

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 28th October 2008

**Subject:** Planning and Economic Development Portfolio

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Anne Grigg

**Item:** 8(j)

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## **Recommending:**

**That the report of the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economic Development be noted.**

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## **Call for Sites - Local Development Framework**

There has been a significant response to the Council's Call for Sites with approximately 200 responses already received in respect of sites across the District. A further exercise must be undertaken to ensure that all Council owned sites with potential for development or use/re-use for any purpose over the next 20 years are included. This will ensure that all possible future options for meeting the needs of the district are investigated. Such sites will include the Condor Building of the Civic Offices site, various Depots around the district, North Weald Airfield, opportunities within the existing Council housing stock and leisure sites. It will also be necessary to ensure that all other public bodies have submitted all possible opportunities in the same light.

The criteria for assessing all of the sites that have been put forward, and any others that may be identified by Officers will be discussed by the LDF Portfolio Holder Advisory Group. I will take a view on whether I consider it appropriate to approve these myself as Portfolio Holder, or recommend them for agreement by the Cabinet. The assessment criteria will include matters such as site location in relation to services, access to public transport & open spaces, environmental constraints including flood risk and nature conservation designations, and the current and potential uses and the timescale in which these could be delivered. There will need to be weighting mechanism applied to these assessments in order to give a clear view on the sites that are most suitable for development of different kinds. It should be remembered that this site assessment will not be undertaken in isolation of other technical work that is currently being carried out, and that issues such as education provision, capacity of the transport network, and provision of health facilities will all be incorporated into the full evidence base that will support the preparation of the Core Strategy.

### **White Water Rafting - Olympic site**

I attended a Planning meeting on 30 September 2008 at Broxbourne Borough Council. The meeting was considering the Olympic Delivery Authority's application for the construction of a White Water Rafting Canoe Centre and associated facilities for the London 2012 Olympic Games at the Lee Valley Park. There was a presentation in respect of the application, then a general debate, followed by Broxbourne Borough Council granting planning consent, subject to a considerable number of conditions (39). On behalf of Epping Forest District Council, I congratulated Broxbourne Borough Council on the exciting prospect of having an Olympic site selected in their area. I also spoke of the adverse impact, on our local roads in Waltham Abbey, of large numbers of vehicle movements associated with engineering, construction works and possible importation of inert waste for the Olympic venue. In light of the potential impact on local roads, I sought an amendment to one of the planning conditions to ensure that, in addition to the Highways Authority, Epping Forest District Council was consulted on the Construction Traffic Management Plan. This was agreed.

### **Gypsies and Travellers Sites**

The Government has directed Epping Forest District Council to produce a Development Plan in respect of sites for Gypsies and Travellers. A consultation document containing potential sites for Gypsy and Travellers has, therefore, been prepared by a consultant employed by the Council. This is a matter that will concern a large part of the District and in order to ensure the widest possible debate, the matter was discussed at Cabinet on 6 October with a recommendation that the document is considered by Full Council on 28 October 2008. The consultation process will run from 4 November 2008 to 20 January 2009. Residents will be encouraged to make comments on line at [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk). There will also be a paper version which can be obtained from the Council and returned Freepost to the Civic Offices. It will also be discussed at the Local Councils' Liaison meeting on 5 November 2008.

### **Loughton Town Centre Enhancement - Trees**

Essex County Council Highways have confirmed that they have passed the details to their Law and Administration team to prepare a notice for adoption of the area of land in question. Essex County Council's intention is to adopt the piece of land so that trees can be planted as requested.

### **Loughton Town Centre Enhancement - Phases 3 and 4**

Essex County Council Officers have been charged with looking at the feasibility of delivering phases 3 and 4. The Director of the Environment and Street Scene has provided them with background information.

## **Loughton Broadway Town Centre Enhancement Scheme**

Technical approval has still not been received from Essex County Council in respect of the revised scheme and issues have now arisen with regard to the lighting scheme. In the light of concerns, it has been agreed to undertake a visual inspection of the Broadway to determine whether more detailed tests should be undertaken before fully committing to commence. A meeting is being sought with Cllr Hume, Essex County Council Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transportation to discuss the issues.