

Epping Stratford Neighbourhood Plan:

Basic Conditions Statement

There are some basic inaccuracies in the BCS and Consultation report – for example: o Incorrect references in BCS in paragraph 3.3 re SP policy numbers and one SP title - SP5 (not SP6 as stated in the BCS) is ‘Green Belt and Local Greenspace’ not ‘Green Belt and District Open Land’.

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Comments
1	Sept 2016	MDS P&CF	First Draft:
2	March 2023	MDS	Revised draft
3	July 2023	MDS	With revisions including Equalities Assessment
4	Nov 2023		
5			

CONTENTS

Introduction	Basic Conditions, Submitting Body, Neighbourhood Area	Page 1
Section 1: NPPF 2021 Obligations	1.1 National Policy 1.2 Fit with the NPPF Presumption 1.3 Fit with the NPPF Sustainability Policies	2
Section 2: Sustainable Development	2.1 Requirement 2.2 Fit of NP Goals and Objectives with Sustainable Development	4
Section 3: The Local Plan	3.1 Requirement 3.2 Conformity with the Strategic Objectives of the Local Plan 3.3 Conformity with the Policies within the Local Plan	5
Section 4: European Union Obligations	4.1 Screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment 4.2 European obligations and human rights requirements 4.2 Equality Impact Assessment	7
5. Conclusion		8
Attachments	EFDC Cabinet Report October 2014	8
	Screening Assessment	10
	An Equalities Impact Assessment	17

Introduction

Basic Conditions

This Basic Conditions Statement has been prepared to accompany the Epping Town Neighbourhood Plan. Paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) requires that Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) must meet the following basic conditions:

- (i) the draft NDP must have appropriate regard to national policies and advice such as that contained in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF);

- (ii) the draft NDP must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- (iii) the draft NDP must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the local planning authority, in this case Epping Forest District Council's Local Plan; and
- (iv) the draft NDP must be compatible with the relevant European obligations and human rights requirements.

Epping Town Council submitting the plan is a qualifying body entitled to submit a plan, the plan meets the statutory requirements for a neighbourhood plan setting out policies for the development and use of land within the specified neighbourhood area only (the whole parish), the Plan covers the period 2023-2033 and does not relate to minerals and waste matters or nationally significant infrastructure projects.

This Basic Conditions Statement addresses these requirements in four sections:

- Section 1 demonstrates the conformity of the Neighbourhood Plan with the NPPF;
- Section 2 shows how the NP will contribute to sustainable development;
- Section 3 demonstrates the conformity of the NP with the Epping Forest District Council's Local Plan; and
- Section 4 demonstrates compliance with the appropriate EU obligations.

Submitting Body

The Epping Town Neighbourhood Plan is submitted by Epping Town Council, which is a qualifying body as defined by the Localism Act 2011.

Neighbourhood Area

The Plan applies to the Parish of Epping within the Epping Forest District. In accordance with part 2 of the Regulations, Epping District Council, the local planning authority, publicised the application from Epping Town Council to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan and advertised a consultation period between 8th August and 19th September 2014 (a copy of the Cabinet report is attached) The application contained a statement explaining why and how Epping Town intended to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, and how the organisation and area met the conditions of Section 61G(2) and 61F(5) of the Town And Country Planning Act, 1990. Epping Forest District took a delegated decision 6th October 2014 to approve the application for the parish as the designated area. Epping Town Council confirms that this Neighbourhood Plan:

- i. relates only to the Parish of Epping Town and to no other Neighbourhood Areas; and
- ii. is the only Neighbourhood Development Plan in the designated area. No other Neighbourhood Development Plan exists nor is in development for part or all of the designated area.

Section 1: NPPF Obligations

1.1 National Policy

The Epping Town Neighbourhood Plan must have appropriate regard to national policy. The following section describes how the Plan's proposals relates to the National Planning Policy Framework (2012 and as subsequently amended).

Sustainable Development

1.2 The central theme of the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In this context sustainable development is broadly defined internationally as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The NPPF uses three 'dimensions' to describe sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, and requires the planning system, and thus the Epping Town Neighbourhood Plan, where appropriate:

- to contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and by improving the local supporting infrastructure.
- to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

- to contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment; helping to improve biodiversity, making better use of natural resources, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

1.3 The NPPF specifies that delivery of sustainable development should be pursued in a positive way by the planning system, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (Para. 11)

1.4 Epping Town Neighbourhood Plan fit with the NPPF presumption in favour of sustainable development is reflected in the combination of development proposals to address objectively assessed strategic needs,

- Enabling rural and urban regeneration of the town and parish.
- Creating a more vibrant historic Epping High Street and town centre
- Ensuring development is sustainable, well-designed and creates a distinctive local identity.
- Protecting or enhancing the historic, natural and rural environments of the parish.
- Creating more sustainable live/work patterns for those who live in and visit the parish.
- Maintaining and expanding the local facilities and amenities which contribute to residents' amenities and enjoyment of the parish

Policies	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi
POLICY 1: PROTECTION OF THE FOREST AND THE GREEN BELT				✓		✓
POLICY 2: PROTECT AND ENHANCE OPEN SPACE WITHIN THE PARISH		✓	✓	✓		✓
POLICY 3: DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
POLICY 4: PROPOSALS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
POLICY 5 SOUTH EPPING	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
POLICY 6: ENHANCING EPPING STATION	✓		✓		✓	✓
POLICY 7: WALKING, CYCLING & CAR PARKING	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
POLICY 8: PATHS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE	✓			✓	✓	✓
POLICY 9: EPPING TOWN CENTRE	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
POLICY 10: SUSTAINING AND ENHANCING EPPING TOWN CENTRE	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
POLICY 11: SHOP-FRONT IMPROVEMENTS	✓	✓	✓	✓		
POLICY 12: EMPLOYMENT	✓	✓	✓		✓	
POLICY 13: ENHANCING SOCIAL, SPORTING, PLAY, CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES	✓	✓			✓	✓
POLICY 14: PROTECTING RESIDENTIAL AMENITY			✓	✓		
POLICY 15: BUNGALOWS, BASEMENTS AND GARAGES			✓			
POLICY 17: PROTECTING THE PARISH'S HERITAGE ASSETS	✓		✓	✓		
POLICY 18: SUSTAINABILITY	✓		✓	✓	✓	

1.5 The neighbourhood plans responded to strong local views on protection of green spaces and , a socio-economic emphasis on supporting the vibrancy of the town centre and its facilities. The Plan includes measures to address transport needs with improvements to Epping Station including the future possibility of extending a connection to North Weald (park and ride scheme) and measures for cycling and walking).Further the historic character of Epping and the built features which contribute to the quality of life in this 'edge-of-metropolitan-London' location are protected and enhanced. Proposals towards the reduction and minimisation of resources and use of carbon-based or fossil fuels are set out in NP Policy 18.

1.6 The development of the Plan included proposals (NP policies 3, 4 and 5 – development proposals and South Epping) to mirror the housing needs set out in the Local Plan with losing the minimum green-belt land, and resisted further employment land-use growth which would occupy further open / green space (NP policy 2 – protect and enhance open space within the parish) plus an increase in associated traffic and journey times.

