

## ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'F'

### **East Herts Draft District Plan Consultation Strategy**

**January 2014**

#### **Purpose of the Consultation**

This consultation strategy has been prepared in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). Several guiding principles will be applied to our planning consultations, based around three values of informing, consulting and involving people.

It is important that the level of consultation is appropriate and proportionate to the importance of the document. The Draft District Plan is the most important Planning document the Council has produced since the 2007 Local Plan. It is therefore appropriate that this consultation is comprehensive and that we seek to engage as many members of the public as possible in the plan-making process. We hope that we obtain a wide representation from the East Herts communities, particularly those from traditionally 'hard to reach groups'.

#### **What format will be used?**

There are many ways in which information can be communicated, from twitter and email to letters and printed copies of documents. Often people's interest will lie only in the area in which they live, or they may be interested in part of the Plan but will not require all of the background information that supports the Plan.

Some of the consultation documents run to many pages and therefore comprise large electronic files. Older computers may struggle to download these files. The Council has therefore decided to make information available in both printed and electronic format. Summary documents and leaflets will be available in hard copy and electronically, and the documents will be available by chapter to enable people to download those parts in which they are interested.

Written information (publications, leaflets etc) will be made available on request in accessible formats such as large print,

Braille, audio, electronic format or translated into another language. The table below describes the various written and electronic forms that will be used in the consultation.

In addition, the Council will be undertaking a series of face-to-face meetings with Town and Parish Councils, Civic Societies and with the Local Strategic Partnership. Each meeting will be attended by the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Transport, a local Member and an officer of the Planning Policy Team.

Type	Description
<b>Printed format</b>	
Poster (community boards in shops)	A3 and A4 formats distributed to all libraries, local supermarkets, local schools and Town and Parish Councils for community notice boards.
Full colour A3 folded leaflet	Containing headlines of the development strategy, the leaflet will be sent to all households, delivered by a reputable distribution company.
Summary Brochure (the headlines from the plan)	Comprising 12 pages of full colour, the Summary Brochure is an A4 booklet containing the development strategy headlines.
Supporting Document and Development Strategy Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Supporting Document compiles all the information and evidence used during the plan-making process.</li> <li>• The Development Strategy Report explains how the plan-making process in the Supporting Document is linked to the Draft District Plan.</li> <li>• All documents are available on the Council's Website.</li> </ul>
The Draft District Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three hard copies sent to all Town and Parish Councils.</li> <li>• One 'reference only' copy sent to all local libraries.</li> <li>• Also available for purchase on request.</li> <li>• All documents are available on the</li> </ul>

	Council's Website.
Written Response Template	Although the online consultation portal is the preferred method of responding to the consultation, those who wish to submit a written response could benefit from a simple response form. This will be designed in a way which encourages responses to be attributed to specific chapters, policies or paragraphs. This assists in both the setting out and recording of comments.
FAQ sheets	Frequently asked question sheet provided with all copies of the Draft District Plan.
Consultation Portal Guidance Note	A brief pictorial guide to accessing the consultation portal, following each step of registering and responding via the consultation portal.
Information board in Council Offices	Containing a poster, key diagram and site location maps.
<b>Consultation Packs</b>	
Information pack for schools	A pack containing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An FAQ sheet re-designed for a younger audience;</li> <li>• A4 Poster;</li> <li>• A3 leaflet; and</li> <li>• A copy of the Summary Brochure;</li> <li>• A covering letter explaining the consultation process and where interested parties can find further information and respond. Schools will be invited in the covering letter to request an engagement session by officers. The letter will also request that the schools advise parents of the consultation in their newsletters and place the poster on notice boards.</li> </ul>
Information pack for Hertfordshire University, Hertford Regional College	A pack containing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An FAQ sheet;</li> <li>• A4 Poster;</li> </ul>

and other further education establishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A3 leaflet; and</li> <li>• A copy of the Summary Brochure;</li> <li>• A covering letter explaining the consultation process and where interested parties can find further information and respond.</li> </ul>
Consultation pack for libraries, Town Council Offices and Parish Clerks	<p>A pack containing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a 'reference only' copy of the Draft District Plan;</li> <li>• 20x Summary Brochure;</li> <li>• 20x FAQ;</li> <li>• 20x Consultation Portal Guidance Note; and</li> <li>• 20x Written Response Template.</li> </ul>
Consultation pack for statutory consultees	<p>A pack containing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covering letter;</li> <li>• Draft District Plan</li> <li>• CD of Consultation Documents;</li> <li>• FAQ;</li> <li>• Consultation Portal Guidance Note; and</li> <li>• Written Response Template.</li> </ul>
Consultation pack for non-statutory consultees	<p>A pack containing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covering letter;</li> <li>• CD of Consultation Documents;</li> <li>• FAQ;</li> <li>• Consultation Portal Guidance Note; and</li> <li>• Written Response Template.</li> </ul>
<b>Electronic format</b>	
Twitter and Facebook announcements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced notice of approval of the Draft District Plan and forthcoming consultation.</li> <li>• Announcement of the start of the consultation period.</li> <li>• Announcement of community public meeting details.</li> <li>• Reminder in week 10 of close of consultation period.</li> <li>• Closure of consultation.</li> </ul>
Front page of the Council's	Banner on Council's home page

