

Concept Framework Briefing Note

September 2018

This Briefing Note is in 'draft' format and subject to formal endorsement prior to publication.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this note is to provide guidance on the process for preparing Concept Framework Plans for the Local Plan Submission Version 2017 (LPSV) allocated sites at West Ongar and South Nazeing. A separate note has been produced which provides guidance for Strategic Masterplans.
- 1.2 This note consolidates the guidance as set out in the LPSV, Planning Performance Agreements and other key documents into a single note in order to ensure consistency in the overall approach for each Concept Framework Plan area. The briefing note is not intended to be prescriptive, and where Planning Performance Agreements are in place, these should also be referred to.
- 1.3 In order to ensure that a comprehensive approach is taken to the planning and delivery of the Concept Framework Areas and associated infrastructure across the District, the Concept Framework Plan should address key place shaping issues in accordance with Policy SP 3 ('Place Shaping') of the LPSV. The Concept Framework Plans for West Ongar and South Nazeing should also be prepared in accordance with Policy P 4 and P 10 respectively.
- 1.4 Where the Concept Framework Area comprises more than one allocation site, the Concept Framework should be undertaken jointly between all landowners/promoters of the site allocations with oversight by EFDC.
- 1.5 The Concept Framework shall be produced in accordance with the site specific requirements set out in Appendix 6 of the LPSV 2017 along with all other relevant Local Plan policies.
- 1.6 The Concept Framework process seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

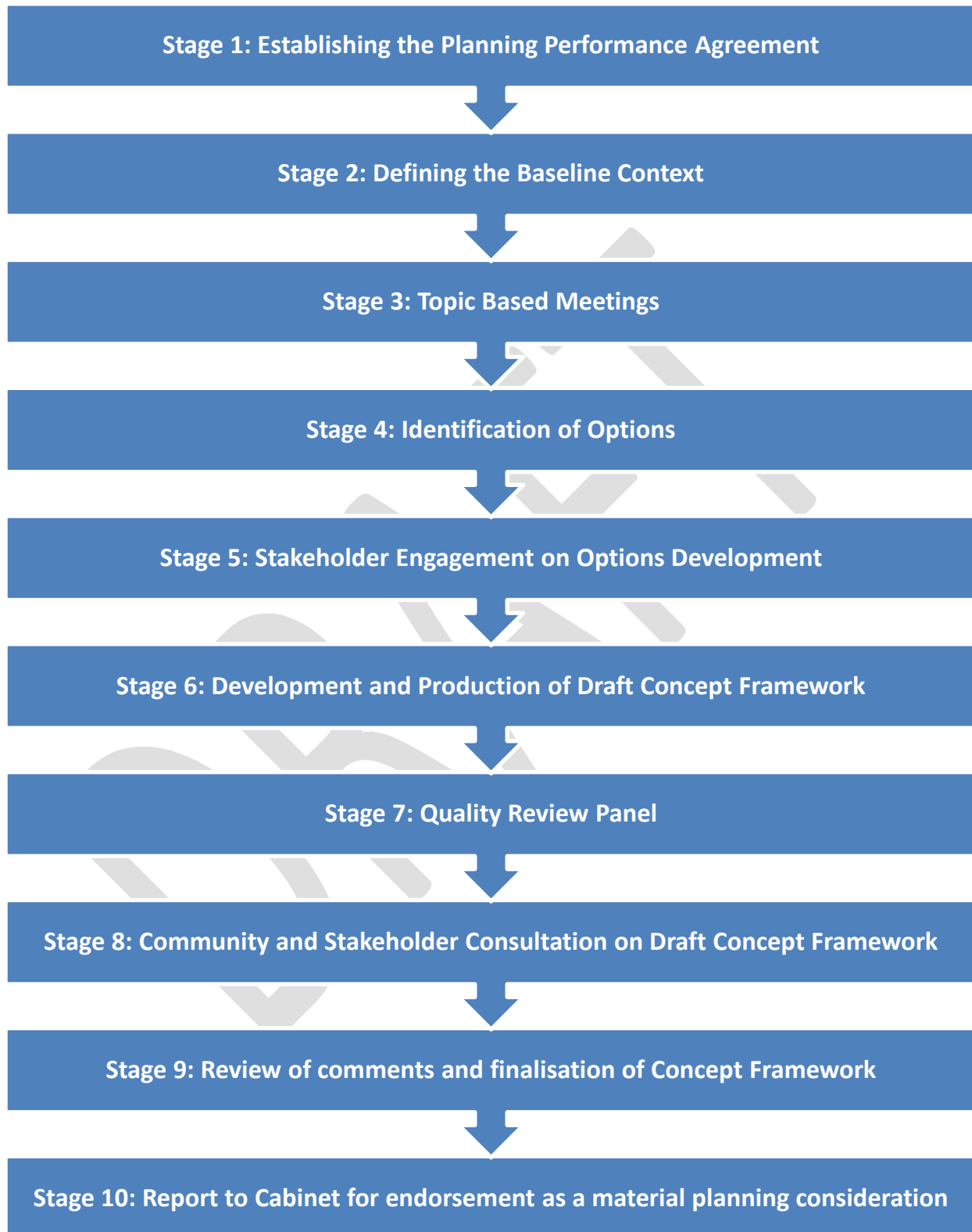
- establish a Development Framework/Outline Scoping for the site;
- set out the broad distribution of different types of development across the site;
- provide a high level overarching framework to ensure that planning and delivery of development and infrastructure is properly coordinated, distributed and timed across the Concept Framework Area;
- ensure that the development is 'front-loaded' and where possible accelerated, so that key planning issues are considered and where possible resolved jointly by all relevant parties prior to the submission of planning applications;

