

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-026-2024/25

Date of meeting: 7 October 2024



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Shaping our District (Cllr K Williamson)

Subject: Implementation of the Local Plan

Responsible Officer: Nigel Richardson, Planning Director,
nrichardson@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Democratic Services Officer: V Messenger (democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) That the progress of Strategic Masterplans and Concept Frameworks, including the use of Planning Performance Agreements and the progress of proposals at pre-application and application stage be noted;

Executive Summary:

Following the October 2018 Cabinet meeting which agreed the governance arrangements for the implementation of the Local Plan, the Policy and Implementation Team made a commitment to provide members with regular updates on the progress of Masterplans and Concept Frameworks within Epping Forest District to ensure that members are kept fully up to date.

This report is prepared by the Policy and Implementation Team to provide members with an update on the progress of Local Plan implementation in relation to the Strategic Masterplans, Concept Framework Plans and Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) within the District, including major projects and planning applications dealt with by the team.

Regarding Strategic Masterplans scheduled meetings and workshops continue to take place with site promoters and developers in accordance with project plans agreed within PPAs.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To ensure that members are kept fully up to date on the progress of Masterplans and Concept Frameworks and other major proposals being promoted within the District.

Other Options for Action:

Not to update members on the progress on the above issues would be contrary to the commitment made by the Implementation Team as noted in the 18 October 2018 Cabinet Report.

Not to publish the Infrastructure Funding Statement within the deadline would result in a failure to comply with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations.

Report:

1. The Adopted Epping Forest District Local Plan 2011-2033 promotes a joined up, collaborative and proactive approach to the planning and implementation of key strategic sites across Epping Forest District. The production of Masterplans and Concept Frameworks will ensure that development proposals are brought forward in accordance with the Council's priorities and policies and facilitate the delivery of necessary infrastructure.
2. The Local Plan is less than five years old and, as such, the strategic policies contained within it are considered to be up-to-date. A review of the strategic policies, including in relation to housing numbers and delivery, does not need to be completed until 5 March 2028. As such the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan, including in relation to housing supply/delivery (primarily Policy SP1), remain up-to-date, and this would remain the same even if the proposed reforms to the NPPF as currently drafted were to be implemented.
3. It is also relevant to note that the latest Housing Delivery Test (HDT) result for EFDC was 105% as confirmed by the then Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in May 2024. This result reflected the adoption of the Local Plan on 6 March 2023 and the Housing Requirement established through Policy SP1 (Spatial Development Strategy 2011-2033). In addition, the Council was able to demonstrate a five year supply of housing land at the point of adoption of the Local Plan.
4. Strategic Masterplans and Concept Frameworks provide an overarching framework to ensure that development is brought forward in a coordinated and coherent way in accordance with high quality place making principles. The planning applications which follow must demonstrate general conformity with an endorsed Masterplan or Concept Framework. As set out in the [18 October 2018 Cabinet Report](#), the Council's Cabinet has the authority to approve Draft Strategic Masterplans for consultation. Following the six-week consultation period, Strategic Masterplans will then be taken to Cabinet for formal endorsement as a material planning consideration. The process for Concept Frameworks is broadly similar, however owing to their smaller scale, these will only be taken to Cabinet once for formal endorsement.
5. As set out in paragraph 15 of the report to Cabinet on 18 October 2018 a commitment was made to provide members with regular updates on the progress of masterplans and concept frameworks within Epping Forest District to ensure that members are kept fully informed of the progression of each plan. The progress is summarised in this report and also set out in Appendix A.

Current progress on the masterplans

Harlow and Gilston Garden Town

6. 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:
 - The Harlow Gilston Garden Town Joint Committee has now been formally established, providing unified leadership across the partnership.
[Joint Committee – Harlow and Gilston Garden Town \(hggt.co.uk\)](http://hggt.co.uk)
 - The first meeting of the Joint Committee was held on 11 June 2024, where the Chairman and Deputy Chairman were elected, and the HGGT 2024/25 Budget and Programme was reviewed.

- A second meeting of the Joint Committee was held on 22 July 2024. The HGGT Stewardship Charter was agreed at this meeting, as well as the HGGT Modal Transition Delivery Framework.
- The next meeting of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Joint Committee will be held on 2 December 2024.
- Work is ongoing on the HGGT 3-year business plan for the period 2025-28, setting out a proposed programme of work for 2025/26 and the objectives for 26/27 and 27/28. This will be presented to the Joint Committee in due course.

Updates in relation to each of the HGGT masterplans:

Latton Priory

7. The Latton Priory Strategic Masterplanning Framework (SMF) is complete and was endorsed by EFDC Cabinet as an important material planning consideration on 10th July 2023.

[Latton Priory Strategic Masterplan - Epping Forest District Council \(eppingforestdc.gov.uk\)](https://eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

8. Following public and stakeholder consultation, the authority-led Latton Priory Design Code was endorsed by Cabinet in March 2024 and sits alongside the Strategic Masterplan Framework as a material consideration in planning decisions.

[Latton Priory Strategic Masterplan - Epping Forest District Council \(eppingforestdc.gov.uk\)](https://eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

9. An Outline planning application for Mixed Use Development to be delivered in phases including up to 1,340 dwellings with all Matters Reserved except Junctions onto Rye Hill Road and B3193 (London Road) was submitted in September 2024 (ref: EPF/1793/24) at Land at Latton Priory, north of Rye Hill Road (Local Plan Allocation Site SP4.1) by the main site promoters (Commercial Estates Projects Ltd and Hallam Land) and is currently under consideration.

