chapter 4
district wide policies

Housing, Economic and Transport Policies

Housing

4.1 This section of the Draft Local Plan sets out the approach that the Council will expect applicants to adopt in relation to the mix and type of new homes to be provided on development sites within the District. It also sets the site thresholds above which proposals will need to make provision for affordable housing and starter homes and how the Council will assess proposals for rural affordable housing which would normally be considered as being contrary to policy (known as rural exception sites).

Draft Policy H 1: Housing Mix and Accommodation Types

The Issue

4.2 It is important to consider, as set out in national planning policy, the needs of different sectors within the community. This is to ensure that the right size and type of new homes is provided across the District to meet the needs of existing and future residents and to ensure the creation of mixed and balanced communities. This includes those with specialist housing requirements or who have a desire to build their own homes.

Key evidence

- West Essex and East Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (September 2015);
- Epping Forest District Council Self Build/Custom Housebuilding Register;
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG): Housing Optional Technical Standards: Accessibility and wheelchair housing standards (DCLG 2015); and
- Epping Forest District Council Authority Monitoring Reports.

What you told us?

4.3 Responses from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- the majority of responders supported the inclusion of a density policy with the mix being dependent on the character of the area. For example, in the parish of North Weald it was considered this should be less than 30 dwellings per hectare;
- agreed set density ranges should be carefully considered in line with the area and the available transport and social infrastructure;
- that protection of the Green Belt was of prime importance but was equally important to ensure the correct mix of properties – even if slightly more Green Belt land has to be released;
- support for the development of minimum space standards;
- that existing policy DBE8 (Private amenity space) is suitable and should be retained;
- that it may be more appropriate to allow the market to determine the most appropriate houses to build but ensure that all new housing complies with the needs of people with disabilities, and makes provision for different types of housing and specifically for retirement, single occupancy and home working;
- proposed lifetime homes developments need to be more defined and need to be targeted for specific units;
- co-housing units, where groups of people can live together should be encouraged;
- that the needs of older people need to be taken into account; and
- protection of existing bungalows needs to be considered.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Preferred Approach

4.4 The revised Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) sets out the type and size of new market housing needed both across the SHMA area and within the District over the Plan period. However, there is also a need to consider the most appropriate location for market housing, and the type and size of properties to be provided in different areas. This must take into account the desire for some to build their own homes and to address specialist housing needs where the evidence exists to support this. The Council will seek to make the best use of land, and take account of the existing stock of housing within the locality in respect of the objective of achieving mixed and balanced communities.

4.5 It is important that a proportion of new homes can provide for the needs of those with, or who may develop, accessibility needs through the design of those homes. This reflects the evidence as set out in the revised SHMA that there is an existing need for accessible housing in the District and that will continue taking into account the ageing profile of the District's population over the period of the Local Plan. Improving housing standards to strengthen local communities and reduce the need for residential care by enabling vulnerable people to remain in their homes, or be able to have the choice to be able to move into a new home, is important as part of improving the overall housing mix within the District. Consequently, the Council's preferred approach is that all new homes should be built to Category 2: Accessible and Adaptable Homes standards, subject to further viability testing.

4.6 The needs of those with accessibility needs, including older people can be supported by bungalow accommodation. Recent information contained in the Council's Authority Monitoring Report shows that there has been a gradual erosion of the District's existing stock of bungalows. The Council considers that bungalows can play an important role because of their potential ease of adaptation such that they can provide choice for people with accessibility needs, including the current and future needs of older people.

Draft Policy H 1 Housing Mix and Accommodation Types

A. Development will be permitted where the mix of market housing:

   i) includes a range of house type and size to address local requirements, including for 'down-sizing';

   ii) is appropriate to the size, location and characteristics of the site;

   iii) is appropriate to the established character and density of the neighbourhood;

   iv) takes into account the existing housing stock in the settlement or neighbourhood in order to avoid any over-concentration of a single type of housing where this would undermine the achievement of mixed and balanced communities; and

   v) provides for all new homes to be accessible and adaptable as defined by the Building Regulations in effect at the time of the application.

B. Development proposals will be required to provide evidence, proportionate to the scale of development proposed, to justify the mix of housing proposed.

C. Proposals for housing specifically designed to meet the identified needs of people with support needs (including older people) requiring specialist accommodation and self-build/custom build housing will be supported where:

   i) they meet a proven identified need;

   ii) the location is appropriate in terms of access to facilities, services and public transport and;

   iii) for housing to meet the needs of people with support needs are of an appropriate design to accommodate the required amenities and support staff.

D. Where there is evidence of an identified unmet need in the local area and the location is appropriate in terms of access to facilities, services and public transport, larger scale new residential developments should incorporate specially designed housing/specialist accommodation for people with support needs (including older people) and for self-build/custom build schemes. The Council will require affordable housing on all such developments that fall within Use Class C3, in accordance with Policy H 2 (Affordable Housing).

E. The loss of bungalows will be resisted as they provide a supply of accessible accommodation.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Alternative Options	
Not include a policy and thus leave the determination of mix and type of housing to the market	This would not comply with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in respect of taking account the needs of different sectors of the community and creating mixed and balanced communities.
To only identify housing mix and type on strategic allocations	Whilst this would comply with the principle of the NPPF it would not ensure that all communities are properly assessed in terms of their needs and ensuring the creation of mixed and balanced communities.

Draft Policy H 2 Affordable Housing

The Issue

4.7 The evidence presented in the revised SHMA demonstrates that the provision of affordable homes is a key issue for the District in that of all of the new homes needed within the District over the Local Plan period (2011-2033) some 3,152 of those need to be affordable. This equates to approximately 143 affordable homes a year. The primary opportunity to address this issue is through on-site provision as part of market sector housing developments, taking into account the limited supply of land and to ensure the creation of mixed and balanced communities. Therefore there needs to be a balance between securing the maximum level of affordable housing on those sites whilst ensuring that this does not impact on the viability of those developments and therefore prevent the overall delivery of homes and infrastructure.

4.8 In order to understand what would be considered a proportionate and reasonable level of affordable housing to be sought, without impacting on the overall delivery of housing, the Council has undertaken an initial assessment of Viability.

4.9 The Housing and Planning Act has introduced a requirement for Starter Homes to the provided as part of all developments, potentially over 10 dwellings or 0.5 ha in size. Starter Homes are defined as new dwellings only available for purchase by qualifying first-time buyers and which are made available at price which is at least 20% less than its market value but which is below the price cap. A price cap of £250,000 outside Greater London and £450,000 in Greater London is specified. To qualify for starter homes, the purchaser must be a first-time buyer (falling within the statutory definition) and he or she must be under the age of 40. The Secretary of State may also, through regulations, specify additional criteria a first-time buyer must fulfil for example nationality. Proposals which fall within the relevant thresholds are likely to have to provide for 20% Starter Homes, as part of the development, in addition to other existing requirements for affordable and specialist housing needs.

4.10 The Government proposes to introduce regulations to underpin the new statutory framework for Starter Homes. The Council is currently awaiting the introduction of the regulations, and considering how the requirements for Starter Homes should be met, including what the implications are for Local Plan policy. Further work will be undertaken in due course to consider the viability implications of the Starter Homes requirements.

Evidence Base

- West Essex and East Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (September 2015);
- Stage 1 Assessment of the Viability of Affordable Housing, Community Infrastructure Levy and Local Plan (June 2015);
- Strategic Land Availability Assessment (2016);
- Settlement Capacity Study (2016); and
- Authority Monitoring Reports.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

What you told us?

4.11 Responses received from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- that better analysis of the need for affordable housing should be undertaken which focused on those actually in need rather than for applicants who were not residents and had aspirations for affordable housing;
- some concerns were raised that seeking affordable housing from smaller sites (that is, below the currently adopted levels) would impact on development viability and restrict infill development. Conversely some responders considered that affordable housing should be sought from smaller sites then the current adopted level allows;
- that affordable housing needed to be of the right type, size and design and should be in direct response to local need;
- that affordable housing should not just be considered as a percentage of build. It should be considered as an appropriate development within its own environment and the need should be assessed and decided based upon matters such as location, need, infrastructure, suitability, and character. If an assessment based on these factors indicates that 80% - 100% affordable housing would be appropriate in a certain location then it should be considered;
- ensure the 'ring fencing' of affordable housing, and that it is retained for occupation by District residents;
- not enough attention given to the needs of the existing community to ensure the provision of appropriate and affordable accommodation;
- crucial to attract a mix of developments and avoid ghetto creation;
- that viability issues should be assessed using an 'open book' viability approach;
- that should viability be an issue then a revised mix and type of homes should be considered before a lower level of affordable housing provision is accepted; and
- that the mix of affordable homes should follow that of the market homes on individual sites;

Preferred Approach

4.12 The evidence suggests that the provision of 40% of affordable homes on sites of 11 or more dwellings would provide the most appropriate balance between achieving a meaningful proportion of affordable homes, as well as accommodating CIL contributions (should this be taken forward), to support both the delivery of affordable housing and provision of necessary strategic infrastructure subject to individual site viability.

4.13 In developing its approach to the delivery of affordable homes the Council needs to take into account the fact that not all development sites will contribute to the provision of affordable housing. This could be due to a number of factors including:

- that the site is too small;
- that there are site-specific factors which mean that the provision of on-site affordable housing may not be desirable in terms of the form and location of development;
- that site-specific complexities and costs would not generate sufficient 'value' to be viable if the proportion of affordable housing sought were to be provided; or
- because some developments, such as those brought forward through the 'Office to Residential' prior approval process, are not required by national regulations to make a contribution towards the provision of affordable housing.

4.14 The 2015 SHMA provides information about the potential type and tenure of affordable homes to be provided across the District. This provides a useful starting point but, as with the delivery of market housing, there is a need to consider the most appropriate location type, size and tenure of properties to be provided in different areas. Different locations will have different characteristics, and different sizes of site will provide varying opportunities for achieving a mix. There is also a need to make best use of land, and to also take account of the existing stock of affordable housing within the locality in respect of the objective of achieving mixed and balanced communities. In relation to this latter point, it is important to ensure that affordable homes are designed to ensure that they are visually integrated as part of any wider development i.e. that schemes are designed in such a way as to be 'tenure blind'. Similarly, it is important that a proportion of the homes to be provided for the needs of those with, or who may develop, accessibility needs through the design of those homes.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Draft Policy H 2 Affordable Housing

A. On development sites which provide for 11 or more homes, the Council will seek a minimum of 40% of those homes for affordable housing. The mix of affordable housing units in terms of affordable rent and intermediate housing will be required to accord with the latest available evidence set out in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. All new homes will be required to meet accessible and adaptable homes standards as defined by the Building Regulations applicable at the time of the application.

B. The management of the affordable housing provided will be undertaken by a Registered Provider which is a Preferred Partner of the Council unless otherwise agreed by the Council. Any scheme will need to demonstrate that the design, siting and phasing of such housing provides for its proper integration and timely provision as part of the wider development.

C. Where it has been demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction through the submission of viability evidence which is open and transparent that the provision of affordable housing in accordance with the above levels and tenure mix would deem the scheme unviable then the Council will take a flexible approach to achieving viability as follows:

   i) reviewing the tenure mix;

   ii) reviewing the extent of other site specific planning obligations; and

   iii) the proportion of affordable housing.

D. The mix of units in respect of size will be determined. on a site by site basis dependent on the overall needs for that area and on the specific characteristics of the individual site.

Alternative Options	
Continue with the affordable housing policies within the current adopted Local Plan. This sets out different levels of affordable housing ranging from 33% to 50% dependent on the location and size of the site.	Evidence suggests that the level of affordable housing that has been delivered through current policy is not sufficient to deliver the level of affordable housing needed. In addition, current policy is not in accordance with the Government's recently set minimum threshold for affordable housing (being that it should only be sought from development of 11 units or more).
Provision of 40% of affordable homes on sites of 15 or more dwellings regardless of location.	Evidence suggests that the level of affordable housing that has been delivered through current policy (which includes the 15 or more threshold for sites being developed in larger settlements within the District - i.e. those with a population of 3,000 or more), is not sufficient to deliver the level of affordable homes needed. In addition the Viability evidence suggests that sites of 11 or more dwellings would be capable of delivering affordable homes and be viable.
Set different levels of affordable homes in different parts of the District	It is acknowledged that the Viability work undertaken by the Council indicates that development in Waltham Abbey would generate less value than in other areas to support both 40% affordable housing and CIL levels. However, taking into account the priority that the Council gives to the provision of affordable housing that this matter should be addressed through CIL setting rather than a differential approach to affordable housing.
Seek a higher level of affordable homes within the Green Belt.	There is no evidence to suggest that development costs for such sites are lower than for other sites across the District to justify such an approach.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Draft Policy H 3 Rural Exception Sites

The Issue

4.15 A significant part of the District is rural in nature with a large number of smaller settlements and communities which, in accordance with the proposed spatial strategy would not be appropriate for the allocation of larger scale market developments, which would normally be expected to deliver a proportion of affordable homes. Nevertheless it is highly likely that there will continue to be a need for affordable homes in those communities.

Evidence Base

- West Essex and East Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (September 2015);
- Stage 1 Assessment of the Viability of Affordable Housing, Community Infrastructure Levy and Local Plan (June 2015).

What you told us?

4.16 Responses received from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- Comments received were, for the most part, related to the provision of affordable housing in its widest sense and therefore the comments referred to in relation to Draft Policy H 2 are also relevant to Draft Policy H 3;
- that current Policy GB16 is appropriate;
- that a rural exceptions policy was needed but concerns were raised regarding the impact of 'Right to Buy' and Starter Homes; and
- considered that a population threshold of 3,000 persons was appropriate.

Preferred Approach

4.17 There is a need to provide the opportunity for those communities to be able to benefit from the provision of affordable homes on suitable small scale sites if a local need is clearly identified and evidenced. In accordance with the NPPF there is also a need to provide some flexibility to enable the opportunity for some cross-subsidy through the provision of a small proportion of market housing should viability evidence clearly demonstrate that such cross-subsidy is justified.

Draft Policy H 3 Rural Exceptions

A. Planning permission may be granted for small-scale "affordable" housing schemes within the smaller settlements, as an exception to the normal policy of restraint, where the Council is satisfied that:

i) there is a demonstrable social or economic need for affordable housing for local residents which cannot be met in any other way and which can reasonably be expected to persist in the long term. An application would be expected to be supported by an assessment appraisal which clearly demonstrates that there is a local housing need;

ii) the development is well-related to the existing settlement and there is no detriment to the character of the village or the countryside, or causes significant harm to Green Belt objectives. Proposals involving extensions into the open countryside or the creation of ribbons or isolated pockets of development are unlikely to be considered acceptable and should be avoided. There should be no significant grounds for objection on highways, infrastructure or other planning grounds; and

iii) suitably secure arrangements will be made to ensure the availability of the accommodation, as built, for initial and subsequent local needs households whose total income is insufficient to enable them to afford to rent or buy a dwelling of a sufficient size on the open market.

B. The Council will consider the provision of some market housing within a site if it can be demonstrated through open and transparent viability evidence that such housing is necessary to ensure the delivery of the affordable homes.

Alternative Options	
To not include a 'rural exceptions policy'	If no policy were included it would inhibit the opportunity for small rural communities to benefit from the provision of appropriate small scale development to deliver affordable homes, in support of locally identified needs. This would not reflect the NPPF or recognise that a significant part of the District is rural in nature and that a need to deliver affordable homes across the District has been identified.
Retain the current adopted Local Plan rural exceptions policy.	This would enable the provision of appropriate small scale development of affordable homes in support of locally identified needs. However, it may not provide sufficient flexibility to allow for cross-subsidy to take account of viability considerations if necessary to achieve delivery.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Draft Policy H 4 Traveller Site Development

The Issue

4.18 As set out in national planning policy "Travellers" means "Gypsies and Travellers" and "Travelling Showpeople". Therefore, when referring to Travellers in this Plan, the term incorporates Gypsies and Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople.

4.19 There are distinct differences in the culture and way of life of Gypsies and Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople. For this reason, Planning Policy for Traveller Sites provides two separate definitions.

4.20 "Gypsies and Travellers" are defined as: persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

4.21 "Travelling Showpeople" are defined as: members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family's or dependants' more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above.

4.22 The Council is required to plan for the future needs of Travellers in the District up to 2033. Chapter 3 and Draft Policy SP 2 set out the context in relation to the future needs of Travellers in the District over the Plan period and the sequential approach to meeting those needs over this period. The proposed allocation of sites to meet the identified need for Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are set out in Draft Policy SP 3 and Chapter 5. In addition, the Plan requires a policy to enable the assessment of proposals for new Traveller sites which fall outside of the allocated sites.

4.23 National planning policy sets out a range of issues for local planning authorities to consider when assessing applications for Traveller site development. It makes clear that local planning authorities should consider a range of issues, including: the effective use of brownfield or derelict land; landscaping and the positive enhancement of the environment; promoting opportunities for healthy lifestyles; and avoiding isolation from the rest of the community. The Council should also consider any locally specific criteria to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites.

Evidence Base

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) – August 2015 DCLG
- Essex Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) July 2014 and 2016 update EFDC interim note - ORS
- Traveller Site Selection Methodology – 2016 EFDC
- Consultation on Options: Development Plan Provision for Gypsies and Travellers in Epping Forest District – November 2008 EFDC

What you told us?

4.24 Responses received from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- There was an indication that the settled and travelling communities favoured a degree of separation from each other;
- Concerns about an over-concentration of Travellers in the parishes of Nazeing and Roydon and preference for additional provision to be across the District;
- Traveller community preference was for concentration of provision within existing areas to enable them to live in close proximity to family members;
- Access to a town yet not adjacent to a settlement community is important to travellers;
- That some communities lacked appropriate locations to support Traveller sites; and
- Preference for the provision of smaller sites rather than expanding provision on existing sites that already have over 5 pitches.

Preferred Approach

4.25 The Council's preferred approach is to ensure that any proposals for Traveller sites located outside of the allocated sites are assessed in accordance with national planning policy to ensure that they are located in suitable locations, and meet the future needs of the Traveller community.

4.26 The criteria in the draft policy responds to the need to ensure that sites for Travellers are accessible and that there is convenient access to local services and facilities, specifically educational, medical and welfare services. The available provision of local services, especially schools, to meet the needs of the occupiers must also be reviewed and appropriately addressed.

4.27 When considering applications for sites, the Council will take into account the suitability of the site and the sustainability of the location, having regard to national planning policy.

4.28 Proposals for Traveller site development is inappropriate development in the Green belt and will only be approved when very special circumstances have been demonstrated in line with national planning policy.

4.29 The Council will resist the loss of existing Traveller sites, and particularly the conversion to permanent dwellings unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there is no genuine need or likely future need for Traveller sites in the locality and other planning policy requirements are met including those identified in national planning policy.

Draft Policy H 4 Traveller Site Development

A. The Council will meet the identified need for Travellers through the provision of plots and/or pitches as part of allocations as set out in Policies SP 2, SP 3 and Chapter 5.

B. If applications for Traveller site development are received for sites other than those allocated in this Plan they will be permitted taking account of the following considerations:

i). The impact on local amenity and the natural and historic environment;

ii). The relationship to local services with capacity, including education establishments, health and welfare services, shops and community facilities;

iii). Access to the highway, public transport services and sustainable transport options;

iv). The provision of on-site facilities for parking, storage, play and residential amenity and appropriate essential services;

v). Whether the site is located outside areas of high flooding risk;

vi). The compatibility of the proposed use with surrounding land uses including potential disturbance from vehicular movements, and on-site business activities;

vii). The impact on the physical and visual character of the area;

viii). The potential for successful integration between travelling and settled communities; and

ix). Whether the site is located in the Green Belt.

C. In accordance with Policy SP 3, proposals for new sites should not exceed five pitches or 0.5 hectares, unless a specific justification is provided for a greater number of pitches up to a maximum of 10 pitches.

D. Planning permission will not be granted for the replacement of lawful Traveller sites by permanent dwellings or other uses unless it can be clearly demonstrated to the satisfaction of the local planning authority that there is no genuine need or likely future need for Traveller sites in the locality and other planning policy requirements are met.

Alternative Options	
Not to include a criteria based policy to assess applications for Traveller sites outside of the Allocations	This would mean that applications would be judged against national planning policy rather than locally specific policy criteria.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

The Economy and Town Centres

4.30 This section of the Draft Local Plan sets out the future plan for the economy and town centres within Epping Forest District up until 2033.

4.31 National policy requires the planning system to place a considerable emphasis on supporting economic growth. Local Plan policies for the economy and town centres should be based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence and integrated with other policy elements, particularly housing. It further reinforces the requirement for cooperation with partners and across boundaries in maintaining a robust evidence base to understand current needs and likely changes. National policy also sets the requirement for Local Plans to address barriers to investment, holistically assess needs for land or floorspace as well as the sufficiency and suitability of existing and future land supply. Local Planning Authorities should also have specific regard to the role and function of their town centres, assess locations of deprivation and assess the needs of the food production and tourism industries.

4.32 In terms of town centres, Local Plans should define a resilient network and hierarchy and the extent of shopping areas. Plans should promote competitive town centres that provide choice, a diverse offer and reflect individuality; they should support existing, and create new, markets and allocate sites to meet a range of uses/needs, including edge of centre sites.

4.33 The NPPF promotes the sustainable growth of all types of businesses in rural areas, including conversion of, and new, buildings. It also promotes the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses and the supporting of sustainable rural tourism activities as well as encouraging the retention and development of local services.

4.34 The strategy for the economy and town centres is closely linked to the strategic policies of the Plan, particularly in relation to the quantum and location of future planned development. The Plan incorporates draft policies to plan for future jobs growth, and the identification of sites and areas to meet future land requirements and employment needs. In addition, draft policies seek to establish the future town centre hierarchy and plan for the retail needs of the District, both in terms of the type of additional retail floorspace that will be required, and where this should be located. Further draft policies relate to the food production industry and glasshouses, and tourism.

