

# **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference: C/043/2007-8.**

**Date of meeting: 3 September 2007.**



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolios: Leader.  
Planning and Economic Development.**

**Subject: Loughton Broadway - Development Options.**

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## **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) To agree the principle that linked Development Briefs are now to be brought forward, so as to improve the further gateways at The Broadway;**
- (2) To agree that, partly because of urgency, partly because of internal capacity and partly to bring specialist knowledge, Consultants are appointed to produce the briefs; and**
- (3) That delegated authority be given to the following Portfolio Holders to agree the scoping report and list of consultants:**
  - (a) Leader of the Council;**
  - (b) Planning and Economic Development;**
  - (c) Housing; and**
  - (d) Civil Engineering and Maintenance.**

## **Report:**

1. The Loughton Broadway area has received the attention of the Council for a number of years, and from the perspective of a number of Services, and Portfolios. (This report is presented by the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economic Development, although some of the sites will be in the remit of the Housing or Civil Engineering and Maintenance Portfolios). Positive examples include the redevelopment of sites on Langston Road, the control/marketing and surfacing of the car parking on Burton Road, and the prospects of the development of the College site, Town Centre Enhancement (TCE) and other sites. The TCE for the Broadway has encountered unforeseen problems, in respect of the location and depth of a gas pipeline, and whether the agreed TCE scheme can be implemented, or what else could be done instead. Whilst any further delay is regrettable it is possible that the actions considered in this report could suggest resolution of these problems, additional funding sources or a different scheme.

2. The Council continues to hold significant freehold land (albeit with much on extended leases) and the Council has issues which it needs to respond to; for example, whether it is getting the most out of its assets, whether it is responding positively to crime issues, transport issues (with ECC) and the needs of the local community for shops, employment, affordable housing and relative deprivation, in a positive manner. There is the potential for positive impacts upon deprivation, and this links to themes in the Essex Local Area Agreement.

3. The redevelopment of the former lorry park, and the long empty former GEC site at

the entrances to Langston Road, have provided new “Gateways” to that employment and business area, have allowed existing and important local businesses to relocate and expand, or for new employment and facilities to come to the area.

4. It is considered that the Broadway has “entrances” where Rectory Lane becomes Chigwell Lane, Willingale Road and, on foot, from the Debden Underground Station. Those entrances are not all that they might be; for example the goods unloading bay for the J Sainsbury store is in full view, and a stranger arriving at the station would not necessarily appreciate that the footpath led to the Broadway. The Station approach, and land adjacent to the London Underground car park are under used.

5. The J Sainsbury store is very small by the standards of most supermarkets; section 7 (and clause 7.5 in particular) of the section 106 obligation for the J Sainsbury Old Station Road, Loughton development requires this store at the Broadway to be kept open until 20/03/2013 or until an alternative store is provided elsewhere in the Broadway. The supermarket has acted as an important local facility for many years, and is accessible to those on foot and/or who make frequent shopping trips for a small volume of groceries; in those senses it remains an important anchor for other shops and services in the Broadway, and can be contrasted to supermarkets with bigger, more car dominated catchments. Any replacement store will need to ensure that the present attributes already mentioned are retained. Many of these attributes are important for locals on lower incomes or who do not have private vehicles; maintaining or enhancing facilities for those without such access is important in an age of growing concerns about inequalities.

6. There has been previous, albeit unsolicited, interest in redeveloping sites or adding new facilities, because some discussions have taken place with Planning and/or Estates Officers and relevant Members. This was one reason why Bidwells consultants were asked to look at the development potential of Council car parks that were in or close to town centres in the District, including land at Burton Road.

7. The development or redevelopment of any one site is likely to have significant impacts upon other sites, for example because relocating an anchor store then leaves the issue of what redevelopment is acceptable on the old site, because of the transport impacts, and what wider aspirations exist; for example, in terms of section 106 requirements, the provision of further economic development or the provision of further housing including affordable housing.

8. Advice encouraging best practice on Development Briefs is that they should end up being meaningful documents, rather than producing nothing on the ground; accordingly, it is considered best to have a series of linked briefs in this instance to seek to improve the Broadway/Rectory (Chigwell Lane) Lane gateways, and the gateway to and from the Station.

9. To seek to move matters forward, and also to secure meaningful consultation, and open market bids, it is considered that a series of linked development briefs are required. Whilst there is internal capacity to manage that process, if Members wish to see early progress, it is suggested that consultants should be engaged to take this work forward quickly.

10. There will need to be a scoping document or brief for the consultancy work, and in order to hasten its production, it is proposed that delegated authority be given to the Leader of the Council, Planning and Economic Development, Housing and Civil Engineering and Maintenance Portfolio Holders to agree the scoping brief.

11. In considering which consultants to approach to see if they are interested and available to undertake the linked briefs, then there are strong candidates that the Council has used in the past, as follows; Bidwells (used in recent past as explained above.) CBRE Richard Ellis (Used longer ago when they traded as CB Hillier Parker, and on assessment of retail schemes in Loughton and Waltham Abbey for the Council, and on land disposals of the Council.) Plainly there are also other major national companies that could be approached.

12. EFDC also has a framework agreement, which includes WS Atkins, Robert West and Waterman Civils – this does not entirely cover this brief but it includes highway and related issues, but all 3 companies have relevant expertise.

**Statement in Support of Recommended Action:**

13. To move matters forward in a positive way by creating linked briefs for development is considered a better response than merely responding to proposals that may be made in more piecemeal fashion, or to deal with matters more slowly. There is insufficient time, capacity and probably specialist expertise within the Council to do other than manage this piece of work; the work needs closer definition before being put to Consultants. Various consultants can be asked to assist, several of whose companies have been used to advantage by EFDC in the past, or we could seek new ideas.

**Other Options for Action:**

14. Doing nothing will not produce the benefits or achieve the developments which members would wish to see for The Broadway and surrounding area. There is the prospect of development that can improve and maintain the position of local residents, reinforce the economic vibrancy of this area, including facilities owned by the Council, there is also the prospect of new retail, economic and housing schemes to add to those already achieved at Langston Road, or being brought forward nearby on the College site. Linking the briefs may be able to secure public transport improvements that might not otherwise be considered or introduced, and the briefs may assist the TCE to move forward.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

15. None.

**Resource Implications:**

**Budget Provision:** Consultants costs will have to be met, and proposals for funding this will be brought to Cabinet with the scope of the brief, probably using Planning Delivery Grant.

**Personnel:** From within existing resources.

**Land:** The briefs would cover several pieces of Council land and private land.

**Council Plan 2006-10/BVPP Reference:** N/A.

**Relevant Statutory Powers:** None.

**Background Papers:** Section 106 Agreement concerning EPF/400/00

**Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:** N/A.

**Key Decision Reference (if required):** Will advise when key decisions have ref nos.