Website	announcing the consultation and providing links to the District Plan web pages for more information.
Email notification to all registered on the consultation portal and all those registered on the Council's Stay Connected service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced notice of the consultation sent once approved by Council.</li> <li>• Announcement of the start of the consultation.</li> <li>• Announcement of public meeting details.</li> <li>• Reminder two weeks before end of consultation.</li> </ul>
Email notification to all Town and Parish Councils, Councillors, local interest groups, statutory consultees etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced notice of the consultation sent once approved by Council.</li> <li>• Announcement of the start of the consultation.</li> <li>• Announcement of public meeting details.</li> <li>• Reminder two weeks before end of consultation.</li> </ul>
Members Information Bulletin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced notice of the consultation sent once approved by Council.</li> <li>• Announcement of the start of the consultation.</li> <li>• Announcement of public meeting details.</li> <li>• Reminder two weeks before end of consultation.</li> </ul>
District Plan Bulletin	Bulletin will be distributed by email to Town and Parish Councils and all those registered on consultation portal following approval of the Plan by Council.
CD containing Consultation Documents	Interested parties will be able to request a CD containing electronic copies of Consultation Documents for free.
Telephone Opinion Survey	An Opinion Research Organisation will be engaged to undertake a structured survey of the District's residents, seeking to reach a cross section of the local community to explore opinions on future development and Draft

	District Plan.
<b>Face-to-Face Meetings</b>	
Town and Parish Councils, Civic Societies and the Local Strategic Partnership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parishes will be grouped together where appropriate and meetings will be held in accessible locations to these Parish clusters.</li> <li>• Meetings will be chaired by the Executive Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning and Transport, and will be attended by the local Members and an officer from the Planning Policy Team.</li> <li>• Other meetings may be held with interested parties, if appropriate, where resources allow.</li> </ul>
Staff Briefings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal meetings will be held with Council officers from all departments to increase awareness of the consultation and the content of the Draft District Plan.</li> </ul>

### **Where can copies of consultation documents be obtained?**

Packs of information will be sent to all local libraries, schools, Town Council offices, Parish Clerks and the East Herts Council offices in Hertford and Bishop's Stortford. Further copies of the Plan will be available upon request from the Planning Policy Team. All documentation will encourage interested parties to access information and respond electronically.

### **How will responses be managed?**

It is often the case that consultation leads to comments and representations which conflict with each other and mean that it will not be possible for the aspirations of all parties to be satisfied. There may also be other reasons why we are unable to deliver the outcome which the respondent seeks. However, while it will not always be possible for the Council to accommodate everyone's expressed views, we will carefully balance and consider all relevant comments and representations and will respond to those issues, as appropriate.

The Council will take account of all responses received by any of the above means where the issues raised are material planning considerations. Responses concerning other issues beyond the scope of planning policy (e.g. matters such as highways maintenance or refuse collection) will not be taken into account.

We are expecting a high volume of responses to the consultation and will not therefore be able to respond to each representation. Comments submitted via the consultation portal will receive a notification that their comments have been received and processed automatically. Comments submitted by email will receive an automatically generated email holding response. Written comments will be published on the consultation portal, along with scanned copies.

All comments, including those of any petitions will be summarised and reported to the Council through the District Planning Executive Panel, Executive and Council.

## Consultation Strategy Timeline

	When	Activity	Purpose	Detail
1	6 January	Web story, Twitter and Facebook	To encourage residents to read the agenda papers	Announcing the publication of the District Planning Executive Panel agenda papers and Panel date
2	Mid Jan	Web story, Twitter and Facebook	To encourage sign up on Stay Connected	
3	15 January	Team Update	To inform staff of imminent consultation	
4	January	Staff Briefings	To inform staff of imminent consultation and detail of the Plan	
5	29 January	Full Council to agree Draft District Plan for consultation		
6	30 January	Web story, Twitter and Facebook	To inform the public about the agreement by Full Council to publish the Plan for consultation	Announcing the agreement and forthcoming consultation
7	30 January	E-newsletter on Stay Connected	To inform the public about the agreement by full Council to publish the Plan for consultation	Announcing the agreement and forthcoming consultation
8	Early February	Press Briefing	To brief press on consultation	
9	Mid	Distribution of		Distribution of consultation leaflets to all



	February	consultation leaflet to households		households
10	Mid February	Distribution of consultation packs to stakeholders		Distribution of consultation packs to statutory and non-statutory consultees
11	Mid February	Consultation period commences		
12	Mid February	Web story, Twitter and Facebook	To inform the public about the start of consultation	Message announcing the start of the consultation
13	February /March	Public engagement meetings with Town and Parish Councils	To conduct face-to-face meetings to discuss details of the Plan	
14	March /April	Public engagement meetings with stakeholders	To conduct face-to-face meetings to discuss details of the Plan	
15	Spring	Spring Link	Update residents on end of consultation and next stages	
16	Mid April - 8 week mark	Web story, Twitter and Facebook Email consultees	To remind the public and consultees of the close of consultation on 8 May 2014	Announcing the end-date of consultation
17	Mid May	Consultation Closes		