4.35 In order to retain sites in employment use and meet the identified need for employment sites, the Council will require evidence in order to show that marketing requirements have been met before releasing sites to other uses. Differing requirements will need to be met depending upon the size, nature and location of the site or property. In general marketing should be for a minimum of 6 months and at a realistic price supported by details of any valuations of the property made as part of the process of placing it on the market. As part of the application a statement will need to be provided which details why the site has not been take up for the use it has been marketed.

Draft Policy E 1 Employment Sites

The Issue

4.36 Epping Forest District is an area of contrasts. More urban in the south abutting London but in stepping beyond the M25 the District becomes more rural in nature. The area has a number of smaller town and population centres with no single higher order conurbation. Unsurprisingly given its position, the District has very high levels of out-commuting with around half of working residents commuting into London. Consequently, the District is not a self-contained economy, but an integral part of a functional economic geography that extends well beyond its boundaries.

4.37 London is a clear economic driver with influence on the District but Harlow is also a major location for economic growth, particularly with its Enterprise Zone status. The Harlow Enterprise Zone (serving all of West Essex) is seeking to create high quality, high technology employment close to the District. Development and employment at North Weald Airfield features in the County Council and LEP's plans for growth. Epping Forest District sits within the London- Stansted-Cambridge Corridor's plans which include promoting growth in sectors such as food and life sciences.

4.38 Epping Forest District Council, along with the Cooperation for Sustainable Development Board member local authorities, commissioned work in 2015 on the economy of West Essex and East Hertfordshire, to inform an updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN) for the four local authorities. In addition, Epping Forest District Council commissioned a further study by the same consultants to specifically examine the Epping Forest economy by undertaking detailed research and considering future employment land supply requirements. The study provides clear recommendations for the future economic strategy based upon the research and forecasts undertaken.

4.39 An Employment Land Review was undertaken in 2010 which identified that a small but significant proportion of employment sites offer opportunities for intensification of development and/or redevelopment at higher densities. There is a need for further 'grow on' space to accommodate the needs of existing businesses and to ensure their future retention in the District. Existing businesses are generally satisfied with their business accommodation, but evidence shows that they are likely to require additional floorspace in the future to meet their business expansion requirements. This particularly applies to manufacturing businesses.

Evidence Base

- Economic evidence to support the development of the OAHN for West Essex and East Herts (Hardisty Jones, July 2015);
- Economic and employment evidence to support the Local Plan and Economic Development Strategy (Hardisty Jones, September 2015);
- Strategic Land Availability Assessment (NLP, 2016);
- Epping Forest District and Brentwood Borough Employment Land Review (Atkins, 2010);
- Shaping the Future (LSP, 2010);
- Economic Development Local Plan Background Paper (EFDC, 2016);
- Sustainability Appraisal (AECOM, 2016);
- Economic Plan for Essex (Essex County Council, 2014).

What you told us?

4.40 Responses received from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- the need to establish as accurately as possible forecasts for numbers of new jobs which will be needed during the Plan period to 2033;
- respondents advocated new ways of working, including the promotion for example, of business clusters, live/work units and home working.

Preferred Approach

4.41 Given the limited supply of readily available employment sites within current policy constraints, there is potential to consider a programme of renewal for some sites, in particular those where Epping Forest District Council has some ownership, such as at Oakwood Hill. This will help to make the most of existing land alongside the consideration of new allocations.

4.42 Based on the evidence, therefore, the Councils' approach is to protect and enhance existing employment sites (including through intensification), together with the allocation of new sites where appropriate. Such an approach would provide for the employment development needed to support sustainable long-term economic growth within the District and the wider area whilst limiting the extent of land that will need to be released from the Green Belt. The Council is also seeking to implement an approach which supports rural development and develops the economy in the northern and eastern parts of the District.

4.43 The following Draft Policy E1 sets out the proposed approach in relation to meeting future employment needs. Further detailed work to identify sites for allocation, together with future designated uses, and additional land requirements, is currently being undertaken by the Council.

Draft Policy E 1 Employment Sites

Existing Employment Sites

A. The Council will seek to retain and where necessary enhance existing employment sites and premises. Proposals for the redevelopment, renewal or extension of existing employment sites and premises for their designated use will be encouraged.

B. The change of use of existing employment sites or premises (whether designated or undesignated) to uses other than those for which they are designated will be resisted unless the applicant can demonstrate through evidence, including marketing of the site, that there is no longer a reasonable prospect of the site being used for the existing or designated employment use. The site must have been marketed effectively at a rate which is comparable to local market value for its existing use, or as a redevelopment opportunity for other Class B Uses or Sui Generis Uses of an employment nature, and it must be demonstrated that the continuous use of the site for employment purposes is no longer viable, taking into account the site's existing and potential long-term market demand for an employment use.

C. Where appropriate and viable, proposals which will result in loss of employment space will be expected to provide mitigation measures in the form of contributions to local employment training and small business growth programmes supported by the Council.

New Employment Sites

D. The Council will allocate new sites for employment uses to meet any remaining future floorspace requirements of the District in accordance with Policy SP 2. In accordance with Policy SP 3, Strategic Allocations (SP 3.1 – SP 3.4) will be required to make provision for an appropriate level of employment floorspace. In addition, the Council will allocate new employment land at other locations across the District to provide a flexible supply of future sites to cater for needs.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

E. In addition, there is potential to consider a programme of renewal for some sites, in particular sites where the Council has some ownership. This will help to make the most of existing land alongside new allocations.

F. The Council will be undertaking further work to enable specific employment land requirements and allocations to be identified within the Local Plan, and to further consider opportunities to intensify and extend existing sites where appropriate.

G. The Council will support and encourage the development of flexible local employment space to meet the employment and economic needs of the District. All new employment space should seek to meet the needs of localbusinesses and attract inward investment.

Alternative Options	
Only allocate new sites to meet projected requirements	This approach would provide for the likely levels of employment floorspace needed over the Plan period but would not recognise the important role played by existing employment areas and the opportunities that exist for intensification and/or regeneration. It would therefore not minimise the amount of Green Belt land that would need to be released.
Protect existing employment sites and renew older stock	The evidence suggests that this would be required to meet future economic needs, but is unlikely to be sufficient in itself to provide for the longer term economic needs of the District and wider area, both in terms of quantum and type of use.

Draft Policy E 2 – Centre Hierarchy/Retail Policy

The Issue

4.44 The town centres of the District experience a significant leakage of comparison retail spend, as many of the District's residents choose to shop outside of the District for items like clothing, furniture and major home appliances. This is not surprising given the relatively small nature of the District's town centres compared to other areas within reach, such as Harlow, Romford, Enfield, and Brentwood.

4.45 The evidence base has considered the relative roles of settlements and town centres across the District, taking into account a range of factors including: sustainability; accessibility; town centre health check analysis; retail provision; employment provision; the historic environment; availability of services and facilities; and population. This has enabled recommendations to be made in relation to the future town centre hierarchy and requirements. The latest evidence has recommended that the hierarchy should be updated and amended to include town centres and small district centres. It has recommended that Epping and Loughton High Road should be categorised as Town Centres, and Waltham Abbey, Loughton Broadway, Chipping Ongar and Buckhurst Hill should be defined as Small District Centres.

4.46 In preparing the Draft Local Plan the Council has to take into consideration the changing nature of town centres recognising the influence of the internet on trading, an increasing demand for services and the level of forecast growth across the District. While population growth is forecast, this does not necessarily translate into a need for more shop and service floorspace, particularly given the competition from nearby centres such as Westfield and the impact of internet trading. Indeed an over provision of floorspace could be detrimental to the health of centres, which in a number of cases have seen some decline in the level of retail provision. Equally under-provision will generate more journeys and potentially diminish the attractiveness of centres.

4.47 Increasing the market share of retail expenditure is considered to be an unrealistic position for the District, given the established nearby retail offer, including Harlow, Romford and Westfield that the District can and does not wish to compete with together with greater use of the internet for making purchases. The evidence suggests that retaining a constant market share is more realistic, and this identifies a need for up to 59,700sq.m. of floorspace. When 'pipeline' development is removed there is a net need of 39,700sq.m. From this it has been assumed that approximately 40% will be provided in Harlow, recognising the contribution this town makes to service the needs of the District.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Loughton

Evidence Base

- Town Centres Review (Arup, September 2016)
- Epping Forest District Council Town Centres Study (Roger Tym and Partners, 2010);
- Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper (Epping Forest District Council, 2015); and
- Sustainability Appraisal (AECOM, 2016).

What you told us?

4.48 Responses received from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- the need for a better balance of uses in the District's centres – although there was recognition that the Council had only limited influence over this;
- the need to protect the character and heritage of the centres, including control of shop front design;
- that the absence of larger chain stores means that residents will shop further afield for certain purchases; and
- concerns regarding town centre car parking and in particular in relation to competition for space between shoppers and commuters near underground stations.

Preferred Approach

4.49 In light of the evidence the Council's preferred approach is to introduce a simplified town centre hierarchy which accords with the latest evidence. Growth in town centre uses will be focussed on the largest town centres at Epping and Loughton High Road, and the Council will seek to promote growth in centres across the District in order to maintain their vitality and viability over the Plan period.

4.50 Additionally, in accordance with the requirement of national policy, primary shopping areas, Primary Retail Frontages and Secondary Retail Frontages have been identified within each Town and District Centre.

4.51 The Council is undertaking further work to determine how to meet future floorspace requirements over the Plan period, including the needs for out of centre sites.

Draft Policy E 2 Centre Hierarchy/Retail Policy

A. The following Town and District Centre hierarchy applies in the District:

i) Town Centre:

- Epping
- Loughton High Road

ii) Small District Centre:

- Waltham Abbey
- Loughton Broadway
- Chipping Ongar
- Buckhurst Hill

B. Proposals within defined Town and District Centres for retail, leisure, entertainment, offices, arts and culture, tourism and other main town centre uses, as defined by national planning policy, will be supported where they will maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the centres.

C. Within Primary Retail Frontage ground floor units will be maintained in A1 Class Uses in accordance with Policies P 1 to P 5. Proposals that would not result in a reduction in the specified percentage of A1 Class Uses will be permitted for other main town centre uses where this would support the function, vitality or viability of the Town or District Centre and maintain an active daytime frontage.

D. Within Secondary Retail Frontage ground floor units will be maintained in A1 Class Uses in accordance with Policies P 1 to P 5, but a wider range of main town centre uses may be supported where they would maintain the diversity, viability and vitality of the Town or District Centre. Proposals for non-A1 Class Uses within Secondary Retail Frontages must encourage active shop fronts, attract a high footfall consistent with other main town centre uses and positively contribute to the function of the Town or District Centre.

E. The scale and type of any development proposals should be directly related to the position of the relevant centre in the hierarchy.

F. In Town and District Centres, the Council may permit residential development in appropriate locations and within Primary or Secondary Retail Frontages where it is above the ground floor and would not lead to a loss of main town centre uses, floorspace or frontage.

G. The Council will not permit the change of use to any non-retail use of corner shops, shops in small local parades or village shops, unless it can be demonstrated that:

i) there is no demand for a retail use; or

ii) the service provided is to be continued in another location in the village or locality; or

iii) the new use would meet an identified community need.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

H. Out of Centre uses

Proposals for town centre uses outside of defined Town Centre Areas, including significant edge of centre/out of centre retail development, will be subject to sequential testing as required by national planning policy and will only be permitted where:

i) There is a demonstrable need for the development;

ii) The proposal satisfies the sequential approach to site selection;

iii) The proposal would not put at risk or harm public and/or private sector proposals to safeguard the vitality and viability of any nearby town centre;

iv) The proposal would not harm the vitality and viability of any nearby town centre;

v) The development would be readily accessible by a choice of means of transport, including public transport, cycle and foot, and by the disabled, or that such accessibility can be provided; and

vi) The development would facilitate linked trips with existing out-of- centre developments.

I. Applications for retail, leisure and office development outside of town centres which are over 2,500 sq.m. of floorspace will be required to undertake and provide an impact assessment in accordance with national planning policy.

Alternative Options	
Retain existing Local Plan hierarchy	The existing Local Plan defines a network of Principal, Smaller, District and Local Centres for the District. Epping, Loughton High Road and Waltham Abbey are defined as Principal Centres, with Loughton Broadway and Chipping Ongar defined as Smaller Centres. The Town Centres Study and more recently, Settlement and Town Centres Review have reviewed and examined the centres within the District in detail, and made recommendations as to how it could be amended to reflect changing circumstances.

Draft Policy E 3 – Food Production and Glasshouses

The Issue

4.52 The District has long been home to a major part of the Lea Valley glasshouse industry, now mainly focused in Roydon, Nazeing and Waltham Abbey. The District has historically provided a favourable location for the industry, with largely flat land, rich soil, ample water supply, and good proximity to London through road, rail and canal links. The industry experienced post-war growth, but has subsequently experienced rapid decline due in part to growing competition with other land-uses, increased competition from other areas and technological improvements which means that the industry no longer requires high quality arable land. However, it continues to remain one of the main centres of the UK Glasshouse industry and whilst the land take has declined significantly the production from the remaining sites has increased. The industry continues to rely significantly on migrant/seasonal labour for most of the glasshouse and packhouse jobs. However, the cost of local accommodation is too great for many employees, so some growers have made provision on site – a mix of permanent, temporary (caravan/mobile home), or building conversions, a number without permission.

4.53 Glasshouse horticulture is an appropriate use in the Green Belt, but technological changes and competition pressures mean new glasshouses have to be much larger in area and taller, increasing their impact on the locality. Some growers are looking to expand significantly, others are stable with some relying on niche markets, and the rest are in long-term decline or are already derelict. Packhouses are vital to the industry to enable the producers to provide supermarkets with graded and packaged products. They handle produce from the Lea Valley, UK and abroad and allow growers to enter into long-term contracts with the supermarkets on the basis of guaranteed volume throughout the year.

4.54 The Glasshouse sector makes a significant contribution to the local economy and employment. Looking to the future, and given operational matters of profit margins, costs and access to workers, growers are increasingly looking at investment in increased mechanisation/ robotics, although the likely impact of this over the Plan period is unclear.

4.55 Growth in the glasshouse industry is constrained by planning designations and constraints in the Lee Valley Regional Park and commercial pressures on site availability from other uses, the glasshouse industry provides two areas of opportunity for future employment and economic growth. The first is the employment of local workers in the existing sector and the second is in the growth of the industry and new jobs that will be created. Following a period of difficult trading conditions the market opportunities for home grown products, together with concern about food security and the widening gap between what the nation produces and requires is leading to renewed aspiration and real opportunities for growth in the sector. The industry appears to have good growth prospects, and food has been agreed as one of the sector priorities for the London-Stansted-Cambridge Corridor.

4.56 The Lea Valley Food Task Force seeks to create a production base by 2035 that exceeds 2014 levels of production by a minimum of 20%. The Task Force recommends that there is a need to develop robust employment and training provision and pathways to ensure that the industry has a skilled local workforce if possible.

Evidence Base

- The Lea Valley Glasshouse Industry: Planning for the Future (Laurence Gould Partnership Ltd., 2012).

What you told us?

4.57 Responses received from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- that the Local Plan needs to acknowledge agriculture as the major land use of the District;
- that farming supports the rural economy, addresses food security, reduces the need for food imports (in turn reducing CO_2 emissions), and protects the countryside;
- support for this traditional industry of the area, recognising the place for agriculture in the Green Belt;
- recognition of traffic problems that can be associated with poor access to sites.
- concerns about derelict agricultural and food production sites located in the Green Belt, and that these should be properly managed;
- some felt that derelict sites should be protected from other uses whilst others considered that the sites may be used for future housing or employment development as an alternative to developing more valued areas of Green Belt;
- concerns were raised in relation to the potential impacts from taller glasshouses within the Green Belt;
- glasshouse areas should be located near to main road routes.

Preferred Approach

4.58 The preferred approach is to introduce a criteria based approach to the location and form of glasshouse development. This would provide the industry with much needed flexibility in the face of increased competition from other locations and increased demands from the supermarkets. A new criteria based approach would enable proposals to be considered against a range of criteria to ensure that proposals are suitable and appropriate. This approach would arguably provide greater flexibility and be more equitable for all growers. It would address the matter that some undeveloped land that is currently designated for glasshouses would no longer necessarily meet the needs of the modern grower. It is recognised that this approach would provide less certainty than the designated areas approach, could result in more development outside of the areas currently designated for the use and could lead to greater subjectivity and less certainty in planning decisions. Nevertheless this needs to be balanced against the benefits to the industry that providing some flexibility would bring, and the benefits to food security that the industry itself brings.

4.59 The matter of water usage in this area of water stress is important and growers are expected to take water efficient measures in their operations, using water harvesting wherever possible as well as sourcing water supply from appropriate sources such as above ground reservoirs. This is now common practice in modern operations.

Draft Policy E 3 Food Production and Glasshouses

A. New or replacement glasshouses and associated packhouse development will be permitted subject to satisfying the following criteria:

i) the height, overall size and bulk of the development would not adversely affect the openness of the Green Belt or the character or sensitivity of the adjoining landscape including long-distance public views;

ii) the application includes full details of landscaping, including trees and other vegetation which will be retained or removed. In appropriate cases the Council may require the provision of a buffer area (on a sq.m/ha basis) of managed biodiverse landscaping including a commitment to its long-term management to offset the loss of open land;

iii) the land is capable of being developed without major changes in contouring;

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

iv) vehicular access from the site to the road network is adequate and uses roads capable of accommodating the vehicle movements likely to be generated by the development without detriment to highway safety, the rural character of the roads, or residential amenity;

v) adequate surface water drainage capacity exists or can be provided as part of the development. The Council may require inclusion of sustainable drainage systems to control the quality or attenuate the rate of surface water run-off. Contributions in the form of commuted sums may be sought in legal agreements to ensure that the drainage systems can be adequately maintained;

vi) adequate water resources are available or can be provided on-site, such as above ground reservoirs and water harvesting;

vii) existing constrained site within the District, and horticultural activities on that site will cease as a consequence of the relocation, the application should include details of:

- the phased removal of buildings and any contaminated material from the constrained site to allow it to be reinstated to its original use or alternative use; and
- on-going landscape management of the constrained site.

B. With applications for major new development, or for major expansion to existing sites, the Council may require some or all of the following:

i) an enforceable plan describing how the buildings and other structures would be removed and the land re-instated to its previous condition should the site no longer be required for horticulture, with a built-in review on a ten-yearly basis;

ii) a supporting business plan from an authorised and responsible source confirming that the new development, or the expansion in association with existing glasshouses, will result in an economically viable unit for the foreseeable future.

C. In considering applications for a change of use of a glasshouse site, the Council will take into account the following factors:

i) If in a Green Belt location, the essential characteristics of permanence and openness, and the five purposes of including land in the Green Belt (in accordance with national planning policy);

ii) landscape impact of the proposed development, including long distance public views;

iii) the adequacy and suitability of the rural road network to accommodate traffic associated with the proposed development;

iv) potential adverse effects on the amenities of adjoining and nearby residents;

v) results of tests of site contamination, and methods of treatment and monitoring to render the site suitable for the proposed use; and

vi) conclusive and suitably authorised evidence that continuation of glasshouse horticulture is unviable – this could include details of attempts to market the site or to consolidate with neighbouring units

Alternative Options	
Continue with designated areas approach.	The existing Local Plan policy E13 provides designated areas for horticultural glasshouses, and the policy seeks to generally contain the development of glasshouses within those areas. Such an approach helps to provide certainty for growers and the local community. Clustering of the uses also helps to minimise landscape impact, whilst protecting
Combined approaches, retaining the designated areas with updated policies and applying criteria based policy elsewhere in the District	This approach could retain an element of certainty for proposals within the designated areas, but could potentially be confusing and difficult to implement.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Draft Policy E 4 – The Visitor Economy

The Issue

4.60 Tourism provides an important source of revenue and employment for the District. Evidence suggests that in 2014 tourism provided for over 2,500 full time equivalent jobs in the District, which equated to approximately 7% of overall employment in the District. The total value of the tourism industry for the District equated to almost £200 million in 2014.

4.61 The District has many attractive facilities to suit a range of interests. These include Epping Forest, Waltham Abbey Church and gardens, the Lee Valley Regional Park, historic North Weald Airfield, Greensted Church, the Royal Gunpowder Mills and the market towns of Chipping Ongar, Epping and Waltham Abbey. The White Water Centre, constructed for the 2012 Olympics, and just over the District border in the Lea Valley near Waltham Abbey, could also be a catalyst in the medium to long-term to encourage sport and other tourism-related activities in the locality. There is a comparatively low supply of visitor accommodation in relation to potential demand.

Evidence Base

- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 2: Ensuring the vitality of town centres;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 3: Supporting a prosperous rural economy;
- Economic Impact of Tourism (Destination Research, 2014);
- Economic and employment evidence to support the Local Plan and Economic Development Strategy (Hardisty Jones, September 2015);
- Lee Valley White Water Centre Economic Development Study (Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners, 2011);
- Lee Valley Park Development Framework (Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, January 2011);
- Area 5 proposals for The Waterlands: King George V Reservoir to Rammey Marsh (Lee Valley Regional Park Authority 2013);
- Tourism: Jobs and Growth – The Economic Contribution of the Tourism Economy in the UK (Deloite November 2013);
- Epping Forest Hotel Investment Fact Sheets (Visit Essex January 2010);
- Epping Forest District Visitor Accommodation Needs Assessment Phase 1 (Hotel Solutions August 2016).

What you told us?

