

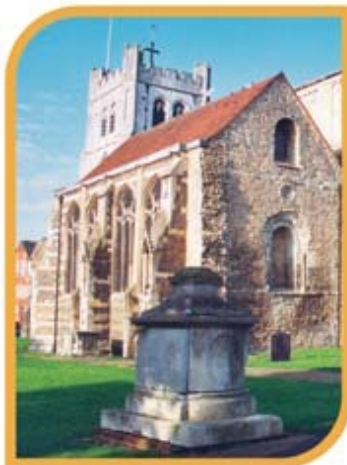


Putting Epping Forest First

A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

2010 to 2031

FIRST DRAFT – February 2010



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Foreword

Welcome to the second Sustainable Community Strategy for the Epping Forest District setting out our plans to make Epping Forest a great place to live work study and do business. We know the Epping Forest district is already a great place to be for the vast majority of our citizens. In recent surveys our residents, well nearly 90% of you anyway have said you are happy with this area as a place to live. However like you we at One Epping Forest are not complacent and we want to make our area and communities even better and tackle those areas and problems where people face real difficulties.

To produce this new long term plan we have listened closely to local people and their priorities for improvement, looked hard at the latest information and data from partners, telling us how things are changing and listened to our key stakeholders and what they think needs to be done. We have brought all this together in the strategy to provide a blueprint for joint working.

It sets out our priorities for tackling the difficult issues that no one public service or institution can hope to tackle effectively on its own such as:

Protecting the green and unique nature of our district, and reducing carbon emissions

Tackling fear of crime, domestic violence and burglary

Combating rural isolation

Reducing economic disadvantage and health inequality

Improving educational attainment and aspiration

Putting Epping Forest First will try to develop a common agenda for action around people's priorities. This involves taking a hard look into the present to identify key issues and problems and take action now which will help us to anticipate and address better, together, any further similar issues in the future.. The vision, values, themes and key objectives are intended to provide long term guidance for our work over the next twenty years but will be reviewed frequently to ensure they remain relevant to peoples concerns and changing times. They will be supported by annual action plans setting out in detail what will be done by the partners each year.

This time, building on the experience of previous years the Partnership has taken a conscious decision to limit its objectives. We want to focus our activities in a smaller number of key areas where we can make a real difference, and 'add value' to priority issues that otherwise simply wouldn't be tackled effectively.

Cllr. Diana Collins

Chairman, One Epping Forest

What Is a Sustainable Community Strategy?

The Sustainable Community Strategy is the key long term plan to deliver better quality of life and improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the Epping Forest District over the next 20 years and beyond.

Based on a clear understanding of local needs and residents priorities it seeks to support 'sustainable communities' for the future which the Government describes as

- Active, inclusive and safe
- Well run
- Environmentally sensitive and well designed and built
- Well connected and served
- Thriving and fair for everyone

It is the cornerstone of all the other plans and strategies that affect how public services and other long term planning policies in the district such as the Local Development Framework are delivered. It tells local people, and importantly regional and national government, on whose support and cooperation we depend, how we will achieve the outcomes in this strategy. It brings together all the plans of partners into one coherent coordinated strategy; this includes the relevant sections of the East of England Regional Plan, the Essex Strategy and the Local Area Agreement.

One Epping Forest is the Local Strategic Partnership for the district and has developed this strategy on behalf of Epping Forest District Council. It brings together a powerful local coalition of bodies and interest groups who are working together to improve the life of everyone in the Epping Forest district. With senior representatives from business, local schools and colleges, local councils, the police, the health service, and the voluntary sector, One Epping Forest is ideally placed to produce a common plan to deal with common problems, and support how we all can pool our efforts and expertise to improve quality of life in our communities.

One Epping Forest is working to enable public services to work in partnership, improve services to local communities, reduce duplication and focus more of increasingly scarce resources where they are needed most.

