

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION
DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND BETWEEN
EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL AND ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

SUMMARY UPDATE – DATED 18 MARCH 2019

Introduction

1. This Summary Update relates to ECC's 'Outstanding Objections' concerning the soundness of the Epping Forest Local Plan Submission Version ("LPSV"), the detail of which is set out within Appendix 2 (**ED10B**) to the draft Statement of Common Ground between EFDC and ECC (**ED10**) dated 7 February 2019.
2. EFDC and ECC have jointly prepared this note, the purpose of which is:
 - (a) To record further areas of agreement between EFDC and ECC regarding the soundness of the LPSV; and
 - (b) To inform the Inspector about those areas of agreement which, in due course, will be recorded in the final signed version of the SoCG between EFDC and ECC.
3. EFDC and ECC will continue to work together to explore opportunities to resolve ECC's remaining objections concerning the soundness of the LPSV.
4. Since 7 February 2019, the additional work undertaken by EFDC has identified further areas of agreement, which are summarised below under the following headings:
 - (a) Highways;
 - (b) Education;

Highways

South Epping and North Weald Bassett Masterplan Areas

5. In its Regulation 20 representations, ECC raised concerns regarding the potential transport (and sustainability) impacts of planned development in Epping and North Weald Bassett Masterplan Areas.
6. The further areas of agreement relate to ECC outstanding objections concerning LPSV Policies P 6 (North Weald Bassett) (**ED10B**, p 17, Representation 57), which ECC

contends is not effective due to the absence of "mitigations" ... "that will make sustainable travel an attractive proposition". To address that objection, ECC suggested that a study be undertaken to assess the potential for sustainable transport linking with Epping.

7. In its duly made Regulation 20 representations, ECC sought the following change to Part F of LPSV Policy P 6 (North Weald Bassett):

"Add reference for Policy P 6F in the Local Plan to a firm need for and commitment to exploring and concluding on the feasibility of sustainable travel alternatives to private road / car transport for this area. This work needs to be progressed to a satisfactory extent (at least a draft stage) by the time of Local Plan examination."

8. ECC has agreed to withdraw its objection to Policy P 6 F (above) on the basis of the additional areas of agreement and further proposed amendments, the detail of which is set out in the Appendix to this note.
9. In summary, the Appendix reproduces relevant parts of Chapter 5 (Places) of the LPSV relating to Epping (pp 116-118) and North Weald Bassett (pp 143-145) and shows:
 - (a) Proposed amendments to Policies P 1 (Epping) and P 6 (North Weald Bassett), respectively; and
 - (b) Proposed amendments to the associated explanatory text to those Policies.

The purpose of these proposed amendments is to provide additional information and detail on Strategic Masterplanning requirements.

10. For the avoidance of doubt, the proposed changes to Policy P 6 F (North Weald Bassett), recorded within the Appendix to this note, supersede and consolidate the previously agreed proposed changes to resolve ECC's objection to Parts D and K of Policy P 1 (Epping) and Part F of Policy P 6 (North Weald Bassett), which are included in the 'Resolved Objections' recorded within Appendix 1 (**ED10A**, pp 12-14, representations 44, 46 and 58) to the draft SoCG (**ED10**).
11. In addition to the proposed changes to the LPSV set out above, Epping Forest District Council will work with ECC and the site promoters to develop more detailed and effective sustainable transport measures for the North Weald Bassett and South Epping Masterplan areas. This will include (but not be limited to):

South Epping

- (a) The development of a travel plan for the Masterplan area which should include the provision of enhanced public transport services to Epping Station in particular together with other initiatives which reduce the use of the car (e.g. car pooling/ car sharing through sites such as liftshare.com). The travel plan will need to include clear monitoring and implementation provision.

- (b) The provision of digital infrastructure to a) facilitate the expected continued growth of home working and b) provide 'real-time' travel information including links to wider travel initiatives.
- (c) Provision of facilities to encourage cycle usage such as opportunities for communal cycle hubs which include 'self-service' cycle maintenance equipment and cycle hire.

North Weald Bassett

- (d) The design and layout of the Masterplan areas to ensure provision is made for safe and convenient walking, cycling and bus routing (and other sustainable travel or passenger transport solutions) within the developments coming forward;
- (e) The development of co-ordinated travel plans for the Masterplan areas which are, wherever possible, integrated, in order to maximise both outcomes and financial sustainability where funding is required to facilitate activities. These should include the provision of enhanced public transport services to Epping and Harlow in particular together with other initiatives which reduce the use of the car (e.g. car pooling/ car sharing through sites such as liftshare.com). The travel plans will need to include clear monitoring and implementation provision, including action plans, targets and triggers;
- (f) The provision of digital infrastructure to a) facilitate the expected continued growth of home working and b) provide 'real-time' travel information including links to wider travel initiatives;
- (g) Provision of facilities to encourage active travel and cycle usage such as opportunities for communal cycle hubs which include 'self-service' cycle maintenance equipment and cycle hire;
- (h) Reduced single occupancy car parking provision at key destinations, with a particular focus on employment sites, secure and convenient cycle parking provision, equipment storage and showers; and
- (i) HGV management plans to cover both routing and timing.