4.62 Responses received from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- support for developing leisure and tourism uses to provide further employment;
- opportunity to raise the profile of the Upper Lee Valley as a more appealing leisure destination and link to sports facilities at the Lee Valley White Water Centre to create a regional centre that would attract visitors, including potential for associated overnight accommodation;
- potential for the Epping Ongar Railway to develop to provide a significant leisure facility;
- there is demand for residential boats/moorings on Rivers Lea and Stort;
- need to ensure that any growth protects the Essex Way and 81 mile public footpath that starts at Epping Station;
- visitor and educational opportunities are provided by the key heritage assets at Waltham Abbey Gardens, Royal Gunpowder Mills and Royal Gunpowder Park;
- the Local Plan is important in terms of the protection, enhancement, development and management of the Regional Park and public enjoyment;
- there is a lack of hotel and visitor accommodation in the District to allow growth in staying tourism. There is a need to look at breadth of accommodation provision and potential – including high quality hotels, budget/ limited service hotels, B&Bs, touring caravanning and camping provision and self-catering. Pubs with rooms should be supported to help support the viability of pubs;
- Debden and Loughton are large settlements with no hotel;
- we should consider Sheering and links to Stansted but do not want hotel in the Green Belt to be a car park for the airport;
- Waltham Abbey as a heritage market town possibly B&B in Waltham Abbey (Museum); possible hotel in Theydon Bois – close to Epping Forest, tourist lodges in High Beach;
- the small museum at North Weald Airfield has scope for expansion drawing on the radar history;
- there is a lack of hotels/B&Bs in North East of District – in reach of Epping Ongar Railway, Secret Nuclear Bunker, Ongar Town;
- possible accommodation for construction and healthcare industries;
- additional accommodation will provide jobs and an opportunity to support the local economy through more overnight stays;
- there is concern to protect against the loss of visitor accommodation to higher value uses, in particular residential;
- restrictions on development in Epping Forest due to legislation make the provision of visitor accommodation, attractions and facilities there difficult; and
- some complaints from business about insufficient accommodation.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Preferred Approach

4.63 The Council considers that there is clear potential to develop the tourism sector locally, drawing on the 'green and unique' character of the District whilst continuing to protect and enhance the quality of the District's environment. There is commitment to support the sector through the promotion of and improving access to, a wide range of existing attractions in the District.

4.64 The Economic and Employment evidence in 2015 based on economic forecasting suggested that there was scope for the development of 150 bedspaces over the new Local Plan period, but was not based on any market research. The Council however has ambitions to exceed this target with a more proactive approach and has commissioned further work to fully understand the potential demand within the District for visitor accommodation. This ambition has gained momentum in recent years with the formation of a District-wide tourism group comprising a wide range of stakeholders.

4.65 It is estimated that tourism is worth £198m to the local economy and that the sector is responsible for 2,535 FTE jobs in the District which equates to 7.4% of local employment (2014 figures). The market is currently dominated by day visitors, with 3.2 million day visitors compared to 169,000 staying visitors, only half of whom used paid accommodation (2014). The lack of visitor accommodation is a factor here, and increased provision an opportunity to grow these higher value staying visitor markets.

4.66 Both Epping Forest (4.3 million visits each year) and the Lee Valley Regional Park (LVRP) provide direct green links into the area from London and offers leisure and recreation activities. LVRP's proposals for Area 5 within its Park Development Framework seek to provide a range of short stay accommodation within the Park including hotel, hostel, holiday village, touring caravan, camping and short term mooring. The Council is working with Lee Valley Regional Park Authority as part of the One Epping Forest Local Strategic Partnership on a tourism strategy.

4.67 The District also boasts a built heritage with for instance, Greensted Church - reputedly the oldest wooden church in the world, Copped Hall which staged the first performance of Shakespeare's Mid-Summer Night's Dream and the Epping Ongar Heritage Railway.

4.68 The need to continue to protect and enhance the quality of the District's environment, whilst also taking the opportunity to make the most of the District's assets is recognised. The visitor economy is central to achieving the objective to support the expansion of tourism in the District through the promotion of, and improving access to, a wide range of existing attractions in the District including Epping Forest, the Lee Valley Regional Park, the Royal Gunpowder Mills site, the historic towns, village centres and countryside.

Tourism on the Epping Ongar Railway

4.69 The District currently has a limited stock of hotel and visitor accommodation, and a number of low quality hotels that have seen little recent investment. Key markets for accommodation in the District are business visitors and contract workers for hotels during the week; people attending weddings and family events; people visiting friends and family; leisure tourists using the District as a base for visiting London; people taking part in outdoor sports and recreation, particularly in the Lee Valley Regional Park; and those escaping from London for a rural break. The Visitor Accommodation Needs Assessment notes that these are all markets that are set to grow over the Plan period.

4.70 The types of visitor accommodation that would be suitable in the District encompass a wide range including, but not exclusively hotels and inns, camping, caravan, activity holiday centres, holiday lodges, camping pod sites, wedding venues with accommodation and youth hostels.

4.71 Whilst tourism is a key sector of the local economy, its growth may also raise challenges for the environment and for local communities. High numbers of visitors can put pressure on some locations in terms of their tranquillity, appearance and by physical erosion. Increased visitor traffic could result in increased congestion on certain routes, and car parking difficulties can affect the environment, as well as local peoples' and visitors' experiences of the area. It is therefore essential that growth in the tourism sector is based upon sustainable visitor attractions. Such attractions retain the economic and social advantages of tourism development while having minimal impact on the environment and the local community through reducing, or mitigating any undesirable impacts on the natural, historic, cultural or social environment to balance the needs of the visitors with those of the destination.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Draft Policy E 4 The Visitor Economy

A. Opportunities for the sustainable development of the visitor economy will be supported where they are of a scale, type and appearance appropriate to the locality and provide local economic benefits, through the following measures:

i) Support for the development of high quality visitor accommodation in terms of new hotels in settlements, accommodation linked to outdoor sport and activity hubs in the Lee Valley Regional Park, and rural accommodation of an appropriate scale and type that makes use of existing buildings and strengthens existing rural leisure businesses;

ii) Support for the upgrading of existing visitor attractions, visitor centres and development of appropriate new ones;

iii) the retention and improvement of existing visitor accommodation and venues unless there is proof that there is no market interest in acquisition and investment to allow continued profitable operation;

iv) encourage sustainable tourism in rural areas. This will include better linkages between the towns and rural surroundings; and the promotion of opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the Lee Valley Regional Park and Epping Forest while recognising the importance of conserving and enhancing the cultural heritage of the area, as assets that form the basis of the tourist industry here;

v) support a year-round visitor economy while ensuring the facility remains for visitor use;

vi) support the improvement of sustainable transport opportunities for visitors and encourage the use of sustainable transport modes to reduce the impact of visitors on the highway network; and

vii) encourage local food and produce and appropriate tourism development that supports rural business and farm diversification.

Alternative Options	
Continue with current planning policies.	The existing Local Plan policies RST1 and RST7 permit the provision of facilities and are generally NPPF compliant but do not take a proactive approach and are very general.
Provide allocations potentially on strategic or mixed use development sites as well as a criteria based policy	There were few sites put forward in the SLAA for visitor accommodation and the Council is not currently proposing to allocate sites for visitor accommodation.

Transport

4.72 This section of the Draft Local Plan sets out the Council's Preferred Approach to managing growth in car travel and its linked impacts including on the local economy and on the environment and communities. The draft policies seek to widen the choice of travel opportunities using public transport, walking and cycling. The Council is also considering the development of residential car parking standards which are specific to Epping Forest District to reflect local information on car ownership and the need to make best use of land. It also sets out how land will be safeguarded for future transport schemes and seeks to protect petrol filling stations, which are an important, but diminishing, local facility.

Draft Policy T 1: Sustainable Transport Choices

The Issue

4.73 The District has a very varied character ranging from edge of London to rural and there is very variable access to public transport, walking and cycling opportunities even in some more urban areas.

4.74 The District is bisected the M11 and M25 motorways which by are key parts of the strategic roads infrastructure. Incidents on both of these roads very quickly can result in impacts on the operation of the local road network within the District. The reverse can also happen. The consequences of this include:

- potential road safety issues, when the slip roads cannot clear resulting in stacking back onto the motorways;
- impacts on journey time reliability for both residents and businesses; and
- slow moving traffic increasing impacts on air quality with resultant health consequences on both residents and the District's environmental assets, such as the Epping Forest.

4.75 The District's economy is such that there are high levels of both in and out commuting which puts pressure on the District's road network (at all levels) at peak periods, and also impacts on rail capacity (both national rail and London Underground networks). The London Underground Central Line terminates at Epping, and there are a number of other Central Line stations within the District. This is both a benefit to District residents and businesses but also has a downside. Because there are price differentials between the cost of travel on rail services and London Underground (the latter being cheaper), the London Underground stations are an attractor at peak hours for longer distance car trips by commuters. Not only does this impact on the Central Line's capacity but also adds to peak hour traffic congestion, and places on-street parking pressure on local roads.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

4.76 An initial analysis of traffic growth across the District Work has shown that even without development in the future, parts of the highway network will be operating over-capacity, in some cases by 2026 and in other cases by 2036. Whilst some junctions could be improved most physically cannot be improved or would have environmental consequences by doing so. For example, traffic congestion and delays that occur on the routes south of Epping could only be resolved by using land which forms part of the Forest. Delays and queuing affect economic productivity, increase air pollution and can sever local communities.

4.76 In 2008 road transport related co_2 emissions produced per person 4.77 per annum in Epping Forest was 1.66 tonnes. Whilst this is similar to the UK average, that average exceeds recognised UK air quality targets. Whilst traffic is not the only source of pollution, it plays a major role, and has local impacts on key road routes through the District.

4.78 The District, as in many other places, has an aging population where the car will, over time, become less feasible as a method of travel. Whilst car ownership had increased by 4.6% between 2001 and 2011 (as would be expected when taking into account an increase in the District's households and population over the same period and an increase in the number of younger people staying in the family home than previously), there were also some 15% of households that do not have access to a car.

4.79 Epping Forest District faces a number of challenges including:

- that for some communities, public transport, walking and cycling are not realistic options. Rural bus services are becoming less and less commercially viable and therefore cannot operate without receiving subsidy from Essex County Council, which is itself operating within an environment of significant financial challenges;
- that there is a need to recognise there will still be a need for new developments to accommodate the car. Research undertaken nationally has been inconclusive as to whether reducing car parking in new developments has any effect on car ownership and this appears to be backed up by, albeit somewhat dated, post-occupancy research undertaken relating to new residential developments that many households will still want to have access to a car. Environmental, road safety and community impacts occur if an appropriate balance is not adopted;
- the size of modern cars has increased and this has led to a need to increase the size of parking spaces in new development. This means that more land is needed to accommodate the same number of cars and puts pressure on needing to find additional land when planning for the number of homes that the District needs to deliver; and
- the level of car ownership across the District is varied ranging from 66.7% of homes in the Loughton Town Council area having no or 1 car through to 17.8% of homes in Theydon Garnon parish having no or 1 car.

Sustainable transport

Evidence Base

- Essex Highways Technical Note 1: Base year junction capacity modelling. (October 2013);
- Essex Highways Technical Note 2: Spreadsheet model development, latest study position and next steps. (January 2014);
- Essex Highways Technical Note 3: Early-Stage Forecast Modelling Results – Background Growth Only and Initial Local Plan 'Scenario'. (May 2014);
- Essex Highways Technical Note 4: Forecast Modelling Results from 7 x Development Scenario Tests. (June 2014);
- Essex Highways Technical Note 5: Preliminary Mitigation Measures Modelling. (July 2014);
- Essex Highways Technical Note 6: Sustainable Accessibility Mapping and Analysis. (December 2014);
- Essex Highways Technical Note 7: Sustainable Accessibility Ranking, Mapping and Analysis. (April 2015);
- Essex Highways Technical Note 8: Sensitivity Testing / Car Ownership & Use Mapping. (June 2016);
- Baseline analysis of highway conditions including detailed assessment of key junctions Accessibility analysis for proposed sites to assist in site selection (Essex Highways, October 2013).
- Census 2011 Transport related data;
- Residential Car Parking Research: Department for Communities and Local Government 2007;
- Epping Forest District Council Planning Application Validation Requirements Checklist.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

What you told us?

4.80 Responses received from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- concerns about traffic growth and the impacts this would have on communities, the environment and health;
- concerns regarding the capacity of motorway junctions and the local road network to accommodate development;
- the need to put in place a suitable strategy to ensure that the M11 and M25 motorways are left no worse off;
- the need for the provision of a new junction on the M11 between junctions 7 and 8;
- impact of increases in traffic through Epping Forest;
- a need to take the Epping Forest Transport Strategy 2008 into account;
- several bypasses were suggested – for Epping, Nazeing, North Weald, Ongar and Roydon;
- residents from Roydon and Lower Sheering/Sheering expressed concern about the impact of level crossings on traffic movements;
- the decline of rural bus services and the impact of HGVs on rural roads (and the need for better enforcement of weight restrictions) were also frequently mentioned;
- extensions to the Central Line were suggested – to Bishop's Stortford, Chelmsford, Harlow, North Weald Airfield, Ongar and Stansted;
- detailed comments on transport/highway issues in relation to individual settlements;
- people felt that the difference in travel costs between national rail services and the Central Line needed to be addressed – to reduce overcrowding on the latter and pressure on car parks in towns and villages with Central Line stations and local peak hour traffic levels;
- the Central Line has a shortfall in capacity westbound into the City in the AM peak. Additional demand on trains from the east of the line would still be able to board trains, but the impact would have knock-on impacts on inner London users who would have longer wait times for trains that they are able to board. Until Crossrail opens, it will not be possible to know the true impact of crowding relief on the Central Line. In addition some stations have low levels of entry and exit which may require improvements to facilities;
- opportunities to expand existing Transport for London owned station car parks;
- opportunities to widen the use of the Epping to Ongar railway to provide commuter rail services;
- detailed comments on transport needs and impacts as a result of development in relation to individual settlements and communities across the District;
- a need to consider the impacts and opportunities that exist across administrative boundaries;
- the need to improve public transport reliability and frequency;
- should focus on areas where existing public transport opportunities can absorb more activity;
- further increases in capacity could have other impacts on associated roads, and congestion at junctions and level crossings;
- need to consider the feasibility and costs associated with improvements – developers should make a reasonable contribution. Need to secure investment for the future;
- need to increase cycling facilities – currently low level of cycling because of safety issues and high volumes of traffic;
- encourage more home working;
- Park and Ride at North Weald should not be pursued;
- pursue a 'garden village' approach where transport routes are pre-planned;
- need to assume that car ownership will continue to increase and need to make sure that an adequate number of car parking spaces are provided to avoid long term consequences. If necessary more land should be made available to provide for this;
- needs to be sufficient parking for the size of residential unit and size of spaces should reflect the fact that cars have increased in size;
- any bespoke standards should look at different standards for different locations such as town centres and rural areas;
- Essex County Council standards provide a useful starting point;
- should provide charging points for electric vehicles;
- need to provide supporting mechanisms such as introduction of Residential Parking Zones around new developments, restriction of parking of commercial vehicles and providing car club spaces as an alternative to private parking spaces;
- parking spaces should be located close to homes/convenient and not to the rear.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Preferred Approach

4.81 Recognising that there is a need to manage the growth in car travel the Local Plan has the potential to widen sustainable transport choices and encourage reductions in car use by:

- considering existing and future sustainable transport opportunities as part of the criteria when identifying sites for housing and employment;
- ensuring the provision of facilities and services in new strategic developments to provide high levels of 'self-containment'; and
- securing the provision of, or financial support for, bus services, and walking and cycling facilities.

4.82 Taking such an approach has a wider benefit in that it can also provide access to new transport opportunities for existing residents, thus reducing increases in background traffic growth, would make a contribution to reducing car-related pollution levels and improve access to services for those who do not have a car or who are unable to drive.

4.83 The delivery of strategic development around Harlow is a key part of the Council's strategy for the future delivery of new homes within the District, and to support the opportunities that Harlow's Enterprise Zone offers to create new jobs, as part of its partnership approach with Harlow, Uttlesford, and East Hertfordshire Councils. A key part of the infrastructure needs to support this strategy is the provision of a new junction (J7a) on the M11 motorway. Demonstrating to Highways England that positive steps are being taken to reduce car travel within the District is an important part of the business case that the Council and its partners will need to present. The preferred approach to delivering sustainable transport choices helps to support that business case.

4.84 As set out above there are issues around the provision of car parking in new development. The Council believes that there are opportunities to take a more locally focused approach to car parking standards across the District. It is therefore proposing to develop specific residential car parking standards for Epping Forest District. It is proposed that these parking standards will be developed based on:

- an understanding of differing levels of car ownership across the District;
- the different levels of current and future access to services and facilities across the District; and
- making better use of land through widening the use of 'unallocated' car parking within larger developments and looking at the need for providing on-site garage provision.

4.85 In order to encourage the use of low emission vehicles to support improvements in air quality the Council will be working in partnership with Essex County Council, and through the development of its own residential car parking standards, to achieve the appropriate provision of electric vehicle charging points, particularly on strategic housing and large scale commercial and retail developments. The Council's proposed approach will be tested through further viability assessment to ensure that such proposals will not impact on the delivery of development.

4.86 Some of the issues raised through the Community Choices Consultation are not within the remit of the Local Plan to address. These include matters such as:

- the differential pricing between rail and London Underground services;
- the issues arising from the down time of barriers at rail crossings; and
- the impact of HGVs on the local road network.

4.87 The Council recognises that these are important issues that need to be addressed wherever possible and will continue to pursue these matters with partners including Essex County Council, Network Rail and the Train Operating Companies and Transport for London.

Draft Policy T 1: Sustainable Transport Choices

A. The Council will work in partnership to promote a safe, efficient and convenient transport system which will:

i) build on the District's strategic location, through improvements to strategic road and rail connections to the wider area;

ii) promote transport choice, through improvements to public transport services and supporting infrastructure, and providing coherent and direct cycling and walking networks to provide a genuine alternative to the car and facilitate a modal shift;

iii) promote improved access to the two town and four district centres and rail stations by all modes of transport and ensure good integration between transport modes;

iv) manage congestion and provide for consistent journey times;

v) promote and improve safety, security and healthy lifestyles; and

vi) improve the efficiency of the local highway network.

B. Development should seek to minimise the need to travel, promote opportunities for sustainable transport modes, improve accessibility to services and support the transition to a low carbon future.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

C. Development proposals will be permitted that:

i) integrate into existing transport networks;

ii) provide safe, suitable and convenient access for all potential users;

iii) provide an on-site layouts that are compatible for all potential users with appropriate parking and servicing provision; and

iv) do not result in inappropriate traffic generation or compromise highway safety.

D. Development proposals that generate significant amounts of movement, as identified in the Council's Planning Application Validation Requirements Checklist, must be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment and will normally be required to provide a Travel Plan. Development proposals which generate a significant number of heavy goods vehicle movements will be required to demonstrate by way of a Routing Management Plan that no severe impacts are caused to the efficient and safe operation of the road network and no material harm caused to the living conditions of residents.

E. Development should be of high quality, sustainable in design, construction and layout, offering maximum flexibility in the choice of travel modes, including walking and cycling, and with accessibility for all potential users.

F. Development will be permitted where it:

i) does not have a severe impact on the operation, safety or accessibility to the local or strategic highway networks;

ii) mitigates impacts on the local or strategic highway networks, arising from the development itself or the cumulative effects of development, through the provision of, or contributions towards, necessary and relevant transport improvements, including those secured by legal agreement;

iii) protects and where possible enhances access to public rights of way;

iv) provides appropriate parking provision, in terms of amount, design and layout and storage arrangements, in accordance with adopted Parking Standards; and

v) ensures that all development proposals provide a co-ordinated and comprehensive scheme that does not prejudice the future development or design of suitable adjoining sites.

G. In order to encourage the use of low emission vehicles to support improvements in air quality the Council will be working in partnership with Essex County Council, and through the development of its own residential car parking standards, to achieve the appropriate provision of electric vehicle charging points, particularly on strategic housing and large scale commercial and retail developments.

Alternative Options	
Make full provision for increases in traffic growth on the road network and continue with Essex County Council Residential Car Parking Standards	Work has been undertaken to understand the impacts of further traffic growth across the District both with and without development, and the potential junction improvements needed if a 'predict and provide' approach were taken regarding traffic growth. Whilst there are opportunities in some cases to make junction improvements for the main part there is insufficient land available within the control of Essex County Council as Highway Authority to be able to guarantee implementation. Land outside of the Highway boundary is also constrained, including by land within the Epping Forest. Consequently the road network would become further congested with increases in travel times and reduced journey time reliability.

4.88 Consequently, taking such an approach would not support the efficient operation of the local economy, the need to address air quality issues, provide for healthy lifestyles, reduce community severance, and improve access to services for those who do not have access to a car.

4.89 Evidence has shown that there is a significant variance of car ownership and access to services by means other than the car. In addition the need to accommodate an increase in the size of the modern car means that more land is needed to accommodate car ownership needs. The Essex County Council Residential Car Parking Standards take a 'one-size fits all' approach to provision. To continue with the current standards would therefore not reflect local circumstances and provide the opportunity to take a more considered and balanced approach to the provision of residential car parking, and would result in the need for more land for development in an area which is highly constrained by the Green Belt, and environmental assets including the Epping Forest.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Draft Policy T 2: Safeguarding of routes and facilities

The Issue

4.90 The Council's preferred approach is to support using sustainable transport choices to manage the impacts of traffic growth. However, there will still be a need to make some improvements to the local and strategic highway network, including the provision of a new Junction 7a to the M11 motorway. In addition land may also be needed for improvements to train, bus, cycling and walking networks, to improve connectivity and/or capacity. It is important the Council ensures that the implementation of such schemes is not prevented as a result of permitting development which would prevent such routes.

4.91 Monitoring undertaken by the Petrol Retailers Association (PRA) identified that 886 forecourts closed between 2008 and 2013, about 10 per cent of all those in the UK, with the loss of almost 6,000 jobs. The PRA has advised that more than a third of these were in rural areas, and it was of the view that this creates the risk of "fuel deserts" in isolated areas where people depend on their vehicles to get around. Concerns regarding closures have also been raised by Government following the commissioning of a report into the matter in 2013.

Evidence Base

- Essex County Council's 'The Essex Transport Strategy: the Local Transport Plan for Essex' covering the period 2011-2026. (June 2011).
- Highways England London to Leeds (East) Route Strategy 2015-2020 and Road Investment Strategy and Delivery Plan 2015-2020.

What you told us?