- provide the spatial vision and development objectives for the area at the outset, complementing the Local Plan allocations/spatial strategy and vision;
- incorporate appropriate effective engagement and consultation with stakeholders and the local community, including town and parish councils, in order to build a sense of community ownership and inform the progress of the preparation of the Concept Framework;
- incorporate appropriate and effective engagement with elected Members, including through regular update reporting to the Local Plan Cabinet Committee;
- be informed through review by the Quality Review Panel; and
- enable the Council to endorse the Concept Framework as a material planning consideration.

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2. Stages in Concept Framework Process

2.1 The key stages in the Concept Framework process are as follows:



2.2 The above stages will not always be sequential. For instance, it is likely that topic based meetings will continue beyond stage 3, and equally community and stakeholder engagement

should be ongoing through the Concept Framework process. However, the diagram provides a visual illustration of the various stages which will be followed in order to arrive at a final endorsed Concept Framework. The following section provides further clarity and guidance on each of the stages presented above.

Stage 1: Establishing the Planning Performance Agreement

- 2.3 EFDC will work with site promoters to scope and agree the broad level of support each Concept Framework requires. The Agreement will identify named officers to lead the delivery of each workstream.

Stage 2: Defining the Baseline Context

- 2.4 At Stage 2 the Concept Framework will need to undertake a full baselining exercise to consider site specific context. This should include as a minimum the identification of site constraints, local character, movement and policy considerations. From this a series of opportunities should be identified.

Stage 3: Topic Based Meetings

- 2.5 At Stage 3 EFDC and site promoters will have agreed through contextual analysis the specific issues that the Concept Framework will need to address. Stage 3 will therefore focus upon the identification of the forward support that EFDC (and in some instances Essex County Council) will need to provide. This will culminate in agreeing a forward programme of topic based meetings. The output of each meeting will be documented and will shape the emerging Concept Framework.
- 2.6 As a guide, it is envisaged that meetings may be required to cover the following topics to inform the production of Concept Frameworks (in addition to outline planning applications where possible). The following topics are not listed sequentially - for example it is anticipated that 'Infrastructure Delivery' will be a key consideration throughout the Concept Framework process to ensure the delivery of infrastructure to support the planned level of housing and employment is considered on an ongoing basis from the outset:

