

**MINUTES** of the **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
Held at Epping Hall, St Johns Road, Epping on **Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019** at **19.30**  
**hours.**

**PRESENT:**

**COUNCIL MEMBERS:** Cllr N Avey (Chairman)  
Cllr M Wright (Vice Chairman and Deputy Mayor)

**RESIDENT STAKEHOLDERS:** Judith Lunn and Tim Valder-Hogg

**COMMUNITY PARTNERS:** Simon Baker, Margaret Emmens, Barbara Ford, Fiona Martin and Peter Murray

**OFFICER(S):** Geraldine Vallis (Planning & Events Officer)  
Martin Small (Neighbourhood Planning expert)

**184 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from: Cllr G Scruton (Mayor), Cllr J Duffell, Cllr Mrs C McCredie, Cllr Mrs B Scruton, Cllr J Whitehouse, Margaret Peppiatt and Charlie Geddes.

**185 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES (ATTACHMENT A)**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee (NPAC) Meeting held on Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019 be signed by the Chairman as a true record and adopted by the Council.

**186 LOCAL PLAN – UPDATE ON HEARING SESSIONS & INSPECTOR’S RECOMMENDATIONS (ATTACHMENT B1 and B2)**

Martin reported that the Epping Forest District Council’s hearing session meetings followed the patterns of other areas with the Local Plan. The inspector invited people to speak, with some cross checking and put points across and the inspector got a good grip of the issues. The inspector sent a letter with actions for the District Council to address issues with actions to ensure that the Local Plan could be made sound. Martin confirmed that it is up to Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) to address these actions and come up with solutions and the modifications needed to satisfy the Inspector. Martin confirmed that once EFDC address these major modifications on a specific scale, there needs to be a public consultation after they are presented to the Council Cabinet Committee to recommend and satisfy the response.

Martin referred to the attachment B1, page 1 of 5 where the inspector raised housing actions. The following were comments:

- the Local Plan may need to show additional sites
- Sites near the forest would cause pollution and tourism
- Crucial issue for South Epping
- EFDC cannot cherry pick the forest issues and needs to look elsewhere in the district to make make up the numbers
- Don’t want to bring too many housing numbers
- Density issue

- Update housing identification/East Herts calculation

Martin said that we need to look at 2019 National Policy Planning Framework to see what the housing requirements are in the district. There needs to be a five year land supply and 20 per cent buffer so that if some sites are undeliverable, there is a backup buffer.

Martin referred to the part of the inspectors requirements around the housing numbers (A9 to 12 on the attachment). Other areas to look at were:

- Page 2 regarding the forest
- Action on the Habitat Regulation Assessments (HRA) has not spent money on these
- Pollution with traffic and increased visitor numbers
- South Epping – sites need to meet housing numbers
- Inspector looked at the pollution issue and commented about withdrawing or reducing the sites
- Page 3 relates to Harlow A2 to 16 – Green Belt
- Car parks –need to have dialogue with TfL sites and issues around height limits
- One set issue of South Epping and one town centre; Last page – Epping – Flux’s Lane section; Other constraints; Bridge cannot pay for Road Bridge

Martin confirmed that the inspector said that South Epping development is too big and most of the other sites are okay with a few tweeks. Martin said that there was a suggested meeting that afternoon with EFDC about South Epping which was cancelled and it seems that EFDC want to understand what the viewpoint of Epping Town Council is about this site.

Martin said that the numbers are correct for Epping and maybe look at alternative sites in the district , for example find sites in Ongar compared to Epping (with the forest). Martin said there is an issue with the viability of infrastructure for South Epping with two separate areas considered – East Epping or take out some of South Epping.

Other comments were that there needs to be a special strategy to expand Harlow M11 with the improved junction 7A junction; increased density housing Harlow; to give new numbers down to forest; proximity of housing to forest, boundaries, input from Natural England.

Martin said that it is a numbers game and would need 1,600 down to 1,300 with currently 950 for South Epping.

Martin commented that TfL response is for 80 plus minimum dwellings at the Epping train station. Martin said that this could happen if build higher on station land but there needs to be common ground between EFDC and TfL as regards height limitations, for example what happened in the Loughton train station development. Martin said that EFDC wants to get to the 1,300 housing number and there would be flexibility around the train station. Martin said that South Epping is an issue so need to look at alternative sites and where is slightly increased density in the car parks.

Martin said that St Margaret’s Hospital has land with room for housing. Martin said that there are other options within Epping which maybe a dangerous route.

Martin confirmed that there needs a minimum number of houses which triggers master planning with infrastructure and facilities which spreads the problem.

Other comments at the meeting were:

Infrastructure, eg roads and schools, etc.

Responses to Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan supported by infrastructure.

Other issues are the one way system in Ivy Chimneys.

Prohibitive cost of the bridge over the working train line.

South Epping is not good.

Move to a different part of Epping with infrastructure

Martin advised that the best tactic is to support South Epping in a reduced form and as regards infrastructure, it is not for this committee to determine but for the district, county or someone else.

Martin said that to consider when to submit the Neighbourhood Plan – the longer the Committee wait, developers will be piecemeal developments across the area.

Martin suggested to the committee about thinking about submission of the Neighbourhood Plan for examination.

Martin advised that until January 2020 there is a lot of work that Epping Forest District Council needs to do. Martin said that there is a 6 kilometre exclusion zone around building near Epping Forest and EFDC can make this case.

Martin confirmed that there are problems with pollution, visitor numbers in Epping Forest and this would be made worse with housing and traffic.

Martin said that one issue is the traffic at the Bell Common traffic lights and it was suggested about setting the timing of lights. Martin said that there is also the issue that residents in South Epping don't agree to the building and want housing elsewhere.

Martin suggested looking at progressing the Neighbourhood Plan and relook at the numbers on the sites.

Martin said that in Policy 3 of the Neighbourhood Plan there is 1,300 total so if Epping underground train station was revised to for example 89 and increase the numbers of housing on St John's site; look at Cottis Lane and Bakers Lane, Bower Vale Laundry; St Margaret's Hospital, the Civic Offices and the Bell Hotel (subject to modification of the junction).

Martin advised that in light of the inspector's comments, the committee should look at a reduced 650 for the South Epping site and include the Bell Hotel and St Margaret's site (which are not in the Local Plan) as well as looking at other sites in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Martin suggested an eco-scheme for South Epping with triple glazing, solar panels, water heating, car charging points with a smaller housing scheme to minimise the environmental pollution.

Martin said that the masterplan for South Epping having infrastructure with the housing would have a huge pressure on schools, surgeries and tweek other sites. Martin said that there would be infrastructure enough for 600 to justify a Section 106 agreement which would contribute towards a section of the bridge, school, etc.

Martin said that it would not be the Neighbourhood Plan owners to get infrastructure but to put pressure on EFDC, Essex County Council to get funding for this.

It was raised about the South Epping residents concerned about housing in the Green Belt. Martin suggested about looking at one side of the site at South Epping with a one way system to help solve the problem at Ivy Chimneys and back down.

Martin reminded the committee about the scoring options for the sites that the Committee did some time ago.

Martin said that while there would be more development, no real development on infrastructure but each site could be accompanied by section 106 agreements which is spent on Epping facilities and not elsewhere. Martin advised to stick to the sites identified in the Neighbourhood Plan to progress with the plan submission and a referendum which could be done ahead of the revised Local Plan but we would need to arrive at answers.

Martin said that TfL told them in the consultation that height details could be revised in the Neighbourhood Plan – maybe ask EFDC, for example 130 flats on six storeys.

Martin said that the committee would need to rethink the strategy is there is not the supply of housing around Epping and look at sites across Epping and outside because of pollution to Epping Forest.

Martin said that looking at this, EFDC could have a decrease of development in Epping including South Epping and EFDC move to other sites outside. Martin said that as there is a shortfall in the infrastructure which is holding things up, not sure how EFDC will do. Martin said that if there is an approved Neighbourhood Plan and not a developed Local Plan, weight would given to the Neighbourhood Plan by EFDC with a weak Local Plan because of the inspector's comments.

Martin advised that having an adopted Neighbourhood Plan would have a lot more weight to consider with planning applications in Epping.

Martin said that EFDC could decide to put a village in another area in Harlow or within the district. Martin said that infrastructure is principle in the Neighbourhood Plan and following the logic of developers with EFDC to put money into infrastructure.

Martin confirmed that there has been masterplan meetings with EFDC, had two and have more ideas.

Martin confirmed that EFDC personnel work out problems confirmed by the inspector with consultants brought in to do the work.

Martin said that the Neighbourhood Plan could have principle options to respond to local housing needs, etc. Martin confirmed that the 20 percent buffer was for the EFDC district, not Epping parish.

Martin advised writing to EFDC in light of the inspector's comments to look at a timescale to progress the Neighbourhood Plan. Martin said that the committee could relook at the sites and numbers to make them better.

Martin advised that South Epping is highly unlikely to be brought forward first and may come into the last stages of the profile of development with alternative proposals in the district maybe renewed in its entirety. Martin said that previously South Epping was considered first and Martin advised that it could be agreed that the other sites could be developed first before South Epping. Martin looked at the numbers at the sites to see how they could be amended.

- 130 Station and station improvements and car parking (with a new link road)
- 40 St John's site
- 80 Cottis Lane and Bakers Lane (Keep as is?)
- 43 Epping Sanitary & Laundry site – Bower Hill
- 200 St Margaret's site with health hub and school
- 44 Civic offices
- 40 Bell Hotel site (lower density housing out of town)
- 50 Sports Centre

Martin suggested that Section 106 agreements could be set up at each of these sites. 600 South Epping, were 950 (long term to ensure that it is served with infrastructure)

Martin suggested splitting the South Epping housing proposal into two parts and advised that by having the development in the longer term, the important infrastructure could be looked at by for example Essex County Council through their long term capital programme.

Martin suggested that this may also include a new school on the South Epping site with the development supplementing or replacing Ivy Chimneys Primary School on Brook Road. Martin confirmed again that there could be two parts to the Neighbourhood Plan – South Epping could be now later in the profile taking the inspector's comments into account.

It was commented by the committee why should the South Epping site remain in the Neighbourhood Plan given the inspectors comments as it may not be viable now. Martin said that there are environmental concerns with this proposed site but it is better than looking at East Epping or land north or west of Epping parish.

Martin suggested that the committee could progress with the Neighbourhood Plan to go to Epping Town Council for the next Full Council meeting.

Martin suggested decreasing South Epping or make up the numbers elsewhere given the master planning and infrastructure. Martin said there is a risk of South Epping not getting infrastructure. Martin suggested that if the Neighbourhood Plan is progressed with the top half and other half South Epping. Martin said that if there was a willingness to increase numbers on some of the other sites with the additional two St Margaret's and Bell Hotel sites. Martin confirmed that there would be a loss of 250 from the South Epping site and if there were space maybe they could be placed with the other 700 at another village site in the district. Martin confirmed that South Epping appeared to be the best site but is not now as a result of the inspector's comments. Martin advised that the South Epping site could be looked at through an eco-route with the advantages of it being less expensive to run and maybe more attractive to people, however it won't solve the traffic problems. Martin felt that by the time the other sites are delivered, South Epping may not be viable anyway.

One of the committee said that the South Epping conservators didn't respond to the Epping Forest District Council's Local Plan proposals very quickly. Martin suggested looking at the numbers outside of Epping from the inspector's comments.

Martin suggested looking at sites if it couldn't be done without infrastructure and the development to be moved elsewhere in the district and also if there is evidence, it could be proven to be the best large site in the district.

The Planning and Events Officer read out two comments from two of the Committee who couldn't attend as follows:

A. As you know I am unable to be present tomorrow night but I have two points that I would like you to raise on my behalf...if that is ok.

1. The provision of the bridge over the central line. Who is responsible & who will fund?

2. We are having working parties for the deliverance of the Latton Priory development. Will we have the same for South Epping? I am most impressed with the work of the developers there including transport infrastructure & wildlife habitat management. I trust that we will have equal for South Epping. Latton Priory c1500 dwellings. South Epping c950 dwellings. I look forward to the response of the group.

B. The Inspector's letter does bring into question whether the neighbourhood plan should continue to support the Epping South development. Hitherto the support has been conditional on significant infrastructure being provided and there is now even more doubt than before about whether the required infrastructure (including an adequate bridge) will be delivered.

The Committee agreed that these comments were covered during the discussion. Martin added that Latton Priory development was a different site with a masterplan working party doing the work.

## 187 NEXT STEPS

Martin advised that the committee could work this discussion meeting into a position paper for Epping Town Council to consider and agree sending a letter to Epping Forest District Council which may trigger something to happen.

It was **RESOLVED** that the committee would submit a position paper to Town Council's Full Council meeting on Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> October to consider submitting a letter to Epping Forest District Council to enquire if the Council would be receptive to receiving the Neighbourhood Plan to progress it to the next stage for approval.

## 188 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the next Neighbourhood Planning Advisory Committee meeting would be held on **Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2019 at 19.30 hours** at Epping Hall.

**NB** date of next meeting to be circulated to Members not present asap after meeting.

**The Chairman, Cllr N Avey, closed the meeting at 21.05 hours.**

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Signature of Chairman

Date