

Report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 26th February 2025



Portfolio: Leader (Cllr C Whitbread)

Subject: Development Management – progress of PAS recommendations

Officer contact for further information: Graham Courtney, Planning Service Manager

Democratic Services Officer: Laura Kirman (01992 564273)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- 1. The Committee notes the progress of the PAS recommendations.**

Report:

Progression of PAS recommendations

- 1.1** The PAS review was undertaken with Officers and Members during the Spring of 2024, and the final Review Document was received by the Council in March 2024. A report on the PAS Review was considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 28 May 2024, the following links are to the agenda and minutes of that meeting:

Agenda:

<https://rds.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/documents/g11975/Public%20reports%20pack%2028th-May-2024%2019.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

Minutes:

<https://rds.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/documents/g11975/Printed%20minutes%2028th-May-2024%2019.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=1>

- 1.2** The Cabinet accepted the recommendations of the PAS Review and delegated authority to Lead Officers to liaise with Members via a Workshop, and to take all necessary steps to implement changes to the Council's Constitution to implement the recommendations of the Review.
- 1.3** A Member Workshop on the recommendations of the PAS Review was held on 19 June 2024. The Workshop sought Member views on all the PAS Review recommendations and was facilitated by Executive Officers and Senior Officers from the Planning Services Directorate. A member of the PAS Review Team was also in attendance to answer any questions from Members.
- 1.4** Following the Member Workshop, a report was submitted to a meeting of the Constitution Working Group on 11 July 2024, to gain agreement for the necessary changes to the Constitution. The following link is to the agenda for that meeting:

<https://rds.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/documents/g11989/Public%20reports%20pack%2011t>

[h-Jul-2024%2019.00%20Constitution%20Working%20Group.pdf?T=10](https://rds.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/documents/g12163/Constitution%20Working%20Group.pdf?T=10)

1.5 The Group considered all the recommendations arising from the PAS Review and there was majority agreement constitutional changes that should be recommended to the Council for approval, to implement the recommendations of the PAS Review and improve the performance of the Council's Planning function.

1.6 A special meeting was held by Full Council on 08 August 2024 to consider the proposed changes. Members agreed to all the recommended changes, subject to an amendment that maintains relevant applications being determined at Committee if representatives from Town and Parish Councils attend the Committee to voice any objections they have on that planning application. The following links are to the agenda and minutes of that meeting:

Agenda:

<https://rds.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/documents/g12163/Public%20reports%20pack%2008th-Aug-2024%2019.00%20Council.pdf?T=10>

Minutes:

<https://rds.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/documents/g12163/Printed%20minutes%2008th-Aug-2024%2019.00%20Council.pdf?T=1>

1.7 The new Committee structure was implemented on 23 October 2024 with Planning Committee B, with the first Planning Committee A sitting on 13 November 2024. Each of the two Committee meetings have subsequently been scheduled for every six weeks thereafter.

1.8 The changes to the Constitution and the Councils delegated agreement were discussed with Town/Parish Councils at the Local Councils' Liaison Committee on 21 November 2024.

1.9 All sitting Planning Committee Members have had relevant planning training, however additional Member training is taking place. The first of this was viability training held on the 11 December 2024, followed by training on the new NPPF on the 22 January 2025.

1.10 Further training is planned, but not yet scheduled. This includes, but is not exclusive to, training on:

- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and S106 agreements
- Green Belt considerations
- Urban Design and the role of the QRP
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)
- Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (EFSAC)

1.11 It has been agreed that the new Committee Structure will be reviewed nine months after implementation.

Background Papers:

Report to Cabinet – PAS Development Management Committee Review – 28 May 2024

Report to Constitution Working Group – PAS Review – Restructure of Planning Committees – 11 July 2024

Report to special Full Council – 08 August 2024

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

Organisation Performance is one of the main responsibilities for the scrutiny function. By having oversight of the implemented changes ensures members are fulfilling their role. Not to provide this scrutiny could be a risk to the organisation.

Equality:

No equality decisions to account for regarding this report.