Water Lane

10. The site promoters for the whole strategic allocation of Water Lane area have been re-engaged, following a period of paused work. The promoters have formed a consortium for the purposes of the PPA and it was signed in October 2023. A process of topic-based meetings and workshops has commenced to help unlock the delivery of the site.

East of Harlow

11. In the current absence of a master developer for the East of Harlow masterplan area, HGGT partners developed design principles for the masterplan area in order to progress design and delivery thinking. These masterplanning principles have been set out within a Masterplanning Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The East of Harlow Masterplanning Guidance Supplementary Planning Document was subject to public consultation from 31 July to 16 October 2023 after which it was formally adopted by EFDC on 28 May 2024.

[East of Harlow masterplanning guidance \(eppingforestdc.gov.uk\)](https://eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

12. EFDC and Harlow Council officers continue to meet with John Lawson Partnership (JLP) working on behalf of Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH) to discuss the proposed hospital relocation element in the East of Harlow strategic site.

Updates in relation to each of the other masterplans:

North Weald Airfield masterplan

13. The North Weald Airfield Strategic Masterplanning Framework (SMF) is complete and was endorsed by EFDC Cabinet as an important material planning consideration on 13th March 2023.

[North Weald Airfield Strategic Masterplan - Epping Forest District Council \(eppingforestdc.gov.uk\)](http://eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

North Weald Bassett masterplan

14. The North Weald Bassett Strategic Masterplanning Framework (SMF) is complete and was endorsed by EFDC Cabinet as an important material planning consideration on 18th March 2024.

[North Weald Bassett Strategic Masterplan - Epping Forest District Council \(eppingforestdc.gov.uk\)](http://eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

15. Vistry Group have made a planning application for the NWB.R3 allocation within the masterplan (ref. EPF/2587/23) and this is currently subject to determination. An application has also recently been received from the Eldred Group for site allocation NWB.R1 and is currently in the process of validation.
16. A Design Code to sit alongside the SMF is currently in development with aspirations to take it to cabinet for endorsement early in the new year.

South Epping masterplan

17. The South Epping Strategic Masterplanning Framework (SMF) has recently been subject to public consultation which ran during June and July 2024 following endorsement to do so at Cabinet on the 28th May 2024. The final version of the SMF is to be presented at Cabinet in November 2024 for endorsement.

Waltham Abbey North masterplan

18. Development of the Waltham Abbey North Strategic Masterplanning Framework (SMF) had progressed during 2021 under the terms of a PPA. Informal public consultation was held with local residents and key stakeholders between mid-July and September 2021. Subsequent to the adoption of the Local Plan in March 2023 the site promoters have reengaged and recommenced development of their proposals. The SMF is currently in development and is anticipated to be brought forward for formal public consultation in the near future. A set programme for this has not been fixed at the current time.

Updates in relation to each of the concept framework plans:

South Nazeing

19. A PPA has been agreed with the site promoter and joint working on the concept framework has progressed. A public consultation on the draft concept framework was undertaken in July 2024. The site promoter has submitted a planning application for the site in parallel with this work but its determination is pending the future endorsement of the concept framework.

West Ongar

20. Development of the Concept Framework is progressing under a PPA agreed between the two promoters representing the site. This is progressing and it is anticipated that the Concept Framework will be subject to public consultation during September 2024.

Other allocated sites

21. Alongside the Strategic Masterplan and Concept Framework Plan sites, work has been progressing on other sites allocation within Local Plan that are not strategic allocations but constitute major development in the District. As with the strategic sites, some of these proposed allocations are further advanced than others, but officers are encouraged by the progress which has been made to date and work continues to progress their delivery. The current status of all allocated sites is set out in Appendix B.

Resource Implications:

As set out in the 18 October 2018 Cabinet Report, the successful delivery of the Garden Town and the other strategic sites within Epping Forest District will require considerable commitment of officer time from EFDC. The noting of the contents of this report do not give rise to additional resource implications.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The work on the Local Plan and Strategic Masterplans has been developed in accordance with Government policy (NPPF and NPPG) and Planning Law.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

The Local Plan contains a policy designed to promote the notion of making good places to live, work and visit. This will include safer by design principles, sustainable development, the provision of alternatives to the car, energy efficiency and environmental considerations as well as sustainable drainage systems and quality green infrastructure. Strategic Masterplans and Concept Framework Plans will be the mechanism for these place-making measures to be delivered in identified Masterplan Areas.

Consultation / Scrutiny Undertaken:

Some of the Strategic sites have been the subject of informal public consultation and engagement. However as set out in the Council's Masterplan and Concept Framework Plan Briefing note, these sites will be subject to public and stakeholder consultation in accordance with an endorsed Statement of Community Involvement.

Background Papers:

C-015-2018/19: Governance arrangements for Local Plan Implementation, 18 October 2018

Risk Management:

If the Council was not to take a pro-active stance on the delivery of Masterplans and major applications arising from the Local Plan, there is a real risk of or development occurring of a type that does not extract maximum value for the provision of social infrastructure and poor quality development may occur.