Introduction

In this document we have set out the sort of place we want to see, the challenges we face and the issues that most require improvement through partnership work. This includes reducing fear of crime, protecting the environment and the green and unique character of the district. The Strategy sets out why we think these issues are important, what we think we can do together to improve them, and how we will know we are being successful.

We will have two overall measures of satisfaction and success which we will check annually they are

- **Your opinions and satisfaction with Epping Forest District as a place to live**
- **Your thoughts about how able you are to really influence decisions in your local area.**

Vision

“Together making Epping Forest the best place to live, work, study and do business in Essex”

Constantly improving quality of life for all our residents through making the most of our proximity to the capital whilst meeting the challenges this poses such as protecting our wonderful green and unique environmental heritage. In partnership building safer, healthier, more cohesive and high achieving communities while helping plan and meet the needs of future generations, for housing, transport, education and jobs in innovative and exciting ways which are sensitive to our needs and aspirations.

OPTION 2

“Together making Epping Forest the best place to live, work, study and do business in Essex”

Building thriving, growing, cohesive and sustainable communities where improving quality of life, aspiration and attainment are achievable for all residents. A place where the green and unique, urban and rural character of our district, and the different villages, towns and communities that make it up are cherished and all sections of the community, and the public services that support them, work together as ONE, committed to excellence and efficiency.

Mission Statement

One Epping Forest exists to help deliver the shared vision, outcomes, objectives, targets and values enshrined in *Putting Epping Forest First*, our Sustainable Community Strategy. The Partnership with senior representatives from all the agencies and groups that have a role in delivering these outcomes, will work together to pool and combine resources, talent and expertise, coordinating and leading activity with the one aim of ***“making Epping Forest the best place to live, work, study and do business in Essex”***.

Core Values

These are the values that will underpin how the Partnerships will work to achieve our vision

Innovation

We will learn from best practice elsewhere, looking for new ideas that will help the partnership to deliver better.

Listening

We will listen and communicate effectively to all our communities, promoting opportunities for local people to shape and direct how the Partnership is working to achieve results.

Equality

We will strive to promote equality and support community cohesion in everything we do, recognising and meeting, where possible, the differing needs and experiences of all our residents, while fostering mutual respect.

Mixed Economy

We will concentrate on putting the customer and citizen first, developing a mixed economy of service delivery, involving the public, private and voluntary sectors, and agreeing who is most able to deliver the best and most economic outcomes for local communities,

Valuing Partners

We will value all our partners and their staff who are helping to deliver “Putting Epping Forest First” supporting flexible inter-agency working and the provision of training and secondments between agencies to share learning and expertise. We will ensure the principles of the Essex Compact are enshrined in all our work.

Total Place

We will manage all our budgets together, arguing for greater local control of investment from central, regional and local government, understanding the importance of maximising the effectiveness of the public money that is spent in and on our district, and targeting increasingly scarce resources to where they are needed most.

Core Objectives

Excellent Public Services

Central to the Partnerships ability to deliver on its objectives will be the quality of services provided locally particularly those in the public sector. We want to be a place characterised by 'Joined-up', value for money, public services that share information and resources, and pool and align budgets. The Partnership needs to maximize the effectiveness of public spending and where possible prioritise frontline services, and make a real contribution to quality of life in our district

This is an issue because almost £8 billion of public money is spent each year in Essex, a significant proportion of this in Epping Forest. This helps provide a wide range of important and valued public services, from schools and colleges, hospitals and health centres to benefits and social services, housing and transport. The list is very long as is the number of separate organisations that deliver these services. Many of these are controlled directly by central government, and often they are centrally driven and links between each of those agencies, providing services locally, are often under developed. Problems of duplication and a lack of coherence result in cause a poor service to the citizen and also causes inefficiency and waste. Given the necessity of making significant savings in public spending in order to reduce the public sector deficit, it is important to drive out waste, building better closer management ties between public services and develop new structures that streamline and focus scarce resources at areas of greatest need. To ensure that the area does not lose out in competitive bidding processes, the Partnership will need to ensure that strong links are built with government, and engage effectively with decision makers so that they fully understand the problems the area faces.

