

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-068-2016/17

Date of meeting: 9 March 2017



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Planning Policy

**Subject: Epping Forest District Draft Local Plan Regulation 18
Consultation**

Responsible Officer: Alison Blom-Cooper (01992 564066).

Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the initial findings of the Draft Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation be noted;**
- (2) That the progression of the Draft Local Plan to Pre-Submission publication under Regulation 19 of the Local Plan Regulations 2012 be agreed; and**
- (3) That the updated Local Development Scheme included within this reported be agreed and published on the Council's website.**

Executive Summary:

This report seeks:

(a) To update members of the progress of the Draft Local Plan by providing high level findings from the Regulation 18 consultation that took place between the 31 October 2016 and 12 December 2016. The Council has received a large number of representations from a wide range of stakeholders. The findings from the questionnaire responses are set out in Appendix A which is the Feedback Interim Report from Remarkable. It should be noted that this is an initial indication of the responses, based on the results of the multiple choice questions and online and hard-copy questionnaires only. It is therefore representative of around half of the respondents to the consultation. Initial analysis of the responses from statutory consultees, Parish and Town Councils has also been undertaken. Many of these are supportive of the overall vision and objectives of the Plan, the provision for additional affordable housing and the scale of growth being proposed. The main concerns and issues identified so far through consultation analysis of these responses include:

- Concern that the infrastructure requirements for the development proposed is not met particularly with respect to the capacity of the Central Line, education provision and health provision;
- The proposed distribution of growth across the District;
- Concern over the potential loss of managed open space and leisure facilities;
- Impact on the roads/traffic congestion;
- Loss of local identity and character and potential for coalescence; and
- Proposed alterations to the Green Belt boundary.

More detailed analysis of all responses received, including consideration of findings on an area basis, is still to be undertaken and will form the basis of a further report.

(b) Agreement to an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS), the high level project plan for the preparation of the Epping Forest District Local Plan. The proposed new scheme would supersede the earlier Local Development Scheme agreed in July 2016, with the preparation of the single District wide Local Plan scheduled for submission to the Secretary of State for examination in May 2018.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To provide members with feedback from the recent Draft Local Plan consultation and advise them of the next steps in plan preparation. The Council is obliged under the Localism Act 2011 to prepare and publish a Local Development Scheme so that the public and stakeholders are aware of the likely timing of key stages of the plan making process.

Other Options for Action:

Not to advise members of the key issues from the recent Draft Local Plan consultation and implications for the next stages of plan preparation. To not agree, or to vary the Local Development Scheme.

Report:

1. In accordance with the agreed Local Development Scheme, the Cabinet considered the Draft Local Plan on 6 October 2016 and subsequently Full Council agreed the Draft Local Plan for consultation on 18 October 2016. The formal 6 week consultation started on 31 October 2016 and ended on 12 December 2016. Full Council also agreed on 18 October 2016 that the Draft Local Plan policies should be treated as a material planning consideration when determining planning applications. The Planning Policy Team has produced a guidance note to officers in Development Management to ensure consistency of approach – this note is available on the Council's website.

2. Consultation on the Draft Local Plan was carried out in compliance with the Council's agreed Statement of Community Involvement and as agreed by Cabinet on 1 September 2016. The consultation strategy for the Draft Local Plan used the following approaches:

(a) A dedicated website was set up and used for background evidence, provision of updates, social media feeds and for the submission of consultation questionnaires. This was clearer and easier to navigate. An increased effort was made to promote the consultation via Social media: @eppingforestdc and www.facebook.com/eppingforestdc and #EFDCLocalPlan. Where appropriate officers used social media to address any major misconceptions or issues associated with the Draft Local Plan, as well as using these routes as a way of keeping stakeholders up to date. The Council sent out over 400 tweets and posts on social media during the build up to and consultation itself, equating to approximately three tweets and three posts per day.

