

Report to Planning Services Planning Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting: 11 October 2010

Portfolio: Leader

Subject: Broxbourne Borough Council Pre-Submission Core Strategy

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Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins (01992 564607)



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) To consider the potential impacts of the proposals from the Broxbourne Borough Council Pre-Submission Core Strategy and formulate a response to the Consultation based on officers' comments.**

Report:

1. Broxbourne Core Strategy is a planning document covering the period 2010-2026, which sets out a vision for the future of Broxbourne Borough as a prosperous and sustainable community. It explores the unique features of the Borough and identifies the main challenges and key drivers of change over the next 15 years. It sets out plans to guide new development, regenerate neighbourhoods, improve services and facilities and protect the environment.

2. In the short-term the strategy will look for development to focus on suitable urban sites to make the best use of land and help achieve neighbourhood regeneration. The Council will also use the presence and legacy of the 2012 Olympic Games to raise prosperity in Waltham Cross and elsewhere. The development of Greater Brookfield as a strategic allocation is intended to provide high quality shopping and leisure facilities and housing development.

3. In the medium and long term, Broxbourne Borough Council's strategy is to complement suitable urban sites with Green Belt sites in order to deliver more family and large homes. With regards to future employment, Broxbourne Borough Council state that there are no specific job targets for the borough. Land will therefore also be released at West of Hoddesdon, Goff's Oak, Bury Green and/or Albury Farm East for new housing and at Park Plaza West and/or Maxwells Farm West for new employment opportunities depending on what is required in the future. The Council will also seek to bring forward proposals in accordance with comprehensive masterplans to help secure appropriate service and facilities.

4. All developments will place an emphasis on design in order to enhance surroundings and to reduce the impact on climate change. The Green Belt, Lee Valley Regional Park and other important open spaces, landscapes and historic areas will continue to be protected and enhanced.

5. Having gathered together a robust evidence base and used this in consultation with local people and other interested parties to identify the most important planning-related issues in the area, Broxbourne Borough Council set out a vision for the borough and consulted on the alternative ways of addressing the issues and achieving the vision in their "Issues and

Options Core Strategy Document” (May 2007). Having taken account of responses, a preferred option was chosen by the Council and consulted on with the public once more in the “Preferred Options Core Strategy Document” (November 2008).

6. Having considered all public comments made at the preferred option stage, Broxbourne Council have now prepared a finalised Core Strategy which is subject of a final six week consultation period to give local people and other interested parties a final opportunity to comment on the document. This ‘pre-submission publication’ stage began on Friday 29 August 2010 and will conclude on Friday 15 October 2010.

7. In light of this opportunity, the following comments have been prepared by the Council’s Forward Planning Team with a view for these to be accepted by the Panel as the official response of Epping Forest District Council. Two issues stand out as being of particular interest to Epping Forest District Council, the first of these is the proposed redevelopment of Hazlemere Marina.

8. Broxbourne Borough Council’s housing trajectory indicates that 840 new dwellings are to be built within Waltham Cross. This is the largest designation of houses within Broxbourne Borough. Given the close proximity of the area to Epping Forest District, and Waltham Abbey in particular, there may be benefits to the local economy through increased trade within the town centre. There is however the possibility that any gains to be had from this significant increase in local consumers will be countered by commercial developments elsewhere, in particular, the proposed expansion of the large retail outlet at Greater Brookfield just to the north of Waltham Cross.

9. Of particular interest to Epping Forest District Council is the redevelopment of Hazlemere Marina along Lea Road. Lea Road is a designated employment area and runs along the border with Epping Forest District adjoining Highbridge Street to the north, which then travels into Waltham Abbey town centre. Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy seeks to “retain and improve” such areas. Broxbourne Borough Council are therefore seeking to bring forward the redevelopment of Hazlemere Marina, and have drafted a Development Brief to support the general policies in the Core Strategy. This was published for consultation between 20th August and 20th September, notification of which was placed in the 17th September edition of the Members Bulletin. As identified in the Development Brief, Broxbourne Borough Council view Hazlemere Marina as an opportunity for a significant mixed use development which they believe will be a catalyst for the wider regeneration of the area and the delivery of Waltham Cross Renaissance Strategy, a strategy which seeks to utilize the economic and social benefits of the Olympic White Water Canoe Course planned in the immediate vicinity.

10. Officers at Epping Forest District Council believe that the development of Hazlemere Marina will clearly have an impact on the surrounding area. A primary concern will be whether the main entrance along Station Road will remain here during redevelopment or whether a currently proposed new entrance along Lea Road will be built before this takes place. Station Road is a key route into the west of the District and especially Waltham Abbey town centre which is close by. Should redevelopment works result in the closure of the road or significant delays along this route then this could potentially disrupt the function of Waltham Abbey’s town centre. Epping Forest District Council officers therefore require assurance from Broxbourne Borough Council that appropriate consultation has been undertaken with Essex County Council as the adjacent highway authority.

11. The development at Hazlemere Marina also poses an issue to the prosperity of Waltham Abbey town centre. Whilst new homes close to Waltham Abbey town centre potentially could encourage new consumers into the area, the location of a major hotel, restaurant and an element of ancillary retail on the proposed site could take away consumers from the already established services located in Waltham Abbey. It is a priority for Epping Forest District Council to ensure the future vitality and viability of Waltham Abbey and its other town centres. Waltham Abbey town centre has experienced difficulties in recent years given the current

economic climate as well as increasing competition from higher order centres. It is a concern that this proposal could therefore exacerbate those problems.

