

**Decision by Portfolio Holder**



**Report reference: HSG-010-2008/09**

**Date of report: 5 August 2008**

**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio: Housing Author: Alan Hall (Ext 4004)**

**Democratic Services: Rebecca Harris**

**Subject: Council-owned Sites to be submitted for Consideration as Future Residential Land in Response to the Council's "Call for Sites".**

**Decision: That the Director of Housing submits, on behalf of the Housing Portfolio Holder, the following Council-owned sites (shown hatched on Appendices 1 – 5 attached to the report) for consideration by the Council as being suitable for future residential land, in response to the recent "Call for Sites":**

- (a) Urban Open Space between Jessel Drive and Goldingham Avenue, Loughton (1.87 hectares);**
- (b) Land between Westall Road and Rochford Green, Loughton (0.97 hectares);**
- (c) Land between Rectory Lane and Newman's Lane, Loughton (1.28 hectares);**
- (d) Former Allotments at Willingale Road, Loughton (0.74 hectares); and**
- (e) Wooded Area between the Oakwood Hill Estate and Chigwell Lane, Loughton (5.39 hectares).**

**ADVISORY NOTICE:**

***A Portfolio Holder may not take a decision on a matter on which he/she has declared a prejudicial interest. A Portfolio Holder with a personal interest must declare that interest when exercising delegated powers.***

I have read and approve/~~do not approve~~ (delete as appropriate) the above decision:

Comments/further action required:

Signed: D Stallan

Date: 5 Aug 08

*Personal interest declared by Portfolio Holder/  
conflict of interest declared by any other  
consulted Cabinet Member:*  
NONE

*Dispensation granted by Standards Committee:*  
Yes/No or n/a

N/A

**Office use only:**

Call-in period begins: 8 Aug 08

Expiry of Call-in period: 14 Aug 08

***After completion, one copy of this pro forma should be returned to Democratic Services IMMEDIATELY***

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Portfolio Holder:**

**Reason for decision:**

The Council has recently issued a “call for sites” from land-owners, seeking that may have potential for development over at least the next fifteen years. As a major landowner, it is important that the Council reviews its land-holdings and identifies any sites that should be put forward for consideration.

It is considered that the proposed sites may be suitable for residential development in the future.

**Options considered and rejected:**

- (a) Not to put forward any Council-owned sites for consideration;
- (b) To put forward different Council-owned sites

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## Introduction

1. The Council's planning officers are commencing work on the Council's Core Strategy – the key document of the new Local Development Framework (LDF). An immediate priority of the LDF is to make sufficient land allocations to meet;
  - (a) The housing and employment targets and infrastructure requirements of the East of England Plan (EEP), which was adopted last month and deals with the period up to 2021; and
  - (b) Provision for gypsies and travelers, in accordance with the Single Issue Review of the EEP.
2. The Core Strategy, however, should look at least 15 years beyond the date of its adoption, which would mean the period up to approximately the mid 2020s. The EEP is due for immediate comprehensive review, with the time-span extending probably to 2031. Planning officers therefore consider that the Core Strategy should take account of this later date, with implications for further provision of land for housing (including gypsies and travellers) and employment.
3. The Director of Planning and Economic Development has therefore issued a "call for sites" from land-owners, seeking opinions on sites that they think may have genuine potential for development over at least the next fifteen years. This request for information has been sent to town and parish councils, developers, agents, landowners, those who have submitted planning applications in recent years, as well as all those who made relevant representations to the Local Plan Alterations or to the Examination in Public of the EEP. A form has been provided for submissions.
4. Proposals put forward will be subject to sustainability appraisal (taking account of economic, environmental and social impacts of potential development), which will include issues such as liability to flood and proximity to areas of built or natural heritage importance. An assessment will also be made of the availability and deliverability of each site.

## The Council as Landowner

5. As a major landowner in the District, it is important that the Council reviews its own land-holdings and identifies any sites that should be put forward for consideration. Accordingly, a group of officers from various directorates has met to consider potential sites.
6. It is considered appropriate that any Council-owned land that may be suitable for residential development in the future is put forward by the Housing Portfolio Holder, on behalf of the Council. The following sites have been identified as being possibly suitable for future residential development by officers. Should any of the sites be accepted for future development, the Council would need to determine at that time the proposed form, tenure and mix and would need to obtain detailed planning permission. Since the Council would have control of the site(s), it could also determine the amount of affordable housing to be provided, which could be in excess of the 40% usually sought from developers on large sites.
7. It should be noted that the first four sites were considered by the Housing Scrutiny Panel in March 2006, as part of a report by the Director of Housing on ways to increase the amount of affordable housing within the District. At that time, the Housing Scrutiny Panel decided not to put forward the sites to the Cabinet for potential residential development.
8. It is emphasised that the decision on whether or not any proposed sites are suitable for future residential development and should be included within the Council's future Local Development Plans will be made by members, on the recommendation of the Director of Planning and Economic Development. This will follow a detailed a sustainability appraisal, which will be undertaken for all sites put forward by landowners. The Council's own sites will be treated in exactly the same way as non-Council sites.