(b) Media briefings were undertaken in September and October 2016 to promote the Draft Local Plan and consultation with the launch of the website and the promotion of the video. The Council's twitter and facebook handle were used with a series of infographics and clips from the video used as promotional tools as well as direct engagement and tweets completed by the Council's communications team.

(c) An information leaflet was distributed to all addresses within the District outlining an update on the Local Plan process and information on how to get involved in the consultation. This was distributed during the week beginning 24 October 2016 and delivery was tracked. Where issues were raised with the distribution steps were taken to ensure further leaflets were distributed.

(d) Commuter postcards were handed out at all the train and tube stations in or adjacent to the District during the week commencing 31 October 2016.

(e) Email mailings were issued to all email addresses provided to the Council during previous stages of consultation on the Local Plan containing similar information to the information leaflet.

(f) Static information points for the duration of the consultation period were in place at 11 locations in the District and one at the Latton Bush Centre in Harlow. Copies of the Draft Local Plan and hard copies of the questionnaire were made available at these locations.

(g) Staffed exhibitions were held at 6 venues in the district. These were well attended:

- North Weald Bassett (5 November 2016): approx. 259 persons
- Loughton (7 November 2016): approx. 207 persons
- Chigwell (8 November 2016): approx. 107 persons
- Chipping Ongar (9 November 2016): approx. 258 persons
- Epping (11 November 2016): approx. 277 persons
- Waltham Abbey (14 November 2016): approx. 125 persons

(h) Member Briefing Packs were provided to all District members.

(i) The Planning Policy Team provided an opportunity for one to one discussions on 22 November 2016 for all the Town/Parish Councils and on request residents' groups/amenity societies to discuss the Draft Local Plan to help them in making comments on the Draft Local Plan.

(j) The Portfolio holder met with the Youth Council on 15 November 2016.

(k) Two briefing meetings were held on 9 September for land owners/site promoters who had submitted sites for consideration through the call for sites to explain the site selection methodology and subsequently meetings were offered to those whose sites had not been included as proposed allocations in the Local Plan. These meetings were held on 18 and 21 November 2016 for approximately 50 unallocated sites. Attendees were provided with a site pro forma which explained how their site had been considered through the site selection process, what stage it reached and the reasons why it was not a preferred site in order to help them make appropriate representations as part of the Local Plan consultation.

(l) Meetings took place on 2 December 2016 for the sites proposed for allocation around Harlow and separately for the other sites within the District. A Developer Forum has been established alongside the progression of the Draft Local Plan to provide a basis for ongoing discussions with relevant landowners, site promoters and stakeholders. It is important that the Council liaises closely on an ongoing basis with relevant landowners and promoters of the sites proposed for allocation within the Draft Local Plan, and with other stakeholders as required in order to:

(i) Demonstrate that the Local Plan is 'effective' and that the allocations in the Local Plan will be viable and deliverable, and therefore meet the 'tests of soundness' at Examination-in-Public; and

(ii) Ensure that a joined up and 'frontloaded' approach is taken to the planning and delivery of the development of sites proposed for allocation and associated infrastructure, including promoting joint working for sites in multiple ownership, or adjacent allocations.

3. Draft terms of reference for the Developer Forum have been discussed and will be further considered at the next sessions scheduled for 24 February 2017. A corporate group (a subgroup of the Local Plan Officer Working Group) has been set up including officers from Planning Policy, Housing, Development Management, Environmental Health and Essex County Council to respond to planning proposals brought forward ahead of the adoption of the Local Plan in order to ensure a joint and coordinated approach.

Response Overview

4. The Council has received approximately 3,300 individual responses to the consultation on the Draft Local Plan. Responses have been received in a variety of formats. Approximately half of responses were received via the online questionnaire, approximately 200 via hard copy questionnaire, and the remainder a mixture of letters and emails. A summary report produced by Remarkable of the key findings arising from questionnaire responses to the 'tick-box' questions included is attached as Appendix A. Further work is currently being undertaken to fully analyse all of the responses received, including the 'verbatim' responses received either as part of the questionnaire, or as a standalone report, letter or email. A further detailed report will be provided to Cabinet following the conclusion of the analysis of all responses received. The Council will also be making all responses available for public inspection as soon as possible following the completion of the analysis. Further details in relation to arrangements for inspecting consultation responses will be made available in due course.

