

Report to Local Council Liaison Committee



Date of meeting: 20 November 2014

Subject: Progress report Parish and Town Councils moving towards paperless planning.

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Committee Secretary: Jackie Leither (01992 56 4756)

To note;

- (1) This report provides an update on measures to implement the electronic distribution of plans and associated documentation.**
- (2) That the circulation of all paper copies planning documentation was partly discontinued from 1st October 2014 and with effect from the 1st November 2014 the distribution of all paper copies of plans and associated documentation to Parish and Town Councils has ceased.**
- (3) An update on the allocation of projectors and screens to Parish and Town Councils to support the implementation of paperless planning.**

Report

1. The ratio of electronic planning applications from the National Planning Portal has increased to nearly 90% nationally.
The same ratio for Epping Forest District Council is over half of the national figure with nearly 50% of all planning applications being submitted electronic to the National Planning Portal.
2. Notification was given at the meeting of Local Council Liaison Committee on 6th March 2014 that from 1st October 2014 Epping Forest District Council will no longer be able to print and distribute electronically received planning documentation to Parish/Town Councils due to resource limitations. On 1st October 2014 the distribution of paper plans and associated document was partially discontinued with the deadline extended for some Parish/Town Councils to 31st October 2014.
3. As part of the process to support Parish and Town Councils move from paper based planning meetings to presenting plans and associated documentation in electronic format, a limited amount of small projectors and screens has been made available. Fourteen Parish and Town Councils applied for either projectors and/or screens including three which asked for a grant towards projection equipment.

The following fourteen Parish/Town Councils now have the necessary equipment and/or a grant towards this;

Epping Upland, High Ongar, Lambourne, Loughton, Matching, Moreton Bobbingworth and the Lavers, Ongar, Nazeing, North Weald, Roydon, Sheering, Stanford Rivers, Stapleford Abbots and Theydon Bois

4. It was originally intended to continue to distribute paper plans and documentation that had not been submitted electronically. However this measure created some confusion for Parish/Town Councils with a number of Councils indicating they preferred to receive all Planning Information electronically.
5. Should any Parish or Town Councils be experiencing any difficulties Governance (Development Management) is happy to provide additional support and training. For example Loughton and Ongar Town Council, Roydon and Nazeing Parish Councils have visited the Development Control section of Development Management to familiarise themselves with both electronic records and other planning related issues.

Reason for this report

This report provides an update of the progress being in assisting Parish Councils to move towards paperless planning. This is due to the increasing trend where electronic planning applications comprise of nearly 90% nationally and 50% locally within Epping District of all planning applications. Epping Forest District Council is no longer able to sustain the additional costs of printing and distributing paper copies of planning applications received electronically to Parish/Town Councils.

Consultation undertaken: N/A

Resource implications: Development Management is no longer able to sustain the increasing costs of distributing paper copies of planning applications received electronically.

Background papers: None