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How do I respond to this document?

Please go to http://eppingforest.consultationonline.co.uk and complete the on line questionnaire.

If you cannot access the internet then please request a questionnaire or send your written comments to:

The Planning Policy Team, Directorate of Neighbourhoods, Epping Forest District Council, 323 Civic Offices, High Street, Epping, Essex, CM16 4BZ

Responses will be received between 31 October and 5pm on 12 December 20126.

If you would like a copy of this document in large print or another language please contact Epping Forest District Council on 01992 564517 (between 10am-4pm Monday to Friday, or leave a voicemail message outside these hours) or email **ldfconsult@eppingforest.gov.uk.**

Foreword

Dear Resident

We are now well on the way to production of a new Local Plan that will help shape our District for the coming years until 2033. This is not the Council's Local Plan, but rather your Plan for the area. This Draft Local Plan sets out the proposed strategy for the next 17 years to meet the economic and housing growth in the District, identifying potential sites for development and regeneration and sets out our proposed draft development management policies. The key, however, is that this is a genuine consultation that provides proposals and alternatives. This Draft Local Plan gives a proposed direction but we particularly want clear and positive feedback to help finalise the Plan. At the heart of Epping Forest District's Draft Local Plan is your feedback. Previously, you have helped us shape the emerging Plan through the Community Visioning consultation in 2010/2011 and then the Community Choices (Issues and Options) consultation in 2012.

This will be your Local Plan and the consultation is our opportunity as a community to ensure development in Epping Forest District takes place how and where we want it to. This Plan is necessarily a balance between the requirement from Government to deliver the identified and evidenced need for economic and housing growth, and the need to protect the greenness of our District, and we are trying to do this by ensuring it is delivered in as sensitive, sustainable and fair a way as possible across the whole District.

We have been clear all along that we will do our best to follow what you told us and so it seeks to ensure that, as far as possible, the Green Belt is protected for future generations, whilst providing for our housing needs. Failing to provide for the evidenced need of housing would result in a greater risk to the Green Belt. We recognise, and the Plan provides for, that with development comes a need for infrastructure for transport, health, education, leisure and social needs. This Plan outlines the necessary infrastructure to support the development and good planning of the District. It also takes the design of places very seriously and we seek to ensure that the new streets that are delivered, as well as changes to existing places, happen in a way that gives residents and users a high quality of environment.

The formal stage of the consultation will be launched on 31 October 2016, after the Draft Local Plan is approved for consultation at a whole Council meeting on 18 October 2016. The draft documents have been available on the Council website from 28 September 2016. There will be many ways to get involved in this stage of the Draft Local Plan, access relevant information and provide your feedback. Copies of the document, background papers and evidence, together with the dates and locations of the exhibitions, are available on the new Planning Our Future website http://eppingforest.consultationonline.co.uk. Further information will be provided in a Local Plan Update newsletter that will be issued District-wide and via the Council's Twitter and Facebook feeds.

We believe that it is vital for as many of you to provide feedback on the proposals as possible. Please let us know what you think about the proposals so that we can incorporate your views into the Plan before we firm it up for publication and then examination by the Planning Inspectorate.

26 September 2016

Please fill in the questionnaire online or on paper, and tell us what you think. The closing date for comments is 12 December 2016.

<signature here>

Councillor Christopher Whitbread, Leader of the Council

<signature here>

Councillor John Philip, Portfolio Holder for Planning

26 September 2016

Chapter 1 - Introduction

The purpose of the Plan

1.1 The Epping Forest District Draft Local Plan sets out the proposed strategy for meeting the District's needs for the next 17 years. It is not a final Plan but represents the Council's preferred approach based on the evidence currently available and the results of the previous consultations in 2010/11 and community choices in 2012. It is published to gather the views of residents, businesses and others with an interest in the area and is accompanied by a questionnaire for completion.

1.2 This document sets out the proposed approach and detailed draft policies for the whole District for the period up to 2033. It sets out:

- the Council's vision and objectives for the District's development over the Plan period;
- draft 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;
- draft policies to build a strong, competitive economy and the future distribution for new employment land space and thus new jobs;
- draft policies to maintain and enhance the vibrancy and vitality of our towns centres
- draft 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.

1.3 The Epping Forest District Local Plan will shape how the District changes, and what is protected, by attracting and guiding investment in the District from the private sector, the Council itself, and other public bodies. Such investment will include new homes, new offices and employment opportunities, colleges and schools, shops and leisure centres, GPs and clinics as well as improvements to existing physical and green infrastructure. It will guide decision making on planning applications to build or change the use of buildings and land. It will also provide the strategic policies that form the context for any Neighbourhood Plans produced in the District.

1.4 This Draft Local Plan includes the draft policies that the Council considers to be the most suitable way to develop the District in the future and explains other options it has considered and decided not to take forward together with the reasons for those decisions. Once adopted, the new Epping Forest District Local Plan will replace all of the surviving policies of the Local Plan 1998 and the 2006 Local Plan Alterations (see Appendix 2) but Minerals and Waste policy remains the responsibility of Essex County Council. The current Minerals Plan was adopted in July 2014 and a replacement Waste Plan is currently being produced. More information can be found from the Essex County Council website.

The existing Plan

1.5 The current development Plan consists of the following documents:

- Combined Policies of Epping Forest District Local Plan Alterations (1998) and Alterations (2006) published February 2008;
- Essex Minerals Local Plan 2014; and
- Essex and Southend Waste Local Plan 2001.