5. Appendix A outlines the key points that can be taken so far from the consultation feedback. The report includes a breakdown of the type and location of respondent, form of response and total numbers of all respondents over the consultation period. It includes a summary of the initial findings in relation to the key issues raised in the multiple choice questions, and a list of the top ten recurring comments. It should be noted that this is an initial indication of the responses, based on the results of the multiple choice questions and online and hard-copy questionnaires only (1,827 responses). It is therefore representative of around half of the respondents to the consultation. Remaining responses submitted to the Council by email or letter will be represented in the Consultation Statement and detailed report to Cabinet once further detailed analysis has been conducted.

6. The following section of the report provides a summary of the key issues and themes emerging from the detailed analysis of responses undertaken to date.

Emerging Key Findings

7. The Council has received a large number of representations from a wide range of stakeholders. Many of these are supportive of the overall vision and objectives of the Plan, the provision of additional affordable housing and the scale of growth being proposed. The main issues raised include:

- The ability of infrastructure to cope with the development proposed,

particularly in relation to the capacity of the Central Line, education provision and health provision;

- The distribution of planned growth across the District;
- The proposed alterations to the Green Belt boundary;
- Concern over potential loss of managed open space;
- Concern over potential loss of leisure facilities;
- Concern about impact on the roads/traffic congestion; and
- Concern in relation to loss of local identity and character, and potential for coalescence.

Statutory Consultees, Parish/Town Councils and Other Organisations

8. The Council has received over 100 representations from statutory consultees, Parish/Town Councils, and other organisations, providing a range of feedback to inform the finalisation of the Local Plan.

Parish and Town Councils

9. Seventeen written responses have been received from Parish and Town Councils. This includes responses from: Epping Town Council; Chigwell Parish Council; North Weald Bassett Parish Council; Loughton Town Council; Ongar Town Council; Theydon Mount Parish Council; Fyfield Parish Council; Waltham Abbey Town Council; and Theydon Bois Parish Council. Epping Town Council and North Weald Bassett Council also submitted a joint response. Many of the responses have shown support for the overall Vision and Objectives of the Draft Plan, but have highlighted concerns in relation to the scale of proposed growth, and in some cases the location of proposed growth and the size of the allocated sites. A summary of the points raised in the responses from Town and Parish Councils is provided as Appendix B.

10. Concerns raised by many of the Parish and Town Councils relate to the ability of local infrastructure to cope with the scale of planned growth. This includes concerns about the existing and future capacity of the Central Line, the ability of the road network to absorb additional traffic, future provision of school places and future provision of healthcare. Concerns have also been raised in relation to the scale of difference between the proposed allocations in the Draft Local Plan and those included in the Issues and Options consultation in 2012. Support was generally received for the protection of local retail provision, and for the approach towards the visitor economy.

11. Several Parish and Town Councils have objected to particular sites being proposed for allocation within their areas, and concerns have been raised in relation to the proposed loss of managed open space, and the potential erosion of the character of individual settlements. Objections have also been raised in relation to the loss of Green Belt land being proposed by the Draft Local Plan. A preference for the allocation of smaller sites to those proposed is cited by some Parish and Town Councils, and some responses query whether the distribution of planned housing growth has been distributed proportionally across the District.

12. Responses received from Loughton Town Council, Theydon Bois Parish Council and North Weald Bassett Parish Council objected to the proposed policies and allocations set out Chapter 5 of the Draft Local Plan in relation to their places. Loughton Town Council raised issues around the loss of green spaces and the approach to urban intensification, and the provision of infrastructure. Theydon Bois Parish Council raised issues around the loss of Green Belt land and objected to the justification of the changes made to the Green Belt boundary in relation to the site allocations at Theydon Bois. North Weald Bassett Council

raised concerns in relation to the distribution of growth in the spatial strategy for the District, the focus on North Weald Bassett consistently across the spatial options for the District and proposed housing densities.