4.92 Responses received from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- the need to provide for improvements in transport infrastructure, including capacity; and
- the need to provide for a new junction on the M11 (a Junction 7A).

Preferred Approach

4.93 A number of transport investment opportunities have already been identified within the District. The Council recognises that there is a need to ensure that the implementation of identified schemes and those that may be identified over the course of the Local Plan period, which are needed to support the delivery of future development, the success of the local and wider economy and on the well-being of residents should not be fettered. Consequently, there is a need to ensure that land is protected from development which would impact on the successful delivery of such schemes.

Local bus service

Draft Policy T 2: Safeguarding of routes and facilities

A. Land required for proposed transport schemes as identified in Plans and Programmes including Essex County Council's Highways and Transport Investment Programmes, the Highways England Route Investment Strategies, Network Rail Investment Strategies and Transport for London Investment Strategies will be protected from developments which would prevent their proper implementation.

B. Local Filling Stations and supporting facilities such as car repair facilities will be protected from redevelopment for alternative uses unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated that warrant their loss.

Alternative Options	
To not include a safeguarding policy	To not include a safeguarding policy could result in the inability to implement key transport schemes needed to support the delivery of housing, as well as the economic and social well-being of the District. In addition if a policy was not included it could result in the need to secure land through Compulsory Purchase mechanisms resulting in an increase in scheme costs and delays in implementation and would not allow for the protection of important local facilities.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Development Management Policies

4.94 The following draft development management policies apply to the whole of the District unless specific locations are indicated within them. They cover four broad categories that interlink and all applications for development will be judged against the full suite. The categories are:

- natural environment and green infrastructure;
- historic environment;
- design; and
- climate change and environmental policies.

Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure

4.95 Draft Policy SP 6 sets the context for Draft Policies DM 1 – DM 6 which reinforce the approach of this plan to provide a network of multifunctional green infrastructure that both avoids harm to precious habitat and species and strengthens the biodiversity assets of the District, addresses the impacts of development on landscape character, responds to the key assets of the Epping Forest and Lee Valley Regional Park, and provides for open spaces for people and other species to thrive.

Draft Policy DM 1 Habitat protection and improving biodiversity

The Issue

4.96 The District is rich in biodiversity resources at an international, national and local scale of importance. In particular, ancient woodland, veteran trees and water habitats such as water meadow and rivers are prevalent in the District. These include Special Areas of Conservation designated for their habitat features and Special Protection Areas designated for their support of important bird species (both of which are European sites), national Sites of Special Scientific Interest and local nature reserves and local wildlife sites. National and international legislation requires that these are protected to differing degrees. National policy requires the Council to take a positive approach to achieving net gains in biodiversity thus improving the quality and extent of land assets that are of biodiversity value.

What you told us?

4.97 Responses from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- key elements of a strategy for the natural environment includes the care of species habitats and enabling the movement of mammals, birds and insects;
- not enough emphasis on the protection of wildlife sites, hedgerows and protected trees, whilst the value of local wildlife sites should be emphasised and consideration given to how these can link in with schemes such as the Living Landscape;
- policies should actively encourage the creation, restoration and enhancement of habitats including river restoration, deculverting, buffer zone creation and protection, wetland creation and water quality improvements;
- the importance of Epping Forest in terms of its contribution to biodiversity and the ecological heritage of the Lee Valley Regional Park should be fundamental to the strategy of the Plan;
- a frequent comment was that there should be no development on the Green Belt because this affects biodiversity and that biodiversity will be negatively impacted by additional development in the District in particular building should not occur on areas of specific interest to certain species and sensitive habitats;
- it may be that biodiversity could be enhanced by reducing the emissions from cars and power generation;
- open space should be enhanced to encourage wildlife and older species introduced to hedgerows;
- off-site mitigation of the impacts of development on habitats should only be applied in exceptional circumstances and access ensured for species; and
- compensation for the impacts of development on habitats and species should include ecological assessments and monitoring of species, alternative green space and new habitat, and locally accessible green areas in large developments.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Key Evidence

- Council Directive 1992/43/EEC: Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora;
- Directive 2009/147/EC: conservation of wild birds;
- Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat. Ramsar, 2/2/1971 as amended 3.12.1982;
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981;
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990;
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006;
- 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services' – DEFRA 2011;
- UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework JNCC and DEFRA 2012;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment;
- Planning Policy Guidance: Natural Environment;
- Circular 06/2005 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation;
- 'The National Pollinator Strategy: for bees and other pollinators in England' - DEFRA 2014;
- European Site Conservation Objectives for Epping Forest SAC (UK0012720) Natural England 2014;
- European Site Conservation Objectives for Lee Valley SPA (UK9012111);
- Essex Biodiversity Action plan 2010-2020 , Essex Wildlife Trust 2011;
- Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS) Review EECOS for EFDC 2010;
- Epping Forest District Council Local List of Validation Requirements.

Preferred Approach

4.98 The Council values the high degree of biodiversity in the District and takes its responsibilities seriously in regard to its protection. The fragmentation of habitats is particularly damaging to achieving the aim of achieving net gains in biodiversity and linking habitats is important in this respect. In part due to its proximity to London, the pressure from infill development in the metropolitan area of London and into Essex makes protection of biodiversity assets all the more important here. Some fragile ecosystems in the District suffer both from visitor pressure and air pollution from traffic fumes (Nitrous Oxide). The impact of climate change on biodiversity is a key consideration and means that species need space to move as conditions alter.

Local wildlife

4.99 In order to comply with national policy it is necessary to recognise that under certain circumstances the harm caused by a development to biodiversity can and should be mitigated against and/ or compensated for, and as a last resort offset. Such measures include the provision of new habitats, relocation of species and development details to encourage or discourage species movement e.g. toad crossings or cat-proof fencing.

4.100 In order to understand the impact of development proposals on protected species and habitat, and potentially valuable habitat for protected species, it may be necessary to require detailed ecological survey information and an impact assessment to enable the Council to judge the proposal and how effective measures to mitigate or compensate for harm might be. This will depend on the level of existing data. The starting point for requiring a Biodiversity Survey and Report is set out in Epping Forest District Council's Local List of Validation Requirements.

4.101 The design and layout of development should enable net gains to the biodiversity of the District to result from the maintenance, enhancement, restoration or addition to habitats, green networks and corridors. Therefore the Council expects all development to contribute to the delivery of net biodiversity gain.

Draft Policy DM 1 Habitat protection and improving biodiversity

A. All development should seek to deliver net biodiversity gain. Development proposals should seek to integrate biodiversity through their design and layout, including, where appropriate, through the provision of connections between networks.

B. Development proposals must protect and enhance natural habitats and areas of biodiversity, and should not negatively impact upon areas of international or national designation.

C. Development proposals which are likely to have a significant adverse impact on a locally designated site will only be permitted where the benefits of the proposed development clearly outweigh the value of the ecological feature adversely affected and there are no appropriate alternatives.

D. In exceptional circumstances where the adverse impacts of development on natural habitat and biodiversity are unavoidable, the adverse impacts must be proportionately addressed in accordance with the hierarchy of: mitigation; compensation in the form of habitat; and finally offsetting within the locality. When appropriate, conditions will be put in place to require that the owner ensures that suitable monitoring is undertaken and to make sure that any mitigation, compensation and offsetting is effective.

E. The loss, deterioration or fragmentation of irreplaceable habitats, such as ancient woodland, will be strongly resisted by the Council, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location can be demonstrated to outweigh the loss.

F. Where there are grounds to believe that a Protected Species, Priority Species or Priority Habitat may be affected by proposed development, applicants must provide survey information and site assessment to establish the extent of potential impact.

Alternative Options	
Retain existing policies	The existing policies were adopted prior to the publication of the NPPF, PPG and Directive 2009/147/EC. They are not all complaint with the NPPF and there is a need to review and update.
No policies	This would conflict with legislation and national policies and guidance.

River Stort at Roydon

A local pond

Draft Policy DM 2 Landscape character and ancient landscapes

The Issue

4.102 The predominant land use, by area, of the District is agriculture and the countryside provides the setting of its hamlets, villages and towns in addition to providing part of the setting for London. The mosaic patchwork of countryside, ancient woodland, hedgerow and trees (including many veteran trees) is a distinctive characteristic of the landscape, as are the river valleys. Therefore the matter of landscape character forms an important consideration in planning for the District's future development, and the Council seeks to maintain a careful balance between managing change to the landscape character and providing much needed new development.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

What you told us

4.103 Responses from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- the preservation of the mosaic of fields, hedges and trees of what was or still is farmland particularly in or near sensitive landscape sites and sites adjacent to SSSIs is key;
- the need to consider landscape in managing proposals for development - a key consideration in any proposal for development – it is integral to the local character and value of the District's countryside;
- use of the underlying landscapes of an area which if drawn out, can make a direct and powerful contribution to 'sense of place' and local distinctiveness (Natural England call this a 'natural signature');
- careful management of the impact of settlement edge development on rights of way, the landscape view, biodiversity and landscape character is needed;
- the particular importance of landscape close to villages and towns as it is considered to alleviate the impact of urbanisation;
- identify the features of the landscape of the District that are integral to local character and the openness of the countryside, alongside promotion of beneficial uses in the Green Belt;
- the aspects of landscape character considered to be particularly important in the District are: ridges and valleys (buffers against development should be provided here); ancient landscapes including the Redoubt and Ongar Park Farm; the hedgerow and woodland patchwork of the District; urban open spaces giving settlements character; veteran, protected, avenues and roadside trees; and
- the preference for edge of settlement development with respect to landscape was to: acknowledge the existing landscape and maintain existing access to green spaces; take care with building heights to develop sympathetically with the settlement and countryside; to carefully consider ancient landscapes; to provide permeable development so that access to the countryside is provided.

Key Evidence

- European Landscape Convention 1.3.2007;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Core planning principles;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment;
- Planning Practice Guidance: Natural Environment;
- National Landscape Character Areas - Natural England;
- Epping Forest District Council Landscape Character Assessment (Chris Blandford Associates, 2010);
- Epping Forest District Council Settlement Edge Landscape Sensitivity Study (Chris Blandford Associates, 2010);
- Epping Forest District Historic Characterisation Study (Essex County Council, 2015).

Preferred Approach

4.104 The District sits on a plateau, immediately north of the basin in which greater London is largely contained. The plateau is cut by the 2 main river systems, the Lea/Stort and the Roding. Soils have been influenced by glaciation and erosion, but are generally London clay, with boulder clay to the north and some overlays of glacial sands and gravels. Particular factors shaping the current landscape have include the relatively low rainfall, that it is underlain by London clay, together with the effects of past glaciation on the topography, creating the gently sloping landform, with its wooded ridges, crowned by the forests of Epping and Hainault. The gently undulating landscapes of south west Essex are a significant contribution to landscape character in the District. Given its location, climate and topography the main factor shaping the District's landscape character outside the urban areas is the presence or absence of trees, as influenced by farming practice.

4.105 National policy requires that authorities set out their strategic policies to deliver climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscape (NPPF paragraph 156).

4.106 Pressures on the landscape from development mirror those outlined under draft policy DM 1 whilst the long term impacts of climate change on the landscape, particularly trees, is uncertain some species will suffer and others benefit. The need to ensure meaningful tree preservation and space for the next generation of large trees is critical to the future landscape as well as providing for shade in a changing climate, and the species they support.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

4.107 The future development pattern of the District must recognise its setting, and respond to the particular landscape characteristics which vary in their sensitivity to change. Individual developments should be designed in a manner that minimises their impact on the landscape through careful design, materials and landscaping. In addition, each individual development should actively seek to contribute to the immediate and wider landscape (as appropriate) by considerate and careful landscaping of proposals. This includes the provision of permeable areas of planting for the purposes of reducing flood risk. The landscape sensitivity studies and Historic Environment Characterisation Study, undertaken on behalf of the Council, represent key evidence in this respect against which to measure the impact of proposed development and its design. The draft policy applies equally to sites within built up areas and those on the settlement edges.

Draft Policy DM 2 Landscape Character and Ancient Landscapes

A. Development proposals will be permitted where applicants are able to demonstrate that the proposal will not, directly or indirectly, cause significant harm to landscape character or the nature and physical appearance of ancient landscapes.

B. Proposals should:

i) be sensitive to their setting in the landscape, and its local distinctiveness and characteristics;

ii) use techniques to minimise impact on, or enhance the appearance of, the landscape by:

- taking into account existing landscape features from the outset;
- careful landscaping of the site; and
- the sensitive use of design, layout, materials and external finishes.

Alternative Options	
Retain existing policies	The existing policies were adopted prior to the publication of the NPPF and PPG. In addition more up-to date assessment work has been undertaken, and this plan delivers significantly more development than the previous plan. There is therefore a need to review and update to ensure the policies are fit for the purpose of this plan.
No policies	This would conflict with legislation and national policies and guidance.

Draft Policy DM 3 Epping Forest SAC, and the Lee Valley SPA

The Issue

4.108 The Epping Forest and Lea Valley form significant areas of land in the District that are valuable for many reasons. They are the two sites that contain land subject to international protection for its biodiversity value. The Epping Forest contains a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) due to its habitat value for a range of plants and animals and the Lea Valley contains a Special Protection Area (SPA) and is a Ramsar Convention on Wetlands Site both of which relate to its importance as a bird habitat. Known as 'European Sites' they are afforded protection in that detailed assessments (Habitats Regulation Assessments) are required of any development plans and proposals likely to give rise to significant impact on the integrity of the sites. These sites form a critical part of the biodiversity asset and green and blue infrastructure of the District. Linking the two areas is a key element of the positive strategy of providing a green infrastructure network that supports people and wildlife and manages pressure on the sites. Draft Policy DM 4 is also particularly important in this regard.

What you told us?

4.109 Responses from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- the importance of the Epping Forest in terms of its size (5% of the land area of the District plus 2% buffer land) and its contribution to biodiversity should be fundamental to the strategy of the Plan which should recognise the context of the Forest in relation to the Green Belt and the networks of green infrastructure possible. The Forest's 9.2 square miles receives some 4.3million visitors per year and it is a major public recreation and tourism destination for London and Essex. Much of its appeal is associated with its natural character. Policy should be shaped by the strategic significance of the Forest and the protection of Epping Forest is a fundamental issue for the Council. Given the growing development pressures it is essential, in the view of the Conservators of the Forest that policy in relation to the Forest is strengthened;
- some 3,900 acres of the Lee Valley Regional Park (which is 4000 hectares in total) lies within the District including parts of the Lee Valley SPA and Ramsar site providing good opportunities to enjoy and learn about nature with good access for all mobility needs. The Local Plan needs to support the Park as a key component of the regions green infrastructure. The Lee Valley Regional Park Authority supports the development of more meaningful green spaces and wildlife links between the Park and Epping Forest;

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

- in line with some aspects of the NPPF there is a need to emphasise effective protection and enhancement of buffer lands around Epping Forest and increase the amount of buffer land;
- respect traditional land uses in the Forest (e.g. equestrian use at High Beach) and set up traditional businesses;
- actively support wildlife links between the Lea Valley and the Epping Forest; and
- Provide links between towns (in the east) and between the Lee Valley Regional Park and Epping Forest including cycleway.

Key Evidence

- European Landscape Convention 1.3.2007;
- Council Directive 92/43/EEC: Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora;
- Directive 2009/147/EC: Conservation of wild birds;
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006;
- 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services' – DEFRA 2011;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Core planning principles;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment;
- Planning Practice Guidance: Natural Environment;
- Circular 06/2005 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation;
- National Landscape Character Areas - Natural England;
- European Site Conservation Objectives for Epping Forest SAC (UK0012720) Natural England 2014;
- Epping Forest District Council Landscape Studies – Landscape Character Assessment 2010;
- Epping Forest District Council Settlement Edge Landscape Sensitivity Study 2009;
- Epping Forest District Historic Characterisation Study 2015;
- Epping Forest District Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment 2012;
- Epping Forest - the next 10 years City of London 2015;
- Epping Forest District Council Local List of Validation Requirements;

Preferred Approach

4.110 The Epping Forest and the Lea Valley are critical characteristics of the District for their landscape and contributions to biodiversity and recreation. The Forest in particular also experiences considerable pressure on its habitats from visitors and road traffic pollution as well as air pollution from London. The Forest is adjoined by buffer lands purchased by the City of London to protect the boundaries of the Forest from encroachment by urban development. These buffers can also act to relieve recreational pressure on the Forest as can the provision of alternative green spaces (Draft Policy DM 4). The potential impact of development on the Epping Forest can arise from development some distance from the Forest itself, particularly in terms of the impact of air pollution from traffic generated on its sensitive ecosystems.

4.111 The Council has a duty to protect the Epping Forest SAC and Lee Valley SPA as well as enhance them and increase the biodiversity that they support. The Council takes its responsibilities seriously with regard to the protection of these sites and will ensure that Habitats Regulation Assessments of development proposals likely to affect these sites are undertaken. This responsibility applies to European sites that are outside the boundary of the District but may be affected by development within the District.

4.112 As part of the approach to a green infrastructure network the links between the Lee Valley Regional Park and the Epping Forest have been identified as particularly important to improve upon and consolidate. These linkages are intended to improve access for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, as well as space for wildlife and plant species. By improving links to other green spaces, and the quality of those green spaces and links, the human pressure on these assets is intended to be more widely spread, with the aim of being less harmful to biodiversity.

4.113 The starting point for requiring a Biodiversity Survey and Report is set out in Epping Forest District Council's Local List of Validation Requirements.

Draft Policy DM 3 Epping Forest SAC and the Lee Valley SPA

A. The Council will expect all relevant development proposals to assist in the conservation and enhancement of the biodiversity, character, appearance and landscape setting of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Lee Valley Special Protection Area (SPA).

B. Where appropriate the Council will expect development to enhance the green links between the two internationally important sites of the Epping Forest SAC and the Lee Valley SPA and to ensure easy and sustainable access opportunities to new and existing green spaces across the District. Links between the District's other green spaces, the Epping Forest and the Lea Valley will be strengthened and enhanced, where possible, to provide safe green corridors for people and wildlife.

Alternative Options	
Retain existing policies	The current policy provides only a limited amount of detail regarding the key considerations that will be used to assess development proposals which relate to Epping Forest, its environs and the Lea Valley. It was adopted prior to the publication of the NPPF and PPG which address the historic value of these assets as well as their nature conservation importance.
No policies	The nature conservation importance and historic value of the Epping Forest and Lea Valley coupled with the pressures placed upon them, are such that a specific policy is required.

Draft Policy DM 4 Suitable Accessible Natural Green Spaces and Corridors

The Issue

4.114 The Council has a duty to protect the Epping Forest SAC as well as increase the biodiversity that it supports. This can be achieved using many measures but an important approach is one of mitigation of, and compensation for, the impact of development on the Epping Forest SAC through the provision of suitable accessible natural green spaces and corridors. As part of the approach to a green infrastructure network these form important elements to divert visitors from the most sensitive Forest habitats.

What you told us?

4.115 Responses from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- the responses noted regarding Draft Policy DM 3 are relevant to this policy;
- where suitable provide alternative green space without damage to other ecosystems, and new habitat;
- compensation for the impacts of development on habitats and species should include ecological assessments and monitoring of species, alternative green space and new habitat, and locally accessible green areas in large developments.

Key Evidence

- Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora;
- Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds;
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006;
- 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services' – DERFRA 2011;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment;
- Planning Practice Guidance: Natural Environment;
- Circular 06/2005 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation;
- European Site Conservation Objectives for Epping Forest SAC (UK0012720) Natural England-2014;
- Epping Forest District Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment 2012.

Preferred Approach

4.116 In pursuit of protecting the vulnerable habitat of Epping Forest the Council seeks to provide alternative spaces and corridors that can relieve the recreational pressure on the Forest. It recognises that additional development in the District is likely to give rise to further visitor pressure on the Forest that needs to be mitigated. This can be achieved by increasing public access to land that is not in the Forest, and altering the character of existing open spaces and the links between open spaces. These linkages are intended to improve access for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, as well as provide space, including additional space for wildlife and plant species. This can be achieved for example, through the creation of more meadow land or indeed woodland, which can both contribute to the improvement of the naturalness of any green space. By increasing accessible natural green space and improving connections to other green spaces the human pressure on the Forest is intended to be more widely spread, with the aim of being less harmful to biodiversity. In addition, this provides an opportunity to create a net gain in biodiverse habitats.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

4.117 The suitability of natural greenspace and corridors will be dependent on a range of factors including location and the potential of the land to increase biodiversity value which relates to among other factors, soil type and rainfall.

4.118 Further work will be undertaken with partners, including Natural England, to understand, and identify, the 'sphere of influence' of users of the Epping Forest based on existing patterns, to provide clarity as to which additional developments would fall to be considered under this policy.

Draft Policy DM 4 Suitable Accessible Natural Green Space and Corridors

A. To mitigate against potential or identified adverse impacts of additional development on the Epping Forest SAC the Council will ensure the provision of Suitable Accessible Natural Green Spaces and Corridors (SANGSC) in relation to additional development. Providing appropriate SANGSC will involve:

i) providing new green spaces;

ii) improving access to green spaces;

iii) improving the naturalness of green spaces;

iv) improving connectivity between green spaces.

Alternative Options	
Retain existing policies	There is currently no policy which covers the issue of alternative accessible green space provision in relation to Epping Forest and its status as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
No policies	This would not comply with the need to provide a planning policy context for the securing of Suitable Accessible Natural Green Space and Corridors (SANGSC) in relation to Epping Forest.

Draft Policy DM 5 Green Infrastructure: Design of Development

The Issue

4.119 A strategy for the natural environment and green infrastructure is a key plank of the overall development strategy of this Local Plan. The strategic approach to green infrastructure is set out in Chapter 3 Draft Policy SP 6. The detailed implementation of that draft policy requires further guidance with respect to the Council's requirements in terms of specific development proposals.

What you told us?

