

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL – 16 JANUARY 2014

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING
AND TRANSPORT

DRAFT EAST HERTS DISTRICT PLAN (PREFERRED OPTIONS)
(JANUARY 2014)

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- This report asks Members to consider and agree the Draft East Herts District Plan (January 2014) for public consultation for a period of twelve weeks, and also to agree the consultation strategy.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE
PANEL AND EXECUTIVE: That:**

(A)	the Draft East Herts District Plan (January 2014) at Essential Reference Paper ‘B’ be supported and made available for public consultation for a period of twelve-weeks in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012;
(B)	the Consultation Strategy at Essential Reference Paper ‘F’ be supported; and
(C)	the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport, be authorised to make non-material, and typographical corrections to the Draft District Plan, prior to publication for consultation purposes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COUNCIL: That:

(A)	the Draft East Herts District Plan (January 2014) at Essential Reference Paper ‘B’ be agreed and made available for public consultation for a period of twelve-
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	weeks in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012;
(B)	the Consultation Strategy at Essential Reference Paper ‘F’ be agreed; and
(C)	the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport, be authorised to make non-material, and typographical corrections to the Draft District Plan, prior to publication for consultation purposes.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Council is in the process of preparing an updated Local (District) Plan for East Herts that will plan for the needs of the District to 2031 and ensure an up to date development plan to provide a framework for decisions on planning applications as required by the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.2 Work on the emerging District Plan has been ongoing since the issues and options consultation in 2010. The emerging Plan has been prepared in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance, including the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).
- 1.3 The preparation of the Plan has been informed by extensive background research and information. This includes research on a range of topics, including housing delivery and supply, transport needs, infrastructure requirements, and economic development. Work on the evidence base is ongoing throughout the Plan process (and beyond), as it is essential that the Council maintains an up to date evidence base that informs the production, implementation and future review of the District Plan. The evidence base is available at:
www.eastherts.gov.uk/technicalstudies.
- 1.4 The final development strategy included in the proposed District Plan was selected following a rigorous strategy selection process. This is documented in the ‘Supporting Document’ which accompanies the Plan and can be found on the Council’s website at: www.eastherts.gov.uk/supportingdocument. A separate

'Interim Development Strategy Report' draws together the evidence contained in the Supporting Document with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (see Agenda Item 6).

1.5 To help inform the process of moving towards a draft District Plan, a series of briefings have been held to which all District Councillors were invited. The briefings were not part of the decision making process but provided a forum to discuss the emerging Plan and gave all Members the opportunity to engage in the development of the District Plan.

1.6 This reports presents for the first time the proposed Draft East Herts District Plan (Preferred Options) (January 2014) and seeks Members agreement to publish the Plan for a twelve-week period of public consultation.

2.0 Report

2.1 The proposed Draft East Herts District Plan is attached at **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**. The Plan includes two parts: Part 1 contains the Development Strategy and Part 2 contains the Topic Policies:

Part 1:

1. Introduction
2. Vision and Strategic Objectives
3. The Development Strategy
4. Green Belt and Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt
5. Bishop's Stortford
6. Buntingford
7. Hertford
8. Sawbridgeworth
9. Ware
10. Villages
11. East of Welwyn Garden City
12. The Gilston Area

Part 2:

13. Housing
14. Economy
15. Retail and Town Centres
16. Design
17. Transport
18. Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

19. Natural Environment
20. Landscape
21. Heritage Assets
22. Climate Change
23. Water
24. Environmental Quality
25. Delivery

2.2 The Plan also contains five Appendices:

- Appendix A: Key Diagram
- Appendix B: Strategy Worksheet
- Appendix C: Open Space Standards
- Appendix D: Monitoring Framework
- Appendix E: Glossary

Appendix A: Key Diagram and Appendix B: Strategy Worksheet are A3 sheets and are attached at **Essential Reference Paper 'C'** and **Essential Reference Paper 'D'** respectively.

- 2.3 A Policies Map (previously known as the Proposals Map) will accompany the District Plan. This will be made available at the Panel meeting on the 16 January 2014. The Policies Map will show all the policies and proposals set out in the District Plan.
- 2.4 Members will recall that Part 2 was previously presented to the District Planning Executive Panel on Monday 18 November 2013. Chapters 13-24 were subsequently agreed for inclusion in the Draft District Plan by Executive on 9 December 2013 and Council on 11 December 2013.
- 2.5 There have been some minor amendments to Chapters 13-24, including typographical corrections. A new section on 'Flexible Working Practices' has also been added to Chapter 14 (Economy) to clarify the Council's position on this policy area (see paragraphs 14.4.2 and 14.4.3 of the Draft Plan and new Policy ED4 Flexible Working Practices). In addition, the Council's position on renewable and low carbon energy, with particular regard to solar farms and wind turbines, has been clarified in section 22.4 of Chapter 22 (Climate Change).
- 2.6 Chapter 21 (Heritage Assets) has also been updated to reflect advice from English Heritage to ensure a more positive approach to the historic environment policies in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. For information a track

change version of Chapter 21 is attached at **Essential Reference Paper 'E'**.

- 2.7 Part 1 of the District Plan provides for the full objectively assessed needs of the District for 9,700 jobs and 15,000 homes. The Plan sets out the Council's strategy for delivering this growth over the period to 2031. The Plan identifies the need for new site allocations in the towns, together with other broad locations (in the Gilston Area, North and East of Ware and East of Welwyn Garden City) to deliver the strategy, and what new infrastructure and services may be required.
- 2.8 The Plan also sets out the approach to the villages including policies for different groups of villages consistent with the level of service provision at each settlement. This is an important element of the strategy, helping to direct housing to the most sustainable locations. There are no site allocations in the villages. Instead, responding to the introduction of Neighbourhood Planning under the Localism Act, Parish Council's will be encouraged to produce a Neighbourhood Plan to develop a shared vision for their village and to deliver the sustainable development that they need.
- 2.9 The final Chapter of the Plan (Chapter 25 - Delivery) sets out how the Council will work in partnership with providers of infrastructure and services to facilitate the timely provision of infrastructure necessary to support sustainable development.
- 2.10 The proposed Draft District Plan is supported by an Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report (see Agenda Item 8) that assesses each of the policies in the Plan, and also assesses the cumulative impacts of the Plan as a whole. The report also provides an audit trail for the development of the policies in the Plan – the links between national and local planning, the evidence base, and the policies and proposals included in the proposed Draft District Plan.
- 2.11 Planning plays an essential role in shaping the places where we all live and work. The outcomes of planning have an effect on everyone and for this reason everyone should have the opportunity to get involved in the process. Given this, it is important that effective consultation and community engagement is at the heart of Local (District) Plan preparation. This gives people the opportunity to get involved from the outset and have their say on local planning issues.

2.12 The 'Consultation Strategy' attached at **Essential Reference Paper 'F'** sets out the Council's approach to consulting and engaging the community on the draft East Herts District Plan. The strategy has been prepared in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (October 2013). A twelve-week period of public consultation is proposed from February 2014 – May 2014, the specific dates to be confirmed in due course.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Essential Reference Papers

- 'A' Information on any corporate issues and consultation
- 'B' Draft District Plan
- 'C' Draft District Plan Appendix A: Key Diagram
- 'D' Draft District Plan Appendix B: Strategy Worksheet
- 'E' Chapter 21 (Heritage Assets) – track change version
- 'F' Consultation Strategy

Background Papers

The Supporting Document, together with links to all relevant reports and documents, are available at: www.eastherts.gov.uk/supportingdocument

The District Plan evidence base is available at:
www.eastherts.gov.uk/technicalstudies.

Previous District Planning Executive Panel reports are all available at:
<http://online.eastherts.gov.uk/moderngov/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=151>

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