National Bodies

13. The Council has received responses from 18 National Bodies. Of the responses reviewed at the time of writing this report, some have raised concerns on aspects of the Draft Local Plan including those from Sport England, CPRE, the London Green Belt Council and the Home Builders Federation. The remainder of the responses that have been reviewed are generally supportive in relation to the Draft Local Plan and have provided suggestions to aid the development of the Pre-Submission Plan. Further analysis of these responses will be conducted in due course. Set out below is a synopsis of some of the key statutory consultee responses. A summary of the responses is included in the summary in Appendix B.

14. **Natural England's** response is in general agreement with the policies and allocations set out in the Draft Local Plan, noting the Council's protection of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation and the Lee Valley Regional Park. Natural England has asked that the Draft Memorandum of Understanding agreed by the Cooperation for Sustainable Development Board would need to be complete before the Plan could be found fully sound. They have also suggested some policy wording changes and encouraged EFDC to consult with them in the development of the Sustainability Appraisal. They have advised that more detail is needed on the impact of allocations on Sites of Special Scientific Interest and in particular the Latton Priory strategic site. Since the end of the consultation period officers have met with Natural England. In addition to the comments made in response to the Draft Local Plan Natural England have stated that they require additional information on the impact of proposed growth in the District on recreational pressure in the Forest.

15. **Historic England's** response is in general agreement with the policies and allocations set out in the Draft Local Plan. They have suggested that a strategic policy on the historic environment should be included in the Pre-Submission Local Plan, and advised against the inclusion of a policy on enabling development. Site-specific notes were also included and raised the potential impact on heritage assets in relation to the four strategic sites around Harlow. It should be noted that all of these heritage assets lie outside of the site boundaries of these sites.

16. **Highways England** response is in general agreement with the policies and allocations set out in the Draft Local Plan, stating particular support for the focus on public transport improvements and sustainability of transport systems in the Draft Plan. In relation to the strategic sites, Highways England identified that Latton Priory may impact upon the M11 Junction 7 and would require a Transport Assessment detailing mitigation measures. East of Harlow is also identified as having a potential impact on M11 Junction 7, but Highways England acknowledge the planned upgrades to the M11 including a new Junction 7a and improvements to Junction 7. North Weald Bassett is also stated to require developers to provide a Transport Assessment with respect to the potential impact on M11 Junction 7. The proposed allocations in Chigwell and Loughton are identified as potentially impacting on M11 Junction 5, and Highways England request that developers should be asked provide Transport Assessments to address mitigation measures. Proposed allocations in Waltham Abbey similarly are identified as potentially impacting on M25 Junctions 25 and 26.

17. **The Campaign for Rural England Essex and London Green Belt Council** responses raise a general objection to the draft policies and proposed allocations in the Draft Local Plan. The organisations consider that the Draft Local Plan is inconsistent with the National Planning Policy Framework, and in particular that the use of housing need to justify the altering of Green Belt boundaries goes against national policy and statements made by

Government. Objections were also raised in relation to the proposed use of the District Open Land designation and the lack of information on infrastructure.

18. **The Environment Agency** response outlines a number of priorities that should be addressed in relation to the Draft Local Plan and gives site-specific feedback and policy wording suggestions. Of most importance, the Environment Agency consider that the Council will need to demonstrate sufficient capacity of the sewage network to support the proposed allocations and suggest that there should be a Water Cycle Study or alternatively the provision of confirmation from the sewage provider about capacity. This is important so that if any adverse impacts are identified work can be undertaken to confirm mitigation measures in line with the Water Directive Framework. The Environment Agency also identified the need for a Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment if the Council continue their current allocation of sites partially within Flood Zones 2, 3a and 3b. The East of Harlow strategic allocation is particularly highlighted in this regard. Officers intend to meet with the Environment Agency to discuss this matter as all the proposed development in the Draft Local Plan is located within Flood Zone 1.