4.120 Responses from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- the responses noted regarding Draft Policy SP 6 are relevant to this policy, those contained below emphasise some of the details that developers need to address;
- emphasise protection of: hedgerows and field boundaries; unmetalled lanes; ancient paths and walks; green lanes and bridleways; protected trees; playing fields; Epping Forest buffer lands; farmland (for food production); access to and biodiversity value of agricultural land; allotments; parks; urban green space; Local Wildlife sites; veteran trees; ancient woodland; landscape character and ecological corridors including between the Lea Valley and Epping Forest;
- the Council should consider green corridors/pathways /cycle ways and encourage joined up approaches to land management with major landowners;
- protect and enhance green spaces within built up areas;
- manage recreational access to the countryside and provide access for people with disabilities to the countryside and urban open space; and
- important elements of a green infrastructure network were identified as:
- working with the natural patchwork of hedges, woodland and open space as well as urban green space, in addition to rights of way and other footpaths;
- joining up spaces into a network providing multi-purpose spaces and links for pedestrians, cyclists and animals – bridging the barriers to connecting spaces e.g. by using green lanes and road tunnels;
- provide green wedges between areas of development;
- enhancing open space to encourage wildlife through new planting;
- introducing older species in hedges; and
- providing bridlepaths, cycle tracks, public footpaths in green corridors for flora and fauna to bypass developments (or run through developments).

Key Evidence

- National Planning Policy Framework: 7 Requiring good design;
- National Planning Policy Framework: 9 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change;
- National Planning Policy Framework: 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (paragraph 114);
- Planning Practice Guidance: Natural Environment: Green Infrastructure;
- Epping Forest District Council Local List of Validation Requirements;
- 50 Favourite Trees;
- Roydon Landmark trees;
- Ongar Community Tree Strategy.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Preferred Approach

4.121 The Council sees green infrastructure as a critical part of the future of the District and this complies with the NPPF. Draft Policy DM 5 inks with NPPF Strategic Policy 5: "The Natural Environment, Landscape Character and Green Infrastructure" which outlines the green infrastructure strategy of this plan. Whilst acknowledging that this Local Plan proposes development on some green field land it seeks to effectively protect and enhance: wildlife sites, including Local Wildlife Sites; veteran trees; ancient woodland; hedgerows and field boundaries; unmetalled lanes; ancient paths and walks; green lanes and bridleways; protected trees; meadow lands; playing fields; Epping Forest buffer lands; farmland (for food production); access to and biodiversity value of agricultural land; allotments; parks; urban green space; and ecological corridors, including those between the Lea Valley and Epping Forest.

4.122 The expectation is that new development will consist of high quality design that carefully incorporates multifunctional spaces (for example for wildlife, recreation, and sustainable drainage). The landscaping of development is expected to be a key element of mitigation against the effects of climate change and the management of flood risk.

4.123 The development pattern for a significant amount of new development during the Plan period will be on the edges of settlements on greenfield land that was previously protected from development by Green Belt policy. There is therefore a particular emphasis needed to ensure that existing green infrastructure assets are respected and used to best effect in new development. In addition, the connections between existing and new development, accessible space and habitats should not be broken, and new spaces and links created within developments that perform effective functions for recreation and other purposes. It should be clear that the design of development has carefully incorporated the context of green infrastructure and provides access to the countryside and urban green spaces as appropriate.

4.124 Most development in the District should be capable of providing for some landscape features suitable to the site. Trees are of particular importance in the District and are a key element of the development and green infrastructure strategy. The Council particularly seeks to increase the tree cover in the District, and aim where possible to allow for space for the next generation of large trees. Therefore in providing new trees the Council expects applicants to include a suitable proportion of larger slower growing and longer living trees in order to avoid only shorter life, fast growing species being planted during the Plan period.

4.125 The Council's Local List of Validation Requirements sets out 'thresholds' and types of planning application where information that should be submitted. This includes Biodiversity Surveys and Reports, Hedgerow Surveys, Arboricultural Implication Assessments and Method Statements.

Draft Policy DM 5 Green Infrastructure: Design of Development

A. Development proposals must demonstrate that they have been designed to:

   i) retain and, where possible, enhance existing green infrastructure, including trees, hedgerows, woods and meadows, green lanes, ponds and watercourses;

   ii) incorporate appropriate provision of green assets or space;

   iii) enhance connectivity and integration by providing pedestrian / cycle access to existing and proposed Green Infrastructure networks and established routes, including footpaths, cycleways and bridleways/Public Rights of Way;

   iv) enhance the public realm through the provision and/or retention of trees and/or designated and undesignated open spaces within built up areas.

B. Development proposals must be accompanied by sufficient evidence to demonstrate that:

   i) the retention and protection of trees (including veteran trees), landscape features or habitat will be successfully implemented in accordance with relevant guidance and best practice;

   ii) the provision of new trees, new landscape features or habitat creation/improvement will be implemented in accordance with relevant guidance and best practice; and

   iii) as a whole the proposals for Green Infrastructure are appropriate and adequate, taking into account the nature and scale of the development, its setting, context and intended use.

C. In the Strategic Allocations a full concept plan of proposed green infrastructure that incorporates existing features on the site and its links to the wider landscape and townscape will be required for submission with the application. Further requirements may be outlined within Strategic Masterplans in accordance with policies SP 3 and DM 9.

Alternative Options	
Retain existing policies	The only relevant existing policy relates to street trees. This has been incorporated into the draft policy in a revised form.
No policies	A policy is needed in order to provide clear guidance to applicants as to what is expected from new development in general conformity with the NPPF.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Draft Policy DM 6 Designated and undesignated open spaces

The Issue

4.126 Open space provision is critical to the physical and mental health of our communities, as well as important to our experience of the character of settlements and the landscape in the District. Such open space varies in character and usage from children's playgrounds, through sports pitches to natural space that can be used for a variety of recreational purposes. New development in the District should provide open space appropriate to its size. Where development may, in exceptional circumstances, involve the use of open space for buildings this must be carefully controlled.

What you told us?

4.127 Responses from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- the responses noted regarding Draft Policies SP 5 and DM 4 in particular are relevant to this draft policy especially with regard to linking spaces;
- there is a need to protect and enhance green spaces within built-up areas for their contribution to landscape and settlement character;
- assess the potential for different approaches to management of urban open spaces in the interests of recreation, health and biodiversity;
- use Local Green Space designation powers to protect school playing fields;
- provide access for people with disabilities to the countryside and urban open spaces;
- provide locally accessible green areas in large developments;
- require the provision of multipurpose open space, close and further afield;
- set out quantitative guidelines, minimum operable thresholds of development to have internal urban green spaces and standards of access – use S106 agreements;
- sites should always reflect the location they occupy - those on the edge of settlements should have green corridors, more open aspect to sympathise with surrounding green belt. Make different requirements depending on the location of development – outer walking access to 'good' green areas, inner open spaces that are green and accessible; and
- there was some support to investigate the potential for the development of some urban green spaces, or parts of them, in association with replacement of the space on the boundaries of settlements.

Key Evidence

- National Planning Policy Framework: Core planning principles;
- National Planning Policy Framework: 7 Requiring good design;
- National Planning Policy Framework: 8 Promoting healthy communities;
- National Planning Policy Framework: 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment;
- Planning Practice Guidance: Open space, sport and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space;
- ' Active Design' Sport England 2015;
- Epping Forest District Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment 2012.

Preferred Approach

4.128 The NPPF defines open space as all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity. These spaces can be opportunities to walk close to home, meet for social gatherings and can present opportunities to view local wildlife. The quality of the spaces in the District varies but they need to be conserved as appropriate, enhanced and where possible connected, in line with the strategy for green infrastructure.

4.129 Providing new public open space in new development is a critical part of maintaining healthy places to live and providing the contrast between built areas and outdoor spaces that meet our social and psychological needs.

4.130 Local evidence in the form of Epping Forest District Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment indicates: that the location of the District in relation to large urban populations significantly increases the demand for space intensive recreational facilities and local space provision locally; the population growth expected over the Plan period will also add to that demand; provision needs to be suitable for older users; opportunities to ensure that people on low incomes are physically and financially able to participate in recreation are important, particularly to give those living in areas with lower life expectancy opportunities to improve their lifestyle; participation rates in recreational activity are high; indicators suggest that provision for recreational level and informal participation in sport is important locally.

4.132 The Council seeks to protect and improve open spaces, unless in exceptional circumstances development of part of an open space is considered appropriate. In such circumstances this would be set alongside improvements in quality to the remaining space, or to existing open space in the locality, and should be clearly set out in any justification.

4.132 Communities are able to seek to designate, and thus protect, Local Green Space which is especially meaningful to a community, local in character and not extensive in size.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

4.133 As a guide to development requirements, and the expenditure of S106/ CIL money aimed at quality improvements to open space, the Council seeks to apply a standard for access to different types of open space based upon guidance from national bodies. The standards are currently being developed.

Draft Policy DM 6 Designated and undesignated open spaces

A. Where appropriate development proposals will be expected to provide open space, or links to open space in accordance with the standards (currently being developed).

B. Development on open spaces (including those allocated in this plan) will only be permitted if it does not result in the total loss of open space.

C. In circumstances where partial loss of the space is considered justified, the predominantly open nature of the remainder of the site should be maintained and enhanced together with the visual amenity and its function as appropriate for active play and recreation.

Alternative Options	
Retain existing policies	There is an opportunity to bring a number of policies together to make them more 'user friendly'.
No policies	A policy is needed in order to secure new, and retain existing open space.

Historic Environment

4.134 The historic environment is a critical part of the District's character and the draft policies in this section address the Councils approach to the historic assets of the District in a manner that is up to date with national guidance.

Draft Policy DM 7 Heritage Assets

The Issue

4.135 Epping Forest District benefits from a rich and varied historic environment some of which is afforded national protection by law, and other locally protected through planning policy. The heritage assets span thousands of years from the Early Iron Age to the 20th Century. The relationship is well recognised between the historic environment and landscape which retains historic and ancient features in many places, and provides the setting of towns and villages. The Council seeks to positively protect and enhance this heritage in line with the NPPF in any case, but sees that the particular circumstances of this Local Plan in allocating significant levels of development, is accompanied by a clear respect for heritage assets.

What you told us?

4.136 Responses from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- significant concern from a large number of respondents that the potential level of housing growth would impact negatively on the character of historic market towns and villages, particularly in relation to Chigwell and Theydon Bois but other places included Loughton and Chipping Ongar. That the best way to protect historic assets was to restrict the amount of growth in towns and villages and, in particular, avoid locating new development within existing Green Belt areas;
- while it was recognised that the District contains a large number of nationally designated listed buildings, there was concern that locally important assets such as North Weald Airfield and numerous historic buildings were in danger of being lost due to a lack of formal protection;
- it was also noted by a number of people that the content of Village Design Statements should be taken into account when considering options for development, and the protection of the local list of buildings should be strengthened to prevent further loss;
- recognition should be given to the use of heritage to stimulate development and regeneration, bringing wider benefits to the community;
- policy should recognise that modern needs must be met and development to encourage successful businesses is needed to keep them in town centres and protect the economy as well as built heritage;
- council to approve appropriate restoration and enhancements and recognise the importance of settings;
- ask developers for heritage statements produced by an independent body;
- increase education and knowledge about local assets;
- council should provide criteria to enable Neighbourhood Plans to identify areas of townscape merit and re use of heritage assets;
- include policy that guards against loss of buildings in conservation areas that have a neutral value to the conservation area;
- control changes to new buildings that contribute to the historic scene e.g. through removal of permitted development rights (Article 4 Direction);
- an enabling policy should be included allowing development in very special circumstances to enable investment in historic environment and re use of buildings for alternative uses; and
- only allow enabling development if there is no alternative; the development is appropriate and high quality; not detrimental to the surrounding area; the applicant receives specialist advice; and the historic asset is then open to the public. Policy should emphasise this as a tool of last resort and safeguard against 'planned' dereliction and include a test to prove clear public benefit.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Key Evidence

- National Planning Policy Framework: Core planning principles;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment;
- Planning Practice Guidance: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment;
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990;
- National Heritage List for England DCMS;
- Epping Forest District Council Heritage Asset Review 2012;
- Epping Forest District Historic Characterisation Study 2015;
- Epping Forest District Council Parish Lists of Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest (Council website);
- Epping Forest District Council Conservation Area Character Appraisals Programme (Council Website);
- Epping Forest District Council Local List of Validation Requirements;

Preferred Approach

4.137 A positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment includes policies to protect assets, and use them in the modern context. To conserve and enhance heritage assets the Council must firstly identify their architectural, artistic, archaeological and/ or historic significance. Policy relating to development proposals that may affect heritage assets, including their settings, then has to support decisions that balance the benefits of proposals for development against the significance of the asset. The NPPF (paragraph 132) guides that the more significant the asset the greater the weight should be applied to its conservation and the greater the significance of the asset then the greater the public benefits of the development should be if harm to the significance of the assets is to be allowed.

4.138 The Epping Forest District Council Heritage Asset Review identified: some concentrations of nationally and locally listed buildings at risk; levels of change in some Conservation Areas that would benefit from removal of permitted development rights or Special Advertisement Control; loss of locally listed buildings and a need for review of the local list. The Historic Characterisation study provides valuable context for assessing the significance of heritage assets.

4.139 The types of historic asset to which this draft policy applies are the 'designated' assets: i.e. Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas; and the 'non designated' assets such as locally listed buildings and non-designated archaeological remains (although, depending upon their significance, the latter should be treated as though they are designated under NPPF paragraph 139)

4.140 In regard to the production of heritage statements the applicant will be required to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including their settings, how this significance is impacted on by the proposals, and how any harm will be mitigated. Further information and links to guidance are set out in the Council's Local List of Validation Requirements. Where there is any harm or loss to significance the applicant will be required to record and disseminate detailed information about the asset gained from desk based and on site investigations and provide this to the Council, Historic Environment Record and Historic England.

4.141 Applications for proposals in respect of heritage assets will be expected to demonstrate that they have paid good attention to matters, where relevant, including detailing, streetscape, roofscape, landscape, scale, height, density, massing, layout, elevation, design, plot and site frontage sizes, materials and external finishes.

4.142 The Council is required to take a positive approach to the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment of the District. In certain exceptional circumstances it is possible to provide development that enables the restoration of a historic asset, often as a result of the financial investment arising, and does not cause such significant harm to a heritage asset as to outweigh the benefit of the development and the restoration of the asset. This 'enabling development' means allowing development to take place that would not normally be granted permission, to enable the delivery of a development that provides significant public benefit, while repairing the heritage asset itself or keeping it in beneficial use. Enabling development must provide significant improvements to a heritage asset which could not otherwise be obtained, and secure its long term future or use for the public benefit.

4.143 In cases of enabling development, the Council will expect the applicant to obtain relevant specialist advice, including from Historic England, and to provide the Council with unequivocal evidence (including financial details) as to how the proposal will secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, and why the development is necessary.

4.144 In this regard the Council is guided by national policy. NPPF paragraph 140 (and Paragraph 55) requires that authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies, but would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies. Therefore to comply with national policy the following policy approach is proposed.

Draft Policy DM 7 Heritage Assets

A. Development proposals which may harm the significance of any heritage asset or its setting should demonstrate how the asset will be enhanced and at a minimum protected and sustained. A heritage statement is required for any applications that may affect heritage assets (both designated and non–designated). The resulting statement should:

i) include a description of the significance of any heritage asset affected, including the contribution made by its setting;

ii) provide an evaluation of the impact the development may have on this significance; and

iii) demonstrate how the significance of the heritage asset has informed the design of the proposed development.

In considering development proposals, the Council will have regard to the following:

B. Conservation Areas:

i) development in conservation areas, or affecting the setting of conservation areas, including views in and out, which preserves or enhances the character and/or appearance of the area, and which demonstrates a sensitive and appropriate response to context, including its relationship with existing buildings and spaces, will be permitted. Proposals should demonstrate that they have had regard to Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans where available; and

ii) only permit the demolition of any building in a conservation area where it can be demonstrated that this would not cause harm to the significance, or the character and/or appearance of the area, unless it can be fully justified and demonstrated that the harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits. Furthermore, consent to demolish will be given only when acceptable plans for development have been agreed and a legal contract for the redevelopment of the site has been entered into and full detailed recording of the building including plans and photographs may be required depending upon its merit.

C. Registered Parks and Gardens:

Any proposed development within or conspicuous from a Registered Park or Garden will be permitted provided that it does not harm the significance of the asset, unless it can be fully justified and demonstrated that the harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits.

D. Statutorily Listed Buildings:

i) the Council will only permit proposals involving the demolition of any whole or part of a listed building where very exceptional circumstances are demonstrated as to why the building cannot be retained and returned to an appropriate use. The fact that a building has become derelict, in itself, will not be sufficient reason to permit its demolition; and

ii) the Council will permit development which would not cause harm to the significance of the listed building. Furthermore the Council will encourage proposals which seek their conservation, regeneration, maintenance, repair or enhancement, and which improve access for people with disabilities who visit or work there. In such cases it must be fully justified and demonstrated that any harm to their significance is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits.

E. Scheduled Monuments and Archaeological Heritage:

i) planning permission will only be granted for development which would not harm the significance of a scheduled monument, or any other nationally important site or monument, or its setting, unless it can be fully justified and demonstrated that the harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits; and

ii) the Council will ensure the preservation, protection and where possible enhancement of the archaeological heritage of the District including areas of archaeological potential. Where proposals affect heritage assets of archaeological interest, preference will be given to preservation and management in situ. However, where loss of the asset is justified in accordance with national policy, the Council will require:

– an archaeological evaluation demonstrating that the remains have been properly assessed and the implications of development understood, and any impacts of development minimised through design; and

– where in situ preservation proves impossible that a full investigation, recording and an appropriate level of publication by a competent archaeological organisation has been undertaken prior to the commencement of development.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

F. Non designated heritage assets including the Local List:

The conservation of locally listed heritage assets and other non-designated assets and their contribution to local distinctiveness will be a material consideration in decisions on development proposals that directly affect their significance or setting. The Council seeks to retain buildings included on its local list of buildings of architectural / historic interest and encourage their sympathetic maintenance and enhancement. Alterations or extensions to locally listed buildings and changes to other non-designated heritage assets will be expected to achieve a high standard of design commensurate with the original fabric.

G. Enabling Development:

Enabling development that would secure the future of a significant designated heritage asset, but which would contravene other planning policy objectives, will only be acceptable where:

i) values of the place or its setting

ii) it avoids detrimental fragmentation of management of the asset;

iii) it will secure the long-term future of the asset and, where applicable, its continued use for a sympathetic purpose;

iv) it is necessary to resolve problems arising from the inherent needs of the asset, rather than the circumstances of the present owner, or the purchase price paid;

v) sufficient subsidy is not available from any other source;

vi) it is demonstrated that the amount of enabling development is the minimum necessary to secure the future of the asset, and that its form minimises harm to other public interests; and

vii) the public benefit of securing the future of the significance of the asset decisively outweighs the disbenefits of such as to allow for a conflict with other planning policies.

Alternative Options	
Retain existing policies	The same considerations apply to different types of designated heritage assets and so there is an opportunity to bring the suite of existing policies together to make them more user friendly. In addition the NPPF has introduced new phraseology which the current policies do not reflect.
No policies	This would not be in line with the NPPF or PPG. The absence of a policy in relation to enabling development would not enable the Council to set out how it will approach the consideration of proposals which involve enabling development (that is, development which would normally be contrary to planning policy but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset).

Ongar Railway

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Draft Policy DM 8 Heritage at Risk

The Issue

4.145 A significant part of the enhancement of heritage assets is their care and maintenance which is the responsibility of the owner of the asset. Many owners of heritage assets in the District take pride in the assets and are responsible owners. However, the Heritage Asset Review identified a concentration of buildings at risk in four particular conservation areas namely Abridge, Royal Gunpowder Mills, Roydon and Waltham Abbey, together with some locally listed buildings at risk. These are not the only heritage assets at risk in the District as a result of neglect or inappropriate development. Policy is required to encourage some owners of heritage assets to maintain them and respect them for future generations to enjoy.

What you told us?

4.146 Responses from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- little was expressly said regarding listed buildings at risk beyond observations that the amount of development in the Plan would put such buildings at risk. Indeed there was criticism that the consultation had not considered heritage at risk;
- a call for better criteria to list and then protect locally listed buildings was made to prevent them being at risk;
- while it was recognised that the District contains a large number of nationally designated listed buildings, there was concern that locally important assets such as North Weald Airfield and numerous historic buildings were in danger of being lost due to a lack of formal protection as well as Locally Listed buildings being at risk;
- create a list of historical assets to accompany the Plan, their condition, possible uses and any urgent needs to return them to useful purpose or open them to the public;
- include a more thorough approach to the local list, assets such as local historic parks and gardens, memorial, fingerposts, mileposts and street signs should be included, and policy to acknowledge the settings of locally listed features;
- research and resources for the local list – up to date assessment and review;
- ensure appropriate advice is also sought from external organisations with listed buildings expertise that take a pro-active approach;

Key Evidence

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment;
- Epping Forest District Council Heritage Asset Review 2012;
- National Heritage at Risk Register.

Preferred Approach

4.147 A positive approach to the protection and enhancement of heritage assets requires that they are maintained to a high standard. This is the responsibility of the owner. The simple fact of a heritage asset being in a poor condition is not a reason for allowing redevelopment or development that could cause harm to the significance of the asset. Owners are encouraged to maintain heritage assets to a high standard in order to preserve their significance.

4.148 The Council seeks to support owners to secure the future of the heritage assets currently at risk, and at risk in the future, in a way that respects the significance of the heritage asset and enhances that significance.

Draft Policy DM 8 Heritage at Risk

The Council will expect property owners/ partners to work proactively with the authority in bringing forward proposals for the conservation and enhancement of Heritage Assets at Risk or under threat within the District to secure their future and seek a viable use consistent with their heritage value and significance.

