

APPENDIX 1

CONSULTANCY BRIEF



Town Centres Study

Consultancy Brief
February 2009

A Study commissioned by:



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1. **Introduction**

- 1.1. Epping Forest District Council is now preparing a Local Development Framework for the district, and is seeking to commission a Town Centres Study to inform the preparation of new policies.
- 1.2. The Study should examine the current role and function of the town centres in the district; make an assessment of future need and demand for a range of uses; and give indications of enhancement and development opportunities. The requirements of PPS6 should be fulfilled including identifying the hierarchy of centres in the District and undertaking town centre health checks. The District Council reserves the right to request further work to be undertaken at no additional charge if it believes the Study does not fulfil the requirements of PPS6.
- 1.3. The town centres to be examined by the Study are identified in policy TC1 of the Local Plan Alterations (July 2006) as Principal, Smaller and District Centres. The centres are Epping, Loughton High Road, Waltham Abbey – Principal centres; Loughton Broadway (Debden), Chipping Ongar - Smaller centres; Buckhurst Hill, Queens Road (East) – District centre.

2. **Study Area**

- 2.1. A map showing the location of the district in relation to regional centres is in Appendix 1. All the centres, including local centres, identified in policy TC1 of the Local Plan Alterations (July 2006) are shown on a map in Appendix 2. With the exception of the towns and larger villages, Epping Forest District is situated within the Metropolitan Green Belt. It abuts the north-east edge of London, in the south west corner of Essex. It comprises the towns of Loughton, Buckhurst Hill, Waltham Abbey, Chigwell, Epping and Ongar together with numerous villages the largest of which are Theydon Bois, North Weald Bassett, Roydon and Nazeing. Many of the towns and villages are historic but those close to London grew rapidly as commuter towns. This was particularly in connection with the coming of what is now the Central Line of London Underground.
- 2.2. The District has an important position in the national motorway network. The M11 runs north-south almost through the centre of the District with local road connections at Hastingwood (just south of Harlow) and Loughton (restricted access only – exit from the northbound carriageway and entry onto the southbound carriageway). The M25 crosses the District east-west with a local road junction at Waltham Abbey and an interchange with the M11. The Central Line has stations at Buckhurst Hill, Loughton, Debden, Theydon Bois, Epping, Chigwell and Grange Hill. Roydon is the only mainline railway station in the District – on the line between Liverpool Street, Harlow, Stansted Airport and Cambridge.
- 2.3. The consistent application of Green Belt policies has meant that some 90% of the District's 130 square miles is still open and undeveloped comprising generally attractive countryside.
- 2.4. The district does not have a single large town centre, but is characterised by a series of commuter and market towns and smaller villages. The services provided in each of the centres vary widely.



2.5. This Study will need to consider the current role and function of the town centres in the district. The relationship of the six centres to each other and other centres outside of the district will also need to be investigated. In addition the relationship of the six centres to local centres should also be taken into account.

3. **Policy Context**

3.1. **National Policy**

3.1.1. Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 6: *Planning for Town Centres* sets out the requirements to be met in assessing the vitality and viability of existing centres. PPS6 should form the basis for the assessment.

3.2. **Regional Policy**

3.2.1. The Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England (The East of England Plan – EEP) was published in May 2008 and is currently subject to judicial review. This identifies a number of regional and major centres throughout the region. None of these fall within Epping Forest District, but several are nearby. Harlow is defined as a key centre for Development and Change. The influence of London and other major out of town centres (e.g. Lakeside) should also be taken into account.

3.3. **Local Policy**

3.3.1. The Local Plan Alterations (2006) contain the adopted Town Centre policies. This chapter identifies the “principal”, “district” and “smaller” centres along with the local centres.

3.3.2. The key frontages in the main centres are defined by policy TC4. Policy currently requires that at least 70% of the key frontage (measured as a whole) is in A1 use. Regular surveys are conducted by the Council to measure performance against this policy, and to inform further decisions on planning applications.

3.3.3. The Council is now commencing preparation of the Local Development Framework, and the policies concerning the town and local centres will be reviewed. The outputs of this study will help shape these policies.