1. Stakeholder and Community Engagement

- Agree a strategy and programme

2. Constraints and Opportunities

- Review of baseline information / evidence
 - Scoping of additional evidence where required (e.g. Ecological surveys, Topographic surveys, Flood modelling, Transport surveys, Contamination risk assessment (high level), Heritage and archaeology assessment, and Housing need)

3. Landscape, Natural Environment, SuDS and Green Infrastructure levels strategy and SuDS

- (E.g. Flooding, Drainage, Landscape sensitivity, Views, Green and Blue Infrastructure, Ecology, SANGs where applicable)

4. Transport and Movement – key principles and access

- (E.g. Highways impacts, Parking standards)

5. Social and Physical Infrastructure

- (E.g. Utilities, Public Transport, Highways, Active Transport – cycling/PROWS/Bridleways, Playing Pitches and Sports Facilities, Education, Health, Local Centre)

6. Urban Design principles and layout

- (E.g. Land Uses, Density and character, Key spaces and routes – public realm and streetscape, Views, Development parameters, Precedent Case Studies)

7. Infrastructure Delivery

- (E.g. Phasing, Viability, Apportionment)

NB. Green relates to meetings agreeing process / principles

Turquoise is for meetings relating to establishing spatial principles

2.7 The above list is intended to provide an indicative sequence and priority order starting point for discussion. It is not intended to be prescriptive. The actual sequencing and content of topic based meetings will vary, taking into account site specific circumstances.

Stage 4: Identification of Options

2.8 As part of the early stages of Concept Framework production it is anticipated that options will be developed. These options will be informed by the early contextual / baseline work undertaken and topic based meetings and potentially QRP. Following review, the initial set of options may then be consolidated in consultation with Council Officers in preparation for Community and Stakeholder Engagement. Options produced should all be in compliance with the emerging Local Plan, and should be presented in a clear and accessible format.

Stage 5: Stakeholder Engagement on Options Development

2.9 It is anticipated that the site promoter(s), together the relevant Council Officers, would provide a briefing to relevant ward Members, the Cabinet and relevant Parish and Town

Councils. The briefing would provide an overview of work undertaken to date by the site promoter(s), and outline the options that have been identified.

2.10 Key principles for all engagement activities include:

- Any consultation and engagement events will be advertised widely to ensure they reach their target audience;
- Any communication or engagement activity will be easily accessible to the community, both through how it's shared and in the way it is written. At each stage it will be made clear whether there is an opportunity to provide comments/feedback and how these comments will be used or responded to;
- Should engagement be face to face, it will take place within close proximity of the community/stakeholders, such as in a village hall or community centre;
- Timing will to be considered to ensure information is supplied with enough notice;
- Communication and engagement will be co-ordinated with EFDC and developers in advance of making arrangements to ensure this can be delivered effectively and does not compete with other planned engagement on the Garden Town or Strategic Masterplanning / Concept Framework areas.
- The scope, nature and location of consultation and engagement events (including consultation and engagement materials) must be agreed in advance by the EFDC.

2.11 It may be beneficial to hold separate briefings for different audiences at this stage. It would be advisable to engage with all relevant Town and Parish Councils, including those neighbouring or adjacent to the Concept Framework Area. Suitable venues and times for the briefing(s) should be discussed and agreed with the Implementation Team Manager, Democratic Services Manager and Planning and Governance Portfolio Holder in advance.

2.12 In addition to briefings held at Stage 5, regular progress reports will also be provided to the Local Plan Cabinet Committee. The reports will be produced by the Implementation Manager, in consultation with relevant lead officers.

2.13 Community and stakeholder engagement must be planned in accordance with the adopted [Statement of Community Involvement](#).

2.14 It is expected that at least one public engagement event and formal stakeholder engagement event should be undertaken to inform the production of each Concept Framework. The form, nature and timing of these events will need to be agreed with the Council.

2.15 The public engagement event may take the form of an exhibition in a local community hall or other accessible and appropriate venue. A key benefit of an exhibition is that they it is able to reach large numbers of people.

2.16 Care must be taken to ensure that the scope and purpose of public engagement is clearly articulated in order to avoid confusion or 'consultation fatigue' within the local community. The Public Relations Manager should be consulted from the outset.

2.17 Promoters will be expected to undertake at least one targeted stakeholder workshop with key target groups (that will as a minimum comprise the Parish and Town Council). The workshop will be used to seek feedback on options presented for the Concept Framework,

and to inform the production and development of the Concept Framework itself. Findings from the workshop will be written up by the site promoter(s) and agreed with the Councils. This will then be used as a key piece of evidence moving forward towards Concept Framework preparation.

Stage 6: Development and Production of the Draft Concept Framework

- 2.18 Following Community and Stakeholder Engagement, the promoter(s) will develop and produce the Draft Concept Framework document. This will require analysis and consideration of the findings from engagement, as well as further ongoing discussions with Council Officers.
- 2.19 A number of plans shall be prepared as part of the Concept Framework process and shall include but not be limited to:
- Site constraints and opportunities
 - Contextual analysis
 - Key strategic design principles
 - Land use plan
 - Movement plan (including main access points, road hierarchy and non-vehicular routes)
 - Landscape, ecology Green infrastructure framework plan
 - Overall indicative Concept Framework
- 2.20 Site promoters should work collaboratively to produce a Concept Framework that broadly accords with the structure set out below. Whilst this is not prescriptive, the Council will expect to see each of the following stages addressed within the completed document as a minimum.

Indicative Content Structure

- I. **Vision** – The vision for the Site / key objectives
- II. **The Concept Framework site(s)** – The site's and context description / designations / flood risk / topography / landscape / transport and access / responding to the constraints / utilities / land ownership
- III. **Consultation and engagement** – a summary of the engagement and consultation that has helped to shape the Concept Framework
- IV. **Movement and access** – Self-contained and walkable neighbourhoods / main access arrangements / pedestrian and cycle routes / PROWs / street hierarchy / car parking / public transport
- V. **Landscape strategy** – Landscape and biodiversity strategy / proposed planting areas / sensitive edges / public open spaces / lighting strategy (if necessary for ecology) / play strategy / drainage strategy and biodiversity enhancement / Mitigation of impact upon Epping Forest
- VI. **Concept Framework Plan**
- VII. **Urban Form** – urban form principles/character areas/building heights/block structure/architectural principles/cohesion
- VIII. **Infrastructure delivery** – including infrastructure phasing plan
- IX. **Application** – application checklist

Stage 7: Quality Review Panel

- 2.21 A Quality Review Panel (QRP) for EFDC has been established and is managed by Frame Projects. The QRP is a multi-disciplinary panel of 18 Members and is chaired by Peter Maxwell, Director of Design at the London Legacy Development Corporation. Up to 5 members are drawn from the Panel for each review, with panel members selected in accordance with the issues raised by the scheme.
- 2.22 The principles of design review are: independent; expert; multidisciplinary; accountable; transparent; proportionate; timely; advisory; objective; and accessible.
- 2.23 All Concept Frameworks are expected to be subject to formal review by the panel on at least one occasion. Depending upon the nature of the Concept Framework being produced, it may be prudent to utilise the Quality Review Panel (QRP) at an early stage to explore issues or options which will be fundamental to the Concept Framework.
- 2.24 In advance of reviews Frame will make available:
- an agenda providing briefing on scheme(s)
 - potential conflicts of interest identified
- 2.25 The full review will comprise:
- site visit;
 - briefing by planning officers on planning context;
 - client introduction;
 - design team presentation and questions; and
 - discussion and summing up by chair.
- 2.26 After the review a report will be drafted by Frame Projects and approved by chair.

Formal Review	Chair's review	Surgery review
Formal Review: Chair + four panel members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For major development proposals, one or more 'formal review' meeting is likely to be needed at a pre-application stage. - First Formal Review - £5,500 + VAT per scheme - Second formal review - £4,000 + VAT per scheme 	Chair + one panel member <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This type of review could be suitable for assessing planning application schemes which have already been to a formal review at pre-application stage, depending on the issues to be addressed - £2,500 + VAT per scheme 	Chair + one panel member <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This type of review might be used for the discharge of planning conditions, where required - £1,300 + VAT per scheme

- 2.27 Further information is available at the links below:

- EFDC Districtwide QRP: http://www.efdclocalplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Epping-Forest-District-QRP_Terms-of-Reference.pdf

Stage 8: Community and Stakeholder Consultation on Draft Concept Framework

- 2.28 Following agreement by EFDC, the draft Concept Framework will be published for public consultation in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement. It is anticipated that public consultation should last for a minimum of four weeks, and incorporate a variety of methods to maximise participation and feedback. As a minimum copies of documentation should be made available at the EFDC reception, on EFDCs website, in local libraries, and at local Parish / Town Council offices. The use of a static exhibition will be encouraged.
- 2.29 The site promoter(s) will be responsible for designing and printing materials required for the public consultation, such as leaflets, banners or boards. The use of feedback forms should be encouraged where appropriate. EFDC will be responsible for collating and analysing any feedback received through consultation. All consultation materials should be approved and signed off by Officers as required prior to the commencement of public consultation. It is important that sufficient time is incorporated into the programme to enable this.
- 2.30 Care must be taken to ensure that the scope and purpose of public engagement is clearly articulated in order to avoid confusion or 'consultation fatigue' within the local community. The Public Relations Manager should be consulted from the outset, and a Press Release will be prepared and agreed in order to publicise the event appropriately, together with any other measures deemed necessary. The site promoter(s) and EFDC must give consideration as to how the public engagement event is to be managed to ensure that feedback received will be as productive as possible, whilst ensuring that resources are utilised as effectively as possible, and that health and safety measures are appropriately planned for.
- 2.31 It is the intention of EFDC that the Concept Frameworks will be formally endorsed to become a material planning consideration in the consideration of pre-application proposals and the determination of subsequent Planning Applications. EFDC may also choose to adopt the Frameworks as Supplementary Planning Documents ('SPD') at a future point in time. To that effect, EFDC requires Concept Frameworks to be prepared in a form and manner that will allow future adoption as a SPD.

Stage 9: Review of comments and finalisation of Concept Framework

- 2.32 Following conclusion of the public consultation, the site promoter(s) will consider all responses received and agree with the Council where amendments are required to the Concept Framework.
- 2.33 On completion of the amendments, the final Concept Framework will then be submitted to the Council for formal endorsement.

Stage 10: Report to Cabinet for endorsement as material planning consideration

- 2.34 On receipt of the final Concept Framework, the Implementation Manager will prepare a report to the Local Plan Cabinet Committee and / or Cabinet to seek formal endorsement of the Concept Framework as a material planning consideration.

Branding and Corporate Guidelines for Consultation and Concept Framework Production

It is expected that Concept Frameworks will adhere to corporate branding and design guidelines. Documents should be formatted to be landscape in layout, with text font size 12 and should avoid the use of ornate serif fonts. Underlining should be avoided as this can be confused for hyperlinks. Emboldened text should instead be used for emphasis. In all cases it should be ensured that there is a clear contrast between the page background colour and the text colour. EFDC will provide a front cover template for each Concept Framework. This will ensure that upon completion, each document is consistent. Consultant's Quality Assurance verification sheets should not be included within the final document.

As a minimum it will be expected that the Epping Forest District Council logo is included at appropriate locations throughout the documents. It is expected that this will appear on the front and rear covers, however there may be opportunities for appropriate usage at other locations within the document.

The Concept Framework should feature a location plan early within the document, and make use of colour photographs at key locations. Whilst the document may include pages of text, it is expected that these will be punctuated with imagery as frequently as possible. Text heavy pages should be avoided.

The Council will provide an appropriate paragraph that should be included within the inside cover to provide guidance for document users who wish to request copies of the document in alternative formats (e.g. languages, braille etc). Costs associated with the provision of alternative formats will be borne by the Council.