Alternative Options	
Retain existing policies	There is no existing policy relating to this matter.
No policies	The absence of a policy would not enable the Council to set out how it wishes to address issues relating to Heritage Assets that are at risk.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Design

4.149 The following group of draft policies relate to the design of proposed development in the District. The NPPF encourages the securing of good design and its importance is increasingly recognised by the development industry. In the past there has been a tendency to view design solely as a visual concern – in this group of draft policies the Council is seeking to consider the social and environmental elements of design, such as the potential of a high quality public realm to contribute to public health, quality of life and the sustainability agenda.

Draft Policy DM 9 High Quality Design

The issue

4.150 National policy expects that the Council includes design policy that sets out the quality of development expected for the area and recognises the local context both in terms of the locality, and the immediate site and its surrounds (paragraph 58).

What you told us?

4.151 Responses from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- need to establish what constitutes high quality design;
- safeguard social inclusion through adherence to principles of inclusive design;
- areas on the edge of the Epping Forest need special design attention;
- landscape needs to be a key consideration in any proposal for development – it is integral to the local character and value of the District's countryside; need to address i) the unique character of the District, ii) maintaining recreational access to the countryside; and iii) its landscape and wildlife features.
- the local environment created within new development and that in which new development is located is a matter of importance – ensuring a good standard of living conditions and amenity is a base line requirement;
- urban tree and shrub planting including on traffic routes, and planting on development sites should be used to mitigate against environmental impacts, and offset greenhouse gases;
- use of permeable surfacing for driveways should be encouraged as well as areas of planting and landscaping to assist in managing run off, whilst rain water harvesting and recycling of water in new buildings should be a requirement;
- the content of Village Design Statements and Neighbourhood Plan design briefs should be taken into account when considering options for development;
- commercial developments should be designed to Secured by Design commercial standards to make new developments safer;
- the Local Plan must be flexible to economic change and should not be too prescriptive to prevent the market;
- there should be a bias toward the effective use of land and achievement of appropriate design to enable reasonable density and affordable accommodation;
- concern was expressed that higher densities result in 'town cramming' and reduced areas of open space and public realm to contribute to the character and quality of the built environment;
- design should have a positive impact on health;
- there should be a specific Plan policy on design to ensure that the Essex Design Guidance is applied and any new developments respect the tone of the area in scale and appearance;
- there should be a specific Plan policy to prevent high rise development;
- a Masterplan/Design Code/Development Brief should be employed for strategic and town centre brownfield sites. Which tool or the combination of tools would depend on the particular context and area. A threshold of 100 houses was considered appropriate for using these design tools;
- generally participants considered that development density would vary depending on the site and context of the development as Epping Forest District is very diverse.

Key Evidence

- National Planning Policy Framework: Core planning principles;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 7 Requiring good design;
- Planning Practice Guidance: Design;
- Secured by Design: Design Guides;
- BRE: 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight – A Guide to Good Practice' 1991.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Preferred Approach

4.152 High quality design should ensure that new development is visually attractive, responsive to local character, helps to promote healthy communities, and creates buildings which are durable, adaptable, and function well within the surrounding area to create a safe and accessible environment. Good design should enable and encourage people to live healthy lifestyles, reduce the risk of crime, create accessible environments which are inclusive for all sectors of society, and increase opportunities for social interaction. Secured by Design provides guidance on how to include security into a development.

4.153 The Council is keen to ensure that the next generation of development in the District is of a quality deserving of its location and meets the needs of occupants and users in an effective and sustainable manner. The environmental impact of development is of significant concern and ensuring sustainable construction is a clear aim of this Local Plan. A clear contribution to the townscape and landscape of the District is sought through high quality design. The design of development which impacts on the historic assets of the District is particularly important and the Council seeks to pay particular attention to them.

4.154 The Council seeks development that follows the principles of sustainable construction and encourages developers to deliver schemes that meet the performance set by appropriate standards e.g. Passive House (see passivhaus.org.uk), the Code for Sustainable Homes, BREEAM UK New Construction 2014. Development should give rise to minimal environmental impact with respect to its energy use, water use, waste and transport as well as providing for green infrastructure and healthy environments for users.

4.155 The quality of amenity for buildings and open spaces is increasingly the subject of concern, particularly in settlements where densities are higher. In order to assess the Council will have regard to the BRE guidelines produced in 1991 which although not mandatory are heavily relied upon as they advise on the approach and evaluation of impact in daylight and sunlight matters. An assessment should accompany proposals where the proposed development has the potential to negatively impact existing levels of daylight or sunlight on adjoining properties or within the development site itself. New developments should be designed to protect the privacy of both new and existing dwellings. Separation distance, the provision of screening between elevations as well as the angle of orientation will be assessed.

Strategic Development

4.156 Strategic and other Site Allocations will be required to accord with the place-shaping principles set out within Draft Policy SP 4, and it will be necessary to demonstrate compliance with these principles through the production of Strategic Masterplans as stipulated.

4.157 Masterplans will enable the front-loading of the planning process and ensure that a comprehensive, joined up and cohesive approach is taken to the planning and delivery of high quality development and associated infrastructure. Development proposals in relation to strategic site allocations will be required to be in accordance with a Strategic Masterplan which has been adopted by the Council. The Strategic Masterplan(s) will be produced by the applicant, in partnership with the Council and relevant stakeholders (including adjacent land owners, relevant parish/town councils, infrastructure providers and statutory consultees). Strategic Masterplans should be prepared in consultation with the local community, and be capable of being adopted by the Council in due course as Supplementary Planning Documents. For adjoining sites, joint Strategic Masterplans will be required.

4.158 In addition, the Council will require Design Codes to be prepared and agreed with the Council for Strategic Site Allocations, following the adoption by the Council of Strategic Masterplans. This will ensure that a consistent, considered and high quality approach is taken to the design principles which are established for the Strategic Site Allocations across the District.

4.159 The Council will require outline planning applications associated with Strategic Site allocations to be in general conformity with the Strategic Masterplan adopted by the Council, and reserved matters applications to be in general conformity with Design Codes endorsed by the Council.

4.160 The Council will strongly encourage the use of an independent Design Review Panel, to be agreed with the Council, to inform detailed design proposals for Strategic sites. This includes complex and large scale development proposals which are outside of the scope of Strategic Allocations.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Draft Policy DM 9: High quality design

A. All new development must achieve a high specification of design and contribute to the distinctive character and amenity of the local area. The Council will require design-led development proposals which meet the following criteria:

i) relate positively to its context to create a harmonious whole;

ii) make a positive contribution to a place, improving the character and quality of an area;

iii) meets the diverse needs of people, incorporates sustainable design and construction principles to enable a minimal environmental impact; and

iv) incorporate design measures to reduce social exclusion, the risk of crime, and the fear of crime.

Strategic Sites

B. The Council will require Strategic Masterplans to be prepared and developed for Strategic Site Allocations in SP 3 and other allocated sites of significance in Chapter 5 as determined by the Council (in accordance with the place-shaping principles set out within Policy SP 4 and other Local Plan policies). The Strategic Masterplan(s) will be produced by the applicant, in partnership with the Council and relevant stakeholders (including adjacent land owners, relevant parish/town councils, infrastructure providers, statutory consultees and where applicable Harlow District Council). Strategic Masterplans should be prepared in consultation with the local community, and be capable of being adopted by the Council in due course as Supplementary Planning Documents. For adjoining sites, joint Strategic Masterplans will be required.

C. The Council will require Design Codes for Strategic Site Allocations to be produced and agreed with the Council, which accord with the adopted Strategic Masterplans and Local Plan policies.

D. Development proposals for the Strategic Site Allocations will be required to adhere to adopted Strategic Masterplans and Design Codes which have been endorsed by the Council.

E. The Council will strongly encourage the use of an independent Design Review Panel, to be agreed with the Council, to inform detailed design proposals for major developments.

Design Standards

F. Development proposals must relate positively to their locality, having regard to:

i) building heights;

ii) form, scale and massing prevailing around the site;

iii) framework of routes and spaces connecting locally and more widely;

iv) rhythm of any neighbouring or local regular plot and building widths and where appropriate, following existing building lines;

v) active frontages to the public realm; and

vi) distinctive local architectural styles, detailing and materials

Landscaping

G. Development proposals must demonstrate how the landscaping and planting are integrated into the development as a whole. The Council will expect development proposals to respond to:

i) landform;

ii) levels, slopes and the fall from the ground;

iii) trees on and close to the site;

iv) natural boundary features;

v) the biodiversity of the site and its context; and

vi) maximise the use of permeable surfaces.

Public Realm

H. Development proposals must contribute positively to the public realm and public spaces around development.

Connectivity and Permeability

I. Development proposals must maximise connectivity within, and where possible through, the development and to the surrounding areas including the provision of high quality and safe pedestrian and cycle routes.

Privacy and amenity

J. Development proposals must take account of the privacy and amenity of the development's users and neighbours. The Council will expect proposals that:

i) provide adequate sunlight, daylight and open aspects (including private amenity space where required) to all parts of the development and adjacent buildings and land;

ii) provide an adequate amount of privacy to their residents and neighbouring properties to avoid overlooking and loss of privacy detrimental to the living conditions of neighbouring residents and the residents of the development;

iii) do not result in an over-bearing or overly enclosed form of development which materially impacts on the outlook of neighbouring residents and the residents of the development; and

iv) address issues of vibration, noise, fumes, odour, light pollution and microclimatic conditions likely to arise from the use and activities of the development.

K. All development proposals must demonstrate that they are in general conformity with the design principles set out in other relevant Local Development Documents, Design Guides, Neighbourhood Plans or Village Design Statements (VDSs) adopted or endorsed by the Council.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Alternative Options	
Retain existing policies	This would impact on the Council's ability to set out clearly what it expects from new development and therefore achieve high quality development appropriate to the District.
No policies	Providing a new policy would provide the opportunity to set out clearly and positively the Council's expectations in respect of design in accordance with the NPPF and PPG. In addition providing one policy means that all of the key components of good design are contained in one place which would make the emerging policy more user friendly.

Draft Policy DM 10 Housing Design and Quality

The Issue

4.161 The majority of the development coming forward over the Plan period will be residential in nature. A core principle of planning is to always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings. National policy expects a high quality of design that meets the needs of the diversity of people i.e. is 'inclusive'. It notes that design policies should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout materials and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area. The consideration of design goes beyond appearance, and should address the connections between people and places, creating safe and accessible environments.

High Quality Homes

What you told us?

Responses from the 4.162 Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- a high proportion of respondents (80%) considered that the Council should introduce a minimum space standard for all new dwellings to ensure appropriate living standards and storage space;
- those that did not agree considered the market and potential purchasers should set the space requirements;
- new housing development should relate well to existing settlements;
- development densities should relate to the surrounding areas;
- appropriate space for children's play should be available in developments;
- there should be a bias toward the effective use of land and achievement of appropriate design to enable reasonable density and affordable accommodation;
- concern was expressed that higher densities result in 'town cramming' and reduced areas of open space and public realm to contribute to the character and quality of the built environment;
- new residential developments should be expected to provide private amenity space, usually at the rear, accessible by the dwellings and of a size, shape and nature that enables reasonable use, receives sunlight and achieves privacy; and
- design should have a positive impact on health.

With respect to space standards:

- there was a mixed response as to whether space standards were an issue in the District and some uncertainty as to how to implement space standards;
- family house space standards are considered essential and should be implemented for affordable housing;
- space standards are needed in new flatted and high density developments e.g. conversions of office into residential; and
- most agreed that preparing the evidence regarding space standards is key as long as it is specific to the District/area.

Key Evidence

- National Planning Policy Framework: Core planning principles;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 6 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 7 Requiring good design;
- Planning Practice Guidance: Design;
- Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard (DCLG March 2015).

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

High Quality Homes

Fire Dragons (Polyanthus) in Epping

Preferred Approach

4.163 The Council seeks to ensure that it is not possible to identify the tenure of a residential development from its external appearance since there can be significant differences in the appearance and quality of materials used between owner occupied and rented housing. This approach is very important to creating inclusive and attractive residential environments.

4.164 The design of the development impacts significantly on living conditions for occupiers and in particular the size and design of internal and external space are important. An analysis of recent applications for development highlights that there is pressure in the District for accommodation to be approved that does not meet the national space standards. There is therefore a need to ensure that all development meets at least the minimum space standards. The Council expects that opportunities are taken to improve the external environment of residential developments where existing quality is poor and to provide suitable public open space with developments, as appropriate, refer to DM 6.

Draft policy DM 10 Housing Design and Quality

A. All new housing development must be of a high quality, taking account of the privacy and amenity of neighbouring uses (See Policy DM 9); make the appropriate use of land; reduce the risk and fear of crime; promote social inclusion, and are required to meet or exceed the minimum internal space standards set out in the current Nationally Described Space Standards and open space standards;

B. Ground floor family housing must provide access to private garden/amenity space, and family housing on upper floors should have access to a balcony and/or terrace, subject to acceptable amenity, privacy and design considerations, or to shared communal amenity space and children's play space;

C. Development proposals should seek to include enhanced provision of green infrastructure, including the quantity and quality of landscaped areas, tree provision and, where the site allows, the provision of additional open space as required by Policy DM 5 and DM 6;

D. Mixed tenure residential development proposals must be designed to be 'tenure blind' to ensure homes across tenures are indistinguishable from one another in terms of quality of design, space standards and building materials.

Residential extensions:

E. Extensions or alterations to residential buildings, will be required to respect and/or complement the form, setting, period, detailing of the original buildings. Matching or complementary materials should be used.

High Quality Homes

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Current nationally prescribed space standards (March 2015):

Number of bedrooms (b)	Number of bed spaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	Built-in storage
1b	1p	39 (37)*			1.0
	2p	50	58		1.5
2b	3p	61	70		2.0
	4p	70	79		
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	
4b	5p	90	97	103	3.0
	6p	99	106	112	
	7p	108	115	121	
	8p	117	124	130	
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	
6b	7p	116	123	129	4.0
	8p	125	132	138	

Alternative Options	
Retain existing policies	Whilst there is an existing policy in relation to the provision of private amenity space there is no specific policy relating to design of new housing and in particular in relation to the Nationally Described Space Standard to ensure the achievement of acceptable living space conditions for occupiers. In addition there is no reference in existing policy regarding the need to integrate affordable housing within a scheme.
No policies	This would impact on the Council's ability to set out clearly what it expects from new housing development and therefore achieve high quality development appropriate to the District, provide of acceptable living space conditions for occupiers and achieve appropriately designed affordable housing.

* Footnote: Where a 1 bedroom (1 person bed space) has a shower room instead of a bathroom, the floor area may be reduced from 39m2 to 37m2, as shown bracketed.

Streetscene in Epping Forest District

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Draft Policy DM 11 Waste recycling facilities on new development

The Issue

4.165 National policy requires that attention is paid to minimising waste as part of sustainable development and policies should make provision for the infrastructure for waste management.

What you told us?

4.166 Responses from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- concern was expressed that recycling facilities should be available to all including those living in flats;
- bins, bikes and cars should be an important consideration in design related matters.

Key Evidence

- National Planning Policy for Waste (October 2014);
- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 7 Requiring good design;
- Planning Practice Guidance: Design.

Preferred Approach

4.167 The Council is committed to reducing waste and the Local Plan will seek to encourage the reuse, recycling and composting of waste material as a priority over disposal. Provision for the disposal of waste including separation for recycling is integral to the convenience afforded to occupiers and users, as well as having the potential to create poor design details if considered as an afterthought. The Council expects these facilities to be integrated into design so that they operate effectively and do not look out of place.

4.168 The management of waste in flatted properties poses particular challenges which need to be factored into the design of a building at a very early stage. Where flatted development includes basement parking provision, the Council expects the options for basement servicing of waste management and collection to have been investigated. This avoids compromising the quality and provision of amenity space, forecourts or active ground floor frontages.

Draft Policy DM 11 Waste recycling facilities on new development

A. All development which generates waste will be required to make on site provision for general waste, the separation of recyclable materials and organic material for composting. The on-site provision must:

i) ensure adequate dedicated internal and external storage space to manage the volume of waste arising from the site;

ii) provide accessible and safe access to on site storage facilities, both for occupiers and collection operatives including vehicles;

iii) be located and screened to avoid nuisance and adverse impact on visual and other amenity to occupiers and neighbouring uses; and

iv) for mixed use development, suitably separate household and commercial waste.

B. Proposals for new multi storey flatted residential development will be required to make provision for:

i) Adequate temporary storage space within each flat, allowing for separate storage of recyclable materials;

ii) Adequate communal storage for waste, including separate storage for recyclables pending its collection.

Alternative Options	
Retain existing policies	There is no existing policy covering waste recycling facilities within new development.
No policies	If no policy is provided then there would be no clear guidance for applicants as to how such facilities should be properly incorporated within new developments in order to support the Government's National Planning Policy for Waste.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Draft Policy DM 12 Subterranean, basement development and lightwells

The Issue

4.169 Development of basements and subterranean rooms below gardens, particularly in established residential areas, has become an increasingly popular way of gaining additional space in homes. Like many other authorities in areas experiencing high property values, Epping Forest District has experienced an increase in the number of applications for basement development in recent years.

What you told us?

4.170 Responses from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- Concerns have been raised about the impact of the increasing number of basement proposals coming forward in areas in the South of the District and the impact on the neighbouring properties both during and after construction.

Key Evidence

- National Planning Policy Framework: Core planning principles;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 7 Requiring good design;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment;
- Planning Practice Guidance: Design, Flood Risk and Coastal Change, Land stability, Noise.

Preferred Approach

4.171 It is important that basement development is carried out in a way that does not harm the amenity of neighbours, compromise the structural stability of adjoining properties, increase flood risk or damage the character of the area or natural environments in line with National policy.

4.172 The Council will also seek to control the overall size of basement development to protect the character and amenity of the area, the quality of gardens and vegetation and to minimise the impacts of construction on neighbouring properties. A basement that is no deeper than one full storey below ground level is often the most appropriate way to extend a building below ground. Criterion Bi) below states that basements should not comprise more than 1 storey. The Council considers a single storey for a basement to be approximately 3 to 4 metres in height.

4.173 Some development falls within the scope of permitted development. However, where control can be exercised by the local planning authority, the Council will seek to appropriately manage adverse impacts. Where appropriate, applicants will need to submit specific information as part of the planning application to demonstrate that these issues can be addressed. The information should be contained in a Basement Impact Assessment to be submitted as part of the planning application.

4.174 The introduction of lightwells where they are not an established and positive feature of the streetscape can harm the character or appearance of an area. Where external visible elements are allowed they need to be located and sensitively designed to avoid light pollution to neighbours and harm to the existing character and appearance of the building, streetscape and gardens in the vicinity.

Draft Policy DM 12 Subterranean, basement development and lightwells

A. Subterranean developments, basements, or extensions to existing basements, will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposal:

   i) will not adversely affect the structural stability of the application building, neighbouring buildings and other infrastructure, including the adjoining highway, having regard to local geological conditions;

   ii) does not increase flood risk to the property and adjacent properties from any source;

   iii) avoids harm to the appearance or setting of the property or the established character of the surrounding area;

   iv) will not adversely impact the amenity of adjoining properties by reason of noise or increased levels of internal or external activity; and

   v) will not adversely impact the local natural and historic environment;

B. The siting, location, scale and design of basements must have minimal impact on, and be subordinate to, the host building and property. Basement development should:

   i) not comprise of more than one storey;

   ii) not exceed 50% of each garden area within the property;

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

C. And during the construction phase:

i) will not cause harm to pedestrian, cycle, vehicular and road safety, adversely affect bus or other transport operations, significantly increase traffic congestion, nor place unreasonable inconvenience on the day to day life of those living, working or visiting nearby;

ii) will minimise construction impacts such as noise, vibration and dust for the duration of the works; and

iii) ensure compliance with the Construction Management Statement submitted (see Policy DM 21)

D. The Council will not permit subterranean developments or basements which include habitable rooms or other sensitive uses in areas prone to flooding and where there is no satisfactory means of escape from flooding.

E. In determining applications for light wells, the Council will protect:

i) the architectural character of the building; and

ii) the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

F. In determining proposals for basements and other underground development the Council will require an assessment of the scheme's impact on drainage, flooding, groundwater conditions and structural stability in the form of a Basement Impact Assessment and where appropriate a Basement Construction Management Statement.

Alternative Options	
Retain existing policies	There is no existing policy in relation to this matter.
No policies	This approach would not address local community concerns regarding the provision of basements and lightwells.
New policy	This is needed in order to address community concerns and ensure proper consideration of the specific impacts relevant to these types of development taking into account the increase in the number of applications being received.

Draft Policy DM 13 Advertisements

The Issue

4.175 Poorly sited or badly designed advertisements and signs, including projecting signs, and illumination, particularly flashing illumination, can have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of areas and may raise issues of public safety. National policy recognises this and makes provision for the control of advertisements.

What you told us?

4.176 No specific reference to advertisements has been made in the various consultation/engagement activities.

Key Evidence

- The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisement Regulations) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended);
- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 7 Requiring good design; and
- Planning Practice Guidance: Advertisements.

Preferred Approach

4.177 The term "advertisement" covers a very wide range of advertisements and signs. Some advertisements are not regulated by the Council and others benefit from "deemed consent", which means permission is not needed; this will depend on the size, position and illumination of the advert. Others advertisements will always need consent. For more information refer to the Control of Advertisements Regulations.

4.178 When deciding applications for advertisements the Council can have regard to considerations of amenity and public safety, as well as the Control of Advertisements Regulations. Draft Policy DM 13 sets the criteria by which amenity and public safety will be assessed in Epping Forest District in relation to advertisements. The design, colour, materials and positioning of all advertisements and signs should respect the character and style of the existing building and be appropriate within the street scene.

4.179 Historic buildings and structures can be particularly sensitive to the change in amenity caused by some advertisements that include illumination. The Heritage Asset Review found that some areas would benefit from Special Advertisement Control. Therefore the Council seeks to carefully control adverts affecting heritage assets including conservation areas, individual historic buildings and buildings that are locally listed.