4. **Proposed Specification**

4.1. The study will be undertaken in accordance with PPS6, and will provide a “health check” of the identified centres. This is to include, in particular, an assessment of current floorspace, vacancy rates, rent levels and the range of goods available.

4.2. The current role and function of the centres should be assessed, and where necessary recommendations given where the position of a centre in the hierarchy should be changed.

4.3. Shopping patterns for residents of the six towns should be assessed to examine both the amount and type of spend in their town centre and in other shopping centres.



- 4.4. Once a baseline set of data has been collated, the study will consider future demand within the centres. This should be linked to population growth and economic conditions, looking forward to at least 2021 and where possible giving indications of the likely pattern of growth to 2031.
- 4.5. In relation to the future demand for development in the town centres, any potential opportunities for development or enhancement should be identified. Where possible the capacity of these sites for different town centre uses should be investigated and aggregate capacity figures on a town centre basis provided.
- 4.6. The current policy of restricting the percentage of non-retail uses within town centres should be assessed, and any impacts (positive or negative) on the vitality and viability of those centres should be identified. This study is not expected to suggest new policy in this respect, but to provide the basis on which any changes may be made in future.
- 4.7. Consultation and engagement will be required at appropriate stages throughout the research with the Town Centre Partnerships/Traders Associations and the relevant Town and Parish Councils. Engagement with the Council's elected members will be required in the research stage. The final report will need to be presented to members at the end of the study. In addition the consultation should include any other relevant organisations as suggested by the Council or as considered appropriate by the appointed Consultants. Evidence of this engagement must be demonstrated in the final report, and this will be taken into account when awarding the tender.
- 4.8. Consultants will need to ensure the Study considers all relevant documents produced by the District Council including Debden Town Centre and Broadway Development Options and Conservation Area Appraisals where applicable. The Consultants should consider future projects likely to impact the six town centres in particular the impact of the proposed development for the 2012 Olympics in Broxbourne district close to Waltham Abbey.
5. **Production & Presentation of Reports**
- 5.1. Consultants will be required to present the complete study and any interim reports in electronic (Word 2003) and paper versions. A total of 10 paper copies of the final report will be required.

6. **Timetable**

6.1. The timetable for this project is as follows:

Receipt of tenders	27 th February 2009
Interviews for shortlisted candidates	w/b 9 th March 2009
Inception meeting with chosen Consultants	w/b 23 rd March 2009
Interim Report presented	w/b 11 th May 2009
Draft Final Report presented for comment	w/b 6 th July 2009
Final Report complete	7 th August 2009

6.2. Consultants must make provision for at least five project meetings with the Council to discuss progress and arising issues, within the above timetable.



6.3. The above timetable may be amended, by agreement, and Consultants are invited to comment on the feasibility and appropriateness of the proposed timetable. However, the study must be complete to inform the preparation of the Core Strategy by the beginning of August 2009.

7. **Tender Information**

- 7.1. Experienced consultants are invited to submit a tender on the basis of the information in this brief. Tenders should include information concerning costs and timings of the study. The methodology for the study should be set out in particular how stakeholder engagement will be conducted.
- 7.2. Relevant experience should be highlighted and appropriate references given. At least two referees should be given for work completed in the last 12 months.
- 7.3. Details of the team that will be undertaking the study should be given. The price quoted should be a fixed price for the study. Consultants should also be available to appear on behalf of the Local Authorities at any Examination in Public relating to their findings. Costs per day should be indicated.
- 7.4. The Council will not be obliged to select the lowest or any tender, and will appoint the consultant having regard to the following criteria:
- o Methodology – 40%
 - o Relevant experience – 30%
 - o Value for money – 30%
- 7.5. Tenders must be returned to Epping Forest District Council, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping, Essex CM16 4BZ for the attention of Ian Willett, Assistant to the Chief Executive by 5 pm on Friday 27th February 2009 in the envelope provided, which must be sealed and bear no distinguishing marks, i.e. franking which may in any way indicate the identity of the sender. Tenderers should note that if returning the Tender by recorded delivery that the name of their company will be written on the envelope. In that case the envelope with the Tender should be placed inside another envelope.

