Report to the Council

Committee: **Council**

Date: **28 July 2022**

Subject: **Place Portfolio**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Nigel Bedford**

Recommending:

That the report of the Place Portfolio Holder be noted.

1   Local Plan progress update

The Council was notified 06 May 2022 that a new Planning Inspector, Jonathan Bore MRTPI, has been appointed to complete the District's Plan Examination. The most recent update (16 June 2022, published on the Plan Examination website), is consistent with earlier correspondence, expressing the Inspector's aim of helping the Council to bring the Plan to an adoptable state as soon as possible.

The Inspector outlines that changes are required to the text of the submitted Local Plan and the Main Modifications (published and consulted upon in 2021) in order to meet the tests of soundness as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The Inspector's note sets out a number of Actions for the Council and requires a new schedule of Main Modifications to be produced and consulted upon. The Inspector's Actions include:

- Main Modifications required as a result of changes to the Use Classes Order
- Additional work to satisfy the Inspector that a five-year housing land supply will be available on the adoption of the Plan
- Main Modifications required in relation the reference to non-statutory documents such documents such as the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule and Strategic Masterplans
- Main Modifications necessary to streamline Policies DM2 and DM22 in respect of Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation and air quality issues
- Additional questions on a small number of specific site allocations.

The Policy and Implementation Team is directing resources immediately to be able to respond on all of the Inspector's Actions as swiftly as possible and upon agreement to a new schedule of Main Modifications, to undertake the required consultation in order to be able to move towards the conclusion of the Examination and the final adoption of the Plan.

2   Neighbourhood Planning

Neighbourhood Planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need. Local Planning Authorities are required to facilitate Neighbourhood Planning and constructively engage with communities throughout the process.

The Ongar Neighbourhood Plan was considered at Cabinet on 18 July 2022 with agreement sought that the draft Plan, with proposed amendments from the Inspector, meets the basic conditions and for it to therefore progress to a local referendum.

3   Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT)

The HGGT Work Programme aims to deliver the overarching objective of coordinating and enabling delivery of 16,000 homes by 2033, along with associated infrastructure, delivering the Garden Town Vision, principles and guidance that has been agreed by the 5 partner councils. 3,900 of these homes are allocated within Epping Forest District, making up over a third of the District's allocated housing.

The key priorities for the Garden Town for 2021/22 are:

- Delivering the Garden Town Vision of quality, beautiful and sustainable places
- Enabling the Infrastructure Foundations for Growth
- Maximising and Accelerating Delivery with a focus on outcomes by 2025
- Ensuring our Governance is Fit for the Future

EFDC officers continue to liaise with key stakeholders across the five Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) authorities and relevant site promoters. This is undertaken in the context of wider Garden Town activities. Key updates in terms of the Garden Town are:

- Endorsement of HGGT Transport Strategy by EFDC Cabinet to be a material planning consideration (Jan 2022)

- Noting of the of the HGGT Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) by EFDC Cabinet as evidence base (Jan 2022)

- Approval of the Stort Crossings planning applications and Cabinet decision to make associated Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) by East Herts District Council/ Harlow District Council (HDC) (Feb 2022)

- Successful Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) PropTech bid for HGGT Quality of Life Mapping and Monitoring project. The partnership has been awarded £228,800 to deliver social value mapping across the Garden Town, through digital and non-digital engagement on quality of life and wellbeing.

- Successful DLUHC Pathfinders bid for Latton Priory Design Code project. EFDC have been awarded £120,000 funding to produce an authority-led design code for the Latton Priory Masterplan Area. The design code will be produced by the EFDC Implementation Team with collaboration and specialist input as required, over the course of 12 months. Content will focus on key aspects of the HGGT Vision, including modal shift, green infrastructure and socio-economic wellbeing. In line with the National Model Design Code, there will be significant community and local stakeholder engagement to promote provably popular design and to ensure a wide range of stakeholder input in shaping the new community. It is intended that the resulting design code will secure design quality on future applications for the masterplan area as well as providing a benchmark for quality and coding process for other EFDC and HGGT masterplans.

- Successful Homes England Capital Funding bid for two transport-related projects: Newhall & Enterprise Zone Sustainable Transport Corridor (STC) Hub (£290,000) and New Garden Community STC Connectors project (£145,000).

4   Climate Change

Climate Change Action Plan

Following consultation that took place between 12 October and 26 November 2021, followed by agreement at Overview & Scrutiny on 31 March 2022, the updated Climate Change Action Plan was approved at Cabinet on 11 April 2022.

Tree planting

Volunteers from the local community, Limes Farm Community Group, Councillors, Parish Council, St Winifred's Church, Limes Farm Primary and Junior Schools and Officers from across the Council came together at the Limes Farm Estate to plant 501 trees in Chigwell.

Further trees were planted in March at Jessel Green and Rochford Green, Loughton.