

Epping Forest District Council
Requirements for Strategic Masterplans
Version 1.1

1. Background

The National Planning Policy Framework and its associated guidance requires that Local Plans deliver sustainable development, which takes into account the need to achieve net gains in economic, social and environmental factors. Sites are proposed for allocation in the Draft Local Plan, and the Council intends to work with landowners/promoters in a positive and proactive way to ensure that the resultant development meets local and strategic development and infrastructure needs. Draft Local Plan policies SP 3, SP 4 and DM 9 indicate the broad requirement for Strategic Masterplans to be prepared in order that development is delivered in a cohesive and timely manner, in accordance with the envisaged housing trajectory. However, the Draft Local Plan does not specify which areas and sites are required to be covered by Strategic Masterplans, nor does it specify how and when Strategic Masterplans are to be produced.

2. Scope and Purpose

This report sets out where Strategic Masterplans will be required to help plan and deliver sites proposed for allocation within the Draft Local Plan. The report should be read in conjunction with the Planning Performance Agreement Framework, which provides the basis for the future processes associated with Strategic Masterplan production and Local Plan implementation.

It should be acknowledged that in some cases where a Strategic Masterplan is not deemed to be required, the Council may still require landowners / promoters to produce a Concept Framework which should be agreed by the Council prior to the submission of planning applications on individual sites. A Concept Framework is less detailed than a Strategic Masterplan, but can be beneficial in seeking to ensure a coordinated approach between adjacent sites, or in addressing particularly complex issues on individual sites, prior to the submission of planning applications. If necessary, the scope and requirements for the production of Concept Frameworks will be subject to further discussion with landowners / promoters and stakeholders through the Developer Forum, taking into account available resources, available site guidance and local context, and is therefore not further considered within this report.

The Council, together with the Developer Forum and other relevant stakeholders, acknowledge that the Planning Performance Agreement Framework and the Strategic Masterplan requirements provide a basis to begin the process of Local Plan implementation. However, both documents will need to be subject to ongoing review as the Local Plan itself progresses, and assume the availability of the necessary resources required to progress, the costs of which are to be recovered through Planning

Performance Agreements. It is not possible, or indeed appropriate, to pre-empt the outcome of the Local Plan process, and all parties recognise that the sites proposed for allocation, and policy requirements set out within the Draft Local Plan, may change prior to the adoption of the Local Plan. However, all parties also recognise that it is essential to ensure that a 'front-loaded' collaborative and proactive approach is taken from the outset to ensure the timely and joined up delivery of high quality development and infrastructure on key sites proposed for allocation as part of the emerging Local Plan. This recognises the scale of housing need in the District, and the aspiration of the Council to promote and guide development that meets the needs and expectations of the local community.

The Council, together with the Developer Forum and other relevant stakeholders, recognise the scale of the task in seeking to 'front-load' the planning and delivery of sites proposed for allocation as part of the emerging Local Plan, and acknowledge that this will require the use of Planning Performance Agreements to ensure that a project managed approach to planning and delivery is taken. As part of Planning Performance Agreements, the Council [and potentially other statutory providers] will seek to recover the costs incurred and ensure the necessary availability of resources to effectively deliver the services required.

The Council is seeking to undertake a skills audit, and establish the additional resources that are likely to be required in order to facilitate and oversee the production of Strategic Masterplans and implementation of the Local Plan as envisaged. This in turn will help to inform the scope and costs associated with Planning Performance Agreements.

The Council intends to provide outline 'site guidance' as appropriate for sites proposed for allocation as part of the Draft Local Plan, as part of the Pre-Submission Publication version of the Plan. In addition to this, the Council will require relevant landowners / site promoters to work in collaboration to produce Strategic Masterplans.

It is not considered to be possible or appropriate to set out a range of criteria in order to objectively assess and determine where and when a Strategic Masterplan will be required. Instead, a range of factors should be considered in determining whether a Strategic Masterplan will be necessary for any given site or grouping of sites. These factors include (but are not limited to):

- Scale of development and infrastructure proposed;
- Site size;
- Proximity of sites;
- Sensitivity of existing surrounding uses;
- Complexity of land ownership / assembly;
- Need for coordinated infrastructure delivery;
- Consideration of existing and future site linkages / accessibility; and
- Need for coordinated design.

3. Sites around Harlow

Each of the sites around Harlow (within Epping Forest District) is currently intended to deliver a substantial quantum of development. In combination, the impact of the delivery of these sites is significant and it is anticipated it will take a number of years to deliver the sites in full. In addition, each of these sites will need to be delivered in accordance with the overall Garden Town programme, requiring a coordinated approach across the sites, and necessitating the involvement of a number of partners including the site owners/promoters.

