

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet **Date:** 18 October 2016
Subject: Draft Epping Forest District Local Plan for Consultation
Portfolio Holder: Cllr J Philip – Planning Policy

Recommending:

(1) That the Draft Local Plan and the non technical summary of the Sustainability Appraisal be endorsed for the purposes of the proposed consultation;

(2) That consultation on the Draft Local Plan under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012 be commenced for a six-week statutory period from 31 October to 12 December 2016 inclusive in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement, and any representations received after 5.00pm on 12 December 2016 be deemed invalid;

(3) That the Draft Local Plan be endorsed as a material consideration to be used in the determination of planning applications and enforcement decisions in accordance with paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework; and

(4) That the Director of Neighbourhoods, in consultation with the Planning Policy Portfolio Holder, be granted delegated authority to make any necessary minor non-material amendments to the Draft Local Plan prior to the commencement of public consultation on 31 October 2016.

N.B...The full draft Local Plan was published in colour as part of the Cabinet agenda for the meeting of 6 October 2016; Members are requested to refer to this document for the Council meeting.

1. The Draft Local Plan has been produced in response to the Community Visioning consultation in 2010/11 and Issues and Options Community Choices consultations which took place in 2012, and in liaison with our neighbouring authorities through the Cooperation for Sustainable Development Board. The Draft Local Plan has been prepared in compliance with the national planning requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Practice Guidance and regulations. Since 2012 the Council has prepared an extensive evidence base to inform the development of policies for the Draft Local Plan. The draft policies have been developed in close and regular consultation with key stakeholders including Members (District and Parish) and officers at a series of workshops taking into account the commissioned evidence and consultation responses. Regular updates and reports have been provided to the Cabinet.

2. The recommended public consultation document for the emerging Epping Forest District Local Plan 2011 – 2033 is a Draft Local Plan consultation under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The Draft Local Plan outlines the Council's vision and preferred approach for development in the District for the next 17 years. It includes the identification of sites for housing and economic growth including proposed development of strategic sites around Harlow and draft development management policies.

3. Following consideration of the comments received in response to the Draft Local Plan consultation, the next stage will be to prepare a plan for publication and to publish it under Regulation 19. This will be the document that the Council considers is ready for examination. The Publication Plan must be published together with other "proposed submission documents", for a six-week period to seek stakeholder representations as to the soundness of the Plan before it can be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. In the meantime decision makers can give weight to the relevant policies in emerging plans according to the stage of preparation of the emerging plan – the more advanced the preparation, the greater the weight that may be given – in accordance with paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Strategy for the Local Plan

4. The Draft Local Plan sets out the Council's preferred approach to development in the District for the period up to 2033 including the amount of new homes and jobs that the plan seeks to achieve, the distribution of that development between settlements, and the approach to the natural environment and green infrastructure. The purpose of the Plan is to deliver the vision and objectives for the District whilst contributing to sustainable development as described in the National Planning Policy Framework to achieve economic, environmental and social progress. This means taking a balanced approach to meeting the needs of existing and future residents, businesses and visitors, whilst protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment and built heritage and addressing the impacts of a changing climate.

5. The Draft Local Plan sets out:

- The Council's vision and objectives for the District's development over the plan period;
- Policies to ensure that development delivers high quality, sustainable homes, drive the quality of design and maintain our high quality built and natural environment;
- The future distribution for housing growth and requirements for affordable housing;
- Policies to build a strong, competitive economy and the future distribution for new employment land space and thus new jobs;
- Policies to maintain and enhance the vibrancy and vitality of our towns centres;

- Policies to support a sustainable transport and road infrastructure network; and
- Proposals for delivery including a draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) to demonstrate the infrastructure requirements necessary to support the site allocations and other proposals.

6. As required by Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the National Planning Policy Framework the Council has been working with East Hertfordshire, Harlow and Uttlesford District Councils and has jointly commissioned work to establish the objectively assessed housing and employment needs across the Strategic Housing Market and Functional Economic Market Area. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment published in 2015 and reported to Cabinet on September 2015 identified an objectively assessed housing need of 46,100 across the SHMA area. For Epping Forest District this equated to 11,300 new homes over the Local Plan period (2011-2033). Since the publication of the 2015 SHMA, the Office of National Statistics and Department for Communities and Local Government issued further population and household projections (in July 2016). The authorities have undertaken some sense checking of the objectively assessed housing need and this has indicated that the objectively assessed need for the SHMA area is now approximately 54,600 including 11,400 new homes for Epping Forest District.

