

Report to the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee



Report reference: CHB-019-2014/15
Date of meeting: 5 March 2015

**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Housing – Cllr David Stallan

**Subject: Strategic Approach to the Prioritisation of Potential
Developments – Council Housebuilding Programme**

**Responsible Officer: Paul Pledger, Assistant Director (Housing Property
& Development) (01992 564248)**

Democratic Services Officer: Jackie Leither (01992 564756)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the strategic approach adopted by the Cabinet Committee at its meeting in February 2014 continues for the prioritisation of potential sites;**
- (2) That, taking account of the strategic approach for the prioritisation of potential sites, and using updated statistics as at February 2015, locations be grouped together into the following two Groups and the Priority Orders shown:**

Group A (Locations with sites that could potentially deliver 10 or more homes):

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Location</u>
1	Loughton
2	Waltham Abbey
3	Epping
4	Ongar
5	Buckhurst Hill
6	North Weald

Group B (Locations with sites that could potentially deliver less than 10 homes):

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Location</u>
1	Roydon
2	Nazeing
3	Theydon Bois
4	High Ongar
5	Coopersale
6	Matching Green/Tye

- (4) That a review of the priority orders within Groups A and B in (2) above be undertaken by the Cabinet Committee in 3-years' time, having regard to the same strategic approach set-out in the existing Policy on the Prioritisation of sites; and**
- (4) That, taking account of the priority order agreed by the Cabinet Committee in February 2014, Phase 3 be made up of 35 new homes on the following sites already agreed as viable by the Cabinet Committee at its meeting in December**

2014, subject to the two revised feasibility studies at Queens Road, North Weald and Centre Drive (Site B), Epping, considered earlier on the agenda, being agreed, based on a total scheme cost of £6,395,477, with a subsidy requirement of £923,600:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| a) Queens Road, North Weald | - 12x3-bed 5P houses |
| b) Bluemans End, North Weald | - 4x3-bed 5P houses |
| c) Stewards Green Road, Epping | - 4x3-bed 5P houses |
| d) Site A Parklands, Coopersale | - 2x1-bed 2P flats & 2x2-bed 4P houses |
| e) Site C Parklands, Coopersale | - 1x2-bed 4P bungalow |
| f) Centre Avenue, Epping | - 2x3-bed 5P houses |
| g) Centre Drive (Site B), Epping | - 1x3-bed 5P houses |
| h) Site B Springfield, Epping | - 2x1-bed 2P bungalows |
| i) Site C Springfield, Epping | - 2x1-bed 2P bungalows & 2x2-bed 4P houses |
| j) 79 London Road, Ongar | - 1x3-bed 5P house |

(5) That, subject to the sites listed in recommendation (6) above being agreed, each site be progressed to detailed design stage, with planning applications being submitted and, subject to planning approval, tenders to be sought in accordance with the Procurement Strategy for House-building; and

(6) That Phase 4 of the Council's house-building programme focussing on Ongar and Buckhurst Hill.

Executive Summary:

The Cabinet has previously agreed a list of potential development sites for Council House-building, and the Cabinet Committee has also agreed at its meeting in February 2014 a strategic approach to the prioritisation of those sites by area taking account of demand from those applicants registered on the Council's housing waiting list. However, the Cabinet Committee required that a review be carried out after 12-months to make sure the priority order was still based on the demand.

This report not only reviews the demand for housing, but also seeks to agree the sites that will make up the next phase of the Council House-building Programme.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

There is a need to review the prioritisation of potential sites for development based on the demand from those registered on the Council's housing waiting list, and also to agree the sites that are to go forward for Phase 3 of the Council House-building Programme.

Other Options for Action:

The main alternative options appear to be:

(a) To adopt a different approach to the prioritisation of sites – of which there are a myriad of alternatives.

(b) To alter the list of sites proposed for Phase 3.

(c) To review the prioritisation of sites in 12-months' time. However, due to the lead-in time to develop the feasibility studies and undertake the legal checks, it makes planning future phases difficult if the priority order changes on an annual basis.

Background

1. At its meeting in February 2014, the Cabinet Committee agreed a Policy on the future prioritisation of development sites based on rotating the developments around the towns/villages where sites are located, so that all areas have the benefit of affordable housing being provided in their area, with priority given to areas in which the highest number of housing applicants live. The strategy that was agreed takes account of:
 - a. Towns/villages with sites that could potentially deliver the greatest number of new properties being prioritised in preference to locations where less properties could be delivered; and
 - b. Where possible, development packages/phases (i.e. the grouping of sites into one works contract, usually undertaken each year) should generally comprise sites within the same town/village, in order to reduce the contractor's site set-up costs.
2. In February 2014, the Cabinet Committee, when agreeing the prioritisation order, asked that this list be reviewed in 12-months to make sure the order continued to match the demand for housing by those on the Council's waiting list. The tables below illustrate where those registered for housing on the Council's waiting list currently live, and are ranked for each of the two groups:

Group A (Comprising towns/villages with sites that could potentially deliver 10 or more new homes in total)

Group A (Capacity for 10 or more new homes)				
Priority Order	Location	No. of Housing Applicants	No. of Sites	Max. No. of Properties
1	Loughton	459	16 ^(#)	52 ^(#)
2	Waltham Abbey	413	18	71 ^(*)
3	Epping	102	5	12
4	Ongar	84	2	11
5	Buckhurst Hill	70	5	23
6	North Weald	40	2	16

(*) = Including the Year 1 sites

(#) = Excluding the sites at The Broadway

Group B (Comprising towns/villages with sites that could potentially deliver less than 10 new homes in total)

Group B (Capacity for less than 10 new homes)				
Priority Order	Location	No. of Housing Applicants	No. of Sites	Max. No. of Properties
1	Roydon	23	1	3
2	Nazeing	19	2	7
3	Theydon Bois	16	2	5
4	High Ongar	13	1	2
5	Coopersale	9	3	7
6	Matching Green/Tye	2	1	2

3. It is therefore recommended that the Policy on the Prioritisation of Sites, from which future phases, beyond Phase 3, are to be drawn up, be based on the revised ranking table set out in paragraph 2 above, with Phase 4 focussing on sites in Ongar and Buckhurst Hill.

4. With the locations already agreed by the Cabinet Committee for Phases 1 and 2 as Waltham Abbey and Loughton respectively, Phase 3 was identified in the report on the prioritisation of sites agreed by the Cabinet Committee in February 2014 as being Epping, Coopersale and North Weald. The Cabinet committee considered the feasibility studies for those sites at its meeting in December 2014, and all but three sites were considered viable. However, for two of the sites at Queens Road, North Weald and Centre Drive (Site B), Epping the Cabinet Committee asked that these be redrawn to achieve a different mix of properties. The revised feasibility studies are to be considered elsewhere on the agenda.

5. It is therefore recommended that Phase 3 be made up of 35 new homes on the following sites, subject to the two revised feasibility studies considered earlier on the agenda, being approved as viable, based on a total scheme cost of £6,395,477, with a subsidy requirement of £923,600 (see appendix 1 for the financial summary):

- a) Queens Road, North Weald - 12x3-bed 5P houses
- b) Bluemans End, North Weald - 4x3-bed 5P houses
- c) Stewards Green Road, Epping - 4x3-bed 5P houses
- d) Site A Parklands, Coopersale - 2x1-bed 2P flats & 2x2-bed 4P houses
- e) Site C Parklands, Coopersale - 1x2-bed 4P bungalow
- f) Centre Avenue, Epping - 2x3-bed 5P houses
- g) Centre Drive (Site B), Epping - 1x3-bed 5P houses
- h) Site B Springfield, Epping - 2x1-bed 2P bungalows
- i) Site C Springfield, Epping - 2x1-bed 2P bungalows & 2x2-bed 4P houses
- j) 79 London Road, Ongar - 1x3-bed 5P house

Resource Implications:

A capital expenditure for Phase 3 of £6,395,477, with a subsidy requirement of £923,600 to achieve a 30-year pay-back. The Cabinet has already agreed the required resources to deliver the Programme for the foreseeable future within the Housing Capital Programme, based on the Council's HRA Financial Plan.

Legal and Governance Implications:

It is considered good governance to adopt and follow a strategic approach to the prioritisation of sites, which has been agreed in an open and transparent way.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

None.

Consultation Undertaken:

None

Background Papers:

- Existing Policy on the Prioritisation of Sites agreed by the Cabinet Committee in February 2014.
- Feasibility studies considered and agreed by the Cabinet Committee at its meeting in December 2014 for each of the sites making up Phase 3, as set out in the recommendations.

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

There are no material risks associated with the proposed approach. The key issue from a risk management point of view is to ensure that potential development sites have development and financial appraisals undertaken, and progressed to the planning stage, in timely and co-ordinated fashion, to ensure that the Programme is not disrupted.

Due Regard Record

This page shows **which groups of people are affected** by the subject of this report. It sets out **how they are affected** and how any **unlawful discrimination** they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how **access to the service(s)** subject to this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to **understand each other better** as a result of the subject of this report.

S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

Within the Housing Service Strategy, it has been identified that the target groups that are affected by the Council's house building programme are people in need of:

- Affordable Housing,
- Homelessness assistance,
- Supported housing for special needs groups,
- Owners and occupiers of poor condition housing
- Council and housing association tenants.

From that, it was identified that generally, there is an under provision of suitable accommodation for nearly all target groups. This has been reaffirmed in the most recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

Decision making is affected by funding and other factors, such as the availability of building land suitable for particular groups e.g. the elderly or young families.

There is no evidence of unlawful discrimination in relation to the provision of affordable housing.