19. **Transport for London** submitted two responses, one from Planning and one from Property. Planning's response is in general agreement with the policies and allocations set out in the Draft Local Plan, in particular the vision for the London Stansted Cambridge Corridor Core Area and the commitment to protect land for transport schemes. Transport for London state that they do not believe that Central Line capacity should act as a deterrent to planned growth in the Draft Local Plan. There are some station capacity improvements for which it will be important to ensure that there are contributions sought from developers. On parking, TfL has requested that all applications affecting car parking capacity in the vicinity of the Central Line will need to consult with them and that they support a restraint based approach to car parking in the London Plan. TfL Property's response was in general agreement with the draft policies and proposed allocations set out in the Draft Local Plan. Officers have recently met with Transport for London, the GLA and the London Boroughs to discuss the potential for a joint study to consider the capacity of the Central Line to accommodate future growth, in response to concerns which have been raised.

20. **Sport England** has raised an objection and advised that they consider that the Council's current evidence base for sport is not robust and is out of date for informing sports facility needs for the period of the Plan. They have also advised that the tools and guidance available for collecting data and undertaking assessments and strategies with respect to indoor and outdoor sports facilities has advanced. The approach to making provision for open space including outdoor sports facilities in new development should not be focused around meeting conventional quantity standards. In order to be consistent with the current guidance the approach should be focused around identifying sport specific needs and developing specific proposals to respond to such needs. The Council should prepare an up to date sports facility strategy including indoor and outdoor sports facilities.

21. **The Home Builders Federation (HBF)** has raised a general objection to the draft policies and proposed allocations set out in the Draft Local Plan on the basis that the Council, together with other authorities in the Housing Market Area, is not meeting the full objectively assessed housing need with respect to the 2014 population projections.

22. The Council has started to consider the additional work that will be required to address some of the issues raised. Work has already been commissioned to address Sport England's concerns about the need for up to date evidence to support future requirements for playing pitches, indoor sports facilities and open space.

Local Authorities

23. Sixteen responses have been received from other local authorities. The responses from the authorities within the West Essex/East Herts Strategic Housing Market Area are summarised below. Responses from the other authorities are summarised in Appendix B.

24. **Harlow Council** submitted two responses to the consultation. The first response, submitted by Councillor Danny Purton, the Portfolio Holder for Environment, indicated that the Council objects to development to the west and south of Harlow (located in Epping Forest District) unless or until such time as it has been demonstrated that transportation and infrastructure requirements can be delivered at a rate and scale necessary to meet the needs of the Harlow urban area that arise from any such proposed development. The response also expressed concerns that the Draft Local Plan is silent on ways to assist Harlow Council meet its affordable housing need. A further response was also received from Officers which provided support for the collaborative working being undertaken by the Council in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate, but reiterated concerns in relation to ensuring that the transport and infrastructure requirements for Harlow arising from growth proposed can be met.

25. The response received from **East Hertfordshire District Council** is supportive of the approach in the Draft Local Plan and in particular the way in which the Council has reviewed the Green Belt to identify potential land for development and the commitment shown to joint working across the Housing Market Area. East Herts appreciate that further work will be undertaken to assess the deliverability of the proposed sites.

26. The response from **Uttlesford District Council** is also generally supportive of the draft policies and proposed allocations in the Draft Local Plan and in particular the Council's approach to meet the housing need identified through the joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment. It notes that the SHMA authorities will however need to carefully consider the implications of the 2014 projections. Uttlesford note that the proposed allocation of sites around Harlow reflects the outcomes of the strategic sites assessment work undertaken jointly by the SHMA authorities.