The Garden Town programme is still in its early stages, however the Councils involved (Epping Forest, East Herts and Harlow District Councils) are clear of the need to ensure joint working across boundaries to secure place-making objectives of the Garden Town, and accelerate delivery of housing and infrastructure. There are a number of challenges to be resolved, and the masterplanning approach will aid in addressing these. This is particularly relevant to addressing the coordination of stakeholder and community engagement and the delivery of strategic and local infrastructure across Harlow, but also ensuring that shared development design principles can be implemented where appropriate.

The need for a coordinated approach to the provision of infrastructure on sites around Harlow is clear, and it is anticipated that this will be guided by the Garden Town programme. In addition further evidence base work is being completed by Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) specifically to ensure the timely and coordinated delivery of development and infrastructure associated with sites located within Epping Forest District. The existing EFDC Developer Forum that has been established for the sites within Epping Forest District which will serve as the initial mechanism to discuss key issues around the delivery of these sites.

The Council has carefully considered the form in which Strategic Masterplans should be produced for sites around Harlow, and has concluded that the following Strategic Masterplans should be produced to enable the joined up planning and delivery of relevant sites:

- **Strategic Masterplan 1 (Harlow South)** – to incorporate SP 3.1 Latton Priory & Riddings Lane
- **Strategic Masterplan 2 (Harlow West)** – to incorporate SP 3.2 & 3.3 West Sumners & West Katherines
- **Strategic Masterplan 3 (Harlow East)** – to incorporate SP 3.4 East of Harlow [*further discussions are required to confirm the extent of the Strategic Masterplan, taking into account the cross-boundary nature of the site*].

Appendix 1 provides an illustrative plan of the Strategic Masterplan areas. It should be noted that the site boundaries shown on the plan are indicative only and provided for illustrative purposes only, and

do not reflect the final proposed site allocations. The Council is seeking to refine proposed allocation boundaries through the progression of the Local Plan and associated evidence base.

The sites to the west of Harlow will be required to work together in a coordinated manner, given their proximity to each other and the cumulative impacts of this growth on the existing urban area within Harlow.

EFDC expects that the landowners/promoters of these sites will continue to engage with the Developer Forum to ensure a cohesive approach across Harlow. It is also anticipated that Officers from Harlow District Council, East Herts District Council, as well as Essex County Council (and where required other agencies and organisations) will continue to attend and engage with the Forum for the foreseeable future. Further consideration is required in relation to the establishment of future mechanisms and structures / working groups required to progress individual Strategic Masterplans, in addition to the resources required to facilitate the required processes at EFDC (see PPA Framework).

Through the Developer Forum, further consideration must be given to the appropriate mechanisms, roles, responsibilities and processes required to facilitate and enable the production of Strategic Masterplans in the most appropriate and efficient way possible. The role of the Council may vary for each Strategic Masterplan depending upon the particular circumstances, context, and availability of resources, which in turn will impact upon the scope and content of Planning Performance Agreements to be produced.

The Council recognises that further more detailed specific discussions will be required in relation to each of the Strategic Masterplan areas in order to determine and agree roles and responsibilities of EFDC / relevant landowners and promoters, in addition to progressing discussions in relation to individual Planning Performance Agreements. It will also be necessary to consider in greater detail the timing of processes associated with the production of Strategic Masterplans, which is likely to vary depending upon local context, Local Plan phasing, and the availability of resources.

4. Sites in Epping Forest District

The sites proposed for allocation within the rest of Epping Forest District are a varied mixture of smaller and larger sites. No single site is as large as the sites around Harlow, but there are some groups of sites that will need to be addressed in a cumulative and cohesive manner to ensure that a strong sense of place is created. In some cases Strategic Masterplans will therefore be required to ensure that a coordinated approach is taken to the planning and delivery of groupings of smaller sites, particularly where they are located in close proximity, or adjacent to each other.

The Council has carefully considered the locations across the District where Strategic Masterplans are deemed to be required, and has concluded that the following Strategic Masterplans should be produced to enable the joined up planning and delivery of relevant sites across the District:

- **Strategic Masterplan 4 (Epping South)*** – see Appendix 2
- **Strategic Masterplan 5 (Debden)** – see Appendix 2
- **Strategic Masterplan 6 (Waltham Abbey North)** – see Appendix 2
- **Strategic Masterplan 7 (Chipping Ongar)** – see Appendix 2
- **Strategic Masterplan 8 (North Weald Bassett)*** – see Appendix 2
- **Strategic Masterplan 9 (Chigwell)** – see Appendix 2

