

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date 21 February 2019**

**Subject:** Planning Services Portfolio

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor J. Philip

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**Recommending:**

**That the report of the Planning Services Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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## **1. Local Plan**

The Local Plan hearing sessions started on Tuesday 12 February. The agendas, hearing statements submitted for the first set of hearings and the participants list are available on the Council's website. All those who made representations to the Regulation 19 publication of the Local Plan Submission Version have been advised of the sessions to which they are invited to participate. An additional date of 21 May 2019 has been added to the programme to consider Matter 1 Issue 5 – Have the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 been met. This is to allow participants to comment on the updated Habitats Regulations Assessment which was published on the Council's website on 24 January 2019. The current programme of hearing sessions therefore has 16 days of hearings in February, March and May 2019.

## **2. Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation and proposed mitigation strategy**

The Mitigation Strategy for the Epping Forest SAC will comprise two elements:

- a) Addressing recreational impacts; and
- b) Addressing the air quality impacts

The approach to the mitigation of recreational pressures is set out in the Interim Approach to Managing Recreational Pressure adopted by the Council on 18 October 2018. The projects, proposals and costs set out in the Interim Approach were provided by the Conservators of Epping Forest (as the Forest's custodians) and have been supported by Natural England. This includes the proposition that opportunities for SANG provision will be investigated further, recognizing that such provision is already being sought as part of the masterplanning of some strategic site allocations.

With regard to air quality impacts the strategy will build on existing national and international initiatives, which in their own right will contribute to an improvement in air quality over the course of the Plan period, as evidenced by the air quality outputs of the updated Habitats Regulation Assessment 2019. Considering the Epping Forest SAC within Epping Forest District as a whole, these national and international initiatives, combined with the other initiatives identified in the Local Plan Submission Version would result in a net reduction in nitrogen deposition and therefore result in no adverse effect. It is anticipated that an action plan will be completed by the end of April, although this date will be dependent on securing Natural England's support and the formal agreement by the Council.

Fuller details are on the Council's website at the following link:

<http://www.efdclocalplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/HS-1-EFDLP-Matter-1-Statement-FINAL-v3.pdf>

### **3. Neighbourhood Planning**

The Examiner has now reported on the Chigwell Neighbourhood Plan. In his report dated 5 November 2018 he has concluded that the Plan should not proceed to referendum as it does not meet the basic conditions. A copy of the final report is available on the Council's website and a report was considered by Cabinet on 7 February 2019 for the Council to agree the recommendation not to proceed to referendum.

The Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers Neighbourhood Plan has been published in accordance with Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The publication period runs until 4pm on Tuesday 5 March 2019. Any representations received will be forwarded to the Examiner Nigel McCurk who has been appointed in conjunction with the Parish Council to assess the plan and will start the examination shortly after the end of the publication period.

### **4. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town**

Work continues apace on the Garden Town. The outcome of the capacity bid submitted to MHCLG to seek further funding to support the work is still awaited. The Council's representatives on the Board are currently Cllr Whitbread, Bedford and Philip. An independent Chair has been appointed – Guy Nicholson. The vision and design guide for the Garden Town which has been endorsed by this Council as a material planning consideration for the preparation of masterplans, pre-application advice, assessing planning applications and any other development management purposes for sites within the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town has been finalised and noted by the 4 February 2019 Garden Town Member Board meeting for endorsement. A draft Transport Strategy for the Garden Town has been prepared and a report will be considered by the Council's Cabinet on 7 March 2019 to agree its publication for a six week period of consultation following the May elections.

### **5. Development Management**

Income for Development Control for January 2019 - period 10 was £90,632 (January 2018 equivalent was £81,966). The year to date turnover to January 2019 is £1,035,661 (January 2018 equivalent was £674,587).

Pre-Application income in the last three years has remained at just over £100,000 per year. Currently January 2019 income for the month is £17,373 (January 2018 £8,029) In addition, Pre-Application income for the first ten months of the year to January 2019 is £103,151 (April 2017 to January 2018 was £88,076) and indications are that the years Pre-Application income will exceed the budget of £110,000 by approximately £10,000 for the year.

It is possible at this rate, that at financial year end to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, Development Control's Planning Fees income will finish the year with a record breaking turnover of £1,219,261 compared to the budget of £1,200,000.

As a result, it is likely that the combined Planning Fee and Pre-Application advice income, for DC will reach £1,343,072 for 2018/19 (2017/18 £948,399)

In January 2018 Planning Fees were increased by 20% and indications are that this is generating approximately £200,000 in increased income that will be re-invested in Planning Services.