7. The local authorities have taken the most recent population and household projections into account and have considered the most appropriate spatial distribution across the wider area and jointly commissioned work in order to establish the appropriate level of growth. This work has shown that the potential to increase the level of housing is constrained by infrastructure requirements as well as environmental and policy designations such that the maximum quantum of growth for the plan period is around 51,100 homes for the Strategic Housing Market Area with around 16,100 homes to be delivered in and around Harlow.

8. This led to a draft memorandum of understanding being considered at the 12 September 2016 meeting of the Cooperation for Sustainable Development Board. This sets out the spatial option for the Strategic Housing Market Area taking account of infrastructure (and in particular highways) constraints. It includes the preferred locations for growth in and around Harlow. This identifies the requirement for Epping Forest District to accommodate around 11,400 new homes over the Local Plan period (2011-2033) with economic growth of around 10,000 new jobs as evidenced by the joint study by Hardisty Jones reported to Cabinet on 3 September 2015. Thus the Draft Local Plan seeks to propose allocations to provide for this quantum of growth over the plan period (2011-2033).

9. The four authorities also commissioned a joint piece of work to assess the sites which were being promoted in and around Harlow to assess the preferred locations for the level of growth. The 16,100 homes identified in and around Harlow comprise the following sites identified in the strategic sites assessment as the preferred locations for development:

Epping Forest District	Latton Priory	~ 1,000
	West Sumners	~ 1,000
	West Katherines	~ 1,100
	East of Harlow	~ 750
	Riddings Lane	~ 50
Total for EFDC		~ 3,900
East Herts District	Gilston (sites A & E)	~ 3,050
Harlow District	East of Harlow	~ 2,600
	Total in proposed sites	~ 9,550
In addition Harlow District will deliver within the District ~ 6.600 on sites not included in the strategic sites assessment		

**The East of Harlow area is split between Harlow and Epping Forest Districts*

10. The Council has considered the housing and economic needs of the local authorities within the Housing Market /Functional Economic Area and the opportunities that strategic allocations around Harlow can provide to support that strategic need. Taking this together with the evidence on other sites put forward in the District and in the context of policy and environmental constraints, it is proposed that the housing target of 11,400 for Epping Forest District will be delivered by taking a sequential approach to where new homes will be provided as follows:

- Allocating sites around Harlow (including making provision for Travellers and Travelling Showpeople) to support the vision of the London Stansted Cambridge Corridor – proposed allocations of the sites are set out in Policy SP 3 of the Draft Local Plan;
- Maximising opportunities for development on previously developed land within the existing settlements of the District;
- Utilising open space within settlements where such selection would not adversely affect open space provision within the settlement and make the best use of existing land without compromising local character;
- Previously developed land within the Green Belt (in anticipation of the NPPF being updated to take account of the proposed changes published in December 2015);
- Allowing for a limited release of Green Belt land to provide for housing on the edge of settlements to distribute housing across the District - this is in keeping with Green Belt policy that exceptional circumstances must be demonstrated for Green Belt release; and
- Enable small scale sites in smaller rural communities to come forward where there is a clear local need which supports the social and economic well-being of that community.

The components of housing land supply over the period 2011-2033 are as follows	
Number of homes required to be built 2011-2033: 518 x 22	~11,400 ¹
Homes Built (Completions) 2011-2016 up to 31 March 2016	1,173
What is currently available in the future (supply)	
Sites with planning permission up to 31 March 2016	1,194
Windfalls 35 x 17	595
Total supply	2,950
Requirement met through strategic sites around Harlow	3,900 (as set out in Policy SP 3 in Chapter 3 of the Draft Local Plan)
Remaining requirement to be provided from elsewhere in the District	~ 4,550 plus reserve sites (as set out in Policy SP 2 in Chapter 3 of the Draft Local Plan and Chapter 5)

The components of traveller and travelling showpeople supply over the period 2011-2033 are as follows:	
Number of pitches required 2011-2033 based on 2016 Interim Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment	38 pitches and 1 yard
No of pitches completed	16
Pitches with planning permission	4
Remaining requirement to be provided	18 pitches and 1 yard (identified in Policy SP 3 and Chapter 5 of the Draft Local Plan)

11. Following a rigorous assessment process to consider all the sites put forward as to their suitability, achievability and deliverability (see site selection background paper for the assessment of residential, traveller and employment sites), Chapter 5 of the Draft Local Plan sets out the proposed allocations for each of the main settlements in the District. The Draft Local Plan also includes proposals for the provision of an additional 18 pitches and 1 yard to accommodate the needs of Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and proposals for the delivery of new jobs.