**These locations may potentially require two separate but closely related Strategic Masterplans*

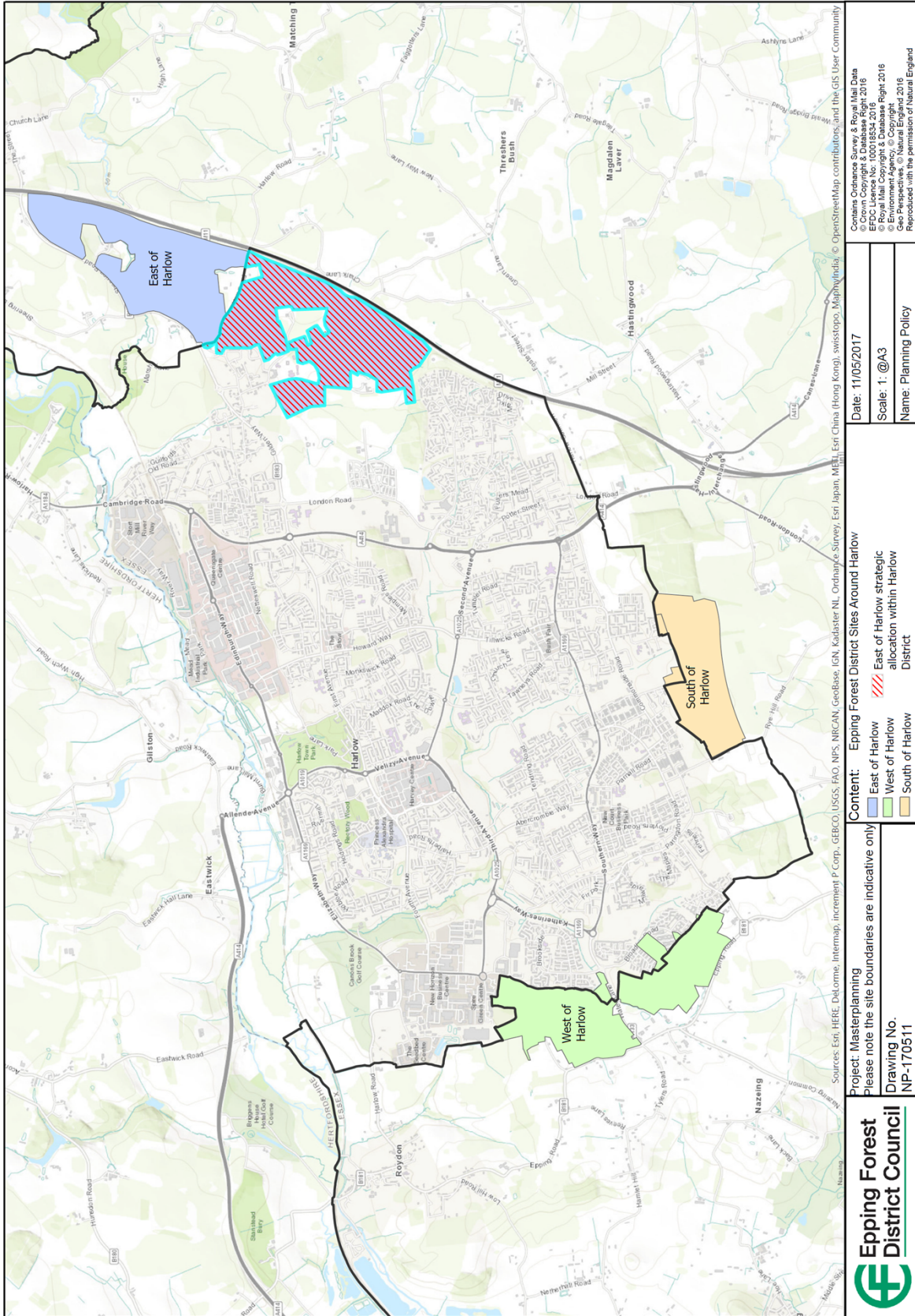
Appendix 2 illustrates the spatial extent of areas covered by Strategic Masterplans. It should be acknowledged that the boundaries shown are indicative only at this stage, and may be amended to reflect local circumstances and / or more detailed consideration of precise boundaries.

It is recognised that the production of a Strategic Masterplan which covers a number of sites and potentially a number of different landowners will require a different approach, compared to the production of Strategic Masterplans for sites which are in one land ownership. Therefore, through the Developer Forum, further consideration must be given to the mechanisms, roles, responsibilities and processes required to facilitate and enable the production of Strategic Masterplans in the most appropriate and efficient way possible. The role of the Council may vary for each Strategic Masterplan depending upon the particular circumstances, context, and availability of resources, which in turn will impact upon the scope and content of Planning Performance Agreements to be produced.