27. **Essex County Council** is generally supportive of the draft policies and proposed allocations set out in the Draft Local Plan. The County support the continuation of the Duty to Co-operate practices and state they will continue to support the Council in the development of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and consider that it is important for the full range of infrastructure requirements arising from growth to be included. Some amendments to flood risk, drainage and surface water management policies are suggested along with some strengthening of the evidence base. An additional policy on healthy communities is suggested.

Landowners and Site Promoters

28. Approximately 174 responses to the consultation have been received from site promoters, landowners and developers. Most of these are from those promoting sites for inclusion within the Local Plan. Detailed analysis of these representations is ongoing. Of those responses analysed to date, many are supportive of the Draft Local Plan, vision and the proposed strategy for accommodating growth, and recognise the positive approach the Council is taking with regard to the delivery of housing. Many recognise the exceptional circumstances that exist in the District which necessitate the release of Green Belt Land.

29. The range of issues raised by site promoters, landowners and developers include:

- the Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAN), and whether it has been correctly identified in the Draft Local Plan;
- whether the proposed residential allocations are sufficient in number to meet the full objectively assessed need and provide a five year housing land supply;

- whether the Plan relies too heavily on the Strategic Sites around Harlow to deliver housing quickly given the infrastructure required to bring these sites forward;
- whether the proposed distribution of housing across the District is proportionate, and whether some settlements should have more or fewer housing allocations than those proposed;
- that assessment undertaken as part of the Site Selection Methodology, as applied to their site, is erroneous;
- that the assessment of their site should be reviewed in the light of further information or a change to the proposed amount of development or site boundary;
- the way in which the findings of Evidence Base documents, including the Green Belt Review Stage 2, were applied in the Site Selection Methodology;
- the indicative capacity assessment and how residential capacities have been estimated; and
- that further clarity is required on the employment sites that will be proposed for allocation, including their impacts on infrastructure provision.

30. Representations have been received from the promoters of the four Strategic Sites around Harlow that are located within Epping Forest District: SP 3.1 Latton Priory; SP 3.2 West Sumners; SP 3.3 West Katherines; and SP 3.4 East of Harlow. These responses were generally supportive of the strategy of directing growth around Harlow, and its important role in meeting the development and infrastructure needs of the District. Respondents are also supportive of the Council's approach to 'front loading' the planning process through the Developer Forum and working with the Council to produce Strategic Masterplans to deliver the Place-shaping aims of Draft Policy SP 4.

31. There were a number of points that were raised by these respondents on aspects of the Plan and Evidence Base, including:

- the risk to delivery of the strategic sites posed by potential land ownership and cross-boundary issues, and that there is a need to coordinate development with adjacent landowners and Harlow Council;
- that draft policy SP 3 Strategic Allocations around Harlow should be supplemented with further site-specific policies for each strategic allocation;
- the promoters at SP 3.1 Latton Priory are concerned about the feasibility of bringing their site forward together with Riddings Lane;
- the promoters of SP 3.4 East of Harlow have registered a holding objection to the potential relocation of the Princess Alexandra Hospital to a location within their site due to the impact this would have on the amount of housing that can be accommodated;
- the promoters of SP 3.3 West Katherines have requested clarity on the extent to which the 3,900 dwellings planned for Strategic Sites proposed for allocation within Epping Forest District are expected to meet the need arising from Harlow District, and whether this has implications for the OAN that has been identified.

32. The issues raised by site promoters, landowners and developers will be considered in further detail to inform the Pre Submission Plan. Further ongoing engagement with site promoters will be taking place as part of the Developer Forums, and with infrastructure providers to understand site-specific requirements for the Strategic and other allocations. The Council will have continued engagement with Harlow District Council on cross-boundary issues as part of the Cooperation for Sustainable Development Board and Developer Forum, particularly on the deliverability of Strategic Sites. This will also be considered in conjunction

with the successful Garden Town bid and the proposed setting up of a joint approach with East Herts and Harlow Councils to bring forward the sites in and around Harlow along garden town principles. In addition further Site Selection Work has been commissioned, and will provide an opportunity to correct any errors that have been identified, revisit site assessments where information or proposals have changed, assess any new sites submitted to the Council as part of the consultation and review elements of the methodology. The Council has also commissioned further work to clearly define infrastructure requirements through the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Next steps for the preparation of the Pre Submission Plan

33. Following consideration and further analysis 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 and legal compliance of the Plan before it can be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination. However, should any significant alterations be made to the strategy and approach set out within the Draft Local Plan, the Council may first be required to undertake additional consultation under the Regulation 18 stage.