The Requirements of Plan Making

1.6 The Epping Forest District Draft Local Plan has been prepared under the legislative provision of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and appropriate regulations including the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The Draft Local Plan has taken into account national planning policy, currently set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (DCLG, 2012a), Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (DCLG, 2015) and the web based published Planning Practice Guidance. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is the core aspect of national planning policy.

1.7 The Council's policies must be backed up by credible, robust and proportionate evidence that supports the approach taken and justifies what is being proposed. The evidence base for the Plan is extensive and is listed at Appendix 4. It is the Council's job to balance all of the evidence and find the most suitable way forward. This evidence base includes research on housing, employment, retail, health and wellbeing, the built and natural environment, accessibility and flooding as well as the views of local people, businesses, landowners and public agencies involved in the District.

1.8 The Council must identify needs for development in an objective manner and seek to provide for the development need it identifies. As well as meeting the identified need the proposals in the Plan have to be economically viable for delivery by the market and achievable. The Epping Forest District Draft Local Plan cannot therefore be unrealistic and the first stage of a Viability Assessment has been undertaken by independent consultants and is published as evidence to support the Plan. Further viability testing of the Draft Plan will be undertaken prior to publication and submission for examination.

1.9 In accordance with the 'Duty to Co-operate' set out in the Localism Act 2011 the Draft Local Plan has been produced through close partnership working with the neighbouring authorities to ensure that sub-regional and cross boundary planning issues have been taken into account. This work under the 'Duty to Cooperate' replaces the role of the old East of England Plan – which was revoked by the Government in January 2013. A number of cross boundary and strategic matters in this Plan are the result of work with partners. This is discussed in more detail in 'Chapter 2 – Setting the Scene'.

1.10 To ensure that the draft 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. The appraisal is intended to assess the impact of draft 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) comply with the Habitats Directive (OJEC, 1992). This document suggests recommendations for policies on sustainability grounds.

1.11 An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out on the Draft Local Plan prior to its submission to the Secretary of State. The Equality Impact Assessment will consider issues relating to gender, age, ethnicity, religion/belief, disability, sexuality and low disposable income.

The Plan Making Process

1.12 The key stages involved in putting this version of the Plan together are outlined below with the next stages in Figure 1. The Council has consulted throughout the preparation of the Plan and in particular through two formal consultations Community Visioning in 2010/11 and Community Choices in 2012. There has been ongoing consultation with Parish and Town Councils through a range of workshops and briefings. The results of the previous public consultations can be found on the Council's website at the following location: http://eppingforest.consultationonline.co.uk All of the comments received have been considered during the production of this Draft Local Plan and the text of this document refers to the issues that people and organisations have raised. Prior to submission of the Draft Local Plan for examination a full consultation statement will be prepared.

Figure 2 – The Plan Making Process
Source -

Plan making stage	Dates and timetable
Initial evidence gathering and background work	2010 onwards
Consultation on the Vision for the District *"Planning Our Future - Community Visioning"*	8 November 2010 – 7 January 2011
Consideration of the responses to the consultation. Preparation of Issues and Options for the Plan together with initial sustainability appraisal	January 2011 – July 2012
Consultation on issues and Options *"Planning Our Future – Community Choices - Issues and Options for the Local Plan"*	30 July 2012 – 15 October 2012
Consideration of responses to Consultation Further evidence gathering and preparation of the Draft Plan	October 2012 – October 2016
Consultation on the Draft Plan	We are here 31 October 2016 – 12 December 2016
Consideration of responses to the Draft Plan Preparation of the submission Plan	October 2016 – April 2017
Publication of submission Plan for representations on soundness	June/July 2017
Submission of the Plan, evidence and representations to the Secretary of State	November/ December 2017
Examination of the Plan by an Independent Inspector	Likely Spring 2018 but subject to discussion with Planning

	Inspectorate
Inspector reports on the Plan - if found sound and legally compliant	July 2018
Council adopts the Plan as policy	October 2018

Neighbourhood Planning

1.13 Neighbourhood Planning is a new right for communities introduced through the Localism Act 2011. Communities can shape development in their areas through the production of Neighbourhood Development Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders. When made, following an examination and successful referendum, neighbourhood plans will become part of the development plan for the area. Locally distinctive Neighbourhood Plan policies will need to reflect the strategic policies of the new Epping Forest District Local Plan.

1.14 At the moment there are Neighbourhood Plans in various stages of production by the following town and parish councils:

- Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers
- Chigwell
- Theydon Bois
- Epping Town
- Buckhurst Hill
- Loughton
- Epping Upland
- North Weald Bassett
- Waltham Abbey

Finding your way around this document

1.15 The document is structured as follows:

- chapter 2 sets the scene explaining some key characteristics of the District;
- chapter 3 explains the overall vision and objectives for the Draft Local Plan and the key issues it needs to address together with the draft strategic policies which set out:
    - how much development is to be planned for;
    - where that development should be located together with major transport infrastructure;
    - Green Belt boundaries and draft policy; and
    - Green networks.
- chapter 4 contains draft policies that apply to a number of themes across the whole District such as housing, employment, transport, historic and built environment, design and environmental draft policies;
- chapter 5 contains draft policies that apply to specific places and has a section on each of the main settlements and town centres;

- chapter 6 sets out the infrastructure draft policies and approach for seeking contributions from developers as well as how the Plan will be delivered and monitored;
- the appendices include a range of key supporting evidence and references to the evidence base.

Appendix 1: Acronyms and Glossary
Appendix 2: Draft Local Plan Policies replacing all policies of the Epping Forest District Local Plan (1998) and Alterations (2006)
Appendix 3: Monitoring the effectiveness of policy and enforcement
Appendix 4: Evidence for Epping Forest District Local Plan
Appendix 5: Housing and Traveller Trajectories