

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Reference No: 4/2012-13

LEADER DECISION

Subject: Local Plan – “Community Choices – Issues and Options” - Consultation

Decision:

To direct that the closing date for consultation on the Issues and Options stage of the Local Plan process be deferred to 15 October 2012 in order to allow more time for public responses to be submitted.

Explanatory Notice:

At the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on the Local Plan held on 2 July 2012 (Minute 7) it was decided that the period for consultation on “Issues and Options” would be from 30 July to 21 September 2012, a period of 8 weeks.

This decision was called in by 5 members of the Council and was reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny at its meeting on 17 July 2012. After a full discussion on the decision, the Committee decided to support the grounds for call in subject to one amendment which related to the closing date for consultation. Those grounds were:

- (a) that a significant part of the consultation was during August 2012 when most residents are away;
- (b) the consultation period proposed is only two weeks more than the statutory minimum allowed which does not take account of the point made under (a) above;
- (c) the timescale for holding public roadshows does not permit sufficient time for informed responses from residents;
- (d) that changes in the Cabinet Committee’s terms of reference meant that Councillors would not be aware that Committee had decision-making powers.

The Committee, in upholding the call in, referred the matter back to the Portfolio Holder for Planning with a request that a new consultation closing date of 12 October 2012 be considered. The Portfolio Holder has consulted me on the matter and we are happy to accept the Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s recommendation, regarding an extension of the consultation period.

Our view is that it will assist the public if the deadline were extended to 15 October 2012 (a Monday) rather than 12 October 2012 (a Friday) in order that there is another weekend for the public to formulate their responses.

In normal circumstances, it would be for the Cabinet Committee to confirm this change but I have decided, in accordance with my powers as Leader of the Council, to direct that consultation timetable is extended without awaiting the next Cabinet or arranging a special Cabinet Committee meeting.

Legal and Constitutional Powers

Local Government Act 2000 (Sections 14-15) as amended by the Local Government etc Act 2007.

Executive Procedure Rules (paragraph 1.4(b))

Signed: _____
Councillor C Whitbread, Leader of the Council

Date: _____ 2012

Ref: PU/IW