12. EFDC is committed to realising the tourism development potential of the Waltham Abbey area and capturing the maximum benefit for Waltham Abbey town centre. The new Lee Valley White Water Centre is set to further enhance the area's already strong visitor offer. Officers at Epping Forest District Council therefore require further assurances from and ongoing co-operation with Broxbourne Borough Council that any new development at Hazlemere Marina aimed at the visitor economy (i.e. visitor moorings, hotel, pub/restaurant) will be well integrated with existing attractions in the area and contribute towards the regeneration ambitions of both Waltham Abbey and Waltham Cross. Epping Forest District Council and partners are working to deliver enhanced visitor orientation and signage within the local area and would seek that any new provision of visitor facilities should comprise complementary wayfinding signage as appropriate. Such linkages are particularly vital at this site given its location between two town centres.

13. Officers at Epping Forest District Council furthermore find it questionable that the inclusion of a hotel within the proposed development mix of Hazlemere Marina is justified solely by reference to a low supply within the administrative Borough of Broxbourne. Operator interest will instead be determined by a more holistic demand assessment within a true geographic catchment from the site. It should be noted that this would therefore include a supply of approximately 260 bedrooms within Waltham Abbey.

14. The second issue of interest to Epping Forest District Council is the proposed development to occur within Essex Road Gateway. Within their pre-submission Core Strategy, Broxbourne Borough Council's housing trajectory anticipates that approximately 3,840 new homes will be required within the Borough up until 2026 at a rate of 240 per year. This is the same figure as the minimum number of new houses Broxbourne Borough Council were required to build per year under the now withdrawn East of England Plan. Of the new homes required, 790 are scheduled for the Hoddesdon area. The Essex Road Gateway Development Brief was published for consultation between 20th August and 20th September indicated that at least some of these new homes will be provided to the east of Hoddesdon. Whilst this brief is mentioned within the pre-submission Core Strategy, no further details are provided within Broxbourne's Pre-Submission Core Strategy Document.

15. The Essex Road Gateway Brief sets out that any development in this area would commence with works to widen the existing Essex Road Alignment as the area is already prone to peak hour congestion. The creation of a new access road to one of two proposed land parcels targeted for new housing and commercial development within the location is also planned. Both of these road work developments have the potential to create road closures and delays whilst they are being carried out. Given that the site is located close to the border with Epping Forest District, there is therefore the potential for delays and increased traffic along Dobb's Weir Road. Officers at Epping Forest District Council therefore wish to seek assurances from Broxbourne Borough Council that these suggested road works, are completed before development begins on two land parcels scheduled for housing and commercial development.

16. In addition to this, council officers also require assurance from Broxbourne Borough Council that consultation with regards to these proposals has been undertaken with Essex County Council as the adjacent highway authority. More detailed discussion with Essex County Council should also consider whether the proposed improvements may cause more east-west traffic movements beyond the Essex Road industrial area, onto roads in Epping Forest district that are unsuited to heavy traffic. Measures to avoid any such increase should be incorporated into detailed redevelopment schemes.

17. Finally, policy CS6 of the Core Strategy states Broxbourne Borough Council's intention to deliver the objectives of the Waltham Cross Town Centre Strategy. This seeks to increase the amount of supermarket floorspace, the number of value/discount anchor stores and the number of eating/drinking places within the town centre. This again has the potential to take consumers away from Waltham Abbey town centre and therefore will be closely monitored by officers.

18. The proposal to increase the capacity of the bus station in Waltham Cross however may be beneficial to Waltham Abbey in increasing the frequency of services between the two towns. Broxbourne Core Strategy also mentions the Highways Agency plans to widen the northern quadrant of the M25 and to introduce peak period use of the hard shoulder between Junction 23 (A1(M)) and Junction 27 (M11) from 2012 onwards. The document highlights that this will be beneficial to Broxbourne Borough although specific details are not given. It stands to reason however that when these works are complete they will likely also be beneficial to Epping Forest District given that the works include Junction 26 at Waltham Abbey.

Reason for decision: To ensure that the comments and concerns raised by the Forward Planning officers with regards to Broxbourne Borough Council's consultation on its Pre-Submission Core Strategy (August 2010) are noted and approved by members. Once approved these comments and concerns will then be sent to Broxbourne Borough Council.

Options considered and rejected:

To not respond to the consultation period.
Not to accept the comments made by Council officers

Consultation undertaken:

None undertaken by Epping Forest District Council

Resource implications: None

Budget provision:
From within existing resources

Personnel:
Consultation documentation analysed & response prepared within existing Forward Planning team

Land: N/A

Community Plan/BVPP reference:
GU1, HN1, EP3

Relevant statutory powers:
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning

Background papers:
Broxbourne Borough Council Pre Submission Core Strategy (August 2010)
Broxbourne Borough Council Preferred Options Strategy (November 2008)
Broxbourne Borough Council Issues and Options Strategy (May 2007)

Hazlemere Marina Development Brief (August 2010)
Essex Road Gateway Development Brief (August 2010)
Theobalds Grove West Development Brief (August 2010)

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:
Any implications are assessed in Broxbourne Borough Council's Pre Submission Core
Strategy Sustainability Appraisal.

Key Decision reference: (if required)
N/A