4.180 Estate agents' boards have deemed consent rights for their display and thus do not need approval from the Council to be displayed for a limited time period. The urban parts of the District and the frequency of sales and lettings can lead to a proliferation of estate agents boards, which are not always removed within the required timescale. This results in a build-up of boards, both legal and illegal, detracting from building façades and causing an untidy and cluttered street scene. In such situations the Council will seek the removal of deemed consent rights from the Secretary of State for this type of advertising.

Draft Policy DM 13 Advertisements

A. Where advertisement consent is required, such consent will be permitted if the proposal respects the interests of public safety and amenity, and meets the following criteria:

i) the design, materials and location of the advertisement respects the scale and character of the building on which it is displayed and the surrounding areas;

ii) any proposals will not result in a cluttered street scene, excessive signage, or proliferation of signs advertising a single site or enterprise;

iii) consent for signs to be illuminated will be considered in relation to impact on visual amenity, potential light pollution, road safety and functional need. Internally illuminated signs will not be permitted where heritage assets, a listed building or a conservation area is harmed; and

iv) illuminated signs will not be permitted in residential areas.

Alternative Options	
No policies	This would not enable the Council to clearly set out how it will consider applications for Advertisement Consent.
New policy	A new policy would provide the opportunity to update the existing policy and to enable the Council to set out clearly what it expects with respect to proposals for Advertisements.

Draft Policy DM 14 Shopfronts and on street dining

The Issue

4.181 There is a need for a policy to ensure that proposals for new shopfronts are of a high quality and relate well to the scale and character of the original building and surrounding area. Attractive shopfronts make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness and enhance the vitality of the shopping frontage as well as the wider town centre.

What you told us?

4.182 Responses from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- the need to be more strict on the design of shop fronts, particularly in areas of heritage importance such as Ongar and North Weald Bassett;
- the importance of strong policies for shop front design particularly in areas of heritage importance;
- none specifically on street dining although the importance of shopfront design in historic areas was recognised.

Key Evidence

- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 7 Requiring good design;
- Planning Practice Guidance: Design

Preferred Approach

4.183 The Council considers that the distinctive character of shopping areas should be maintained by retaining or designing high quality shopfronts that refer to the architecture of the host building, neighbouring units and general scale and rhythm of the shop front widths in the area. New shopfronts should contribute positively towards a cohesive streetscape and attractiveness of the shopping parade. Materials, detailing craftsmanship and finishes are equally important in achieving high quality shop front design especially as they are viewed close up.

4.184 Shop fronts with poor quality materials, internally illuminated box fascias and intrusive signage add to visual clutter and detract from the appearance of the streetscape. Use of solid security shutters creates a fortress like atmosphere in town centres and neighbourhood parades when premises are closed, perpetuating fear of crime and personal safety. To reduce visual clutter from the frontage, the grille box should be designed to be hidden behind the fascia.

4.185 On street dining facilities can add to the vibrancy of town centres. However these should not disrupt normal pedestrian movement or other high street activities. Where possible, such facilities should integrate with the public realm of the surrounding area. The Council may consider limiting the hours of use through the use of planning conditions.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Draft Policy DM 14 Shopfronts and on street dining

Shopfronts

A. The Council requires shopfronts, including their signs, security shutters and canopies, to be designed to a high standard and contribute to a safe and attractive environment. In particular:

i) The Council will seek the retention of traditional shopfronts contributing to the visual, architectural or historic quality of the local townscape;

ii) Replacement shopfronts should relate to the host building and conserve original materials and features as far as possible;

iii) The alteration or replacement of an existing shopfront or the development of a new shopfront must allow for easy access by all members of the community; and

iv) Security shutters must be open mesh and, wherever possible, be located internally.

On street dining

B. Proposals for on-street/forecourt dining must demonstrate the suitability of the proposed location having regard to the proximity of residential development and should:

i) be integral and functionally related to the business; and

ii) provide sufficient space to not obstruct the pavement space.

Alternative Options	
Retain existing policy	There are opportunities to strengthen the existing policy with regard to matters such as the retention of original shopfronts outside of conservation areas, access considerations, for canopies that do not involve advertising and security shutters.
No policy	This would not enable the Council to clearly set out how it will consider applications in relation to shopfronts, canopies and security shutters.

Climate change and environmental policies

4.186 The final set of draft development management policies address a wide range of aspects that relate to the wider, and site environment that pertains to individual developments. It includes additional requirements to those contained in the design policy section of the Plan and includes measures that address natural resources and mitigate against the impacts of climate change as well as assisting in places adapting to the changing climate.

Draft Policy DM 15 Managing and Reducing Flood Risk

The Issue

4.187 Parts of the District currently experience flooding from a range of sources. It is critical to manage flood risk in order to minimise harm to people and property. The location and design of buildings and their settings are key factors in reducing the risk of such damage. Climate change is projected to increase the risk of flooding and number of flooding incidents over the Plan period.

What you told us?

4.188 Responses from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- concerns regarding the increased occurrence and risk of local flooding resulting from changes to the climate, together with the impact of more development on flood risk and run off from new development as well as the occurrence of surface water flooding in some areas of the District including Epping, Theydon Bois and Ongar;
- the importance of flood risk assessment including calls for flood risk assessment for all developments within flood risk areas ensuring that new building does not happen in areas at risk of flooding;
- concern that sustainable drainage systems should also include existing development, rainwater harvesting measures should be included in new development, as should grey water systems and front gardens adapted for car parking need appropriate drainage;
- concerns regarding the impact of flooding on agriculture and the decreased land mass available to absorb rainfall resulting from new building;
- the Environment Agency supported the mention of Flood Risk Assessments and use of the sequential approach to location of development. Comments were made regarding specific locations put forward in the document;

- Essex County Council highlighted the joint working undertaken on surface water flooding matters and sustainable drainage systems (SuDs). The County is the lead local flood authority for Essex and from 2014 the SuDs approving body for major developments. In addition it leads on the production of Surface Water Management Plans;
- the role of the Lee Valley Regional Park in flood water storage was recognised, and the Park Framework recognises this role in addition to its role in managing water quality;
- it was recognised that the bulk of a policy response to matters of flood risk management and reduction is bounded by national policy and good practice guidance and is not an optional matter; and
- the Council should continue to pursue a robust approach to managing and reducing flood risk arising from all sources.

Key Evidence

- The Floods and Water Management Act 2010;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Core planning principles;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change;
- Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework;
- Planning Practice Guidance : Flood Risk and Coastal Change;
- Epping Forest District Council Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Update 2015 (and future updates);
- Essex Local Flood Risk Strategy 2013;
- Other Essex County Council flood risk management strategies and policies; and
- Loughton, Buckhurst Hill and Theydon Bois Surface Water Management Plan 2016

Preferred Approach

4.189 The Epping Forest District Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 Update 2015 (SFRA1) contains a great deal of detail on the matter of flood risk. The forms of flooding experienced in the District are: 'fluvial' from rivers and other watercourses; 'pluvial' from rain i.e. surface water flooding resulting from rain; and 'groundwater' flooding which is the emergence of water from the ground away from river channels. Locations within the District have experienced flooding that has caused damage to property.

4.190 The SFRA 1 identified surface water run off as the greatest risk to the District with regard to flooding. Due to the underlying geology and the presence of water courses in the area there will continue to be flood risks. The corridors of the River Lea and River Roding, including their main tributaries Cobbins and Cripsey Brooks contain the majority of the flood risk zones in the District – i.e. areas at risk from flooding by rivers. In particular the rapid onset, flash flooding of the smaller watercourse system is an ongoing concern.

4.191 Avoiding development in areas at risk of all types of flooding is the most effective way to minimise flood risk over the Plan period, coupled with careful provision of flood mitigation measures where water run off from buildings and the land can be managed. The approach to location of development, where reasonable, in areas where the risk of flooding is lowest, taking account of climate change and the vulnerability of types of development to flood is known as 'sequential testing'. If necessary an 'exceptions test' is applied to the location of development to establish whether there is a way to locate and design the development within a flood risk area by exception and requires the proposed development to demonstrate: wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk; and that it will be safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Some uses are more vulnerable to flood risk than others e.g. caravans and basement dwellings are 'highly vulnerable' whilst marinas are 'water compatible'. The Planning Practice Guidance explains these distinctions and suitable approaches (Flood Risk and Coastal Change section). National policy explains that for the exception test to be passed: within the site the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location; development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient, including safe access and escape routes where required, and that any residual risk can be safely managed, including by emergency planning; and it gives priority to sustainable drainage systems (paragraph 103).

4.192 For areas of river flooding the SFRA Update 2015 for the District notes that these are principally flood risk zones 2 and 3, but can also contain areas of flood risk 1 where there are Critical Drainage Areas (as notified by the Environment Agency).

4.193 the EFDC Flood Risk Assessment Zones (FRAZ's) have been defined by EFDC as catchments of ordinary watercourses identified as key areas where surface water run off is contributing to Main Rivers or areas of known historic flooding. The FRAZ's are shown in Appendix B Figure 13 of the SFRA 1. Within FRAZ's particular attention should be applied to surface water management, with the aim of reducing the cumulative impact of development throughout the District. A SWMP outlines the predicted risk and preferred surface water management strategy for areas under study. They identify local Critical Drainage Areas (CDAs) and site specific measures that could help reduce the risk of surface water flooding in these areas. The Council currently has in place one Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) for Loughton, Buckhurst Hill and Theydon Bois (June 2016). Further SWMP may be carried out for other areas.

4.194 Because flood risk can arise from development in a different location to the development itself, both existing and new development need to be considered in terms of associated flood risks. However, there can be opportunities to reduce flood risk overall and reduce the causes and impacts of flooding for instance, through the layout and form of development including green infrastructure (See Draft Policy SP4), by safeguarding land for flood risk management and designing off site works required to protect and support development. It is important to ensure that there is no net loss of flood storage.

4.195 The proposed Draft Policy DM15 follows the sequential approach and current national policy- it applies to all operations that are defined as development in Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (see glossary) hence includes engineering operations such as ground works, conversions of buildings and extensions to existing buildings The draft policy will be applied across the District, taking into account all sources of flooding Flood risk should be assessed at the site level as this enables an understanding of the risk of flooding on site and the impact of flooding elsewhere.

4.196 The valuable information on Critical Drainage Areas and the EFDC Flood Risk Assessment Zones will be used to support decision making on planning applications. The Council seeks to improve drainage, hence reduce flood risk, within the Critical Drainage Areas and the FRAZs and ensure that site specific flood risks are properly assessed. This is also important to ensure that the cumulative impact of flood risk from development is reduced throughout the District. Therefore Draft Policy DM 15 will apply.

4.197 The Council will use its standard conditions on approvals for development to secure the relevant information required for assessments – these vary in accordance to the size of the development for proposals in these areas.

Draft Policy DM 15 Managing and reducing flood risk

A. The Council will ensure that all proposals for new development avoid and reduce the risk of flooding to future occupants and do not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere;

B. The overall aim is to steer new development into Flood Zone 1 or to areas with the lowest probability of flooding; Any proposals for new development (except water compatible uses) within Flood Zone 2 and 3a will be required to provide sufficient evidence for the Council to assess whether the requirements of the Sequential Test and Exception Test, have been satisfied*.

C. Proposals within the flood zones 2 and 3a must be informed by a site specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) taking account of all potential sources of flooding and climate change allowances and should:

i) demonstrate the application of a sequential approach for the development of individual sites to ensure highest vulnerability of land uses are located in areas of the site that are at lowest risk of flooding; preserve overland ii) flood and flow routes and ensure there is no net loss of flood storage;

iii) ensure that there is no adverse effect on the operational functions of any existing flood defence infrastructure;

iv) provide adequate flood storage and compensation on site, or if this is not possible, provided off site;

v) where appropriate, set out the mitigation measures that will be incorporated on site to manage residual flood risk including finished floor levels set no lower than 300mm above the 1 in 100 chance in any given year, including an allowance for climate change, flood level or in line with any future revision of the Environment Agency's Standing Advice+;

vi) contribute to naturalising watercourses where opportunities arise, in line with Policy DM 17 (Watercourses and Flood Defences).

D. All proposals for new development will be required to:

i) manage and reduce surface water run-off, in line with Policy DM 16 (Sustainable Drainage Systems);

ii) manage water and waste water discharges, in line with Policy DM 18 (On-site Management of Waste Water and Water Supply);

iii) ensure safe access and egress for future users of the development and an appropriate emergency evacuation plan where appropriate.

E. All proposals for development within a Critical Drainage Area (CDA) or an EFDC Flood Risk Assessment Zone (FRAZ) will be required to provide a site specific flood risk assessment consisting of: an assessment of the risks involved, focussing predominantly on surface water and ordinary watercourses; details of any mitigation measures on site where required (e.g. increased thresholds); and a drainage strategy incorporating the use of SuDs (see DM 16) to mitigate any impacts of site.

F. With the exception of water compatible uses and essential infrastructure, subject to passing the Exception Test, development in areas designated in Epping Forest District's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment or as determined by specific Flood Risk Assessment as being within Flood Zone 3b will not be permitted.

* Note: for new development except those listed in NPPF Technical Guidance Table 3 – in these Zones a Sequential Test and Exceptions Test must be satisfied

+ Note: the most up to date technical advice and guidance are always used.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Alternative Options	
Retain existing policy	The existing policies were adopted prior to the Floods and Water Management Act 2010 and publication of the NPPF, PPG and technical guidance.
No policy	This would prevent the Council from setting out how it expects applicants to address matters in respect of flood risk, critical drainage areas and local flood risk zones which are relevant considerations for the District.

Draft Policy DM 16 Sustainable Drainage Systems

The issue

4.198 Avoiding development in areas at risk of all types of flooding is the most effective way to minimise flood risk over the Plan period. This needs to be coupled with careful provision of flood mitigation measures where run off can be managed. National policy gives priority to sustainable drainage systems which manage run off (paragraph 103).

What you told us?

4.199 Responses from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- (see also responses noted above for Draft Policy DM 15);
- there is increasing pressure on surface water and sewer drainage systems from development;
- the use of permeable surfacing and landscaping to assist in managing run off should be encouraged;
- the Environment Agency noted that green field run off rates should be the aim for all new developments. Green roofs should be promoted within a policy given their numerous benefits, as should increasing permeable surfaces in development for the purposes of drainage; and
- the issue of maintenance of sustainable drainage systems in new development needs to be addressed.

Key Evidence

- The Floods and Water Management Act 2010;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change;
- Planning Practice Guidance: Flood Risk and Coastal Change;
- Non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems, DEFRA 2015;
- Epping Forest District Council Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Update 2015;
- Essex Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2013; and
- Loughton, Buckhurst Hill and Theydon Bois Surface Water Management Plan 2016.

Preferred Approach

4.200 The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 Update 2015 (SFRA 1) identified surface water run off as the greatest risk to the District with regard to flooding. The Council currently has in place one Surface Water Management Plan for Loughton, Buckhurst Hill and Theydon Bois (2016).

4.201 Surface Water run-off is the excess water that flows off the land as a result of rainfall that is unable to filter through the soil. Surface water flooding occurs when high intensity or prolonged rainfall generates run off which flows over the surface of the ground and ponds in low lying areas. It can be especially problematic when the ground is saturated or when the drainage network has insufficient capacity to cope with the additional flow. Climate change is projected to increase the frequency and intensity of heavy rainfall events, placing greater pressure on traditional drainage systems.

4.202 All development has the potential to increase the risk of surface water flooding. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are an important tool in managing surface water flood risk. SuDS mimic natural drainage systems and retain water at or near a site when rain falls. They can also be of added benefit by enhancing biodiversity and amenity through design treatments and incorporate trees and other vegetation. The Council seeks to manage surface water run off as close to the source as possible and will apply a hierarchy of drainage solutions as outlined in Draft Policy DM 16, prioritising sustainable solutions. Proposals should seek to maximise the value of SuDS by making use of their features, such as trees, green space and clean water at the surface, to improve the value of landscapes and to strengthen the sense of place.

4.203 There are numerous types of SuDs including swales, ponds, green walls and brown, blue and green roofs. 'Green roofs' are a design feature that is planted whilst 'brown roofs' are composed of soil allowed to colonise with plants naturally and 'blue roofs' are themselves water features. All of these design elements slow the rate of run off of rainwater from land or buildings. In addition, paying attention to designing permeable surfaces in development assists with drainage (see also DM 9).

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

4.204 Applicants will be expected to demonstrate that the SuDS will function effectively over the lifespan of the development, by ensuring adequate arrangements for their management and maintenance. Attention should be paid to the most up to date Technical Guidance from: Government; British Water and the Environment Agency and Essex County Council.

Draft Policy DM 16 Sustainable Drainage Systems

A. All proposals for new development must seek to manage surface water as close to its source as possible in line with the following drainage hierarchy:

   i) store rainwater for later use;

   ii) use infiltration techniques, such as porous surfaces in non-clay areas. Porous surfaces are suitable in areas of clay but must be adequately tanked with an outfall. Epping Forest District is predominantly clay so any infiltration proposals must be subject to and pass the relevant percolation tests;

   iii) attenuate rainwater in ponds or open water features for controlled release;

   iv) attenuate rainwater by storing in tanks or sealed water features for controlled release.

B. Other methods including and in line with the following hierarchy will be acceptable only if it can be shown that this will not result in any increased flood risk and more sustainable methods are not practicable:

   i) controlled discharge of rainwater direct to a watercourse/ surface water body;

   ii) controlled discharge rainwater to a surface water sewer/drain;

   iii) controlled discharge rainwater to the combined sewer.

C. The Council will encourage the use of green, brown and blue roofs.

D. The Council will require Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to be sensitively incorporated into new development by way of site layout and design, having regard to the following requirements:

   i) all major development proposals will be required to reduce surface water flows to the 1 in 1 greenfield run-off rate and provide storage for all events up to and including the 1 in 100 year critical storm event including an allowance for climate change, and include at least one source control SuDs measure resulting in a net improvement in water quantity or quality discharging to a sewer;

   ii) all brownfield development proposals should aim to achieve the 1 in 1 greenfield run-off rate and, at a minimum, achieve a 50 per cent reduction in existing site run-off rates for all events, including an allowance for climate change, SuDs measure resulting in a net improvement in water quantity or quality discharging to a sewer;and

   iii) all 'minor' and 'other' development proposals should aim to achieve the 1 in 1 greenfield run off rate where possible, including an allowance for climate change, or a rate as otherwise agreed with the Council

   iv) for all development where the greenfield runoff rate cannot be achieved justification must be provided to demonstrate that the run-off rate has been reduced as much as possible.

E. Where Sustainable Drainage Systems are implemented they will be expected to:

   i) meet the requirements set out in the Council's relevant local standards and guidance, and/or national standards where agreed;

   ii) incorporate measures identified in Surface Water Management Plans;

   iii) be designed to maximise biodiversity and local amenity benefits, and where appropriate, ensure that SuDS techniques provide for clean and safe water at the surface;

   iv) improve water quality; and

   v) full details of the means of achieving future management and maintenance of the SuDS scheme to ensure that it will function effectively over the lifespan of the development will be required, including responsibilities and funding.

F. The Council will give consideration to adopting SuDs. Contributions in the form of commuted sums or CIL will be sought for maintenance if adopted by the Council.

G. Where SuDS cannot be implemented due to site constraints (such as land contamination) robust justification must be provided along with proposed alternative approaches to surface water management.

Alternative Options	
Retain existing policy	The existing policy was adopted prior to the publication of The Floods and Water Management Act 2010, NPPF, PPG and technical guidance and is therefore out of date.
No policy	This would prevent the Council from setting out how it expects applicants to address matters in respect of flood risk and sustainable drainage which is a relevant consideration for the District.

Draft Policy DM 17 Protecting and enhancing watercourses and flood defences

The issue

4.205 National policy notes that opportunities offered by new development should be used to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding. Historical development has included changes to natural watercourses that do not necessarily assist in modern flood management. In addition new development should not reduce the quality of an adjacent water course.

What you told us?

4.206 Responses from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- Responses noted for DM 15 and DM 16 also apply;
- Given the requirement to deliver the levels of development needed over the Plan period, the focus of policy should be on reducing the impact of new and existing development and building in resilience to climate change;
- The Environment Agency highlighted that policies should actively encourage the creation, restoration and enhancement of habitats including river restoration, deculverting, buffer zone creation/ protection and wetland creation. These also act as measures to manage the overall risk of flooding.

Key Evidence

- The Floods and Water Management Act 2010;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change;
- Planning Practice Guidance: Flood Risk and Coastal Change

Preferred Approach

4.207 In order to manage the risk of flooding to properties close to watercourse buffers of open land should be applied between the water course and new buildings.

4.208 The most effective way to reduce flood risk is to enable the watercourses to operate naturally, however in urban areas these have been redirected, and culverted over the years whilst areas of land that may have been used for water storage during flood have been developed. Such changes can now contribute to the risk of flooding. The Environment Agency advises that in order to manage flood risk where there are opportunities to re naturalise water courses, and provide land for flood storage, these should be taken. Development proposals should therefore account for these matters in design wherever possible.

4.209 Where it is not possible to re-naturalise water courses then development must pay particular attention to ensuring that the existing built defences such as walls and culverts serving the development are fit to last, and will be maintained throughout the lifetime of the development.

Draft Policy DM 17 Protecting and enhancing watercourses and flood defences

A. New development must be set back at a distance of at least 8 metres from a main river* and an ordinary watercourse**, or at an appropriate width as agreed by the Council and/or the Environment Agency, in order to provide an adequate undeveloped buffer zone.

B. All major development will be required to and minor development will be expected to:

i) investigate and secure the implementation of environmental enhancements to open*** sections of the river or watercourse if appropriate; and

ii) investigate and secure the implementation of measures to restore culverted sections of the river or watercourse, if appropriate.

C. The Council will resist proposals that would adversely affect the natural functioning of main rivers and ordinary watercourses, including through culverting.

D. Where appropriate the Council will require proposals to include a condition survey of existing watercourse infrastructure to demonstrate that it will adequately function for the lifetime of the development, if necessary, the proposal must make provision for repairs or improvements.

E. Development on or adjacent to a watercourse must not result in the deterioration of the quality of that watercourse and must not impact on the stability of the banks of a watercourse or river.

* the main rivers and their associated tributaries are the River Lea, River Lee Navigation and Stort Navigation River Roding, Nazeing Brook, Cobbins Brook and Cripsey Brook

** the ordinary watercourses are those that are not Main Rivers.

*** Open in this context means any length of watercourse that is not culverted.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Alternative Options	
Retain existing policy	The existing policy was adopted prior to the publication of The Floods and Water Management Act 2010, NPPF, PPG and technical guidance and is therefore out of date.
No policy	This would prevent the Council from setting out how it expects applicants to address matters in respect of protecting and enhancing watercourse and flood defences which are relevant considerations for the District.

Draft Policy DM 18 On site management and reuse of waste water and water supply

The issue

4.210 There is a clear need to ensure that surface water, foul water drainage and treatment occur effectively for the protection of human health and the wider environment. In order for development to function effectively it should not cause any pollution to water bodies or controlled waters including ground water.

What you told us?

4.211 Responses from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- concerns regarding the capacity of the surface water and foul drainage systems to cope with current and future demand arising from additional development;
- reinvestment in sewers is needed;
- concerns regarding water pressure in some areas and the ability to supply water to new development given the current stress on supply;
- the separation of surface water drainage and foul water drainage is critical and efforts must be made to upgrade combined systems in old properties;
- Thames Water the statutory sewage undertaker for the District and statutory water undertaker for the south and south western part of the District highlighted its heavy reliance on the planning system to ensure that infrastructure is provided ahead of the development through phasing or use of planning conditions;
- the Environment Agency highlighted the importance of consideration of the EU Water Framework Directive and that some of the main rivers in the District are classified as poor or bad ecological status or potential. A policy should be in place to improve the status of the rivers in the District;
- it was recognised that the bulk of a policy response to matters of waste water and water supply is bounded by national policy and good practice guidance and is not an optional matter;
- the Council should continue to pursue a robust approach to managing waste water and water supply as far as it is able within its powers.

Key Evidence

- The Floods and Water Management Act 2010;
- Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010;
- EU Water Framework Directive;
- Thames River Basin Management Plans;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change;
- Planning Practice Guidance: Flood Risk and Coastal Change.

Preferred Approach

4.212 National policy sets out that local authorities should adopt proactive strategies in regard to climate change resilience and take full account of water supply and demand considerations. They should include Local Plan policies to deliver the provision of infrastructure including waste management, water supply and wastewater.

4.213 The EU Water Framework Directive established a framework for the protection and improvement of rivers and lakes, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwater. As set out development must not result in the deterioration of the water quality status of a waterbody and must not prevent the future attainment of 'Good Ecological Status', or 'Good Ecological Potential' if the watercourse is artificial or heavily modified. In addition the chemical quality of the watercourse is important as it has the potential to affect the biological quality. The ecological potential or status of the water bodies in the District varies although most of these water bodies do not fall under the ambit of the Water Framework Directive. The Thames River Basin Management Plan is designed to implement the Directive. It seeks by 2027 at the latest that all relevant water bodies in the area should be of 'good ecological status'. During the Plan period the Council seeks to take any measures that are within its powers to improve the quality of these water bodies and is in discussion with the Environment Agency and the statutory water undertaker (Thames Utilities Ltd) to establish how to influence these beyond dealing with any historical misconnection problems from properties. Sustainable drainage systems are considered to be able to contribute to improvements in water quality given their potential to 'filter' run off water. All new development must avoid any detriment to water quality.

4.214 The Environment Agency has identified Groundwater Source Protection Zones for 2000 groundwater sources used for public drinking water supply nationally. The zones show the potential for contaminant migration to the water source/ resource from any activities that might cause pollution in the area. The closer the activity the greater the risk. The groundwater source catchments are divided into zones that relate to the travel time of water from any point below the water table to the source. The Lea Valley contains some areas of Groundwater Source Protection Zones in the Inner Zone 1 (50 day travel time) and Outer Zone 2 (400 day travel time) and Total Catchment Zone 3. The Environment Agency use the zones in conjunction with the Groundwater Protection Policy to set up pollution prevention measures in areas which are at higher risk and to monitor the activities of potential polluters nearby. Although not considered in national source protection zones, the Lea Valley within the District is especially sensitive to groundwater contamination, as a whole, due to the history of gravel extraction and landfilling. There are also significant numbers of private water supplies in the area which require protection.

4.215 The Council expects developers to work with the water companies to ensure that their proposals can be suitably serviced with water supply and make considerate use of water saving measures such as grey water systems and rain water harvesting (please see also Draft Policy DM 9). In addition to ensure the suitable arrangements for foul water drainage and treatment from their developments and respect for the Groundwater Source Protection Zones and the environment in general.

4.216 This will also apply to operators of commercial developments to ensure that contaminated surface water is properly treated in order to protect drainage systems, watercourses and the environment in general. For example, from car/ lorry washes hardstanding.

4.217 In the majority of cases the Council does not have the power to refuse planning permission in relation to connections to the public sewer whilst the statutory undertakers' role is to provide connections to the public sewer and their ability to refuse to make connections is limited. Therefore, planning applications should be referred to the statutory undertaker for assessment. The applicant will be expected to provide proof of the adequacy of the proposals in respect of water supply and foul drainage via correspondence from the statutory undertaker. The Council will use standard conditions to manage this aspect of the development.

Draft Policy DM 18 On site management of waste water and water supply

A. The Council will expect applications to set out how they will ensure that there is adequate surface water, foul drainage and treatment capacity to serve their development and demonstrate that it does not impact on the adequacy of existing development in this regard. All proposals for new development will be required to:

   i) ensure the separation of surface and foul water systems; and

   ii) implement sustainable drainage systems, in line with Policy DM 16.

B. Where the local public sewer network does not have adequate capacity to serve the existing and proposed development proposals will be required to demonstrate that it provides for suitable alternative arrangements for storing, treating and discharging foul water.

C. The Council will give preference to mains foul drainage and will seek to restrict the use of non-mains drainage for foul water disposal, particularly in Groundwater Source Protection Zones, in line with Environment Agency guidance. The location of and likely impact on the private water supplies within the District must also be taken into account. Where non-mains drainage is proposed for the disposal of foul water, a foul drainage assessment will be required to ensure the most sustainable drainage option will be implemented.

D. All proposals for new development will be required to:

   i) ensure that there is adequate water supply infrastructure capacity both on and off site to serve the development with wholesome water of sufficient quantity, flow rate and pressure, without adversely impacting on existing users; and

   ii) make provision for the installation and management of measures for the efficient use of mains water and where possible with direct connection to the mains public water supply. Please also refer to Policy DM 19 below.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Alternative Options	
Retain existing policy	Whilst there is a general policy regarding infrastructure adequacy it is considered that a more specific policy would be appropriate taking account of water specific infrastructure adequacy and to respond to the EU Water Framework Directive and related new legislation, the Floods and Water Management Act 2010, NPPF, PPG and technical guidance.
No policy	This would prevent the Council from setting out how it expects applicants to address matters in respect of on site management of waste water and water supply which are relevant considerations for the District.

Draft Policy DM 19 Sustainable Water Use

The issue

4.218 It is important to manage the water resources that serve the District as it is in an area of serious stress on water resources. Consequently the use of water efficiency measures in buildings is appropriate.

What you told us?

4.219 Response from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- concerns regarding water pressure in some areas;
- concerns regarding the ability to supply water to new development given the current stress on supply and summer shortages;
- rainwater harvesting measures should be included in new development, as should the recycling of water in new buildings i.e. grey water systems;
- measures to reduce water usage should be promoted;
- new build should incorporate sustainability provisions including carbon saving measures;
- require the optional standard of water efficiency for new buildings given the location of the District in an area of Water Stress as identified by the Environment Agency;
- the measures should be treated holistically through recognised standards such as BREEAM or Code for Sustainable Homes.

Key Evidence

- National Planning Policy Framework: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change;
- Planning Practice Guidance: Housing Optional Technical Standards – Water Efficiency;
- Environment Agency Water Stress Areas Classification (2013) – Anglian Water's classification for the purposes of Regulation 4 of the Water Industry (Prescribed Condition) Regulation 1999 (as amended);
- Epping Forest District Council Carbon Reduction and Renewable Energy Assessment 2013;
- BREEAM UK New Construction (2014) Building Research Establishment

Preferred Approach

4.220 The District, served by Thames Water and Affinity Water for mains water potable water supplies and a number of private water companies, is classed as being in an area of 'serious water stress' (Environment Agency Water Stressed Areas Classification 2013). In such areas it is recommended that there is implementation of water efficiency standards in order to manage demand on the water environment.

4.221 The average UK consumption of water is 150 litres per person per day (in the home). As set out in government guidance the Council has the option to set additional technical requirements in the Local Plan on exceeding the minimum standard (125 litres per person per day) required by Building Regulations in respect of water efficiency. The tighter Building Regulations optional requirement expected by the Council is 110 litres per person per day (roughly 30% less than average consumption).

4.222 Given the significant pressure on the water supply in the District conditions will be required on planning permissions to ensure the standard is met. There are many routes to achieving the standard such as the use of grey water systems and rainwater harvesting together with water efficient fittings and appliances.

4.223 With respect to non residential development the Council considers it reasonable to require a similar percentage reduction in water consumption as that for residential uses recognising that some commercial uses need more water for operational processes.

4.224 The Code for Sustainable Homes provides a useful benchmark to assist in water efficiency measures and the BREEAM 2014 for New Construction is the relevant standard for non- domestic new build property. Whilst the Council recognises that it cannot impose the BREEAM standard the draft policy below sets out the Council expectation of a reduction in water usage in non-residential buildings commensurate with that achieved by the optional requirement for residential development.

4.225 Water efficiency of non residential buildings can be demonstrated with reference to the BREEAM manual metrics.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Sustainable energy solar panels

Sustainable energy solar panels

Sustainable transport

Draft Policy DM 19 Sustainable Water Use

A. Development will need to demonstrate that:

i) Water saving measures and equipment is incorporated in all new development

ii) New homes (including replacement dwellings) meet a water efficiency standard of 110 litres or less per person per day;

iii) New non-residential development of 1000sqm gross floor area or more aims to achieve at least a 30% improvement over baseline building consumption.

The above applies unless it can be clearly demonstrated that it would not be feasible on technical or viability grounds.

B. Where new national standards exceed those set out above, the national standards will take precedence.

Alternative Options	
Retain existing policy	There is no existing policy regarding sustainable water use.
No policy	This would not enable the Council to respond to issues of water stress within the District.

Draft Policy DM 20 Low Carbon and Renewable Energy

The issue

4.226 National policy provides that local authorities should adopt proactive strategies with regard to climate change resilience and have a positive strategy to promote energy from low carbon and renewable energy. It notes that local authorities should recognise the responsibility of all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources.

What you told us?

4.227 Responses from the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- new build should incorporate sustainability provisions including carbon saving measures;
- the measures should be treated holistically through recognised standards such as BREEAM or Code for Sustainable Homes;
- more use of alternative and green energy has to be encouraged, and energy saving promoted;

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

- existing buildings should be made more energy efficient, and zero carbon over the Plan period;
- new buildings should be energy efficient with built in measures and not just recommendations to developers;
- set standards for renewable energy in development and enforce them;
- small scale renewable energy schemes are preferred;
- provide policy for residential and industrial development to provide renewable infrastructure as part of initial construction;
- district heating schemes would be most suitable in the area, fuelled by renewable sources and residential areas using spare heat and power from industrial uses would be valuable if possible;
- support community energy generation on a small scale with a long term view of people owning their own energy generation for their homes and communities;
- views differ regarding the suitability of large scale wind and photovoltaic power (sun farms) installations in the District.

Key Evidence

- Climate Change Act 2008;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change;
- Planning Practice Guidance: Climate Change, Renewable and low carbon energy;
- Epping Forest District Council Carbon Reduction and Renewable Energy Assessment 2013.

Preferred Approach

4.228 National policy notes that local authorities should include Local Plan policies to deliver the provision of energy infrastructure including heat. Low carbon and renewable energy measures take a variety of forms including commercial 'farms' that whilst intrusive generate energy on a large scale, individual installations for individual properties (micro generation) and schemes that include a number of properties (district heating schemes). Some householder installations are permitted development not requiring planning permission.

4.229 The Council wishes to encourage new development that designs from the outset an environment of zero or low carbon energy use rather than retrofits installations to standard traditional designs. The retrofitting of renewable energy installations on existing development is considered acceptable in principle.

4.230 The Council recognises the need for energy generation to support development and seeks the generation of low carbon and renewable energy. The Council also recognises the findings of the Carbon Reduction and Renewable Energy Assessment in its conclusions that the potential in the District for large scale renewable energy production is hampered by the policy designation of the Green Belt. National Policy does not rule such development out but notes that elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development. In such cases the demonstration of very special circumstances would be required for proposals to proceed (paragraph 91). In any case careful consideration of the impact of proposals on the openness of the Green Belt is needed. More positively, the Assessment concluded that small scale renewable energy schemes of all kinds can be accommodated in the District and incorporation in the design of development on larger sites is feasible and viable as would be installations on individual buildings.

4.231 Decentralised heating is supported by national policy as a form of renewable or low carbon decentralised energy supply, and a means of meeting requirements of the Climate Change Act on carbon remission reduction. Decentralised or community energy schemes can be connected into larger District wide schemes.

4.232 A key characteristic of district heating schemes are that an 'anchor' high demand energy user is needed to support the viability of the scheme. The Councils Carbon Reduction and Renewable Energy Assessment 2013 found the potential for combined heat and power (CHP) networks in the glasshouse industry to be significant in terms of carbon savings – if powered by traditional energy sources this is heavily reliant upon the fuel markets and there are viability concerns. However, if it is practical to provide through renewable energy sources then there is potential.

4.233 It is possible that future redevelopment or extension of industrial areas may give rise to the suitable conditions for district heating schemes, or purely support site wide communal energy systems that may be connected to district heating networks at a later date. A small number of gas fired combined heat and power plants exist in the District.

4.234 Large scale residential development is a clear candidate for the use of communal energy schemes that may later be connected to wider district networks.

4.235 The proposed draft policy seeks to support appropriate low carbon and renewable technologies including district heating networks as part of a package of measures to assist in delivering more energy efficient development. All major development should incorporate site wide communal energy systems that serve all energy demands from within the development and should have the ability to connect to district heating networks where possible.

Draft Policy DM 20 Low Carbon and Renewable Energy

A. The incorporation of low carbon and renewable energy measures in new and existing development will be encouraged with regard to both stand alone installations and micro renewables integrated into development.

B. Low carbon and renewable energy technologies will be permitted provided that:

i) they do not have any adverse impact on the integrity of any European sites, wildlife sites, protected species or habitats or the openness of the Green Belt;

ii) a positive assessment is provided demonstrating how any impacts on the environment and heritage assets, including cumulative landscape, noise, visual, air quality and emissions, traffic generation impacts can be avoided or mitigated through careful consideration of location, scale and design;

iii) the benefits of the proposal are clear with regard to the amount of heat or electricity generated and consequential reduction in greenhouse gases, and the local individual or community benefit including community ownership or shareholding of a scheme;

C. The use of combined heat and power (CHP), and/or combined cooling, heat and power (CCHP) and district heating will be encouraged in new developments.

D. All major development will be required to incorporate infrastructure for district heating, and will be expected to connect to any existing suitable systems (including systems that will be in place at the time of construction), unless it is demonstrated that this would render development unviable.

E. Where a district heating scheme is proposed as part of a major development the Council will expect the scheme to demonstrate that the proposed heating and cooling systems (CHP/CCHP) have been selected considering the heat hierarchy in line with the following order of preference:

i) connection with existing CHP/CCHP distribution networks;

ii) site wide CHP/CCHP fed by renewables;

iii) communal CHP/CCHP fuelled by renewable energy sources;

iv) gas fired CHP/CCHP.

Alternative Options	
Retain existing policy	There is currently a policy for renewable energy that does not extend to low carbon solutions or district heating schemes.
No policy	If no policy is provided the opportunity would be lost for the Council to secure the benefits to addressing climate change issues.

Draft Policy DM 21 Local environmental impacts, pollution and land contamination

The issue

4.236 National policy supports the planning system to prevent both new and existing development from contributing to environmental damage and putting people and the environment at risk, or subjecting them to the adverse effects from unacceptable levels of soil, air, water, light or noise pollution or land instability. These factors impact significantly on living conditions and include the potential disruption from the demolition and redevelopment of buildings. The NPPF also notes that planning should remediate and mitigate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land where appropriate.

What you told us?

4.237 Responses to the Community Choices consultation and stakeholder engagement included:

- concerns regarding the noise, light and air pollution arising from new development, in particular regarding road traffic emissions and noise, and that from North Weald Airfield flights;
- concerns regarding the impact of additional development and traffic generated on air quality and consequently human health, wildlife, and the Epping Forest;
- the Environment Agency seeks Local Plan policy to ensure that potential contamination at a site is fully investigated and remediated.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Key Evidence

- Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990;
- Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010;
- Ambient Air Quality Directive 2008;
- EU Water Quality Framework;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Core planning principles;
- National Planning Policy Framework: Section 11: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment;
- Planning Practice Guidance: Land affected by contamination, Light Pollution, Noise;
- EFDC Contaminated Land Strategy 2000.

Preferred Approach

4.238 The aim in plan making should be to minimise pollution and other adverse effects on the local and natural environment and subsequently humans and other species. The prevention of unacceptable risks from pollution and land instability should be accounted for in consideration of the location of development and the impact on health and the environment taken into account. Some engineering operations and ground works can cause pollution such as the movement of significant amounts of soil, or fill with inert waste to re- contour land. Therefore all types of development fall within this policy.

4.239 National policy notes that where a site is affected by contamination or land instability it is the responsibility of the developer or landowner to ensure that a safe development is secured. However, planning policy and decision making is required to ensure that any site is suitable for its use taking account of ground conditions and land stability including from former activities and pollution from former uses. Such assurance can be taken from site investigation information prepared by a competent person. The NPPF defines the competent person to prepare site investigation information as being "a person with a recognised relevant qualification, sufficient experience in dealing with the type(s) of pollution or land instability, and membership of a relevant professional organisation."

4.240 Contamination of land in the District largely arises from previous industrial activity, waste disposal, accidental spillages and transportation. Many processes are now controlled under legislation but historically this was not the case and hence we are left with a legacy of contaminated land and surface/ground waters that potentially may need to be addressed. (Refer EFDC Contaminated Land Strategy 2000).

4.241 The construction process, whether accompanied by demolition or other ground preparation, can cause a significant degree of noise, dust and vibration within the locality. Some types of development such as basement development are particularly extreme examples of such disruption. The Council seeks to minimise these impacts and the use of Construction Management Statements, agreed with the Council, include matters such as hours of operation on site. In addition, the reuse of materials on site reduces waste, as well as the amount of materials removed from site and contributes to an overall reduction in the use of materials reducing the carbon footprint of development.

4.242 The following draft policy seeks to ensure that these factors are effectively considered and managed in assessing the suitability of development, acquiring evidence to support decisions made on planning applications, and requiring management statements setting out the process and rules for the reduction of nuisance in the demolition and construction process.

Draft Policy DM 21 Local environmental impacts, pollution and land contamination

A. The Council will require that local environmental impacts of all development proposals do not lead to detrimental impacts on the health, safety, well being and the amenity of existing and new users or occupiers of the development site, or the surrounding land. These potential impacts can include, but are not limited to, air and water (surface and groundwater) pollution, dust, noise, vibration, light pollution, odours, and fumes as well as land contamination.

B. The Council will:

i) resist development that leads to unacceptable local environmental Impacts, including, but not limited to, air pollution, noise and vibration, light pollution, odours, dust and land and water contamination;

ii) require that activities likely to generate pollution are located away from sensitive uses and receptors where possible, practical and economically feasible;

iii) require development proposals to mitigate and reduce to a minimum any adverse local environmental impacts and activities that may have wider cumulative effects;

iv) where there are unacceptable risks of contamination and land instability, require these to be properly addressed through remediation. If remediation measures are not suitable then planning permission will be refused.

v) Where necessary, the Council will set planning conditions to reduce local environmental impacts on adjacent land uses to acceptable levels.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'

Land Contamination

C. The Council promotes the remediation of contaminated land through development where possible. Potential contamination risks will need to be properly considered and adequately mitigated before development proceeds. To deliver this the Council will require development proposals on contaminated land:

i) to be informed by a desk top study and preliminary risk assessment, including an assessment of the site's history, potential contamination sources, pathways and receptors;

ii) where necessary to undertake a site investigation and detailed risk assessment in line with current best practice guidance, including where appropriate physical investigations, chemical testing and assessments of ground gas risks and risks to groundwater;

iii) where necessary to provide a remediation strategy that sets out how any identified risks from the assessments above are going to be addressed. If remediation measures are not suitable then planning permission will be refused;

iv) where necessary to provide a long term maintenance and monitoring regime for the mitigation of any on going risk and identify the person/s responsible for the regime;

v) where necessary, to provide a validation report once remediation has taken place, including evidence that demonstrates that risks from contamination have been controlled effectively; and

vi) to ensure that all above assessments and investigations are carried out by a competent person.

Construction and demolition

D. The Council will seek to manage and limit environmental disturbances during construction and demolition as well as during excavations and construction of subterranean developments. To deliver this the Council requires the submission of Construction Management Statements for the following types of developments:

i) all major developments;

ii) any basement developments;

iii) developments of sites in confined locations or near sensitive receptors;

iv) if substantial demolition/excavation works are proposed.

E. In addition the Council supports the use of sustainable design and construction techniques, including where appropriate the local or on-site sourcing of building materials enabling reuse and recycling on site.

Countrycare volunteers at Bobbingworth

Countrycare volunteers at Bobbingworth

Alternative Options	
Retain existing policy	The existing policies were adopted prior to the publication of the NPPF and PPG. In addition there are opportunities to combine the existing policies to make more user friendly.
No policy	If no policy were provided the Council would not be able to provide what it expects from applicants to address with regard to these matters.

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies'