

## Scrutiny Panel Agenda



### **Planning Services Scrutiny Panel Tuesday, 14th April, 2015**

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Planning Services Scrutiny Panel**, which will be held at:

**Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping  
on Tuesday, 14th April, 2015  
at 7.00 pm .**

**Glen Chipp  
Chief Executive**

**Democratic Services  
Officer**

Mark Jenkins - Directorate of Governance  
Email [democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk) Tel: 01992  
564607

#### **Members:**

Councillors G Chambers (Chairman), Ms Y Knight (Vice-Chairman), D Dorrell, H Kauffman, J Knapman, Mrs M McEwen, B Sandler, Mrs G Shiell, B Surtees, A Watts and D Wixley

**SUBSTITUTE NOMINATION DEADLINE:**

**18:00**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

(Assistant to the Chief Executive). To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

(Assistant to the Chief Executive). To declare interests in any items of the agenda.

In considering whether to declare a personal or a prejudicial interest under the Code of Conduct, Overview and Scrutiny members are asked to pay particular attention to paragraph 11 of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements.

This requires the declaration of a personal and prejudicial interest in any matter before an Overview and Scrutiny Committee which relates to a decision of or action by another Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council, a Joint Committee or Joint Sub-

Committee in which the Council is involved and of which the Councillor is also a member.

Paragraph 11 does not refer to Cabinet decisions or attendance at an Overview and Scrutiny meeting purely for the purpose of answering questions or providing information on such a matter.

**4. NOTES FROM THE LAST MEETING (Pages 3 - 10)**

To agree the notes of the last meeting held on 26 February 2015 (attached).

**5. TERMS OF REFERENCE (Pages 11 - 12)**

The Terms of Reference are attached.

**6. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 13 - 14)**

The Work Programme is attached.

**7. ELECTRONIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT (Pages 15 - 18)**

(Director of Governance) To consider the attached report and appendix.

**8. LOCAL PLAN (Pages 19 - 22)**

(Director of Neighbourhoods) To consider the attached report.

**9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**10. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

This is the last meeting of the Panel, its work will form part of two Overview and Scrutiny Select Committees:

(1) Neighbourhoods and Community Services Select Committee – Management and Development Plan matters;

(2) Governance Select Committee – Development Management.

Lead officers for each select committee will be developing new work programmes for next year.

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NOTES OF A MEETING OF PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL  
HELD ON THURSDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2015  
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING  
AT 7.30 - 8.55 PM**

- Members Present:** G Chambers (Chairman), Ms Y Knight (Vice-Chairman), K Angold-Stephens, Mrs M McEwen, B Sandler, Ms G Shiell, B Surtees and D Wixley
- Other members present:** G Waller
- Apologies for Absence:** D Dorrell and H Kauffman
- Officers Present** D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), N Richardson (Assistant Director (Development Management)), S G Hill (Assistant Director (Governance & Performance Management)), Bean (Planning Policy Manager) and M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant)

### **33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

In addition to the apologies indicated above, the Panel had also received apologies from Councillors R Bassett and J Philip, Portfolio Holders for Planning Policy and Governance and Development Management respectively.

### **34. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

It was noted that Councillor K Angold-Stephens was substituting for Councillor H Kauffman.

### **35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

### **36. NOTES FROM THE LAST MEETING**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the notes of the last Panel meeting held on 26 February 2015 be agreed subject to the following amendment:

Minute Item 32 Dates of Future Meetings should say "Tuesday 14 April" instead of "Tuesday 15 April."

### **37. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Panel's Terms of Reference were noted.

### **38. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Work Programme was noted.

**39. RECENT MEETING OF THE CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE AREA AND DISTRICT COMMITTEES INVITATION PANEL**

The Panel received a copy of the notes from the meeting of Development Control Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen held on 2 December 2014. The Assistant Director of Governance and Performance Management advised that the agenda items under discussion had also been discussed at the Constitution and Member Services Scrutiny Panel.

The Panel were informed that:

- (a) The District Development Control Committee (DDCC) would be re-titled District Development Management Committee;
- (b) The Council would use the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) definition advice in determining those planning applications applicable to be reported straight to DDCC;
- (c) The procedure for referring a planning application from an Area Planning Sub-Committee to DDCC was being amended so that a minority reference could only take place after a committee vote had been taken; and
- (d) A Portfolio Holder report was being prepared on the options for the possible re-location of the Area Plans South Sub-Committee from Loughton.

**40. AREA PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEES - MEMBER BRIEFING ARRANGEMENTS**

The Assistant Director of Governance (Performance Management) advised the Panel that the short prompt included on the front page of Area Planning Sub-Committee agendas advising the respective chairmen, vice-chairmen and group spokespersons of the briefing arrangements held immediately prior to each meeting, had been subject to occasional misunderstanding by the public. The word "spokespersons" had sometimes been taken to refer to registered speakers addressing the Sub-Committee. Due to the briefing arrangements being well known, it was intended that the briefings prompt should be removed from area planning sub-committee agendas, to avoid any future confusion.

**RESOLVED:**

That the changes to Area Planning Sub-Committee Briefing Arrangements be noted.

**41. LOCAL PLAN**

The Panel received a report regarding the Local Plan Update from the Planning Policy Manager.

**(a) Options for Growth**

A series of three member workshops organised on an Area Planning Committee basis, were held in September/October 2014 for engaging members in the process of identifying options for testing. A summary note would be sent to all members on the outcomes of the workshops.

The work on updating the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) in conjunction with the other authorities within East Herts, Harlow and Uttlesford was progressing well and a draft report was expected towards the end of February. It was noted that the timetable had slipped as two additional pieces of work had been commissioned regarding economic activity scenarios matching appropriate job growth and a scenario based on intercensal population change assessing the projections for migration.

**(b) Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)**

Work was underway updating the Stage 1 SFRA and should be completed by the end of March 2015.

**(c) Plan Viability**

The plan viability being undertaken by Dixon Searle Partnership would also inform policy choices on Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Officers had met with the consultants in early February and it was agreed that the timetable should be revised to enable the general direction from the Member's workshops to inform the consideration of viability. The consultants would complete a Stage 1 report in March that would report on the market position, consider options and include an initial informal view on the possibility of charging CIL, should the Council wish to pursue this option.

**(d) Economic and Employment Evidence**

Consultants had provided their interim findings on economic and employment evidence to support both the Local Plan and the Council's overall Economic Development Strategy. Officers needed to ensure that this work incorporated the work commissioned by economic development on Waltham Abbey Town Centre and the County Council Commission for an Essex Economic Growth Strategy.

**(e) Green Belt Review**

The Green Belt Review Phase 1 had undertaken a comprehensive high level review of all Green Belt land across the district to identify its contribution to the Green Belt. Fieldwork was substantially completed and was being mapped and written up.

A meeting had been arranged with the district's 10 neighbouring authorities advising of the council's work and gaining a clear understanding of any Green Belt Reviews they were undertaking. Later, it was proposed to share the findings of Phase 1 with the Town and Parish Councils in accordance with the Cabinet's decision.

**(f) Strategic Land Availability Assessment**

A note had been placed in the Bulletin updating Members on the position reached with the Strategic Land Availability Assessment which once completed would form part of the Local Plan evidence base.

**(g) Air Quality**

Officers were awaiting the outcome of the strategic transport modelling work before progressing this, officers were liaising with Harlow and East Herts District Council to address the concerns raised by Natural England on the impact of traffic on the forest.

**(h) Developer Briefings**

Following on from developer briefings for the strategic sites around Harlow, sites outside the Harlow and North Weald areas where a similar approach might be appropriate had been identified.

**(i) Duty to Co-operate**

Officers had been meeting regularly with the appropriate authorities to consider cross boundary issues including the update to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and identifying the objectively assessed housing need, the approach to Green Belt review having carried out by several authorities and identifying the functional economic area. Meetings were held in January with further meetings scheduled for March.

**(j) Uttlesford Local Plan Examination**

The PINS Inspector raised fundamental concerns regarding the soundness of Uttlesford District Council's draft Local Plan and felt unable to recommend adoption of the plan. These concerns focussed on:

(i) The housing numbers derived from an outdated SHMA and Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing and;

(ii) The potential expansion of the village of Elsenham, in particular concerns about the capacity of the local road network in the absence of committed significant infrastructure improvements.

**(k) Neighbourhood Plans**

Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers produced a revised draft plan following the critical friend advice received from an NPIERS examiner. Officers were currently undertaking a screening opinion on the requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment which was a necessary part of the process. North Weald Bassett had also submitted an application for neighbourhood area designation. Following consultation one comment was received from the developer of Latton Priory about the area to be designated and this had been discussed with the parish. It was also advised that an application had been received from Loughton Town Council which was being currently consulted on. New regulations stipulated that future designations would need to be made in 8 weeks.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Local Plan update report be noted.

**42. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2015-16 - REVIEW AND TARGETS**

The Panel received a report regarding Key Performance Indicators 2015/16 Targets from the Assistant Director of Governance (Development Management).

Pursuant to the Local Government Act 1999, the Council was required to make arrangements for securing continuous improvement in the way in which its functions and services were exercised, as part of this duty a range of Key Performance

Indicators (KPIs) relevant to the Council's service priorities and key objectives, were adopted each year. Performance was reviewed on a quarterly basis.

Assistant Director of Governance (Development Management) verbally reported that as a result of revision for 2015, Minor category (KPI GOV05) and other category (KPI GOV06) defined planning applications determination times could be extended with the agreement of the developer and be considered to have been decided in time, so long as the new date for decision was achieved. The Panel agreed to the change in the definition and for all planning applications, to bring GOV05 and GOV06 in line with the current measure for Major category applications (KPI GOV04).

The review of KPIs which fell within the areas of responsibility of the Planning Scrutiny Panel resulted in one change being made to the way the target for the Increase in Homes was calculated.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Key Performance Indicators 2015-16 be noted with the added recommendation to the measure of GOV 05 and GOV06.

**43. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2014/15 - QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE**

The Panel received a report regarding the Key Performance Indicators 2014/15 – Quarter 3 Performance from the Assistant Director of Governance (Development Management).

Pursuant to the Local Government Act 1999, the Council was required to make arrangements to for securing continuous improvement in the way in which its functions and services were exercised, as part of the duty to secure continuous improvement a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) relevant to the Council's services and key objectives were adopted each year. Performance was reviewed on a quarterly basis.

A range of 36 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2014/15 was adopted by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee in March 2014. The KPIs were important to the improvement of the Council's services and the achievement of its key objectives. The KPIs directed improvement effort towards services and the national priorities and local challenges arising from the social, economic and environmental context of the district that were the focus of the key objectives.

As part of the overview and scrutiny review undertaken in 2013/14, changes had been made to arrangements for the quarterly review of KPI performance. From this municipal year, the existing scrutiny panels were now each responsible for the review of quarterly performance against specific KPIs within their areas of responsibility.

Six of the KPIs fell within the Planning Scrutiny Panel areas of responsibility. The overall position with regard to the achievement of target performance at the end of the third quarter of the year for these six indicators is as follows:

- (i) 3 (50%) indicators achieved the cumulative third quarter target;
- (ii) 3 (50%) indicators did not achieve the cumulative third quarter target, although 1 (17%) of these KPIs performed within the agreed tolerance for the indicators; and

(iii) 5 (83%) were currently anticipated to achieve the cumulative year end target.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Key Performance Indicators 2014/15, in relation to development management, be noted.

**44. BUILDING MORE HOMES ON BROWNFIELD LAND CONSULTATION PROPOSALS**

The Panel received a report regarding Building More Homes on Brownfield Land – Consultation Proposals from the Assistant Director of Governance (Development Management).

A Government consultation published on 28 January 2015 sought views on proposals for measures making it easier for building on brownfield land suitable for housing. They expected that permissions on brownfield land suitable for housing would in future be granted by Local Development Orders (LDO) and had set an objective that by 2020, LDOs should be in place in over 90% of brownfield land suitable for housing, with an intermediate target of 50% by 2017, and which did not already benefit from planning permission.

LDOs granted permission to specific types of development within a defined area and removed the need for developers to make a planning application. Members noted that a particularly controversial aspect of the consultation was the proposed sanction of placing councils under special measures for not making sufficient progress in setting LDOs in place. In these cases, applicants would have a choice of applying directly to the Secretary of State for planning permission. Whilst it was acknowledged that in a district such as Epping Forest, which was over 92% green belt, the Government's proposals should not be a major issue, there were still a number of potentially harmful implications and an objection in principle to the proposals was recommended.

It was also advised that bids were encouraged from local planning authorities who could identify brownfield sites that were suitable for housing and capable of accommodating in the region of 100 units or more. It was anticipated that successful bidders would receive £50,000 per bid towards the costs incurred in delivering the LDO.

The closing date for consultation responses was noted as being the 11 March 2015, it was suggested that Panel Members should email their responses to the Assistant Director Development Management for onward transmission to the Government by Friday 6 March 2015. The Chairman requested that the full response submitted by the Panel be put before the next meeting, be placed in the Council Bulletin and also be copied to the local MPs.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Panel Members respond directly to the Assistant Director Development Management with their comments concerning the Building Homes on Brownfield Land consultation by 6 March 2015; and
- (2) That the final response to the consultation be placed in the Council Bulletin and be copied to the local MPs.



**45. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Panel would commence at the earlier time of 7.00p.m.

**46. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next scheduled meeting of the Panel would be held on Tuesday 14 April 2015.

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## TERMS OF REFERENCE - STANDING PANEL

**Title: Planning Services**

**Status:** Standing Panel

**Terms of Reference:**

1. To consider and review Measures taken to Improve Performance within the Directorate concerning;
  - a) Performance standards and monitoring; and
  - b) Other Reviews
2. To monitor and receive reports/updates on the delivery of the Local Plan;
3. To monitor and receive reports/updates on the Planning Electronic Information System. To provide information regarding the progress and availability of planning information held on i-Plan.
4. To establish whether there are any resource implications arising out of the topics under review and advise Cabinet for inclusion in the Budget Process each year;
5. To report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at appropriate intervals on the above. To report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Council and the Cabinet with recommendations on matters allocated to the Panel as appropriate;
6. Response to Planning Consultations;
7. Receiving feedback from Chair and Vice Chair of Development Control meetings; and
8. Business Plans Review Development Control – Governance and Forward Planning - Neighbourhoods

**Chairman: Councillor G Chambers**

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<b>Planning Scrutiny Panel (Chairman – Cllr G Chambers)</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Report Deadline / Priority</b>	<b>Progress / Comments</b>	<b>Programme of Future Meetings</b>
1. To consider and Review Measures taken to Improve Performance within Development Management	To be confirmed	The Panel would review 5 Key Performance Indicators	8 July 2014; 2 September 2014; 9 December 2014; 26 February 2015; and 14 April
2. To monitor and receive reports/updates on the delivery of the Local Plan: a. To report on the progress of the Local Plan b. To provide further updates on the Local Plan	To be updated at every meeting		
3. Community Infrastructure Levy	9 December 2014	<b>COMPLETED</b>	
4. To monitor and receive reports/updates on the Planning Electronic Document Management System	2 September 2014/14 April 2015	Received report on 2 September 2014	
5. To establish whether there are any resource implications arising out of the topics under review and advise Cabinet for inclusion in the Budget Process each year. To provide reports/updates as and when required.	2 September 2014	Received update on Electronic Records Document Management Systems at the 2 September 2014 meeting	

6. Any recent meeting of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Area and District Committees Invitation Panel	To be discussed prior to December 2014 Panel	Any recent meeting of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Area and District Committees Invitation Panel. <b>Discussed at Panel meeting on 26 February 2015.</b>	
7. To receive urgent or other consultations and consider what response to give on behalf of the Council.	As and when required to meet consultation deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The London Infrastructure Delivery Plan Consultation (2 Sept 2014), recommendations to OSC – 16 Oct 2014</li> <li>b. Building more Homes on Brownfield Land (there was insufficient time to report to OSC)</li> </ul>	
8. S106 Agreements Monitoring Report (Annually)	8 July 2014	<b>COMPLETED</b>	
9. a. KPIs 2014/15 Q1 Performance b. KPIs 2014/15 Q2 Performance	2 September 2014 & 9 December 2014	First KPI Q1 reported at 2 September Panel meeting Second KPI Q2 reported at 9 December Panel meeting Third KPI Q3 reported at 26 February 2015 Panel meeting	
10. Speaking and arrangements at Planning Sub-Committees	9 December 2014	PICK Form request from Councillor B Sandler referred from the OSC to this Panel. Panel meeting submitted recommendations to the Constitution and Member Services Scrutiny Panel <b>COMPLETED</b>	

## Report to Planning Scrutiny Panel

**Date of meeting: 14 April 2015**

**Subject: Progress Report Electronic Information and Systems  
Progress Plan – Development Management**

**Officer contact for further information: Peter Millward (x4338)**

**Committee Secretary:**

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**To consider and note a report on Electronic Information and Systems Progress Plan 2015 – 2016, Development Management**

### Summary

The following report outlines the Electronic Information and Systems Progress Plan 2015 – 2016, Development Management as shown on Appendix One and forms an Appendix of the Governance Directorate Business Plan. Each of the paragraphs in the following report corresponds with the number sequence in the left column in Appendix One attached.

### Report:

1. Development Management is heavily dependent on the smooth operation of its primary planning database Northgate M3 for both Development Control (DC) and Building Control (BC). Linked to this is Information@work, the information management software where all plans, maps, photographs and documents are stored. The restructure of the Planning Support Team was agreed on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2014 and a Senior Technical Officer Electronic Information and a Technical Officer Applications Systems have since been appointed. The key focus for the newly restructured team will be to implement business process improvements in the use of both Northgate M3 and Information@work.
2. Crystal Reports is a powerful performance management tool that will help in creating new and faster business processes within Development Management. Development of Crystal Reports has been identified as a key area where significant business process improvements should take place. Developing Crystal Reports during 2015/16 will help provide better quality performance management information.
3. There is a need to improve and develop payment processes in Development Management. One of the barriers to the provision of quality Planning and Building Control services is our inability to accept payments online by card for both DC and BC. We currently have this facility available as part of the electronic Planning Portal process where over 50% of all planning applications are processed. However Building Control at this time does not have this facility and currently rely on the limited Submit a Plan process which does not include a payment option. An integrated payment solution for BC may be resolved once Northgate rollout online BC applications and/or if the Planning Portal provides a BC application service.
4. Ongoing support for improvements to both iPlan and Development Management EFDC Website pages will continue during 2015/16 including the provision of specialist web mapping information. The introduction of Web Mapping on the EFDC website linked to planning and building control information is scheduled to be rolled out in 2015/16.
5. Work will continue in the scanning of large site, conservation and contaminated land files. Significant progress has already been made in scanning some large site files. There is a high level of public interest in these files and once completed this information will be available to all officers across the council who in turn will be able to make this information more readily available to members of the public.

6. Significant progress has been made in the in the electronic conversion of historical microfiche planning records. It is estimated that the total of planning microfiche including an additional previous project that by December 2015 we will have converted 93 000 jackets comprising of nearly five million historical planning images to electronic format.
7. Work will continue in 2015/16 to scan Building Control paper files. This is required as there is a need to reduce Building Control's dependence on paper records as existing storage space has reached maximum capacity. The conversion of Building Control Paper Records to electronic format is part of the modernisation of Building Control and will support flexible and mobile working.
8. The roll out of tablets for flexible working for DC, Trees and BC is a key element in making progress towards mobile and flexible working. However ICT are leading on this and further development is subject to planning/building control officers being able to access the full range of database information whilst on site and/or at home.

**Reason for recommendation/decision:**

This progress report forms part of the Work Programme for Planning Scrutiny and Appendix One of the Governance Directorate's Business Plan forms the basis for Electronic Information Improvement.

**Consultation undertaken:**

ICT (SB)

**Resource implications:**

Resource requirements for some actions to achieve specific key objectives for 2014/15 are still to be agreed by Finance as part of the budget process.

**Background papers:**

Appendix One - Electronic Information and Systems Progress Plan 2015 – 2016, Development Management (attached)

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

There are no specific implication implications arising from the recommendations of this report. However steps are being taken as part of the Improvement Plan for Electronic Information Systems to decrease paper usage and to encourage Epping Forest residents to make use of iPlan and associated website information which are climate and environmentally friendly measures in line with the carbon reduction objectives of the council.



## APPENDIX ONE - ELECTRONIC INFORMATION AND SYSTEMS PROGRESS PLAN 2015 – 2016 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

PHASE	ACTION FOR IMPROVEMENT	SERVICE AREA	BENEFITS	LIMITATIONS	STATUS & TIMESCALE
1	Restructured Planning Support Team will place greater emphasis on coordinating moves towards modernised paperless electronic information systems.	SCANNING & RECORDS DEV MNGT	Will enable better back office support systems for mobile and flexible working Reductions in paper usage will create significant cost savings. Moving from paper to electronic information systems will result in effective/faster ways of working & in sharing planning information	A large amount of paper and microfiche records currently inhibit the effective sharing of all planning information. Transition phase requires the working of both manual and electronic records 'side by side' which is more costly to manage	Recruitment in progress to be completed April 2015. Restructured support team will be able to lead on electronic information improvement in 2015/16.
2	Continued development of Crystal Reports will take place to enable faster business processes and high quality Performance Management Information	ALL DEV. MNGT	Improved access to information for Councillors and Parish Councils. Greater transparency of Planning Information particularly Enforcement. Will aid Business Processes and collation of Performance Management information.	Enhanced software will require staff resources & training to implement. Needs to be developed alongside Northgate M3 improvements	Significant development expected to take place in 2015/16 due to the appointment of Senior Technical Officer Electronic Information and Technical Officer Applications Systems in February 2015.
3	Improvements in DC/BC payments: Arrange Chip & Pin device - Planning Reception Facilitate on line payments. Audit compliant reconciliation of DC/BC income	BC & DC	DC/BC methods of payments processes inhibit delivery of efficient customer service and limit/delay audit compliant reconciliation of DC/BC income currently in excess of £1 million per annum.	Currently we receive payments by cash, cheque, and online payments along with telephone payments. The manual reconciliation and recording of income to audits standards is time consuming	Ongoing 2015/16 Chip & Pin device scheduled for early in 2015/16 year. Subject to co-ordination by ICT and Finance
Page 17	Support visible improvements to both iPlan and other Planning/Building Control electronic records on EFDC Website including specialist Web Mapping Information.	EFDC WEBSITE DEV. BOARD & DEV. MNGT	Improved access to planning information by members of the public and Parish/Town Councils. Planning Information now available via EFDC website to all homes/businesses across the district	Subject to wider Council resource limitations & priorities. Transition period with both manual & electronic records both costly and time consuming to manage.	iPlan User Group to promote better access & quality ongoing 2015/16 Corporate ICT Mapping upgrade expected 2015/16
5	Back scan Large Site Files, Conservation Files, Contaminated Land and remaining Policy & Cons Files.	SCANNING & RECORDS DEV MNGT	High level of interest in these records by members of the public/professionals within the District. Will reduce number of Freedom of Information requests	Large size bulky paper files containing detailed commercial and contaminated land semi historical information.	Large site files being quality checked in 2014/15 and scheduled for scanning 2015/16
6	Last phase of historical DC Microfiche records conversion (71 000 fiche jackets – 4.2 million images) project from December 2014 to December 2015.	DC Historical Planning Records	Important historical Planning records that are being converted to electronic format. Will also aid business processes as quicker and easier access will become available.	Large amount of microfilmed information 71 000 microfiche jackets, four million images. These records are over 30 years old & subject to deterioration	Microfiche Project Team in place currently converting 5000 – 6000 microfiche jackets per month. Completion December 2015
7	Project to 'back scan' paper copies of Building Control Paper Records.	BUILDING CONTROL	Required to provide 'back office' support for flexible & mobile working. Aid BC business continuity as there are no back ups to existing paper files.	Large amount of paper files to be scanned - project across multiple financial years.	Budget in place to back scan a limited quantity of BC files to free up storage space in early 2015/16
8	Roll out Tablets for flexible working for DC, Trees and BC.	ALL SECTIONS	Will enhance the quality of electronic records usage and remove barriers to future 'paperless' working.	Lack of resource availability - delays to 2015 – 16	Awaiting advice and details from ICT – ongoing 2015/16

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## SCRUTINY



## **Report to Planning Scrutiny Panel**

**Date of meeting: 16 April 2014**

**Subject: Local Plan Update**

**Officer contact for further information: K Bean, Planning Policy Manager (01992 56 4610)**

**Committee Secretary: M Jenkins (01992 56 4607)**

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

That the Panel note:

- (1) The progress made on the Local Plan; and
- (2) Update on the Duty to Co-operate and Neighbourhood Plans

### **Report:**

#### **Project Management/Local Plan timetable**

1. The Local Development Scheme agreed in July 2014 proposes that the next stage of consultation on the draft plan/preferred option is to run between May and July 2015. However, for the reasons outlined in my report and explained at the previous meeting, it has not been possible to meet this timetable.
2. A detailed programme taking account of resources, setting out the key milestones and a best estimate on timings is being prepared and it is anticipated that this revised timetable will be drafted for consideration by Cabinet at their meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> June.

#### **Update on Key Evidence**

1. **Options for Growth:** A series of three member workshops, organised on an Area Planning Committee basis, were held in September/early October 2014 to engage members in the process of identifying options to be tested. A summary note has been sent to all members on the outcomes of the workshops by the Portfolio Holder.
2. **Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA):** Receipt of the final report from our consultants undertaking work to update the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) in conjunction with the other authorities within our Housing Market Area: East Herts, Harlow and Uttlesford has been slightly delayed. The reason for this is that new household projections have been published by Communities and Local Government, which are one of the key components of the assessment within the SHMA. Therefore, the consultants need to update the SHMA calculations using these (the Government's online Planning Policy Guidance stipulates this). Furthermore, updated economic forecasting data has been published which need to be taken into account, as national policy and guidance requires that assessments of need for housing and jobs are co-ordinated. We now expect to receive a draft final report towards the end of April; officers therefore hope to be able to brief the Member Co-operation for Sustainable Development Group on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2015 on the outputs. We obtained agreement from the other three authorities to commission this work last December and this is now being used as the basis for identifying the Objectively Assessed Housing Need. The consultants will be including consideration of housing mix and affordable housing in the final report.

3. **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA):** Work updating the Stage1 SFRA is nearly complete and a Members' workshop will be arranged with the consultants this Spring, the exact date for which will be advised shortly. Once completed, this work will inform the first phase of the Green Belt Review.
4. **Transport matters:** EFDC continues to work with neighbouring authorities, Essex County Council, Herts County Council and the Highways Agency on strategic transport modelling to gauge the current position in respect of the transport network in and around Harlow. Initial findings of the new model are likely to be available in the Spring. To support the emerging Local Plan, Essex County Council is currently preparing a transport accessibility study. This will provide a further tool to assess possible site allocations. Initial outcomes of this work are also expected in the Spring.
5. **Plan viability:** The plan viability being undertaken by Dixon Searle Partnership will also inform policy choices on Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) / S106. Officers met with the consultants in February and it was agreed that the timetable be revised to enable the general direction from the Members' workshops on options and outcomes from SFRA Level 1, Green Belt Review Phase 1 and transport accessibility to inform the consideration of viability. A draft of the consultants stage 1 report is now due and, once received and considered by officers, a member workshop (likely to be in May) will be arranged. This will report on the market position, consider possible options and include an initial informal view on the possibility of charging CIL should the Council wishes to pursue this option.
6. **Economic and employment evidence:** Hardisty Jones Associates have provided interim findings on economic and employment evidence to support both the Local Plan and Council's overall Economic Development Strategy. Officers are ensuring that this work links effectively with work commissioned by Essex County Council for an Essex Economic Growth Strategy. This work is also being used to inform the SHMA and again officers are ensuring that the assessments of future need for housing and jobs are co-ordinated. Several local plans have failed at Examination in Public recently for not doing this.
7. **Green Belt Review:** Phase 1 of the Green Belt Review undertakes 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 NPPF. It identifies both the primary functions of the Green Belt, which deliver the national purposes, and whether there are areas of the Green Belt land which no longer contribute towards the national purposes or contribute the least to these. The officer working group met on 12 March to discuss initial findings and to feed into the report. On the same day a meeting was also arranged to which all our neighbouring authorities were invited to advise them of our work and gain a clear understanding of any Green Belt Reviews they are undertaking. Following these meetings the Stage 1 report is now being finalised prior to the findings being shared with the Town and Parish Councils at their next meeting which is scheduled for 15<sup>th</sup> June. The report will then go forward to the Cabinet meeting in July. As I previously reported, the outcomes of the updated SFRA1 and transport accessibility work will be used to sieve sites and to inform the more detailed assessment as set out the proposed methodology and work programme for Phase 2.

#### Other matters

8. **Duty to Cooperate:** Officers continue to meet regularly with the appropriate authorities to consider cross boundary issues including, as reported above, the update to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment identifying the objectively assessed housing need, the approach taken to Green Belt reviews and strategic transport matters..
9. **Neighbourhood Plans:** Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers produced a revised draft Plan that is shortly to be formally consulted on and will then go forward for

independent examination. North Weald Bassett Parish Council's application for their Parish to be designated a neighbourhood area remains under consideration. Consultation has just ended on an application from Loughton which the Council will consider shortly. New regulations that came into force on 9 February 2015 mean that future designations will need to be made within 8 weeks. The Council will be writing shortly to all Town and Parish Councils outlining the level of support, guidance and funding available to those progressing neighbourhood plans.

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