8. **Contacts**

- 8.1. Any queries on the information in this brief should be directed to Kevin Wright or in his absence any other member of the Forward Planning team:

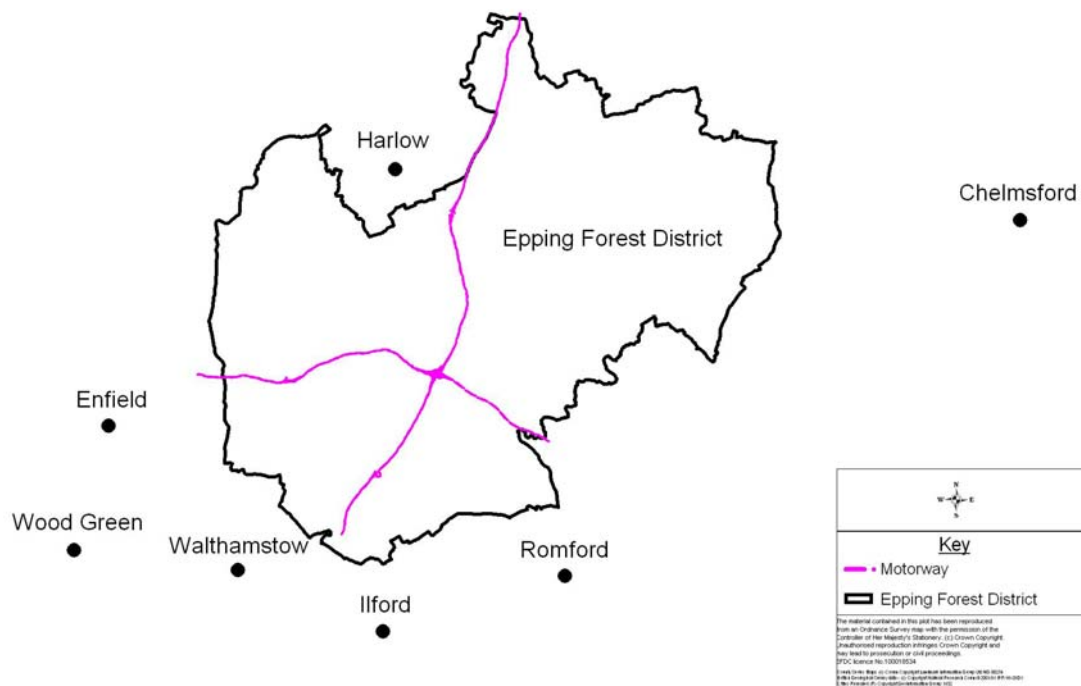
Kevin Wright, Senior Planning Officer
Forward Planning
Epping Forest District Council
Civic Offices
323 High Street
Epping
Essex
CM16 4BZ

Tel: 01992 564095
Email: kwright@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

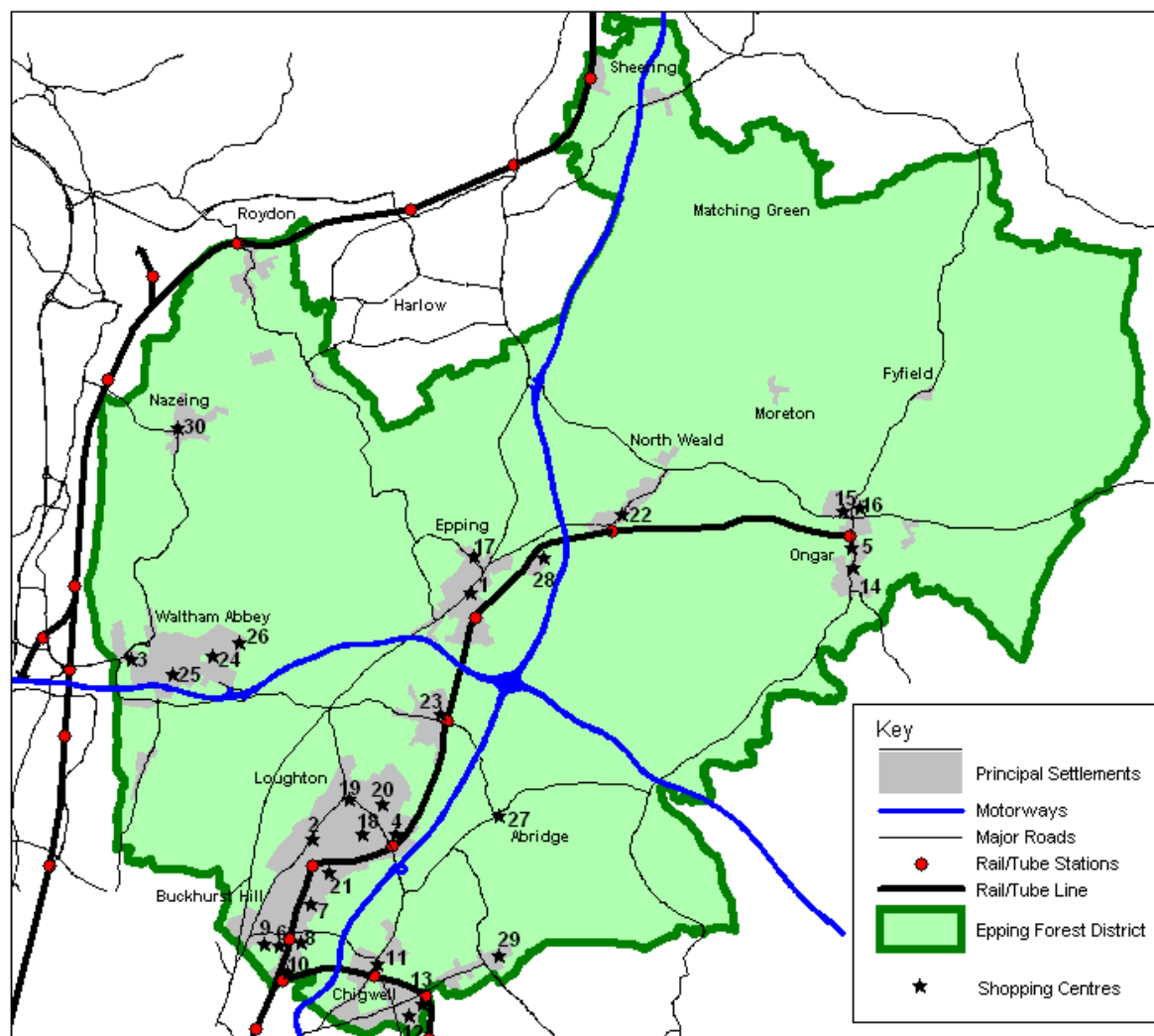


Appendix 1

Map showing Epping Forest District in relation to regional and other large centres



Appendix 2



Principal Centres

1. Epping
2. Loughton High Road
3. Waltham Abbey

Smaller Centres

4. Loughton Broadway
5. Chipping Ongar

District Centres

6. Queens Road, Buckhurst Hill

Local Centres

Buckhurst Hill:

7. Loughton Way; 8. Lower Queens Road
9. Queens Road West; 10. Station Way

Chigwell:

11. Brook Parade; 12. Limes Farm; 13. Manor Road

Chipping Ongar:

14. Lower High Street; 15. St Peter's Avenue; 16. Fyfield Road

Epping:

17. Lindsey Street

Loughton:

18. Borders Lane; 19. Goldings Hill/Lower Road 20. Pyrles Lane;
21. Roding Road/Valley Hill

North Weald:

22. High Road

Theydon Bois:

23. Coppice Row/Forest Drive

Waltham Abbey:

24. Ninefields; 25. Roundhills
26. Uphire Road; 27. Highbridge Retail Park

Others:

28. Abridge; 29. Coopersale;