12. Alongside the Draft Local Plan the Council is publishing a range of evidence studies to support the proposed approach and draft policies in the plan. All these documents will be available on the website with links to the documents provided in the Draft Plan which goes out to consultation. Members' attention is particularly drawn to the following studies which have not yet been published but which have been used to inform the preparation of the plan. The studies include:

¹ Please note that the figures may not add up due to rounding.

- (a) The updated Strategic Land Availability Assessment prepared by Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners (July 2016);
- (b) The Stage 2 Green Belt Review prepared by Land Use Consultants (August 2016);
- (c) The Settlement Capacity Study prepared by Fregonese Associates (2016);
- (d) Historic Characterisation Study prepared by Essex County Council (August 2016);
- (e) Spatial Option for the Distribution of OAHN for West Essex and East Herts SHMA prepared by AECOM (September 2016);
- (f) Harlow Strategic Site Assessment prepared by AECOM for West Essex and East Herts authorities (September 2016);
- (g) Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Interim briefing note for Epping Forest District Council (September 2016);
- (h) Epping Forest District Visitor Accommodation Needs Assessment Phase 1 prepared by Hotel Solutions (August 2016);
- (i) Town Centres Review prepared by Arup (September 2016);
- (j) Site selection report prepared by Arup (September 2016); and
- (k) Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan prepared by Arup (September 2016).

Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment

13. To ensure that the policies set out in the Draft Local Plan are in line with the objective of sustainable development, a Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating a Habitat Regulations Assessment) has been prepared which is non technical summary. The appraisal is intended to assess the impact of planning policies in terms of their social, economic and environmental impacts. The Sustainability Appraisal addresses the requirements of the European Union Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (OJEC, 2001) and complies with the Habitats Directive (OJEC, 1992).

14. AECOM, were first appointed by the Council to undertake the Sustainability Appraisal on the Local Plan in 2009. Since then a scoping report was consulted on during 2010 and an interim Sustainability Report was published alongside the Community Choices consultation in July 2012. During the intervening period AECOM has given support in developing the reasonable alternative options for delivering the housing and employment needs for the District and was involved in the development of the criteria for the site selection process which was developed from the Sustainability Appraisal criteria. AECOM has also undertaken a Sustainability Appraisal of the Draft Local Plan during its formulation and development, and is in the process of finalising the Sustainability Appraisal Report This will be one of the supporting documents which will be published for consultation along with the Draft Local Plan. The full Habitats Regulation Assessment will be undertaken following the completion of detailed transport modelling prior to the Regulation 19 publication plan.

Consultation

15. Cabinet approved the Consultation Strategy for the Draft Local Plan on 1 September 2016. This strategy is in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement adopted in February 2013. During the consultation period between 31 October and 12 December 2016 there will be a series of staffed exhibitions at 6 locations on agreed dates in the District and static information points at 11 locations which will be permanent throughout the consultation period. A new website has been developed and will include all the technical studies and background papers referred to in the Draft Plan together with an online questionnaire. An information leaflet will be distributed to every household during the week commencing 24 October 2016 with details of the consultation. Letters will be sent to all town and parish councils, individuals and organisations on the Council's data base and tailored letters issued to statutory consultees. To ensure that the consultation process is promoted as far as possible information postcards will be handed out during the peak periods at the District's underground and train stations – 11 locations in total.

16. The Draft Local Plan and hard copies of the questionnaire will be available in libraries and in reception at the Civic Offices. There will be regular information and updates on Council social media. In addition there will be surgery sessions for town/parish councils and residents associations on 22 November 2016 and surgery sessions available for land promoters on 18 November 2016.

Equality Impact Assessment

17. An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out on the Draft Plan prior to its submission to the Secretary of State following the Regulation 19 publication of the Plan. The Equality Impact Assessment will consider issues relating to gender, age, ethnicity, religion/belief, disability, sexuality and low disposable income. An Equality Analysis report can be found at Appendix 3 of the Draft Local Plan.

Cabinet Meeting 6 October 2016

18. The agenda for this meeting has had to be prepared prior to the meeting of the Cabinet on 6 October 2016, which will be considering the Draft Local Plan. If any amendments are made to the Draft Local Plan at this meeting then an addendum sheet will be issued as a supplementary agenda prior to this meeting of the Council.

19. We recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.