34. A new project plan has been developed to programme the work for the Planning Policy Team, other Council specialists and consultants working on the plan up until the Regulation 19 publication. This has taken into account the analysis so far undertaken on comments to the Draft Local Plan and has been used to develop a new timeline for the work.

35. The key issues in managing the programme relate to resources, the ability of external organisations such as Essex County Council in providing timely inputs into plan preparation largely outside our control and the interconnectivity of the various workstreams. The importance of maintaining a full team of appropriately skilled and effective officers and consultants cannot be underestimated and there have been resource concerns with staff leaving/going on maternity leave. In addition the avoidance of diversion of resource to other tasks is a key concern yet matters such as neighbourhood plan advice, development monitoring and assistance do need to be provided. The key workstreams are:

- Update of employment land review to feed into the further site selection work;
- Transport modelling;
- Local plan viability work;
- Joint work to update the employment need within the Functional Economic Market Area and the District to inform the work on site selection;
- Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment;
- Retail evidence to assess the impact of recent developments at Chelmsford and Westfield;
- Site Selection work taking account of new sites submitted and comments received;
- Further work on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan;
- Open Space Study, Indoor Sports and Playing Pitch Strategy;
- Working with site promoters on proposed allocations; and
- Coordinating work with the Garden Town project.

36. The Localism Act 2011 amended the provisions set out in the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. However, S111 maintains the requirement that a local authority must prepare and maintain a scheme to be known as their Local Development Scheme. The scheme should specify the local development documents which are to be development plan

documents, the subject matter and geographical area for each development plan document, and the timetable for them. Essentially the Local Development Scheme (LDS) lists and programmes the documents that will be produced by a Local Authority. Although there is no longer a requirement for this to be submitted to the Secretary of State, new provisions in the Act state that the local planning authority must make the following available to the public:

- the up to date text of the scheme;
- a copy of any amendments made to the scheme; and
- up to date information showing the state of the authority's compliance with the timetable set out in the scheme.

37. The last Local Development Scheme was formally adopted by the Council in July 2016. This set out the proposed programme for the preparation of a single document – the Epping Forest District Local Plan which will provide a framework for the future development of the District for the period up to 2033. The Plan will contain the strategic vision and policies, site allocations and development management policies. There is no longer a requirement for the Local Development Scheme to list any proposed supplementary planning documents or the statement of community involvement.

38. Since the publication of the Local Development Scheme in July 2016, the Council has made good progress in developing the Local Plan and consulted on the Draft Local Plan in accordance with that project plan. Following the conclusion of the consultation this has been reviewed in the light of the need to repeat and refresh some evidence work as well as commission additional consultancy support. A revised Local Development Scheme is proposed with the preparation of the single district wide local plan scheduled for submission to the Secretary of State for potential examination, in May 2018. The table below sets out the proposed strategic timeline as the basis for the new Local Development Scheme based on a complete review of the programme and assessment of resources/skills available for preparation of the Local Plan going forward.

Update on Garden Town Funding

39. Members will be aware that the Council was successful (together with East Herts and Harlow Councils) in securing £500,000 Garden Towns funding from DCLG for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town to support the delivery of strategic sites in and around Harlow. This includes the four strategic sites to the South, West and East of Harlow in this District. A joint delivery team is being established with EFDC as the lead authority and the post of Project Director is currently being recruited.

