

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Subject: Planning Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Richard Bassett

Date: 18 December 2012

Recommending:

That the report of the Planning Portfolio Holder be noted

Local Plan

Work on the Local Plan is continuing and we will have input all the issues and options consultation responses into the analysis system by the end of December. We have started work on the analysis and on the data for the workshops that I mentioned last month. As well as District, Council Councillors and MPs there will be an invite for one Town and Parish representative per Council. I will send a formal invite to all parties in early January but I am now in a position to explain the draft content of the workshops.

Saturday January 26th 10:00 am to 16:00 (Waltham Abbey Town Hall). This will involve presentations and discussions of the evidence and its implications across the district, and for different places in the district. Participants will explore different ways of addressing the key issue of growth for the future within the context of the wider evidence base. The results of Workshop 1 will be analysed and reported back to participants and inform workshop 2.

Saturday February 9th 10:00 am to 16:00 (Waltham Abbey Town Hall.) This will explore the impact of the plan vision and objectives, on the choices for growth and broad locations for development. Discussion on emerging policy themes and priorities critical to deciding the future of the district will take place. The roles of individual towns and the suitable directions of development for them will be explored.

Saturday March 2nd 10:00 am to 16:00 (Epping Town Hall). This will address the future of towns in more fine grain and this will involve testing the likely future impact of different policy choices against the Council's aspirations for the futures of settlements and the rural areas. Participants will focus on a small number of settlements but will be able to comment on the work of others.

In order to be most effective it is requested that you sign up for all three workshops as these are intended to be a programme of workshops and consistent input is desirable. Lunch and light refreshments will be provided

A further fourth workshop will be held later in the year that will consider the implications of further evidence and a preferred option for the emerging Local Plan to be published in Late Summer/ Early Autumn 2013 for consultation.

As requested by several members I have also asked the Forward Planning team to compile a list of the "Brownfield" sites they have considered as part of the Local Plan process and it is hoped that this will help members identify any which were not identified in the SLAA part of the process. If any new sites are identified please let me know so they could be considered. I would remind members that brownfield sites which would accommodate less than six houses would not be part of the identification process as they are considered as windfall sites and applications for these normally appear through the normal planning process.

Population Projections

As we are aware one of the key areas of the local plan is the decision over population growth and I have been informed that Essex Country Council is arranging for an Essex Planning Officer Association Demography Workshop for officers and selected Member representatives from the Districts. The date for this will be the second half of January (Date to be confirmed). This workshop will be key as it would look at updates to the population modelling and would include data from the June 2011 Census.

Growth Meeting with Harlow

On the 13th November, together with the Leader and the Chief Executive, I met with our counterparts at Harlow Council. We agreed to cooperate on how both councils go forward focusing initially on planning and economic development. The initial meeting was very positive and we have arranged for a follow up meeting to discuss possible development proposals on the boundaries of Harlow and Epping Forest on the 18th January.

With the importance of cross boundary consultation we are also trying to arrange a similar meeting with Uttleford and are awaiting an agreed date.

Northern Gateway Access Package (NGAP)

As mentioned last month the North East Enfield Area Action Plan is part of a complex area plan of the London Borough of Enfield (LBE). It contains many proposals of merit, and where one might expect an adjacent Planning Authority would be supportive of the strategic approach and the tactics to be employed to achieve the intended actions. However as part of the package of changes the London Borough of Enfield (LBE) have indicated they aspire to a direct or indirect route for traffic using the North South Road (A1055) or Mollison Avenue to the J26 M25.

In pursuing their aspiration LBE developed a scheme called Northern Gateway Access Road (NGAR) which was submitted for planning and other approvals some sixteen years ago. This was rejected on appeal and our views on the subject have not changed. At a special meeting of the Planning Scrutiny Panel members unanimously approved our objections to the scheme. The main objections were impact on the Green Belt, Lee Valley Regional Park and the traffic issues over a wide area of the district. For full details please see the minutes of the Scrutiny Panel meeting.

Further Cooperation meetings with outside bodies

As part of the duty to cooperate we are putting together a list of all the external bodies we are currently in discussions with or consulting/cooperating with for the Local Plan and I will circulate this as soon as

possible. However I would mention that I have a meeting planned with counterparts at Enfield and Broxbourne where we will be discussing

- Partner Updates, key elements of emerging strategies and plans (we will want to raise NGAP)
- Opportunities for joint working/ Focus on Productive Landscapes/Food Summit
- Current Structures for Liaison and coordination

Glasshouse Industries

Finally as part of the Local Plan we have been looking at strategies for the future of the Glasshouse industry. We have been looking at several options which range from Non-intervention, i.e. continuation of current planning policy where we see managing decline, to proactive intervention where we look at policy changes to support industry expansion.

We are currently putting together information on this which will be circulated. This would be included as part of consultation/discussions on Productive Landscapes which is very topical at the moment with various statements coming from the London Assembly on food supply issues in the coming years. Currently they have allocated £600k to London Borough of Enfield where they are investigating the issues and setting up schemes to increase/start food production. This will be discussed further at the meeting with Enfield and Broxbourne.