

Report to the Local Development Framework Cabinet Committee



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Report reference: LDF-003-2009/10
Date of meeting: 9 November 2009

Portfolio: Leader
Subject: Local Development Framework – Budget Update
Responsible Officer: Amanda Wintle (01992 564543)
Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) To note progress on the Local Development Framework; and**
- (2) To note the expenditure on preparing the Local Development Framework in this financial year to date.**

Executive Summary:

Preparation of evidence to support the Core Strategy is continuing. The Options Appraisal of the Harlow area is due to be completed by the end of November 2009, and will form a significant piece of evidence to inform the preparation of the Issues & Options consultation document.

Detailed consideration of the progress on the Gypsy & Traveller Development Plan Document is subject of a separate report on this agenda.

Expenditure on the Local Development Framework over the period 01/04/09 to 22/10/09 is £127,900, with a further £91,900 committed.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

This report is intended to update Members on progress with the LDF, and expenditure against the LDF budget. No decisions are required at this stage.

Other Options for Action:

There are no other relevant options at this time.

Report:

Local Development Framework (LDF) – Background and Progress

1. The LDF was introduced by the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended 2008). All local planning authorities must now prepare a LDF to determine the location and extent of development over a period of at least 15 years. The Core Strategy is the key document to be prepared, and performs a role akin to the previous County-level Structure Plan, i.e. it is a strategic document which sets the general principles for the location

and type of new development across the district, in addition to identifying the areas and key features which must be protected.

2. The East of England Plan was published in May 2008. A legal challenge was launched by Hertfordshire County Council and other Hertfordshire authorities in respect of the growth proposed in Hemel Hempstead, St Albans, Welwyn Garden City and north of Harlow. The judge's decision determined that the growth to the north of Harlow should remain, but the other identified growth locations in Hertfordshire had not been subject to a proper appraisal of all the options and should be removed from the final EEP.

3. The EEP requires (Policy HA1) an Options Appraisal of the Harlow area. Scott Wilson were appointed to undertake this work in January 2009, and the final report is due to be published in November 2009. This report will be a key piece of evidence in determining the location and extent of the urban extensions required by the EEP, to deliver the regeneration and growth of Harlow.

4. The EEP is currently under review to extend some policies to 2031. The Council's response to the suggested growth scenarios is subject to a separate report to Overview & Scrutiny on 12 November 2009.

Gypsy & Traveller DPD

5. As requested at the meeting of the LDF Cabinet Committee on 10 September 2009, Counsel has been instructed to undertake a "stock take" on progress on the Gypsy & Traveller DPD.

Core Strategy

6. Preparation of the Core Strategy is continuing. Coordinated working between Epping Forest, Harlow and East Herts District Councils is envisaged, however there are still a number of uncertainties around the governance arrangements that will need to be established to ensure a "sound" document is prepared. A revised Local Development Scheme will be prepared shortly, which will set out the governance arrangements that will need to be entered into. It will also identify the further DPDs that will need to be prepared to support the Core Strategy.

7. A further meeting has been held with GO East officers to discuss the proposed timetable of the preparation of the Core Strategy. As significant further work is required for the Gypsy & Traveller DPD, this has a subsequent impact on the ability of the Forward Planning team to prepare the Core Strategy. It is therefore proposed that the Issues & Options consultation will take place from June 2010. Further consideration of the timetable beyond this will be part of the preparation of the Local Development Scheme.

8. A number of pieces of evidence are shortly to be completed. An updated table is attached at Appendix 1.

Resources

9. The total expenditure in 2008/09 was £222,000 compared to a revised budget of £294,000. The budget for 2009/10 including amounts carried forward is £529,200 of which £219,800 is committed to date. The revised outturn is anticipated to be £320,000, with the slippage being due primarily to the uncertainties that remain around how the remainder of the Gypsy and Traveller DPD and the Core Strategy will be prepared. The amounts currently in the budget for 2010/11 and 2011/12 are £615,000 and £153,000.

10. The estimates that underpinned the initial LDF budget were based on the best knowledge available at that point. The expenditure on the Gypsy & Traveller document to date has far exceeded the original estimate, but the total expenditure on all LDF matters is still below that which was anticipated. It was originally suggested that £45,000 would need to be spent to complete the Issues & Options stage of the preparation of the DPD. However, Members will recall that the total that has been spent to date from the LDF budget is £178,413, although this has been partially funded by a supplementary estimate of £19,200 and use of a CSB salary underspend of £31,200 from a vacant post, this clearly has implications for the remainder of the LDF budget.

11. Members will be aware (C-121-2008/09, paragraph 18) that the intensive work required on the Gypsy & Traveller DPD has caused delays to the preparation of the Core Strategy and the evidence base to support this. A revised Local Development Scheme is required, however, there are still considerable uncertainties concerning the nature and extent of coordinated or joint working required by the East of England Plan. Therefore a revised budget over the period to 2012 and beyond, including the implications of the significant necessary expenditure on the Gypsy & Traveller DPD to date, cannot be meaningfully estimated until the Local Development Scheme is revised. It is anticipated that a revised LDS will be brought to Members in early 2010.

Resource Implications:

This report sets out expenditure against the previously agreed DDF allocated to preparation of the Local Development Framework.

Legal and Governance Implications:

No relevant implications.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

No relevant implications.

Consultation Undertaken:

None

Background Papers:

Cabinet Report (Ref: C/090/2007-08 – 17 December 2007)

Cabinet Report (Ref: C-017-2008/09 – 14 July 2008)

Cabinet Report (Ref: C-041-2008/09 – 06 October 2008)

Cabinet Report (Ref: C-121-2008/09 – 20 April 2009)

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

The Corporate Risk Register identifies two risks in relation to the East of England Plan, and the management of growth which arises from it:

3. East of England Plan – Housing built without infrastructure (B1)

4. East of England Plan – Unable to agree joined up plan (B2)

Proper resourcing of the LDF will help prevent these two risks from occurring.

Equality and Diversity:

Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications? **Yes** **No**

Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? **Yes** **No**

What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?
n/a

How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group?
n/a