Housing White Paper

40. The Government published the Housing White Paper '*Fixing Our Broken Housing Market*' on 7 February 2017. This sets out a broad range of reforms that Government plans to introduce to help reform the housing market and increase the supply of new homes. The White Paper includes proposals which may, in time, impact upon the production of Local Plans. However, in many cases the Government has committed to consulting on proposals prior to implementing specific changes to National Planning Policy or Regulations. The proposals in the Housing White Paper are not considered to materially impact upon the proposed modifications to the Local Plan at the current time.

41. Many of the changes involve amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework. The Government intends to publish a revised Framework later this year which will consolidate the outcome from previous and current consultations and will incorporate changes to reflect changes made to national policy through Written Ministerial Statements

since March 2012.

42. The White Paper sets out consultation questions where new proposals are being made and officers will be reporting to Neighbourhoods Select Committee on 21 March 2017 setting out a proposed response from the Council. Any response needs to be made by 2 May 2017.

Equalities Impact Assessment

43. 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. This report is however accompanied by an Equality Analysis report at Appendix C.

Resource Implications:

The budget for analysis of Draft Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation was approved as part of the Local Plan budget in December 2016.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The Council is required by national legislation to prepare and maintain an up to date Local Plan to set out the strategic priorities for the area and the policies that address these.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

The delivery of a Local Plan, informed by a robust evidence base, will contribute to safer, cleaner, greener objectives by planning for sustainable development.

Consultation Undertaken:

Full public consultation on the Draft Local Plan in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Local Plan Regulations 2012 and in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement involving residents, local businesses, neighbouring local authorities and statutory consultees as detailed in the report.

Background Papers:

Report from Remarkable analysing the questionnaires submitted in response to the Draft Local Plan consultation: Please see Appendix A.

Statement of Community Involvement: <http://eppingforest.consultationonline.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2016/08/Statement-of-Community-Involvement-Final.pdf>

Local Plan Regulations 2012: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2012/767/contents/made>

Risk Management:

The Council needs to be seen to make timely progress on the preparation of a Local Plan to avoid the risk of intervention by the Secretary of State. It is important that the published project plan is kept up to date to inform all stakeholders.

Epping Forest District Council Local Development Scheme March 2017

Local Plan	
Role and Subject	Determines the amount and location of development for the district together with some release of Green Belt land for this purpose. Sets out the spatial vision, objectives and strategy, all development sites and development management policies for the development of the district for the period up to 2033.
Which “saved” policies will it replace?	All
Geographical coverage	District wide
Status	Development Plan Document
Conformity	Consistent with national planning policy and planning practice guidance
Timetable	
Evidence gathering & background work Issues & Options preparation and public consultation including initial sustainability appraisal	October 2011 – September 2012 Consultation on the issues & options ‘Community Choices’ took place between 30 July 2012 and 15 October 2012
Draft plan preparation and sustainability appraisal	October 2012 – October 2016
Consultation on draft plan (a minimum of 6 weeks)	31 October 2016 – 12 December 2016
Preparation of Submission Plan and Sustainability appraisal	January 2017 – December 2017
Pre-submission publication and representations on soundness (6 weeks) Regulation 19	January/February 2018
Submission to Planning Inspectorate for Examination Regulation 22	May 2018
Examination in public Regulation 24	Subject to discussion with the Planning Inspectorate and timetabling – likely to be Autumn 2018
Receipt of report Regulation 25	Spring 2019
Expected Adoption & Publication (including policies map) Regulation 26	Autumn 2019
Production	
Lead department	Planning Policy (Neighbourhoods Directorate)
Management	The Portfolio Holder (and the relevant Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet as necessary) will consider drafts. Full Council will approve final draft documents prior to submission.
Resources	Planning Policy Team with consultative input from Development Management Team Corporate Support, Economic Development, Environment and Street Scene, Country Care, Finance and ICT, and Housing.
Community and Stakeholder Involvement	In accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement