

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL – 24 MAY 2016

REPORT BY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

EAST HERTS DRAFT DISTRICT PLAN – CHAPTER 15 – RETAIL AND TOWN CENTRES: RESPONSE TO ISSUES RAISED DURING PREFERRED OPTIONS CONSULTATION, FURTHER AMENDMENTS AND DRAFT REVISED CHAPTER

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WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

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**Purpose/Summary of Report**

The purpose of this report is:

- To bring to Members' attention the issues raised through the Preferred Options consultation in connection with Chapter 15 (Retail and Town Centres) of the Draft District Plan Preferred Options version, together with Officer responses to those issues;
- To explain to Members why further amendments to Chapter 15 are required to ensure that the final draft District Plan reflects the most up-to-date policy position and the latest available evidence;
- To place before Members for consideration a draft revised chapter, for subsequent incorporation into the final draft District Plan.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE**

**PANEL: That Council, via the Executive, be advised that:**

<b>(A)</b>	<b>the issues raised in respect of Chapter 15 (Retail and Town Centres) of the Draft District Plan Preferred Options, as detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'B' to this report, be received and considered;</b>
<b>(B)</b>	<b>the Officer response to the issues referred to in (A) above, as detailed in Essential Reference Paper 'B' to this report, be agreed;</b>
<b>(C)</b>	<b>the further amendments in respect of Chapter 15 (Retail and Town Centres) of the Draft District Plan Preferred Options,</b>

	as detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'B' to this report, be received and considered; and
(D)	the draft revised Chapter 15 (Retail and Town Centres), as detailed in Essential Reference Paper 'C' to this report, be agreed as a basis for inclusion in the final draft District Plan, with the content being finalised when the consolidated plan is presented in September 2016.

## 1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Council published its Draft District Plan Preferred Options for consultation for a period of twelve weeks between 27<sup>th</sup> February and 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014. Several thousand comments were received through the consultation exercise from over a thousand stakeholders including statutory consultees and members of the public.
- 1.2 In order to manage these comments, the Council's agreed approach, as set out in its Statement of Community Involvement (October 2013), is to summarise the issues raised through the consultation and record how these issues have been used to inform the next draft of the District Plan.
- 1.3 This report presents a draft revised chapter on Retail and Town Centres for subsequent incorporation into the final Draft District Plan. **Essential Reference Paper 'B'** contains the Issues Report and **Essential Reference Paper 'C'** the draft revised chapter.

## 2.0 Report

- 2.1 The Issue Report is split into two parts. The first part summarises the issues raised through the Preferred Options Consultation. The issues are grouped according to the section of the Draft Plan they relate to. The table presents an officer response to each issue and then sets out any subsequent proposed amendments to the text or policies of the draft Plan. These proposed amendments are shown in the form of a 'track change' so that readers can clearly see what amendments are being proposed.
- 2.2 The second part of the Issue Report details any further amendments that are required to ensure that the final draft District Plan reflects the most up-to-date policy position and the latest available evidence.

- 2.3 Members will be aware that a report to the District Planning Executive Panel on 19 March 2015 previously considered issues raised in respect of the draft Retail and Town Centres chapter at the Preferred Options Consultation stage and also the proposed officer response to each issue, along with a proposed revised draft Chapter. However, since that time, various changes in local and wider circumstances have occurred, which have necessitated a review of some of the previously proposed responses to ensure the most up to date and accurate picture going forward.
- 2.4 The greatest change has been amendments to the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, which introduces a far more relaxed approach to changes of use in retail and other commercial premises. The chapter acknowledges the amended regulations and seeks to protect the longer term interests of the district's high streets where possible.
- 2.5 Members are therefore invited to agree the draft revised Chapter 15 (Retail and Town Centres), as detailed in **Essential Reference Paper 'C'** to this report, as a basis for inclusion in the final draft District Plan, with the content being finalised when the consolidated plan is presented in September 2016.
- 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'**.

#### Background Papers

None

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