Harlow and Gilston Garden Town - Major Transport Interventions

12. The focus of this further area of agreement concerns Issue 2 of Matter 8: Garden Town Communities, namely: "*Are the Garden Town allocations deliverable in respect of their impact on transport infrastructure?*" Specifically, the Inspector's Question 1, which asks:
 - "1. *Are the requirements of Policy SP5 in relation to transport sufficient to mitigate the effects of the proposed development in all three communities upon existing Junction 7 of the M11 and to ensure that adequate financial contributions are made towards the provision of*

Junction 7a? Is it the case that the provision of Junction 7a and associated infrastructure is a prerequisite of development on these sites and, if so, is this sufficiently clear in the Plan?"

13. ECC has clarified its position on this issue and its outstanding objections to LPSV Policies SP 4 and SP 5 (see **ED10B**, pp 12-13, representation 21). Following recent discussion EFDC and ECC have identified further areas of agreement which are set out in the table below, which also identifies each Council's most up-to-date position regarding matters that have not been agreed.

Item	ECC position	EFDC position
(a)	<p>The Major Transport Interventions identified in the 'Memorandum of Understanding on Highways & Transportation Infrastructure for the West Essex/East Hertfordshire Housing Market Area' (EB1201), including the provision of M11 J7a, must be considered as prerequisites to the delivery of the growth proposed in Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (including, within Epping Forest District, the strategic site allocations identified in LPSV Policy SP 5 (Garden Town Communities));</p>	<p>Agree that the provision of Junction 7a of the M11 is a prerequisite for the development of the strategic Harlow and Gilston Garden Town sites.</p> <p>Disagree that the delivery of other interventions are prerequisites (<i>in the sense that they must be implemented before the development of the strategic Harlow and Gilston Garden Town sites</i>).</p> <p>EFDC's position is addressed in detail within its Matter 8 Hearing Statement, specifically, its response to Issue 2, Question 1 (pp 7-8, paras. 19-27).</p>
(b)	<p>Funding for those Major Transport Interventions must be secured through a combination of developer contributions and other funding sources at an appropriate time during the Plan period;</p>	<p>Agreed</p>

Item	ECC position	EFDC position
(c)	<p>ECC acknowledge and agree that the full delivery / completion of the proposed Sustainable Transport Corridors ("the STC") could not reasonably be required upon commencement of proposed development at the Policy SP 5 (Garden Town Communities) strategic site allocations;</p>	<p>Agreed</p>
(d)	<p>Instead, at the point of occupation (not commencement) of these developments, adequate availability of sustainable transport options provision (such as passenger transport services / cycle & walking infrastructure) will be required, in order to avoid the establishment of unsustainable travel behaviour (among new residents) and to provide viable alternatives to private car use. The Councils will secure the necessary measures through the use of planning obligations or other relevant mechanisms as appropriate.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>

Item	ECC position	EFDC position
(e)	<p>At the end of the Local Plan period (2033):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The STC must be operational and available for public use; and (ii) The identified M11 J7 improvements must be delivered. 	<p>Agreed that the STC must be operational and available for public use before the end of the Local Plan period (2033).</p> <p>In the short term, minor upgrades will be made to Junction 7 of the M11 in order to facilitate the delivery of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town, which are estimated to cost £5,000,000. Unless funding is secured from Highways England Road Investment Strategy 2, the improvements will be funded through developer contributions.</p> <p>Over the longer term, it is anticipated that more significant improvement works will be required to upgrade Junction 7 of the M11. This is estimated to cost £29,000,000, and is subject to a funding bid through the Highways England Road Investment Strategy 2. The funding and delivery of this upgrade is considered to be of strategic importance to the sub-region, and neither the IDP or LPSV anticipate developer contributions towards this longer-term requirement at this time.</p>

Education

14. In relation to ECC's outstanding objection to LPSV Policies SP 6 (Green Belt and District Open Land) and DM 4 (Green Belt) (**ED10B**, pp 2-3, representations 34 and 39), concerning the expansion of existing educational facilities within the Green Belt, ECC has agreed to withdraw these objections on the following basis:

(a) EFDC has agreed to adjust the proposed amendment to the additional text to be inserted after paragraph 4.34 of the associated explanatory text to Policy DM 4 (Green Belt). This supersedes the proposed positioning of the amendment within the LPSV – see EFDC's Matter 16 Hearing Statement, pp 10-11, paras. 31-34¹ and Amendment 5 in the Schedule of Proposed Amendment.

(b) EFDC and ECC agree that the proposed amendment supplementing the explanatory text to Policy DM 4 (Green Belt) provides sufficient clarity on the proper application of Policy DM 4 (Green Belt), as follows:

"A number of community and education sites in the District are located within areas designated as Green Belt. The Council acknowledges that due to the extent of the Green Belt in Epping Forest District, there may be instances where new buildings related to community or educational uses may be proposed (e.g., a new village hall or new buildings related to an existing school). In accordance with national planning policy such proposals will be considered inappropriate development which should not be approved within the Green Belt except in very special circumstances. As such community and educational facilities are generally considered to be essential uses within the District. When determining whether very special circumstances exist, a clear locational need for such facilities will be a material consideration that weighs in favour of granting planning permission and should be accorded appropriate weight."

(c) EFDC and ECC further agree that the resolution of ECC's objections as specifically referenced above do not require LPSV Policies D 2 or DM 4 to be amended.

¹ Paragraph 34 of EFDC's Matter 16 Hearing Statement erroneously refers to the associated explanatory text to "Policy DM 4" instead of "Policy D 2".