

RESOLVED:

That the report regarding Electronic Information Systems Development Management be noted.

54. LOCAL PLAN

The Panel received an update on the Local Plan from the Planning Policy Manager.

The Local Development Scheme agreed in July 2014 had proposed that the next stage of consultation on the draft plan/preferred option was to run between May and July 2015. However, it was advised that it was not possible to meet the timetable for a number of reasons, one of which was that receipt of the consultant's report updating the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) had been delayed due to new household projections published by the Government. The following was noted:

- (a) Options for Growth – A series of three Member workshops were held in the autumn of 2014 to engage Members in the process of identifying options for testing.
- (b) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) – As indicated earlier, the receipt of the final report from consultants undertaking work on updating the SHMA had been delayed. New household projections had been published by the Government, therefore the consultants needed to update the SHMA calculations using these figures. A draft final report was expected very soon.
- (c) Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) – Work updating the Stage 1 SFRA was nearly complete, a Member's workshop would be arranged with the consultants once the Stage 2 work had been undertaken.
- (d) Transport Matters – The District Council continued to work with neighbouring authorities on strategic transport modelling to gauge the current position in respect of the transport network in and around Harlow. Supporting the emerging Local Plan, was Essex County Council, who were currently preparing a transport

accessibility study. This would provide a further tool to assess possible site allocations.

(e) Plan Viability – Advice of viability of Local Plan policies was being undertaken by consultants. Their report would also inform policy choices on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL/S106). It had been agreed that the timetable should be revised to enable the general direction from Member workshops on Green Belt Review Phase 1 to inform the consideration of viability. A Member workshop would likely be scheduled for May 2015 reporting on the market position, consider options and include an informal view on the possibility of charging CIL.

(f) Economic and Employment Evidence – Consultants had provided interim findings on economic and employment evidence for supporting both the Local Plan and the District Council's overall Economic Development Strategy. This work was being used together with the SHMA with officers ensuring that the assessments of future need for housing and jobs were co-ordinated.

(g) Green Belt Review – Phase 1 of the Review undertook a comprehensive high level review of all Green Belt land across the district to identify its contribution to the Green Belt as stipulated in the National Planning Policy Framework. It would also explore areas of Green Belt land which no longer contributed towards the national purposes or, contributed the least. The Phase 1 report was approaching completion and it was advised that an extra meeting of the Local Council's Liaison Committee had been scheduled for 15 June 2015 for the purposes of sharing the report with parish and town councils.

(h) Duty to Co-Operate – Officers continued to meet regularly with the relevant neighbouring authorities and other bodies to consider cross boundary issues.

(i) Neighbourhood Plans – Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers produced a revised draft plan which was being formally consulted on shortly before being put forward for independent examination. North Weald Bassett's application for their parish to be designated a neighbourhood area was currently under consideration, and consultation had just ended on an application from Loughton Town Council which would be considered soon.

New regulations came into force during February 2015 meant that future designations would need to be made within 8 weeks. The District Council would be writing shortly to all parish and town councils outlining the level of support, guidance and funding available to those progressing neighbourhood plans.

In addition, the following was noted:

(j) The Planning Policy Manager updated the Panel on Enfield Borough Council's North East Enfield Area Action Plan and in particular references in relation to a scheme concerning the North Gateway Access Road. District Council officers were objecting, they were submitting a full statement to the examining inspector. The examination would take place on 28 April 2015 with District Council planning officers being present, along with representatives from Waltham Abbey and Loughton Town Council.

(ii) The Planning Policy Portfolio Holder told the Panel that he had attended a meeting at City Hall (London), to meet representatives from the East and South East of England to establish better communication. At the meeting it was advised that London was planning on building 49,000 new homes within its own area with

no overspill into cross border spaces. City Hall would like to set up “round table” meetings in various places to discuss cross regional border Duty to Cooperate issues. Two meetings involving East of England authorities had now been arranged for later this year.

RESOLVED:

That the update on the Local Plan be noted.

55. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Assistant Director of Development Management advised the Panel of new planning legislation which had just come into effect. The changes affected permitted development rights with less permission required for building, from the Area Planning Sub-Committees. A note would be put in the Bulletin for Members.

The Planning Portfolio Holder commented on a recent judicial review involving the District Council, where approval had been given to a glasshouse development in Nazeing. A statutory consultee - the LVRPA - had objected to the application and later requested a judicial review. The review was dismissed and the judge refused an application to appeal the decision. This could have far reaching implications for the LVRPA and the scope of their powers under the 1966 in relation to planning applications.

56. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

This was the last meeting of the Panel, its work would be transferred to two new committees, the Governance Select Committee and the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Select Committee.

The Chairman thanked Members and officers for their support over the last year.