1.7 The Plan addresses other major themes within the NPPF:

NPPF core planning principles	Epping Town Neighbourhood Plan's aims and policies
Be led by local plans which set out a vision for the future of the area and provide a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made efficiently; (para 15)	The preparation of the Plan has been achieved with input and assistance from Epping Forest District Council's Local Plan staff throughout. Paragraphs 3.1 to 3.5 (below) describe the fit between the Neighbourhood Plan and the EFDC Local Plan.
Emphasise enhancing and improving the places in which people live their lives; (para 20)	The Plan's focus on enhancing and improving this is reflected at the heart of the document, in its Vision and its Aims and Objectives (Plan paras 3.3 & 3.4) and NP policies 14, 15 and 16 – Protecting residential amenity).
Drive sustainable development to deliver homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and support local vitality, objectively identifying local need and setting out a clear strategy for allocating land; (para 11a)	The Plan uses statistical data (see Baseline Data) and the needs identified by the community (Issues Survey and consultation results) to shape its direction and policies. – see NP policies 3, 4 and 5 – development proposals, other sustainable development, South Epping and policy 12 Employment. Proposals towards the reduction and minimisation of resources and use of carbon-based or fossil fuels are set out in NP Policy 18. It also reflects the analyses supporting the Local Plan.
Seek to secure a high-quality of design and a good standard of amenity for occupants; (Section 12)	The Plan refers to the adopted Essex Design Guide to shape new developments in the newer residential areas as well as the historic parts of the parish. The Advisory Group undertook Area Character Assessments to shape this approach (see Neighbourhood Plan Appendix C)
Protect the diversity of different areas of England, protecting Green Belts and recognising the " <i>intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside</i> "; (Section 13)	The Plan includes extensive areas of green belt and lays special emphasis on the protection of green belt (NP policy 1 – protection of Forest and green belt) and green spaces within the parish (see NP Policy 2).
Support the transition to a low-carbon future, take account of flood risk and coastal change and encourage the reuse of existing and renewable resources; (Section 14)	The Plan makes specific provision for cycling and walking (NP policy 7), and traffic management with a 20mph limit near schools (see Section 6: Accessibility & Connectivity). In addition the Plan has complementary proposals (Policy 18) which refer to reducing carbon dioxide emissions, electric car-charging points for all new dwellings, public transport systems which don't use fossil fuels, maximising energy efficiency and conservation through orientation, layout and design of buildings, landscaping and tree planting, minimising overheating through the use of green roofs and walls, shading, landscaping and planting, making use of natural lighting and beneficial solar gain.

Help conserve and enhance the natural environment and reduce pollution, allocating land avoiding areas of high environmental and habitat quality; (Section 15)	The Plan identifies land within the parish for new uses or for development without expanding the limits of current development except the specific South Epping proposal (policies 3 and 5) and employment policy 12.
Encourage the re-use of land that has been previously developed (brownfield land); (Section 11)	As above.
Promote mixed use developments, encouraging multiple benefits from urban and rural land; (para. 120)	Several of the sites allocated for development or redevelopment promote mixed uses. (NP policies 3 and 5 – development proposals)
Conserve heritage assets " <i>in a manner appropriate to their significance</i> "; (Section 16)	The Plan has specific policies to protect and enhance the historic core of Epping (policy 17) but recognise the possibility of extending protection to 'newer' heritage within the parish (see section 11 and NP Policy 17 – protecting heritage).
Manage development to make full use of public transport, walking and cycling; (Section 11)	As well as policies on transport modal shift (NP policies 6 and 7) the Plan recognises the importance of retaining facilities such as the health centre and library to be accessible to all and Section 6 responds to the ability and preferences people indicated for walking and cycling and makes provisions accordingly.
Take account of local strategies to improve health, social, and cultural wellbeing; (para. 93)	As well as provisions for healthy travel and transport (notably NP policy 6 – to extend the usage of rail travel through Epping Station, and policy 7 walking and cycling), the Plan specifically makes provision for social, sporting, play, cultural and community facilities (see sections 7 and 9, NP policy 13).

Section 2: Delivering Sustainable Development

2.1 Requirement

The Epping Town Neighbourhood Plan must contribute to sustainable development (as defined in the NPPF and summarised in section 1.1 of this Basic Conditions Statement) and presented as consisting of three dimensions:

- to contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy,
- to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities; and
- to contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment.

This section shows how the Plan proposals deliver sustainable development.

2.2 Fit of Epping Town Neighbourhood Plan Aims and Objectives with Sustainable Development. The NPPF Policy on Sustainable Development states: The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development making clear that sustainable development has economic, social and environmental objectives. For planning policies this means achieving growth taking account of the needs of future generations. The Epping Neighbourhood Plan delivers growth by encouraging new housing (policies 3,4, and 5), economic development (Policies 9,10 and 12); encouraging sustainable locations for development (Policy 5 and support for the St Johns development); and protecting and enhancing the local environment (Policies 1,2, 5,8, 14 and 15). The Epping Neighbourhood Plan addresses sustainability and the interests of future generations by encouraging development which reduces reliance on carbon-based and fossil fuels, encouraging walking and cycling and enabling the future extension of train services northwards beyond the current terminus, linking with a proposal for a nearby park and ride scheme, encouraging infrastructure improvements notably real-time traffic management. Table III shows, for each dimension of sustainability, the alignment of the Plan with the aims of the NPPF.

to contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy	The Plan makes specific provision for the major elements of the local economy through new developments (NP policies 3, 4 and 5 – development proposals) and in Epping Town Centre (NP Section 7 policies 9,10 and 11 – town centre and shop front improvements)) and a major development in St Johns (approved by EFDC October 2022), and employment policy 12.
to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities;	This area is addressed specifically in Sections 9 & 10 , and NP policy 13) which enhance existing facilities and identify new.
to contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment	Section 6 addresses traffic, congestion and accessibility, section 2 the heritage and historic issues (NP Policy 17 – protecting heritage), and section 4 the green and open spaces. Proposals towards the reduction and minimisation of resources and use of carbon-based or fossil fuels are set out in NP Policy 18.

2.3 In short, the Epping Town Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development by:

- planning positively for housing growth to meet the needs of present and future generations, with sites within the parish and recognising the growth in South Epping, identifying developable sites to meet the housing need up to the end of the plan period;
- encouraging improved residential amenity and working in the parish by improving the traffic management, community facilities infrastructure, protecting land for commercial development and, by allocating new housing, helping local businesses and organisations;
- protecting the open and green spaces within the parish and local habitats (NP policies 1 and 2) by focusing development on the use of previously developed sites within the parish;
- protecting community assets that both enhance the quality of life in each part of the parish and reduce the need to travel to obtain these services elsewhere;
- locating new development within the core of existing areas, within easy walking or cycling distance (including schools, shops and healthcare), close to bus stops, and to minimise traffic congestion and thus the related emission and pedestrian safety concerns; and
- protecting and enhancing the built and historic environment of Epping by encouraging high quality development that responds to the distinctive character of the parish and protecting the open spaces within the built up area.

Section 3: Local Strategic Policy Obligations

3.1 The Epping Town Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the development plan for the area of the local authority, namely the adopted Epping Forest District Local Plan 2023. This section shows how the Plan is in general conformity with its objectives, strategic policies and development proposals.

Local Plan Objectives

3.2 The Epping Forest District Local Plan (adopted March 2023) sets objectives to deliver the Council’s vision for the district. Strategic Local Plan policies relevant to the Epping Neighbourhood Plan are as follows:

Environment & Design
Housing
Economic Development
Infrastructure & Movement ;
Climate Change & Flood Risk (see Local Plan pages 20/21)

3.3 Local Plan Strategic Policies relevant to Epping

- Policy SP1 Spatial Development Strategy 2011-2033
- Policy SP2 Place Shaping
- Policy SP5 Green Belt and Local Greenspace
- Policy SP6 The Natural Environment, Landscape Character and Green and Blue Infrastructure

Neighbourhood Plan Policies	SP1	SP2	SP5	SP6
POLICY 1: PROTECTION OF THE FOREST AND THE GREEN BELT	✓		✓	✓
POLICY 2: PROTECT AND ENHANCE OPEN SPACE WITHIN THE PARISH		✓	✓	✓
POLICY 3: DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS	✓	✓		
POLICY 4: PROPOSALS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	✓	✓	✓	✓
POLICY 5 SOUTH EPPING	✓	✓		
POLICY 6: ENHANCING EPPING STATION	✓	✓		
POLICY 7: WALKING, CYCLING & CAR PARKING		✓		✓
POLICY 8: PATHS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE		✓	✓	✓
POLICY 9: EPPING TOWN CENTRE	✓	✓		✓
POLICY 10: SUSTAINING AND ENHANCING EPPING TOWN CENTRE		✓		✓
POLICY 11: SHOP-FRONT IMPROVEMENTS				
POLICY 12: EMPLOYMENT	✓	✓		
POLICY 13: ENHANCING SOCIAL, SPORTING, PLAY, CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES	✓	✓		✓
POLICY 14: PROTECTING RESIDENTIAL AMENITY				✓
POLICY 15: BUNGALOWS, BASEMENTS AND GARAGES				✓
POLICY 17: PROTECTING THE PARISH'S HERITAGE ASSETS		✓		✓
POLICY 18: SUSTAINABILITY	✓	✓		✓

3.4 General Conformity The relationship of the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan to the strategic policies of particular relevance addresses specifically the housing, employment (NP policies 3, 4 and 5 – development proposals and South Epping, and 12 Employment) and town centre proposals for Epping (NP policies 9, 10 and 11 – town centre). Sustainable urban development and economic growth will be accommodated in a sustainable manner focusing new developments into the town centre and South Epping – minimising the loss of green belt and enabling the facilities and infrastructure for the new housing. The Neighbourhood Plan contributes positively to the social, economic and environmental improvement of the area through policies which focus new development (policies 3,4,5 and 6), walking and cycling (policy 7 plus community aspirations to address congestion and through-traffic), and the vitality and facilities in Epping town centre, policies 9, 10, 13 and 17.

3.5 Other Local Plan policies with more general application cover,

- Housing, Economic and Transport - see (NP policies 3, 4 and 5 – development proposals and South Epping and policy 12 Employment)
- The Economy and Town Centres (NP policies 9-12)
- Transport (NP policies 6, 7 and 8) and Safeguarding of routes and facilities (NP policy 6 – Epping Station)

3.6 The Local Plan also has policies on Development Management, Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure, Habitat protection and improving biodiversity, Epping Forest SAC, Landscape Character, Ancient Landscapes and Geodiversity, Green Belt, Green and Blue Infrastructure, Designated and undesignated open spaces, Historic Environment and Heritage Assets, Heritage at Risk, Design, Waste recycling facilities, Subterranean, basement development and lightwells, Advertisements, Shopfronts and on street dining, Environmental policies, Managing and reducing flood risk, Sustainable Drainage Systems, and the Protection and enhancement of watercourses and flood defences. Chapter 6 addresses Infrastructure & Delivery.

3.7 The Neighbourhood Plan contains policies and community aspirations to enhance modal transport shift from cars to walking and cycling and road safety (para 6.16 et seq and notably NP policy 6 – Epping Station, and policy 7), for instance promoting ‘greenways’ to connect the town centre with nearby countryside (NP policy 8 – Paths to countryside), and a 20mph on roads near schools. The Plan also seeks to enhance the heritage matters in the town by supporting extending the two conservation areas so that they join and cover the whole of the central part of the town. Local Green Spaces are specifically proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan as well as ‘green corridors’, indicating areas where green connections should remain to enable wildlife movement and contiguous green spaces, even in the event of future development being considered.

3.8 The Neighbourhood Plan proposals – policies and community aspirations, are in conformity with the Local Plan on other aspects:

- Parks and Open Spaces – the Plan’s proposals do not compromise the area’s parks and open spaces,
- Areas liable to flooding- proposals do not impact the Local Plan flood risk analysis,
- Protection of listed buildings – the proposals follow the basic heritage principles and emphasise the importance of heritage matters in the area,
- Affecting the setting of a Listed Building- the Neighbourhood Plan measures include merging the town’s two conservation areas,
- Transport – the plan’s proposals seek measures to ease congestion, use of public transport with improvements at Epping Station (NP policy 6), modal shift to walking and cycling (policy 7) , and better direction of traffic to less congested routes,
- Shopping Hierarchy- the role of Epping in the retail hierarchy is supported (NP policies 9,10 and 11 – town centre and shop front improvements) and reflects the recent town centre development approvals.

3.9 Within this broad framework, the Neighbourhood Plan supports the Local Plan Settlement Hierarchy (for development) and the identification of Epping as a third-tier location in the Retail Hierarchy, as a town centre where smaller scale comparison retail needs could be located in the town in order to accommodate a locally derived need consistent with their role in the retail hierarchy.

3.10 The Plan sets out National Planning Policy Framework-Presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 2.37 and policy SP1) and strategic policies

- A Spatial Development Strategy (policy SP2)
- Place Shaping (SP3)
- Policy SP 6 Green Belt and District Open Land
- SP 7 The Natural Environment, Landscape Character and Green and Blue Infrastructure.

Section 4: European Union Obligations and Human Rights

4.1 The Human Rights Act 1998 came into force in the UK in October 2000 and sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to. It incorporates the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into domestic British law.

Equalities

The Epping Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared following a Baseline Study profiling the community within the parish (see para 1.8). This describes Epping as a modern, mainly residential community of approximately 5,000 homes and a population of 12,000,

- the percentage of older people is higher than the averages for the county and national figures,
- levels of deprivation are low, out of 5,039 homes 2,378 had no deprivation factors, 1,635 had 1 - e.g. elderly, 831 had 2 factors - e.g. low income / single parent, 175 had 3 and 20 homes exhibited 4 or more deprivation factors,
- The community is relatively healthy with a high proportion giving their ethnicity as white from UK or Europe, the gender profile was almost equally male / female, unemployment was low (around 3%) with another 6% students, and out of work figures were low compared with the county and national averages. 20% are classified as older people and this is likely to be the largest growth group looking forwards. People in the parish describe themselves mostly as British white, with mixed race, Asian, Black and Chinese together amounting to 5%.

15% describe themselves with disability and / or long-term limiting illnesses. Religion for the area (Epping Forest) is 49% Christian, 4% muslim with the remainder as not having a religion or not saying.

Aims and Policies of the Epping Neighbourhood Plan

These are set out in para. 3.4 of the Plan to support the 'vision':

- a) To respond to local housing needs with a mix of dwelling types, where new housing respects the town's quality of life and is integrated without materially damaging the local environment and has easy access to transport
- b) To shape development within the town centre to create a range of retail and other appropriate commercial activities, contributing to the area's vibrancy and attractiveness respecting Epping's scale, heritage and character
- c) To ensure a mix of leisure and recreational facilities plus improved infrastructure such as schools, transport, medical and other facilities for all age groups, particularly for young people
- d) To retain and enhance the town's historic buildings, Charter market, conservation areas, and links to the Forest and Green Belt
- e) To identify improvements to the existing transport and car parking network for travel within Epping, connections to London and neighbouring areas, supporting the future of the community with accessibility and sustainability at its core
- f) To enhance the appearance of the historic town centre through improvement to the 'public realm' which provides a frame for the town's activities, enhancing its appearance and heritage
- g) To identify opportunities which encourage the development of enterprise and expertise promoting jobs and other commercial activities, and maximise Epping's potential as a destination of historical significance, a centre for the area's arts, recreation, cultural and heritage offers.

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on all public authorities in the exercise of their functions to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between persons who have a “protected characteristic” and those who do not. Protected characteristics are defined in the Equality Act as age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. An assessment has been made on whether the Neighbourhood Plan has a positive, negative or neutral impact on each of the protected characteristics.

Impact on Protected Characteristics Groups

<p><u>Gender</u> Issues of perceived safety risks, harassment in the public realm and sexually-based social pressures are particularly impactful on women, approximately 50% of the Epping population. The neighbourhood plan seeks to respond to these issues through policies to animate and increase the attractiveness of the town centre to users, visitors, shoppers of all ages (aim f, policies 9 and 10). Details of improvements to lighting, pavements and signage are expanded in paras 5.10 and 7.9. Policy 8 describes improved routes for pedestrians and cycling. In addition, issues of housing and community facilities are of concern for adult women in all age groups (including during pregnancy and with young children). The Epping Forest District Local Plan 2011-2033 contains policies and proposals for new job delivery, town centre development, varied new housing mix types and densities, affordable housing, and employment opportunities (important to various demographics for flexible employment opportunities). The policies have been written to provide equal opportunity to any gender in respect of the provision of development and access to facilities. No gender is disadvantaged by any of the policies and proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan, and people will benefit equally from the implementation of the plan’s proposals and aspirations. The impact will be positive for all genders. There are no specific land-use policies which would impact those undergoing gender re-assignment, or the LBGTQIA+ community but the proposals for improvement in the public realm and lighting will benefit all.</p>	<p>positive, negative or neutral impact</p> <p>The impact of neighbourhood plan policies and proposals on will be positive.</p>
<p><u>Access to Housing</u> Appropriate housing provision helps to address the needs for a number of protected characteristics groups – older people, those with mobility limitations and disabilities. The adopted Local Plan 2011-2033 contains policies and proposals for varied new housing mix types and densities with a focus on affordability. The first of the neighbourhood plan’s aims (para. 3.4 and 5.6) seeks to ‘respond to local housing needs with a mix of dwelling types, where new housing respects the town’s quality of life and is integrated without materially damaging the local environment and has easy access to transport’ and the proposal is described in Policies 3 &4. The plan seeks to accommodate housing need and growth specifically through sites in and around Epping, notably a sustainable urban extension, South Epping (policy 5) – ‘South Epping is expected to deliver 450 homes with a mix of dwelling types and sizes’. Particular issues are housing provision which caters for younger people seeking housing for the first time and older people looking to downsize. Policies 3 and 5 in the neighbourhood plan seeks to create well designed development, which includes safety considerations. The plan makes reference to the impact of the Essex Design Guide.</p>	<p>positive, negative or neutral impact</p> <p>The impact will be positive on all the groups of protected characteristics.</p>

<p><u>Age</u> The Baseline Study and census data shows that older people are a substantial element in the local demographic, and one which is growing. The issue of appropriate housing is described above. Other age-related issues in the neighbourhood plan cover access to improved community facilities (policy 13), walking and cycling (para 6.4 and policy 8), and better lighting in the public realm (para 5.10, and policy 9 / community aspirations). Para 9.5 describes changes to health facilities in Epping – ‘5 Any future development of the St Margaret’s Hospital site needs to be phased in relation to a new hospital at Harlow and the commitment, with site and funding secured for a health hub to serve the future needs of the Epping community. A health hub would typically include GP services, community health services, podiatry, x-ray and diagnostic services and drop-in blood tests – as well as the existing maternity and post-natal services that are based there.’</p>	<p>positive, negative or neutral impact</p> <p>The impact will be neutral to positive on all the groups of protected characteristics.</p>
<p><u>Access to Employment</u> The Epping Forest District Local Plan 2011-2033 sets out strategic policies and identified sites as the most suitable and sustainable for development and regeneration relating to economic needs and new jobs. The neighbourhood plan highlights that Epping does not have the higher level employment functions, these (major retail, commercial head offices, distribution, service, administrative, legal etc,) are found in some of the relatively accessible larger towns nearby. The main source of further education and skills training is the New City College located outside the Parish in Loughton, however Epping is situated in the London / Stanstead / Cambridge corridor. Lower-skilled employment opportunities are available in the High Street shops, cafes, restaurants. The availability of high speed broadband connectivity in the area (para 8.3) allows for greater employment flexibility for higher-skilled work in the shape of work-from home, meetings on-line (without the need for distinct employment floorspace) and / or work-live units as an alternative to allocating employment and residential areas separately. The neighbourhood plan mirrors the employment site allocations in the adopted Local Plan (policy 12), the impact will be neutral / positive on those seeking employment. Concerns over the environmental impact of increased tourism on Epping Forest means that policies to encourage tourist visits to the Forest have been omitted. Otherwise the plans’ policies seek to encourage the growth of enterprise and to reduce the need for commuting, helping to create new jobs for people of all ages and will help to create choice and opportunity for people who have restrictions on their mobility (including the young and the old) by improving access to employment, goods and services and to facilities.</p>	<p>positive, negative or neutral impact</p> <p>The impact will be positive on several groups of protected characteristics.</p>
<p><u>Disability</u> The housing and employment needs of persons who are disabled or who have limited mobility are addressed above. The policies of the Local and neighbourhood plans seek to create a well-designed and accessible environment. The introduction of Epping Greenways (NP policy 1) and improved walking and cycling (policies 7 and community aspirations page 21) will help to increase access and enable improvement to the local environment.</p>	<p>positive, negative or neutral impact</p> <p>The impact on people with disabilities will be positive.</p>
<p><u>Race</u> The census data show approximately 5% of people living in Epping are from non-white / British ethnic backgrounds. The neighbourhood plan policies will</p>	<p>positive, negative or neutral impact</p>

<p>have an equal impact on the local population regardless of race. A public realm designed with safety in mind will minimise opportunities for hate crime (there is no evidence that this is a particular local problem).</p>	<p>The impact will be neutral to positive on groups of protected characteristics.</p>
<p><u>Religion</u> Key issues for religious groups are discrimination relating to employment, housing and the provision of services. The neighbourhood plan policies and proposals seek to provide a built environment with a safe public realm for all and equality of access.</p>	<p>The impact will be positive on all people, regardless of religion or LGBT+ status.</p>

4.2 The Epping neighbourhood is compatible with EU obligations and legally compliant, the main relevant obligations relating to the environmental impacts of the plan. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) integrates consideration of environmental impacts into the process of preparing the plan. In terms of development proposals and environmental impacts the Epping Neighbourhood Plan mirrors those in the approved Local Plan, as such a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulations Assessment are not required. The Neighbourhood Plan does not breach EU obligations.

4.3 The Neighbourhood Plan has regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights and complies with the Human Rights Act. An Equalities Impact Assessment is attached. This has indicated that the impact of the plan on protected characteristics is either neutral or positive. The Neighbourhood Plan has been produced in full consultation with the local community including a wide range of community engagement activities. The aims, objectives and policies within the plan were developed through issues, data and themes arising from the local engagement including input from local residents on the steering group. Details can be found in the neighbourhood plan itself and the Consultation Statement. The plan accords with the policies and proposals in the adopted Local Plan and is compatible with human rights law.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The Neighbourhood Plan policies and proposals will have a broadly positive impact on groups with protected characteristics. Both the strategic approach, the policies and community aspirations will result in positive benefits for many parts of the local community. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks phasing of development opportunities to ensure provision for housing and retention of existing health and community facilities until new are provided which will benefit the whole population.

Traffic congestion is identified as an issue locally including commuters parking for access to the Central Line at Epping both of which are limiting factors for local people's enjoyment of their area, measures to address both will have a positive impact.

5.2 The Basic Conditions as set out in Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 are considered to be met by the Epping Town Neighbourhood Plan. It is therefore considered that the Neighbourhood Plan complies with Paragraph 8(1)(a) of Schedule 4B of the Act.

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-028-2014/15 Date
meeting: 6 October 2014



Portfolio: Planning
Subject: Epping Town Neighbourhood Area Consultation
Responsible Officer: Shanaz Zaman (01992 564732)
Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) To designate the neighbourhood area covering Epping Town parish following the receipt of representations; and

To delegate future decisions to designate neighbourhood areas to the Director of Neighbourhoods following consultation with the Portfolio Holder, where the area covers the whole parish and there are no objections.

Executive Summary:

Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) were introduced as part of the Localism Act 2011. They enable local communities (town/parish councils or designated neighbourhood forums) to shape the way that their local area develops over the coming years. Once approved, NDPs form part of the statutory development plan, and are therefore a material consideration when deciding on planning applications.

To date three neighbourhood areas have been designated, all of which cover the whole parish area and none of which have attracted objections. A minor change to the governance agreed by Cabinet in July 2013 is proposed to enable such uncontentious requests to be approved by officers under delegated powers.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The decision regarding designation has been recommended in order that the Council meets its duties under the relevant regulations.

The recommendation regarding governance is to assist in making best use of resources.

Other Options for Action:

To not designate the proposed neighbourhood area, or to designate a different area. Neither action is recommended as there is nothing to support either approach.

To maintain governance arrangements as they are.

Report:

1. The Government introduced Neighbourhood Planning as part of the Localism Act 2011 in order to enable town/parish councils and Neighbourhood Forums to actively participate in plan making. A Neighbourhood

Development Plan (NDP), once it has passed a referendum, forms part of the statutory development plan and is therefore taken into account in the determination of planning applications. They can include housing and employment land allocations, policies and design statements and can be as simple or as complicated as the town/parish council choose. Crucially, the NDP must be in conformity with national planning policy as well as the District Council Local Plan.

2. The District Council has a statutory obligation to perform certain duties during the preparation of an NDP. The governance arrangements for neighbourhood planning were agreed by Cabinet on 29 July 2013.

3. Epping Town Council submitted an application for the designation of a neighbourhood area in July 2014. The proposed neighbourhood area, which can be found in Appendix 1, follows the line of the parish boundary. Following receipt of the application, and in line with Regulation 6 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, the Council invited representations on the proposed neighbourhood area for a period of 6 weeks from 8 August until 19 September 2014. Five responses have been received from two parishes: Buckhurst Hill Parish Council and Loughton Parish Council who made no comments; the Epping Society who support the designation; and two developers Croudace Strategic and Persimmon Homes who have asked to be kept informed of the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4. Following designation of the neighbourhood area, the Town Council will progress with the preparation of the NDP. A draft Plan must be submitted to the District Council. Representations will then be invited on the plan for a period of at least 6 weeks, after which an independent examination will be held. Finally, the Plan will be subject to a referendum before Full Council is asked to bring it into force. At this point the NDP will become part of the statutory development plan for Epping Forest District.

5. Neighbourhood areas have previously been designated for Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers, Chigwell and Theydon Bois Parishes. All cover the whole parish area, and none have attracted objections. The Council has recently received applications for the designation of neighbourhood areas from North Weald Bassett Parish Council and Buckhurst Hill Parish Councils.

6. In order to make best use of resources it is proposed that the ability to make uncontentious designations, which cover the whole parish and do not receive any objections, should be delegated to the Director of Neighbourhoods following consultation with the Portfolio Holder. Notification of decisions could then be given through the Member Bulletin. In the light of the increase in the number of neighbourhood plans being proposed it is suggested that the Director of Neighbourhoods should also consider whether additional resources are required in the budget for 2015/16 to support the preparation of plans.

7. It should be noted that the government is currently consulting on requiring councils to make decisions on uncontentious designations within 10 weeks. This minor extension of delegated powers would help facilitate this, should it come into effect.

Resource Implications:

Currently neighbourhood planning is currently being delivered within existing resources. The Government has a dedicated funding resource for the development of NDP's, and as such, the Council will receive £5,000 for designating a neighbourhood area. Further payments will be received as the NDP is progressed up to a maximum total of £30,000. The minor change to delegated powers proposed would assist in making best use of resources. Future resources are to be considered for 2015/16 in the light of the number of neighbourhood plans being brought forward and the support being provided by the Planning Policy team.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The legal and governance arrangements were agreed by Cabinet on 29 July 2013.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

N/A.

Consultation Undertaken:

Whilst not a consultation, representations were invited with regard to the designation of a neighbourhood area covering Epping Town Parish for a 6 week period between 8 August and 19 September 2014.

Background Papers:

Epping Town Council submission for Neighbourhood Area designation.

Risk Management:

It will need to be ensured that Council resources do not extend beyond the level of assistance agreed with the governance arrangements as approved at Cabinet in July 2013, and as may be altered as proposed in recommendation 2 of this report.

Epping Town Neighbourhood Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Opinion

Appropriate Assessment Screening

1. Introduction

1.1 What is the screening opinion?

1.2 This report has been produced to determine the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

1.3 This document also addresses the need for Appropriate Assessment, in accordance with European Directive 92/43/EEC, commonly known as the Habitats Directive.

1.4 **What is the Neighbourhood Plan trying to achieve?**

1.5 The Neighbourhood Area covers the whole of the Epping Town Council area. The area consists of a town centre, which is primarily commercial in nature but with some residential. It also contains the rest of the town of Epping itself, which is primarily residential (with supporting facilities) and the countryside around.

1.6 The aim of Epping Town Neighbourhood Plan will primarily to be to support the housing needs of the area, address traffic congestion and pollution, and support the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre. This will revolve around adding detail to the strategic level policies in the Local Plan. It will seek to ensure that any opportunities for infill development that may emerge over the next few years are shaped in such a way as to be of maximum long-term benefit to the town. It will also seek to address the opportunities and concerns presented by the development of the South Epping development to the south, which will primarily revolve around the provision of facilities and how people travel within the town supporting a modal shift away from cars. The Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate any new sites for development.

2. Policy context

2.1 The Epping Forest District Council's Local Plan was formally approved by the Inspector in February 2023. The Local Plan provides the statutory land use planning framework for the area. The document contains the vision, objectives and strategic policies for the future of the area, replacing the strategic elements of the former Local Plan.

2.3 Although the Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and the Local Plan, it can promote more development (but has chosen not to), but must not propose less. It will also provide a more local context to the non-strategic policies of the Local Plan, some of which are set out in 'community aspirations' rather than land-use policies.

2.4 The Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to public consultation in accordance with the relevant regulations prior to its adoption (see separate Consultation Statement).

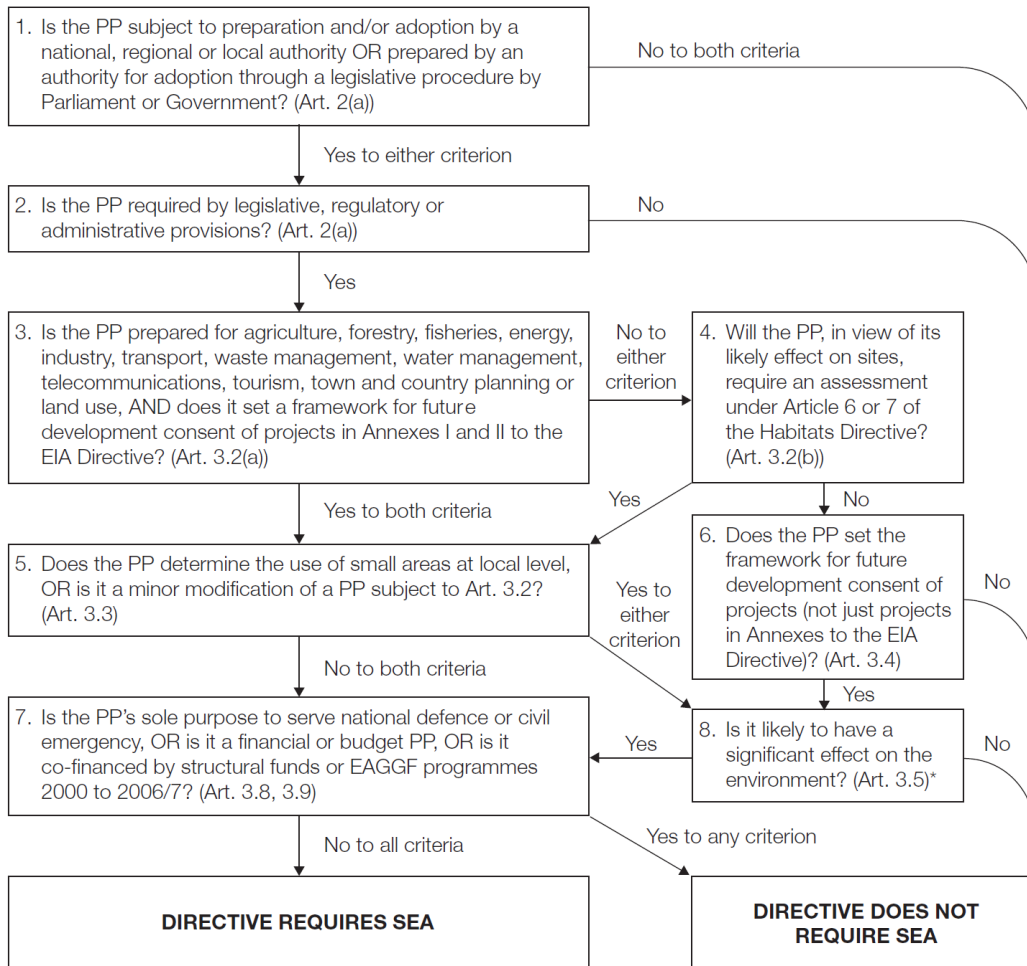
3. SEA Screening

3.1 The requirement for a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) is set out in the "Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004". There is also practical guidance on applying European Directive 2001/42/EC produced by the ODPM (now DCLG)¹. These documents have been used as the basis for this screening report.

3.2 Neighbourhood Plans must be screened to establish whether or not they will require Strategic Environmental Assessment. The ODPM practical guidance provides a checklist approach based on the SEA regulations to help determine whether SEA is required. This guide has been used as the basis on which to assess the need for SEA as set out below.

Figure 1: Establishing the need for SEA

¹ A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2005) (ODPM)



*The Directive requires Member States to determine whether plans or programmes in this category are likely to have significant environmental effects. These determinations may be made on a case by case basis and/or by specifying types of plan or programme.

Figure 2: Establishing the need for SEA of the Neighbourhood Plan

Stage	Answer	Reason
<p>1. Is the NP subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament of Government? (Article 2(a))</p>	Yes	<p>It has been prepared by the Town Council and adopted by Epping Forest District Council under the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.</p>
<p>2. Is the NP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Article 2(a))</p>	Yes	<p>Although there is no requirement to produce a Neighbourhood Plan, they are subject to formal procedures and regulations laid down by national government. In light the European Court of Justice ruling in the Case C-567/10 it is considered that this means the NP is 'required'.</p>
<p>3. Is the NP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art. 3.2(a))</p>	No	<p>The NP is prepared for town and country planning purposes but does not explicitly set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I or II of the EIA Directive.</p>
<p>4. Will the plan in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats directive?</p>	No	<p>The Local Plan was screened and it was concluded that appropriate assessment was not required. The Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the Local Plan and, although it can propose more development, given the scope of what the plan covers it is unlikely to be significant enough to require assessment under the Habitats Directive.</p>
<p>6. Does the plan set the framework for future development consent of projects?</p>	Yes	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan will provide a framework for the consent of development projects in the area.</p>
<p>8. Is the NP likely to have a significant effect on the environment?</p>	<p>See results of Figure 3: Determining the likely significance of effects</p>	

Figure 3: Determining the likely significance of effects

SEA Directive Annex II: Criteria for determining likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5)		
Criteria		Epping District Comment
<i>The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:</i>		
1a) The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources		The NP will set a framework for future development projects, particularly in terms of their nature and scale/size. It however does not identify schemes beyond those in the adopted local plan.
1b) The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	X	The NP will form part of the statutory development plan with the same status in decision making as development plan documents.
1c) The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	X	The document is likely to cover a mainly urban area, with a focus on controlling the detail of changes to the existing built environment. It seeks to promote walking and cycling as alternatives to car-based transport, measures to reduce congestions and use of Epping tube station (NP policy 6 – Epping Station), all of which will support environmental sustainability.
1d) Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme	X	It is not considered that there are any particular environmental problems relevant to the plan.
1e) The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).	X	The NP is unlikely to be directly relevant in regard to this criterion.
<i>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</i>		
2a) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	x	The plan is likely to affect the existing built form, which has evolved over 100s of years. Any effect is therefore likely to be reversible as places continue to evolve – there is

		unlikely to be any loss of open, green space to development (beyond already planned in the Local Plan) that would be irreversible. The probability of any negative environmental effects is limited.
2b) The cumulative nature of the effects	x	It is unlikely that any effects of the plan would in combination have a significant effect on the environment.
2c) The trans-boundary nature of the effects	x	Unlikely to be any significant trans-boundary effects due to the local nature of the NP.
2d) The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	x	The Neighbourhood Plan is highly unlikely to change the built environment in a way that would cause risk to human health.
2e) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	x	Any limited environmental effects are unlikely to effect any spatial area other than the Parish area of Epping. This is a relatively limited population.
2f) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: I. special natural characteristics or cultural heritage, II. exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values III. intensive land-use	✓/?	The NP will cover an area which includes three conservation areas. It also includes parts of Epping Forest. It is not felt that either of these areas are significantly vulnerable to the proposed scope of the neighbourhood plan
2g) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status	x	The assessments within the Local Plan have mitigated the impacts of development proposals on Epping Forest .

4. SEA Conclusion

- 4.1 The Epping Town Neighbourhood Plan will provide a framework for detailed decision making in the locality. The plan is unlikely to have an influence on any other plans or programmes, nor affects any significant environmental designations. The area does not have any significant environmental problems and the plan is unlikely to lead to any irreversible effects, which could be caused by say the loss of open space for new development. Any effects of the plan are likely to be confined to the Epping Town Council boundary, and individually or in combination any affects are not considered to be significant.
- 4.2 There is scope for non-policy proposals in the plan to have an impact on the conservation areas, however these policies would need to be prepared in accordance with higher order plans and therefore, it is not

considered that they will lead to significant environmental effects. It is not felt that the nature of the plan and its likely policies will have any impact on the nature reserve and therefore are highly unlikely to lead to significant environmental affects. Therefore it is concluded that SEA of the Neighbourhood Plan will not be required.

Equalities Assessment

Legal Requirements

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on all public authorities in the exercise of their functions to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between persons who have a “protected characteristic” and those who do not. Protected characteristics are defined in the Equality Act as age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

An Equalities Assessment is an analysis of policies in order to scrutinise the potential for an adverse impact on a particular group or community, in particular those with a protected characteristic. An assessment has been made on whether the Neighbourhood Plan has a positive, negative or neutral impact on each of the protected characteristics.

The Epping Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared following a Baseline Study profiling the community within the parish (see para 1.8). This describes Epping as a modern, mainly residential community of approximately 5,000 homes and a population of 12,000,

- the percentage of older people is higher than the averages for the county and national figures,
- levels of deprivation are low, out of 5,039 homes 2,378 had no deprivation factors, 1,635 had 1 - e.g. elderly, 831 had 2 factors - e.g. low income / single parent, 175 had 3 and 20 homes exhibited 4 or more deprivation factors,
- The community is relatively healthy with a high proportion giving their ethnicity as white from UK or Europe,

The Baseline Study used 2011 census data and details from the 2016 Epping Forest community profile prepared by Essex Police:

Essex Local Authority Portraits

A product of the Essex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

A profile of people living in Epping

Forest April 2016

Organisational Intelligence

An overview of Epping Forest including key issues impacting the population, health & wellbeing, and demand on services

People and place

- ☐ An **ageing population** is increasing demand on services.
- ☐ Few **deprived areas** with poor health and unemployment.
- ☐ Low population density.
- ☐ Average rate of **crime** and residents feeling safe.
- ☐ Higher than average waste **recycling** levels.

Lifestyles

- ☐ Although lower than average, reducing **smoking, drinking** and **obesity**, plus increasing physical activity, are all areas for improvement.
- ☐ Interventions need to reach high risk groups to reduce the number of preventable health conditions and service demand.

Physical and mental health

- ☐ Increasing rate of **diabetes** although it is below average.
- ☐ Slightly higher rate of hospital admissions due to **hip fractures** than England.
- ☐ Rate of those **killed/seriously injured on the roads** is significantly above average.
- ☐ Good **wellbeing** amongst pupils and adults and a lower than

- ☒ Hospital admissions due to **alcohol** related conditions are better than England average.
- ☒ Fall in number of adults in **substance misuse** treatment.

- average percentage with **mental health** problems.
- ☒ Increasing number of people with **dementia**. Unpaid carers require support to achieve their role.

Children and Young people

- ☒ Low rate of **teenage pregnancy** (which is linked to a range of poor outcomes in later life).
- ☒ Average level of **Chlamydia** testing and percentages testing positive.
- ☒ Pockets of **child poverty**.
- ☒ Low rates of **children in care**.
- ☒ Average level of eligibility for free early education entitlement (two year olds) but lowest **take up** rate.

Education

- ☒ The proportions who are **ready for school** and who achieve a **good level of development** at age 5 are close to the county average but there is a **gap** for those eligible for free school meals.
- ☒ Close to average proportion achieve five or more **GCSEs** at grades A*-C.
- ☒ Lower than average proportion attend a **good or outstanding school**.
- ☒ More pupils than average aspire to go to **university**.

Employment

- ☒ Lower proportion of adults with **no qualifications**.
- ☒ Slightly lower than average **adult unemployment** and average proportion of **young people** Not in Education Employment or Training.
- ☒ Higher than average number of **economically inactive** adults.
- ☒ Lower than average ratio of **jobs** per population but increasing number of jobs.
- ☒ Most businesses have 9 or fewer employees.

The 2011 Census showed that the gender profile was almost equally male / female, unemployment was low (around 3%) with another 6% students, and out of work figures were low compared with the county and national averages. 20% are classified as older people and this is likely to be the largest growth group looking forwards. People in the parish describe themselves mostly as British white, with mixed race, Asian, Black and Chinese together amounting to 5%.

15% describe themselves with disability and / or long-term limiting illnesses. Religion for the area (Epping Forest) is 49% Christian, 4% muslim with the remainder as not having a religion or not saying.

Aims and Policies of the Epping Neighbourhood Plan

These are set out in para. 3.4 of the Plan to support the 'vision':

- To respond to local housing needs with a mix of dwelling types, where new housing respects the town's quality of life and is integrated without materially damaging the local environment and has easy access to transport
- To shape development within the town centre to create a range of retail and other appropriate commercial activities, contributing to the area's vibrancy and attractiveness respecting Epping's scale, heritage and character
- To ensure a mix of leisure and recreational facilities plus improved infrastructure such as schools, transport, medical and other facilities for all age groups, particularly for young people
- To retain and enhance the town's historic buildings, Charter market, conservation areas, and links to the Forest and Green Belt
- To identify improvements to the existing transport and car parking network for travel within Epping, connections to London and neighbouring areas, supporting the future of the community with accessibility and sustainability at its core

f) To enhance the appearance of the historic town centre through improvement to the 'public realm' which provides a frame for the town's activities, enhancing its appearance and heritage

g) To identify opportunities which encourage the development of enterprise and expertise promoting jobs and other commercial activities, and maximise Epping's potential as a destination of historical significance, a centre for the area's arts, recreation, cultural and heritage offers.

The policies are:

POLICY 1: PROTECTION OF THE FOREST AND THE GREEN BELT

POLICY 2: PROTECT AND ENHANCE OPEN SPACE WITHIN THE PARISH

POLICY 3: DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

POLICY 4: PROPOSAL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Policy 5: SOUTH EPPING

POLICY 6: ENHANCING EPPING STATION

POLICY 7: CAR PARKING PROVISION

POLICY 8: EPPING GREENWAYS

POLICY 9: EPPING TOWN CENTRE

POLICY 10: SUSTAINING AND ENHANCING EPPING TOWN CENTRE

POLICY 11: SHOP-FRONT IMPROVEMENTS

POLICY 12 BUSINESS AND COMMERCIAL

POLICY 13: ENHANCING SOCIAL, SPORTING, PLAY, CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

POLICY 14: PROTECTING RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

POLICY 17: PROTECTING THE PARISH'S HERITAGE ASSETS

POLICY 18: SUSTAINABILITY

Impact on Protected Characteristics Groups

Gender

Issues of perceived safety risks, harassment in the public realm and sexually-based social pressures are particularly impactful on women, approximately 50% of the Epping population. The neighbourhood plan seeks to respond to these issues through policies to animate and increase the attractiveness of the town centre to users, visitors, shoppers of all ages (aim f, policies 9 and 10). Details of improvements to lighting, pavements and signage are expanded in paras 5.10 and 7.9. Policy 8 describes improved routes for pedestrians and cycling.

In addition, issues of housing and community facilities are of concern for adult women in all age groups (including during pregnancy and with young children). The Epping Forest District Local Plan 2011-2033 contains policies and proposals for new job delivery, town centre development, varied new housing mix types and densities, affordable housing, and employment opportunities (important to various demographics for flexible employment opportunities).

The policies have been written to provide equal opportunity to any gender in respect of the provision of development and access to facilities. No gender is disadvantaged by any of the policies and proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan, and people will benefit equally from the implementation of the plan's proposals and aspirations. The impact will be positive for all genders. There are no specific land-use policies which would impact those undergoing gender re-assignment, or the LBGTQIA+ community but the proposals for improvement in the public realm and lighting will benefit all.

The impact of neighbourhood plan policies and proposals on will be positive.

Local Housing

Appropriate housing provision helps to address the needs for a number of protected characteristics groups – older people, those with mobility limitations and disabilities. The adopted Local Plan 2011-2033 contains policies and proposals for varied new housing mix types and densities with a focus on affordability. The first of the neighbourhood plan's aims (para. 3.4 and 5.6) seeks to 'respond to local housing needs with a mix of dwelling types, where new housing respects the town's quality of life and is integrated without materially damaging the local environment and has easy access to transport' and the proposal is described in Policies 3 & 4.

The plan seeks to accommodate housing need and growth specifically through sites in and around Epping, notably a sustainable urban extension, South Epping (policy 5) – 'South Epping is expected to deliver 450 homes with a mix of dwelling types and sizes'. Particular issues are housing provision which caters for younger people seeking housing for the first time and older people looking to downsize.

Policies 3 and 5 in the neighbourhood plan seeks to create well designed development, which includes safety considerations. The plan makes reference to the impact of the Essex Design Guide. The impact will be positive on all the groups of protected characteristics.

Age

The Baseline Study and census data shows that older people are a substantial element in the local demographic, and one which is growing. The issue of appropriate housing is described above. Other age-related issues in the neighbourhood plan cover access to improved community facilities (policy 13), walking and cycling (para 6.4 and policy 8), and better lighting in the public realm (para 5.10, and policy 9 / community aspirations).

Para 9.5 describes changes to health facilities in Epping – '5 Any future development of the St Margaret's Hospital site needs to be phased in relation to a new hospital at Harlow and the commitment, with site and funding secured for a health hub to serve the future needs of the Epping community. A health hub would typically include GP services, community health services, podiatry, x-ray and diagnostic services and drop-in blood tests – as well as the existing maternity and post-natal services that are based there. '

Employment

The Epping Forest District Local Plan 2011-2033 sets out strategic policies and identified sites as the most suitable and sustainable for development and regeneration relating to economic needs and new jobs. The neighbourhood plan highlights that Epping does not have the higher level employment functions, these (major retail, commercial head offices, distribution, service, administrative, legal etc,) are found in some of the relatively accessible larger towns nearby. The main source of further education and skills training is the New City College located outside the Parish in Loughton, however Epping is situated in the London / Stanstead / Cambridge corridor. Lower-skilled employment opportunities are available in the High Street shops, cafes, restaurants. The availability of high speed broadband connectivity in the area (para 8.3) allows for greater employment flexibility for higher-skilled work in the shape of work-from home, meetings on-line (without the need for distinct employment floorspace) and / or work-live units as an alternative to allocating employment and residential areas separately. The neighbourhood

plan mirrors the employment site allocations in the adopted Local Plan (policy 12), the impact will be neutral / positive on those seeking employment. Concerns over the environmental impact of increased tourism on Epping Forest means that policies to encourage tourist visits to the Forest have been omitted. Otherwise the plans' policies seek to encourage the growth of enterprise and to reduce the need for commuting, helping to create new jobs for people of all ages and will help to create choice and opportunity for people who have restrictions on their mobility (including the young and the old) by improving access to employment, goods and services and to facilities.

Disability

The housing and employment needs of persons who are disabled or who have limited mobility are addressed above. The policies of the Local and neighbourhood plans seek to create a well-designed and accessible environment. The introduction of Epping Greenways (NP policy 1) and improved walking and cycling (policies 8 and community aspirations page 21) will help to increase access and enable improvement to the local environment. The impact on people with disabilities will be positive.

Race

The census data show approximately 5% of people living in Epping are from non-white / British ethnic backgrounds. The neighbourhood plan policies will have an equal impact on the local population regardless of race. A public realm designed with safety in mind will minimise opportunities for hate crime (there is no evidence that this is a particular local problem).

Religion

Key issues for religious groups are discrimination relating to employment, housing and the provision of services. The neighbourhood plan policies and proposals seek to provide a built environment with a safe public realm for all and equality of access. The impact will be positive on all people, regardless of religion or LGBT+ status.

Conclusion

The Neighbourhood Plan policies and proposals will have a broadly positive impact on groups with protected characteristics. Both the strategic approach, the policies and community aspirations will result in positive benefits for many parts of the local community. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks phasing of development opportunities to ensure provision for housing and retention of existing health and community facilities until new are provided which will benefit the whole population.

Traffic congestion is identified as an issue locally including commuters parking for access to the Central Line at Epping both of which are limiting factors for local people's enjoyment of their area, measures to address both will have a positive impact.