The Council recognises that further more detailed specific discussions will be required in relation to each of the Strategic Masterplan areas in order to determine and agree roles and responsibilities, in addition to progressing discussions in relation to individual Planning Performance Agreements. It will also be necessary to consider in greater detail the timing of processes associated with the production

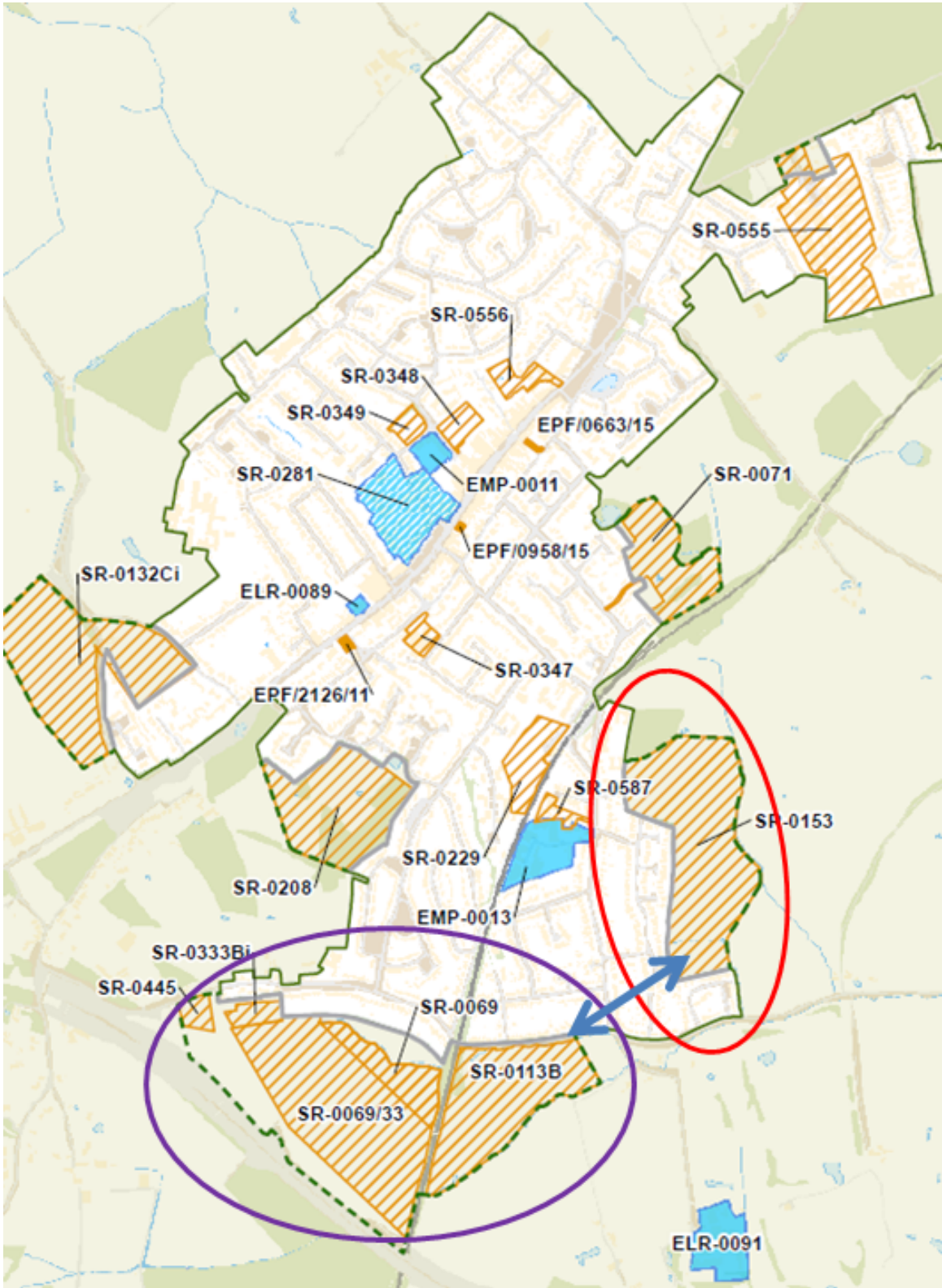
of Strategic Masterplans, which is likely to vary depending upon local context, Local Plan phasing, and the availability of resources.

Appendix 1 – Indicative areas identified for Strategic Masterplans for sites around Harlow within Epping Forest District

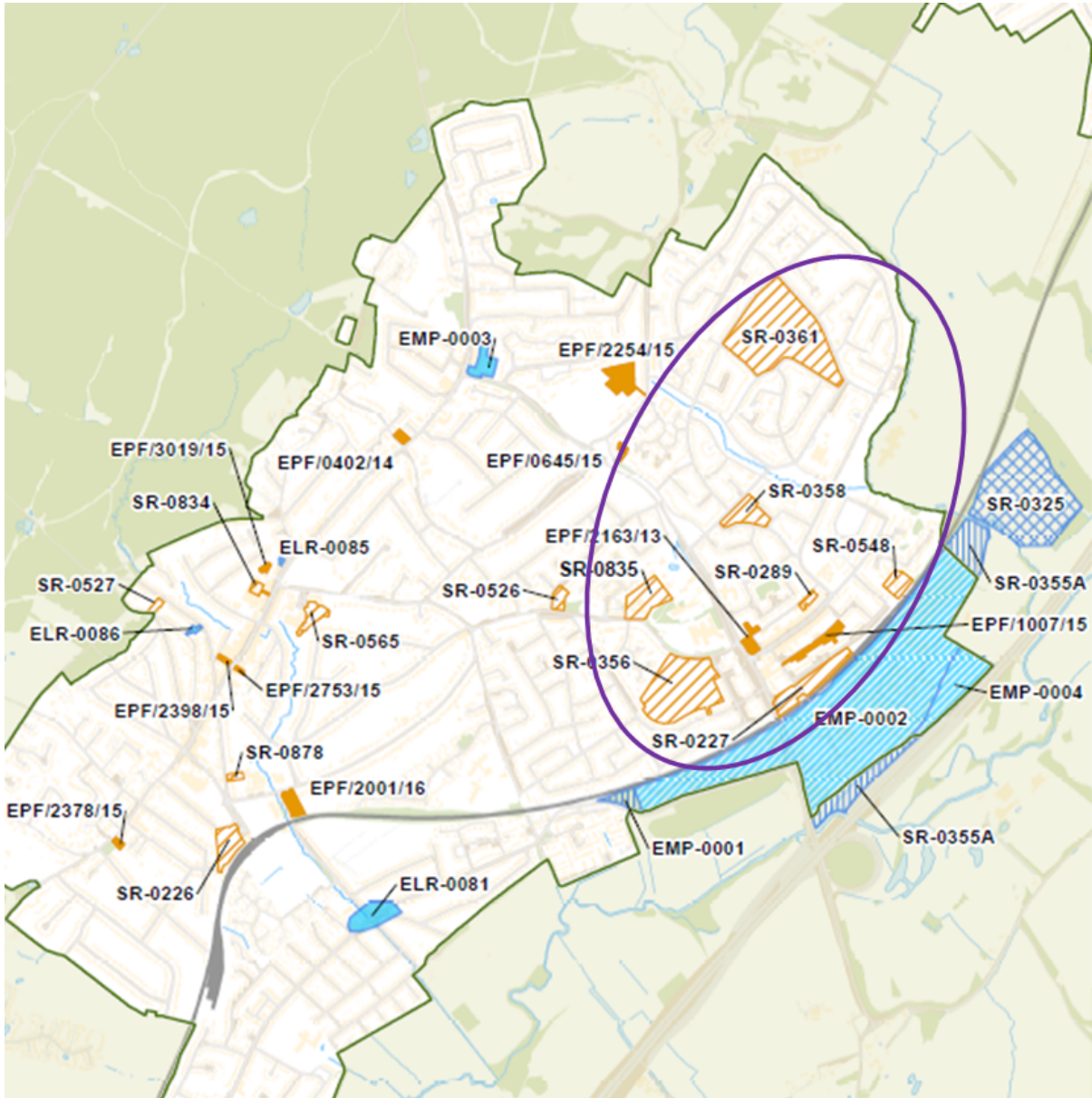


Appendix 2 – Indicative areas identified for Strategic Masterplans within Epping Forest District

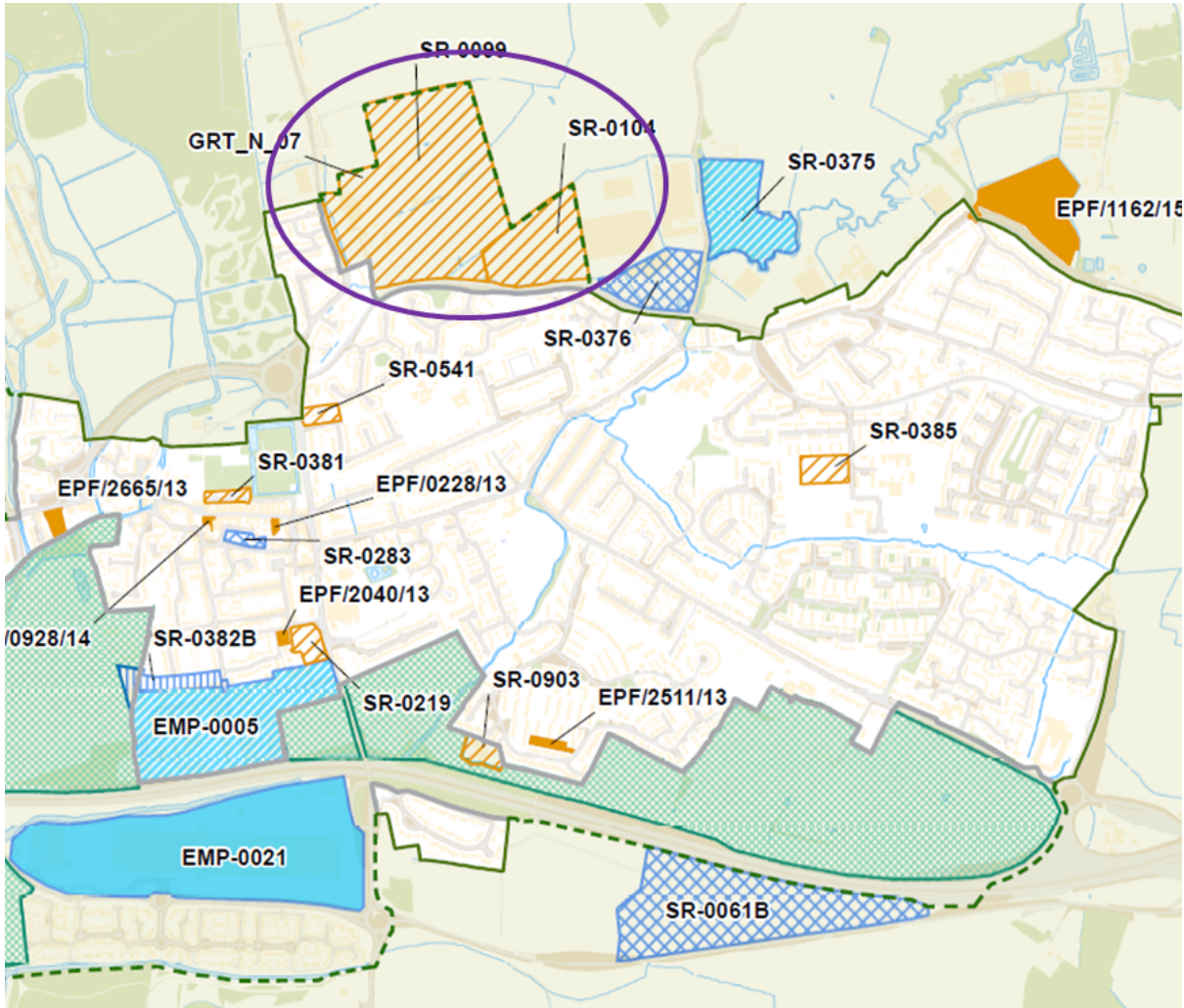
Epping (Draft Local Plan Policy P 1)



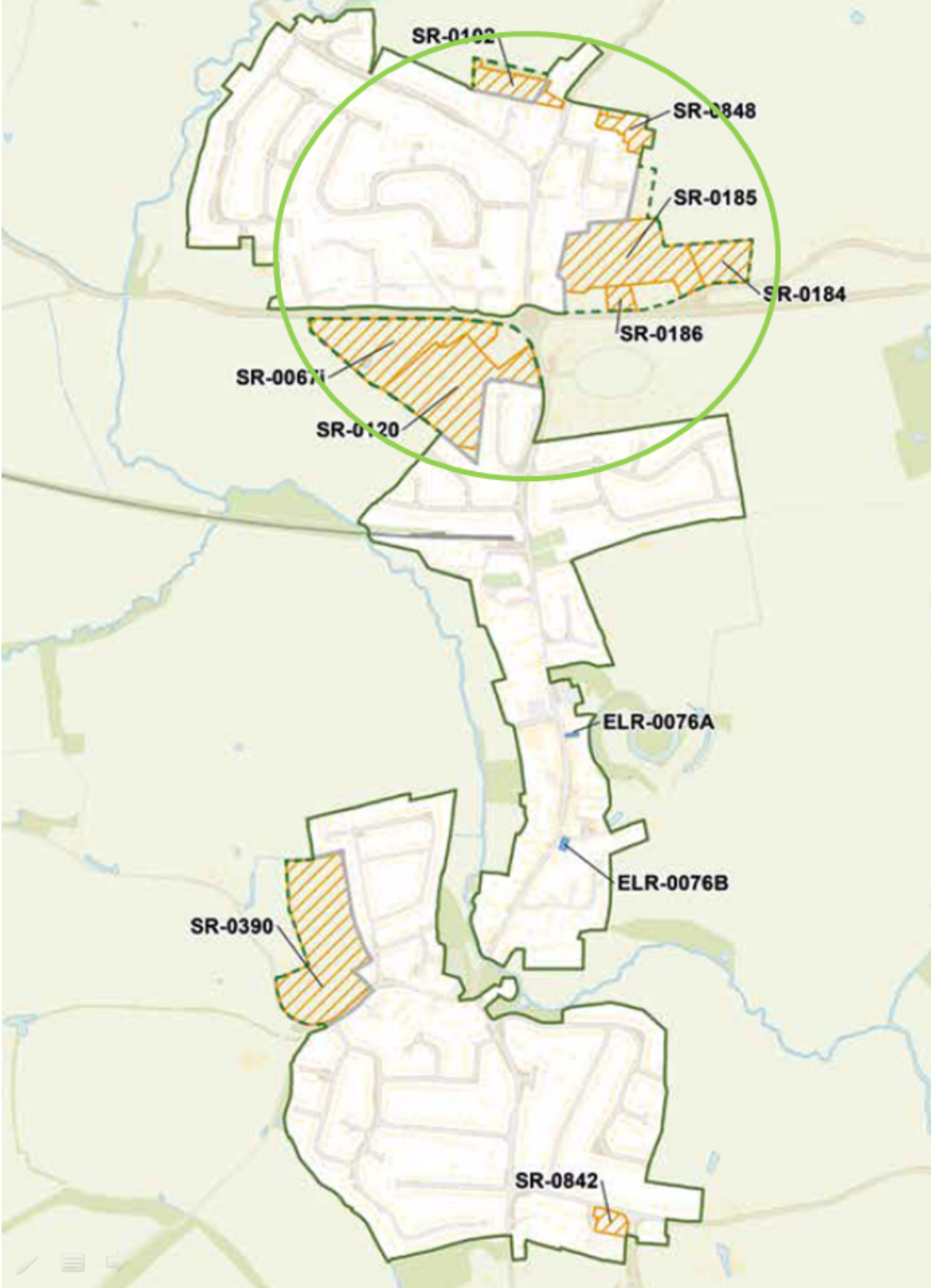
Debden (Draft Local Plan Policy P 2)



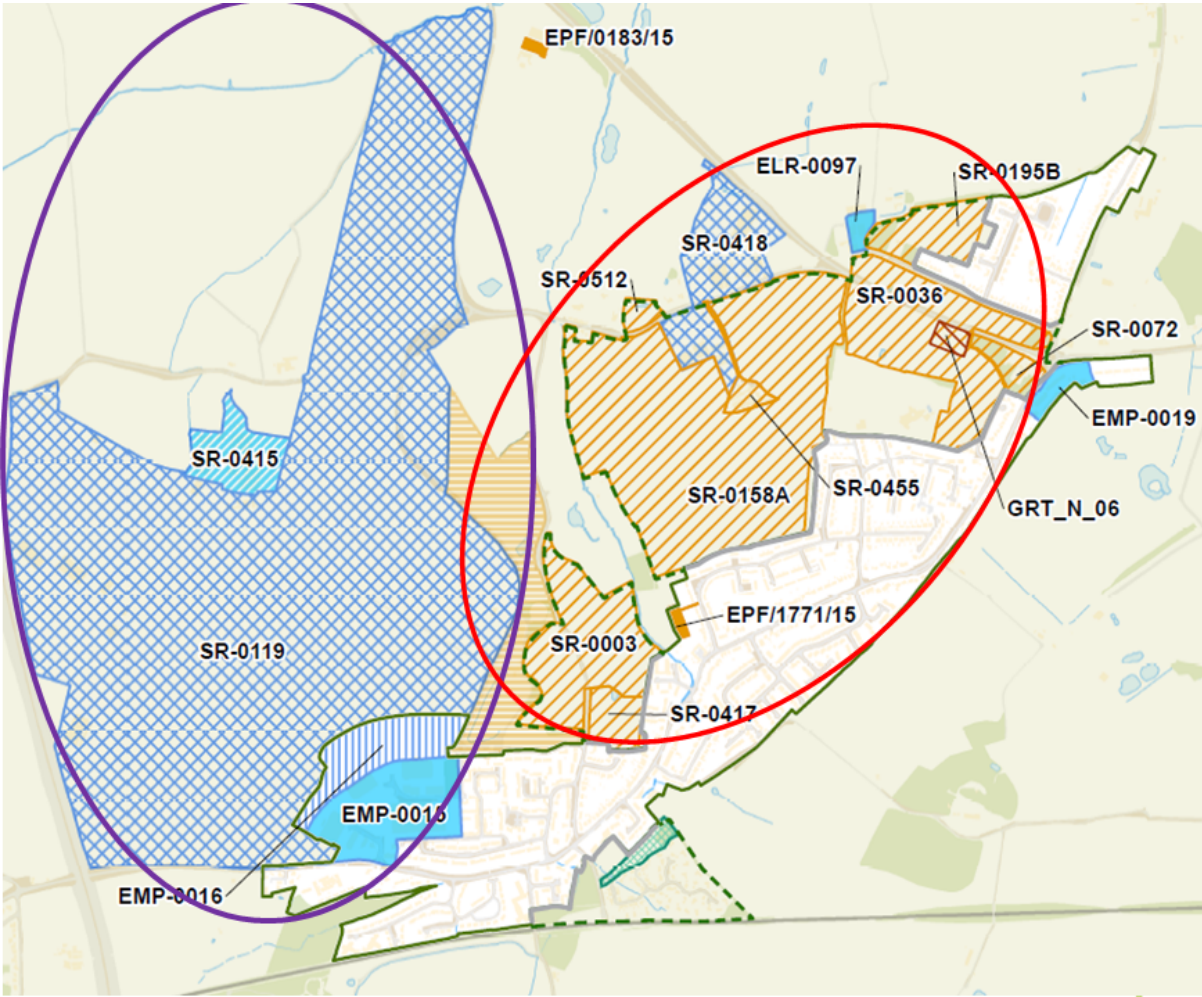
Waltham Abbey (Draft Local Plan Policy P 3)



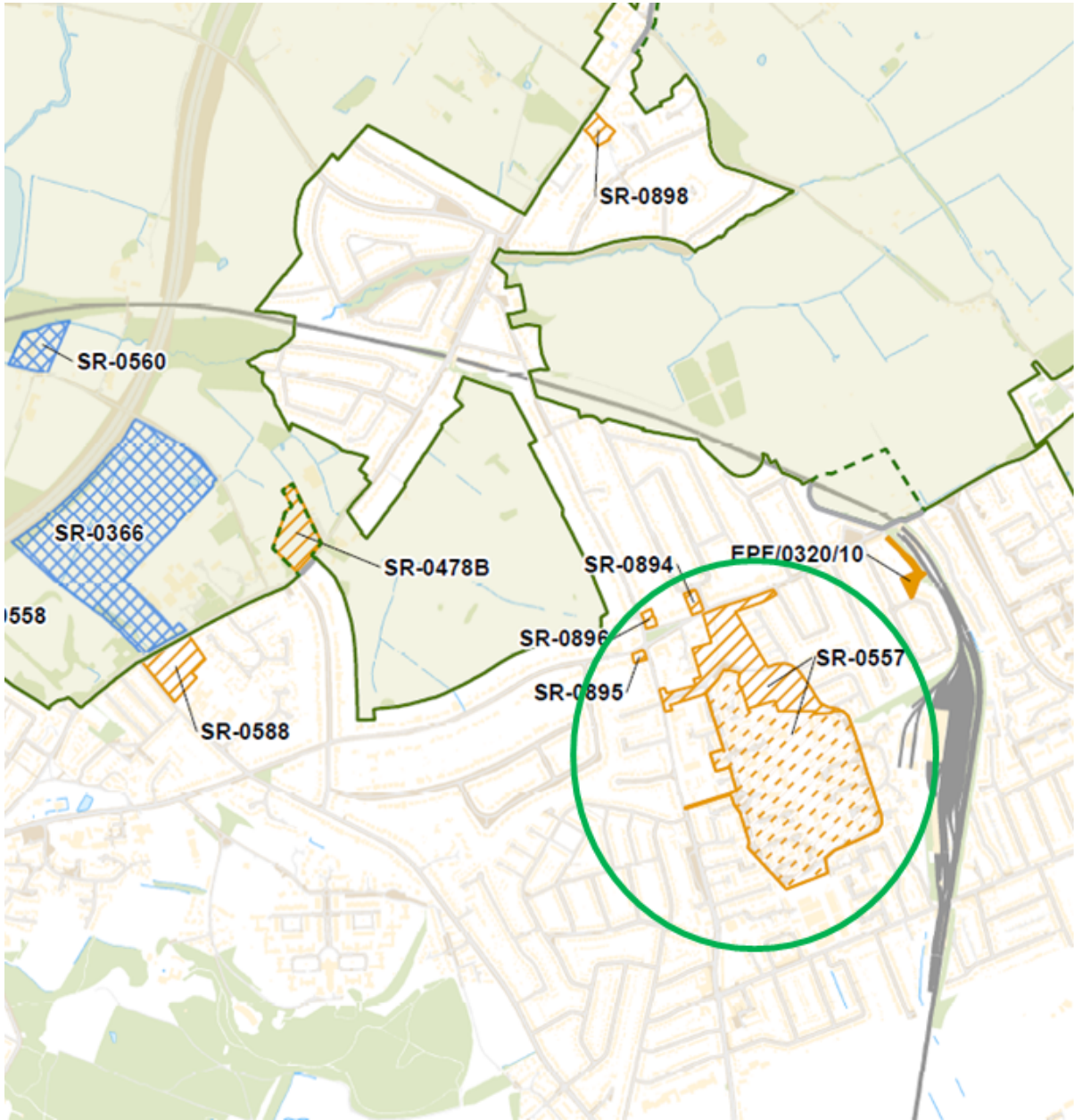
Chipping Ongar (Draft Local Plan Policy P 4)



North Weald Bassett (Draft Local Plan Policy P 6)



Chigwell (Draft Local Plan Policy P 7)



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