**(a) Urban Open Space between Jessel Drive and Goldingham Avenue, Loughton**

9. The Council owns a very large area (8.6 hectares) of land at this location, designated in the Local Plan as Urban Open Space. It has a relatively steep incline towards Colebrook Lane. A location plan is provided at Appendix 1. At one end of the site (shown hatched on the plan), the incline is less steep and would be suitable for residential development.

10. The hatched area comprises 1.87 hectares, and could possibly provide 75 – 95 properties. It is therefore proposed that the hatched area is put forward for consideration.

**(b) Land between Westall Road and Rochford Green, Loughton**

11. This is a large grassed area (that is not designated as Urban Open Space) comprising 0.97 hectares (shown hatched at Appendix 2). Part of the Council-owned land at this location, that is not shown hatched and is excluded from the proposal, provides a children’s play area, which would remain.

12. The hatched area could possibly provide 40 – 50 properties. It is therefore proposed that the hatched area is put forward for consideration.

**(c) Land between Rectory Lane and Newman’s Lane, Loughton**

13. This is a large grassed area (that is not designated as Urban Open Space) comprising 1.28 hectares (shown hatched at Appendix 3). Located at the centre of the land is a children’s play area, managed and maintained by Loughton Town Council under a Management Agreement dated 21<sup>st</sup> January 2002. The Management Agreement can be terminated by three month’s notice. If the site is developed for residential accommodation, it is proposed that an alternative site would need to be provided for a replacement play area, possibly on the large area of Council-owned land on the opposite side of Rectory Lane, adjacent to Lawton Road.

14. The hatched area could possibly provide 50 – 65 properties. It is therefore proposed that the hatched area is put forward for consideration.

**(d) Former Allotments at Willingale Road, Loughton**

15. Adjacent to the existing allotments in Willingale Road, Loughton is an area of land comprising 0.74 hectares (shown hatched at Appendix 4) that formerly comprised allotments but is now unused scrub land. Although the freehold interest of the hatched land has been transferred to Loughton Town Council, an “option” has been included within the Title which enables the District Council to re-purchase the freehold interest of the land for £1, up to 2026, if the District Council wants to use the land “for housing purposes”. This is subject to the District Council consulting the Town Council and their comments being taken into account.

16. The hatched area could possibly provide 30–40 properties. It is therefore proposed that the hatched area is put forward for consideration.

**(e) Wooded Area between the Oakwood Hill Estate and Chigwell Lane, Loughton**

17. This site is a dense wooded area along Oakwood Hill comprising 5.39 hectares (shown hatched at Appendix 5). It is currently designated in the Local Plan as an “Other County Wildlife Site”, which is a local wildlife site of lesser significance, and having less protection, than Sites of Special Scientific Interest / Special Protection Areas or Special Areas of Conservation (one of which is adjacent to the hatched area).

18. The hatched area could possibly provide 215 – 270 properties. It is therefore proposed that the

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hatched area is put forward for consideration.

### **Council-owned Sites Not Being Proposed for Future Residential Development**

19. Consideration has been given to other Council-owned sites which, for various reasons, are not being put proposed for future residential development. A list of these sites is attached as Appendix 6.

#### **Consultation Undertaken:**

None

#### **Resource implications:**

**Budget Provision:** Nil

**Personnel:** Nil

**Land:** As set out in the report

**Council Plan:** Meeting Housing Need

**Relevant statutory powers:** Town and Country Planning Act

**Background papers:** Nil

**Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act:** Eventual development of the sites will inevitable result in less green and/or wooded areas.

**Key Decision Reference (if required):** N/A

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Portfolio Holder:**

**Council-Owned Sites Not Being Proposed for Future Residential Development**

**Buckhurst Hill**

Lindersfield – Open Space Area

**Chigwell Row**

Chigwell Row Recreation Area & Woodland

**Epping**

Bell Common  
Theydon Grove – Open Space Area

**Loughton**

Englands Lane (Homemead) – Open Space Area  
Roding Valley Recreation Area  
Roding Valley Nature Reserve

**North Weald**

Roughalleys Woodland  
Merlin Way – Recreation use  
Hampden Close – Open Space Area

**Norton Heath**

Norton Heath Woodland

**Ongar**

Longfields - Open Space Area  
Former Ongar Comprehensive School – Playing Fields

**Sheering**

Lower Sheering Road - Open Space Area

**Waltham Abbey**

Thaxted Road – Open Space Area  
Walton Gardens – Open Space Area