

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference:** C-013-2012/13

**Date of meeting:** 23 July 2012



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio:** Asset Management and Economic Development

**Subject:** Consultation update and Timetable - St John's Road Area, Epping Design & Development Brief

**Responsible Officer** Colleen O'Boyle (01992 564475).

**Democratic Services Officer:** Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**(1) To agree the timetable for reporting a design & Development Brief for the St John's area to the September Cabinet and Council.**

### **Executive Summary:**

Allies Morrison Urban Practitioners (AMUP) have analysed the more than 400 consultation responses submitted in various formats over the period of the consultation during March and April of this year. This document updates Members on the key issues arising from the consultation and outlines a proposed timetable for delivering the Brief.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

To seek agreement to the process for delivering this important Brief.

### **Other Options for Action:**

Cabinet could seek an alternative timetable or process.

### **Report:**

1. On 10<sup>th</sup> March 2008 Cabinet authorised the delivery of a Design & Development Brief for the St John's Road area, Epping.
2. The site is predominantly in public ownership, with Essex County Council owning the greater proportion of the site and the Town and District Councils owning the remainder.
3. The project has taken longer than anticipated but the essential information required to inform Members' decision making has now been assembled. In addition to National, regional and local planning policies this includes the illustrative Options prepared for the Council, the traffic impact analysis, the financial appraisals, a retail study and the results of the recent consultation.
4. Turning to the consultation responses, AMUP have produced a summary and highlighted not only the key issues arising but proposals as to how this could be translated into the Brief. Members will need to consider these in detail, as well as the views of the Town

and County Councils. The interim report on this has been published in the Council Bulletin previously and is attached as an Appendix. An updated version will be distributed to Members in due course.

5. In response to the acknowledged local interest, the Leader of Council and the Portfolio holder for Asset Management and Economic Development have accepted an invitation to meet with the Town Council, Epping Society and ward councillors on the 16<sup>th</sup> July to give feedback on the key issues emerging from the consultation. It is understood the County Council have also been invited.

6. The main issues which people felt it was most important to provide in the town centre can be summarised as follows:

- (i) improved sport and leisure facilities;
- (ii) the protection of historic buildings and respect for their scale;
- (iii) space for adult education; and
- (iv) protection of the existing trees.

7. In addition to these issues concern has been expressed by many who are concerned that a new larger store would have a negative impact on the High Street. Those who favoured a new store to provide competition wanted a smaller scale and/or a particular operator.

8. The Cabinet wishes to reflect further on all of the issues, consider the proposed approach suggested by the consultants within the attached briefing paper in addition to outcome of the feedback meeting referred to above.

9. Therefore it is proposed to bring a report to the 10<sup>th</sup> September Cabinet which draws these matters together in a draft Design & Development Brief. AMUP will be present to assist with both the presentation and any questions Members may have. If agreed, the Brief would then be referred to Full Council on the 27<sup>th</sup> September.

10. If the Brief is not agreed and/or further work is required this will of course impact on the timetable and a further report would be brought to Members.

#### **Resource Implications:**

No further resource is required to deliver the Brief as currently described.

#### **Legal and Governance Implications:**

The Brief if agreed will become a material planning consideration in relation to any future planning applications affecting the site.

#### **Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

Protection of historic buildings and protected trees form part of the Brief.

#### **Consultation Undertaken:**

A comprehensive exercise was undertaken to consult residents, businesses and visitors.

## **Background Papers:**

AMUP report.

## **Impact Assessments:**

### Risk Management

There is a risk that a unique development opportunity is not realised- either because of conflicting aims or through difficulties associated with the multiple ownership of the site.

To mitigate this, expert advice has been sought, consultation has been undertaken and essential partners have been involved through Project Board meetings.

### 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?* No

*Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken?* 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.