The key objectives below will focus the work of the partnership to support the delivery of the objectives in the theme areas

- **Build better links with county, regional and central government funding agencies to ensure Epping Forest receives a fair share of external funding**

Develop the role and remit of the West Essex Partnership

- **Establish mechanisms to promote, support and deliver better joined up public services locally**

Establish a Public Service Board

Establish Efficiency Task force

Establish and develop partnership infrastructure including data observatory and procurement

Safer Stronger Communities

Sustainable Communities

Healthier Communities

Children and Aspirations

What Do Local People Say?

This section looks at the broad headline results from consultation undertaken by the Partnership over a period of time including 'Your Voice Matters', the Big Youth Debate and the 'Place Survey'

- Our residents feel that generally the most important factors in making somewhere a good place to live are the low level of crime, reliable health services and clean streets. In the Epping Forest district specifically, protecting the green and unique environmental legacy of the district is a major issue.
- The issues considered to be in most need of improvement are road and pavement repairs, activities for teenagers, and the level of traffic congestion. Looking much further forward issues around the areas green heritage, carbon emissions and other environmental concerns predominate. Priorities for improvement (i.e. the aspects that are regarded both as important and as in need of improvement) are the level of crime and cleanliness of streets. **However if it is worth noting there are no issues that residents find really important and which they think are really in need of improvement locally, this is unusual and shows residents are generally comfortable with their area as it is, but have concerns about how change might affect it.** Nine out of ten residents are happy with their own homes
- The majority of residents are satisfied overall with their local area as a place to live. Satisfaction ratings for this aspect are highest among residents living in Buckhurst Hill, Theydon Bois, Chipping Ongar and Moreton & Fyfield. Satisfaction with the area is lowest in ?????????? This shows a high variation between the most satisfied areas and the least.
- More than three fifths of residents reported feeling a strong sense of belonging to their immediate neighbourhood, and this tends to increase with age. A substantial majority also feel that this is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together
- The majority of residents agree that local public services are working to make the area safer and to make it cleaner/greener. Half agree that public agencies treat all types of people fairly, agreement declines when asking whether they act on the concerns of local residents.
- Among respondents who have used public services in the past year, around three quarters are satisfied with their local Fire & Rescue Service and the local GP/family doctor. At least three fifths of those who have used them are satisfied with the local hospital and dentist, while around half are satisfied with the police force.
- The majority of respondents are satisfied with environmental services, particularly doorstep recycling and refuse collection. Satisfaction is lower in relation to keeping public land clear of litter and refuse.
- In terms of leisure and cultural services, the most frequently used are parks, open spaces and local household recycling centres. About three quarters are satisfied with local household recycling centres, parks, open spaces and

libraries. Around half are satisfied with sport/leisure facilities. Respondents are more likely to be dissatisfied with local bus services, local transport information, theatres and concert halls.

- Just under a third of respondents agree that Essex County Council provides good value for money, and around a quarter agree the same in relation to Epping Forest District Council. More than two fifths of respondents are satisfied with the way Essex County Council operates, and almost half with the Epping Forest District Council.
- Although the majority of residents feel well informed about how and where to register to vote and how their council tax is spent, many feel that they are not well informed in terms of other aspects; in particular, how to get involved in local decision making and what to do in the case of a large-scale emergency.
- A quarter of respondents agree that they can influence local decision making. Seven in ten feel that, generally speaking or depending on the issue, they would like to be more involved in this process.
- Although the majority of respondents have not been involved with any volunteering work in the past year, around one in six volunteer at least weekly. Few have been involved in any decision making groups.
- Around a quarter of respondents agree that parents in the local area take enough responsibility for the behaviour of their children. However, about half disagree.
- More than three quarters of respondents agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, residents in the Waltham Abbey and Loughton are particularly positive about this aspect.
- Most respondents do not feel that there is a problem with people treating each other with respect and consideration in their local area, and almost three quarters agree that they have been treated with respect and consideration by public services all or most of the time.
- The majority of respondents feel safe in their local area and report anti-social behaviour issues to be fairly rare, there are fewer than one in five respondents who consider one or more ASB issues to be a problem.

The key message from Your Voice Matters was to prevent crime. The types of crime were mainly vandalism and theft. Anti-social behaviour in particular frightens residents and people want to create more activities and facilities for young people to stop them hanging around on street corners. Young people congregating in public even if they aren't doing anything wrong can often been seen as intimidating by residents particularly the most vulnerable. Work from the ward profiles comparing crime levels with people's perception of how vulnerable they are shows a major difference across the wards.

The Youth Debate, and answers to 'Your Voice Matters' show a similar pattern of concerns among young people about crime and safety issues but also greater concern about issues around carbon emissions and the environment generally, and for some access to transport is important The area of greatest concern however was

for the provision of more activities for young people. This issue about providing purposeful activities for young people was cited by the wider population as an area for development. Young people also appear to be more likely to be concerned about improving race relations. They want to congregate and yet there is no central point for teenagers in each town like a cinema, skating rink or bowling alley. Not all young people want sports activities, many want to simply hang out with their friends in a safe environment.

Community Development sessions held as part of Your Voice Matters show residents in the more deprived parts of the district are still positive about living here however concerns were raised about crime and anti-social behaviour, while the community/social aspects of life in the area were found to be good together with access to green space. Looking further forward concerns about preserving the community/social aspects of life in the area and issues around public transport were highlighted.

What Do We Know About Epping Forest District?

This section of the strategy sets out what we think our district is all about, its key attributes and problems and the issues that are priorities for our communities. This section helps set the context for the selection of the objectives and targets that the Partnership will adopt.

Safer Stronger Communities

Stronger Communities

The district is becoming one of the most ethnically diverse places in Essex, which is unsurprising given its proximity to the capital, one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world. The district has one of the largest ethnic minority populations in Essex and higher than average numbers of ethnic minority children in our schools. While our residents feel that this is an area where people generally get on well with each other there are those that for whatever reason try and exploit the differences between people and direct impressionable people towards violent extremism. The result of this is evident in the terrorist attacks in London and elsewhere over recent years. There is a need for all public and community bodies to work together in areas of diverse populations to strengthen community cohesion. Epping Forest District is lucky to have a growing Multi-faith forum which is looking at ways to increase understanding and respect between communities and a community safety team working with colleagues in this area.

Access to educational opportunity goes hand in hand with other issues facing children and young people in Epping Forest District.

Young people are prone to becoming victims of crime. Instances of street violence have occurred due to organised groups of young people travelling into the District from London via the Central Line, or confrontation between local youths and students travelling into the college.

Safer Communities

In comparison with many other places, the District of Epping Forest is a safe place to live and work. However, crime is a cause of local concern. Fear of crime can be almost as debilitating for vulnerable groups within the community, particularly the very oldest and youngest generations.

Anti-social Behaviour and Dispersal Orders (mostly associated with young people) have been utilised. Essex Police resources are stretched and the demand for officers created by the influx of teenagers from outside the district can be hard to meet.

Peoples' health and well being in Epping Forest District is not only affected by how but also where they live. Transport impacts on 3 key areas of peoples' lives i.e. road casualties, access to services and social interaction.

The rate of people of all ages killed or severely injured in road traffic accidents in Epping Forest has been showing a steady decrease but still remains the highest in West Essex and consistently above the East of England and national average.

Sustainable Communities

Green and Unique

Our district takes its name and much of its character from Epping Forest. Most of the 131 square miles of our District are green and rural. The Forest is administered by the City of London Corporation. It is an area of protected wildlife habitats and ancient woodland managed on behalf of residents and visitors. Much of our western boundary is formed along the line of the Lee Valley Regional Park, a green corridor stretching into the heart of London. We are entirely within the Metropolitan Green Belt. Horticulture and farming features heavily in land use.

Approximately half of our 122,900 residents live in a very small and congested area comprising around 5.2% of the district close to our boundary with London. The main conurbation comprises Chigwell, Buckhurst Hill and Loughton also Waltham Abbey which borders London and Hertfordshire.

Most of the rest of our population live in a mixture of market towns such as Epping and Chipping Ongar, large villages such as Sheering, Theydon Bois and Nazeing or in small rural hamlets such as the Lavers.

Our district's long history has left its mark. We have outstanding historic buildings of many kinds. Waltham Abbey and Greensted Church, The Kings Head at Chigwell and the Royal Gunpowder Mills are among the best-known examples. We have many Grade I and Grade II listed buildings and extensive building conservation areas.

Pressure for development has always been intense. However, the demand for more sustainable homes, jobs and leisure has never been greater.

The East of England Plan proposes an additional new 3,500 houses to be built by 2021 plus an estimated 3,000 more where the boundaries of Harlow might expand into what is currently Epping Forest District.

Balancing the needs of an increased population against the desire to protect and conserve the predominantly rural nature of the district presents a major challenge. The district currently suffers from inadequate infrastructure and services. Epping Forest is already the most polluted Site of Special Scientific Interest in the UK. Without careful planning at a local level and major regional investment, the fragile eco-systems of the forest and beyond that provide the green lung for Epping Forest District, London and other areas will be placed at serious risk.

Homes and Neighbourhoods

Each of the towns, villages and hamlets of Epping Forest District has its own identity and personality. We do not have a single homogenous population. Many of our residents moved from or are the descendents of people who moved out from the East End of London in search of a better life. We also have a large and well-integrated Jewish community and many people of Italian extraction.

Epping Forest District has a reputation for great affluence. In part this is true but the affluence has a tendency to mask the existence of areas of deep social deprivation. Four wards in Loughton, Waltham Abbey and Ongar are among the ten most deprived

in Essex. Serious social deprivation and associated instances of poor private sector housing are also to be found 'pepper-potted' across the district in urban and rural areas. For those on the lowest incomes, fuel poverty and affordable warmth is a significant additional factor to other deprivation issues.

More than four fifths of housing is in private ownership, rented, mortgaged or owned outright. Levels of demand have contributed to high prices and a lack of affordable housing beyond the means of many people on average and low incomes. The Council's Housing Waiting List has in the region of 3,500 (???)**more now needs to be checked**(???) applicants. Despite the environmental concerns, there is a widely perceived need for substantial provision of more new affordable housing.

Historically, many of our communities have been small and isolated. Communication and access to services is a cause of increasing concern (see below). There is also fear that the social fabric that binds people together in mutual support is being eroded. Where the local church, post office and pub once provided much of the social foundation of rural life, these are now disappearing. The latest announcement of post office closures has been met with particular anxiety. The young, old and vulnerable are becoming increasingly isolated. There is increasing reliance on already stretched voluntary services for support.

Getting About

In the Epping Forest District, opportunity and access is inextricably linked to the ability to get about.

The district is criss-crossed by the M11 and M25 motorways. It is the only district in Essex to enjoy the benefits of London Underground services. British Rail services touch the district briefly in Roydon but are also accessible to many of our residents via stations such as Harlow, Broxbourne and Chingford.

Travelling to and from work in London is part of the daily routine for thousands of resident commuters. For people travelling further, Stansted is just 20 to 30 minutes away. However, despite rail and road links, many people struggle to travel in and around our district.

High levels of car ownership are a sign of economic prosperity, but this in turn means a higher level of unsustainable traffic growth. Rail networks tend to allow easy travel to and from the district but not around it. Making bus services more attractive is key although in the rural areas it is acknowledged that where the traditional bus is not sustainable, using community transport and the voluntary sector may be the only viable alternative. People living without daily access to a car can be very isolated which can lead to restrictions in terms of work, health, education and leisure opportunities.

Elderly and young people, those groups with least access to the car, are particularly badly affected.

However, even easy access to a car can feel like a mixed blessing. Traffic congestion is a major problem with half the population of the district living in such a small area so close to London and many other people travelling through on a daily basis. This places pressure on road conditions from which there is a requirement to ensure

adequate investment is secured. Parking is also a major problem as residents, shoppers, commuters and workers all battle for somewhere to leave their cars.

Economic Prosperity

Without doubt, Epping Forest District is an area of high prosperity. Unemployment is low and many residents enjoy a very high standard of living. For some people the 'Premier League' dream really does exist. Some of the country's top footballers live in the district as do some club owners and managers.

Many residents take advantage of the employment opportunities available in London. The local economy has also developed as companies such as Higgins, Keir, Clinton Cards and Sainsbury's have grown or moved in. These have replaced older employers such as Royal Ordnance (now gone), The Royal Gunpowder Mills (reinvented as a centre for heritage and tourism) and the Bank of England Printing Works, which was once the most important employer in the district.

Horticulture and farming continue to play a role but tourism and leisure is growing. The historic town of Waltham Abbey including the Abbey, Royal Gunpowder Mills and Lee Valley Regional Park, Epping Forest, North Weald Airfield and many pretty towns and villages are a draw to people from London and further afield. The scope for development of tourism has been further enhanced by the successful London Olympic bid. The district stands at the motorway gateway to Stratford and within a short distance of both the mountain bike and white water canoe events.

While much of the workforce is highly skilled and flexible, this can mask higher levels of unemployment in parts of the district, notably the socially deprived areas of Loughton and Waltham Abbey. Demand for housing also requires sustainable local provision of jobs and services, placing more stress on a district already struggling to protect its fragile green areas.

Life-Long Learning

Life-long learning begins before school and continues into old age. However, to maintain a motivated and skilled workforce it is essential that a good educational foundation is continually built upon and developed. Residents of Epping Forest District are generally highly skilled but as referred to above, pockets of social deprivation can be linked to poor educational opportunities. Lack of suitable public transport may also limit access.

Healthier Communities

Tackling health inequalities

There are health inequalities between wards in the Epping Forest District and overall improvement in access to services is needed for the district to keep up with the improvement in health that is going on in the rest of the country.

Life expectancy varies depending on where you live in Epping Forest District

Analysis of trends shows that for men, life expectancy is not increasing as fast as the national rate and there is a 10-year difference in life expectancy between the highest (80-86 years) and the lowest wards (between 70 and 75 years). In some smaller areas life expectancy appears to be declining.

All dimensions of deprivation (health, education, housing, access to services, isolation and barriers to opportunity) impact significantly on the health of the local population and although the Epping Forest District is considered to be relatively affluent there are nevertheless pockets of deprivation which are the focus of attention for health improvement activity.

Lifestyle factors (smoking, diet, exercise, levels of alcohol/substance misuse and people's sense of well being) also play a key role in both quality of life and life expectancy, the young, vulnerable and elderly being the most likely to suffer disproportionately.

Although the district has a smoking prevalence of between 22% and 27%, which is below the Essex average, among 15-17 yr olds the prevalence is 27%, which is second highest across West Essex.

With regard to obesity which is a growing problem nationally, the most recent figures for 2009 show the picture in the district getting worse in terms of total numbers and compared to other areas.

Epping Forest District adults compare favourably with the national average for adults participating in 30 minutes of exercise at least 3 days a week but attention needs to be paid to the exercise opportunities for young people who may not have the freedom or means to access physical activity programmes etc especially in the holidays.

Nationally and locally we are anticipating that elderly people will represent an increasing large proportion of the population. This will put greater demand on health and care services at a time, when options for informal care arrangements supported by younger family members is put under strain as often they have moved out of the district owing to housing affordability. This unintended consequence of housing inflation impacts negatively on informal care arrangements placing a greater reliance on public sector provision. There are also real concerns about the real future costs of social care provision and the needs of all sector providers to work better together.

Children and Young People

Over the last few years the district has developed a real focus on providing the best start in life for all its children, including those looked after by the state or at risk. Attainment and aspiration for all children remain issues as does safeguarding the most vulnerable children

Primary school education is perceived to be of a generally high standard throughout Epping Forest District. However, the picture becomes more mixed at secondary and further education levels.

While all Epping Forest schools are now doing well or moving in the right direction, three of the District's six state secondary schools have experienced periods of poor performance and special measures in recent years. Two others have performed well while one has achieved outstandingly good results. Successful schools are heavily oversubscribed, a situation exacerbated in the south of the district where children from outside the district take up a large proportion of annual admissions. The local college of further education also takes the majority of its admissions from outside the district although numbers from within the district are increasing. Its record of achievement is also improving. A key feature of education in the district is this mobility, more children travelling into schools in the district, and more local children travelling out than anywhere else in Essex.

There is no secondary school provision within the district north of Epping. Many children are forced to travel large distances to school outside the District, motivated by the desire to attend a high performing school or simply because no place is available locally. For those parents able to afford it, they may pay thousands of pounds in annual travel costs. Poorer parents face real dilemmas in trying to find the best possible educational opportunities for their children. This also has environmental impacts and the aim should remain to ensure a range and quality of provision locally that enables all Epping Forest residents to make a school in the district their first choice.

The provision of secondary school education is perhaps one of the most controversial issues in Epping Forest. Nevertheless, there is a general feeling that greater confidence in local education is required and that some young people suffer from lack of opportunity due to current standards of school provision.

Substance abuse and life style issues such as sexual health can be linked to educational opportunities and attainment. Poor housing and social deprivation can also be linked.

Conclusion

The District of Epping Forest is an area of contrasts. It is a green and open land of fields, hedgerows and woodland but parts of it suffer from heavy levels of congestion and pollution. It has good communications and transport links in and out but is difficult to get around. Access to many services can be very difficult if you do not have a car. Young people are at a particular disadvantage compared with friends in other districts or boroughs. Housing is at a premium and more affordable homes are needed.

However, sustainable homes also means infrastructure including employment, roads, sewers, shops, health, education and a wealth of other facilities. That needs to be balanced against the needs of fragile eco-systems we are committed to protecting and preserving. Our district is wealthy and healthy but we have some of the poorest areas of deprivation in Essex.

We are not one community but several but it is in our people that we are strongest and we look forward to the challenges of the future.

So What Are We Going to Do About It?

Aim One - Building Safer Stronger Communities

Reducing crime, and fear and the growth of violent extremism

Mini Vision

A place where people work together so that all in our communities, especially the most vulnerable groups are able to lead lives free from the blight of crime and fear of crime and can play a full role in the life of their community in an environment that supports and sustains respect.

Why is this an issue?

All our research tells us that crime and fear of crime remain central issues for our residents even though the actual crime rate in our district has been declining for sometime and the crime rate remains below the national and county averages. Those in our community that are young or old seem to be particularly vulnerable and often fear of crime has a major negative effect on their quality of life and their ability to fully engage in all the good things that living in our district has to offer. While our crime rate is comparatively low issues around domestic burglary a particularly invasive and unsettling crime continue to buck this downward trend and domestic violence is becoming an area of growing concern. The position of the district next to the capital with tube links giving easy access continues to facilitate criminal travelling into and out of area, a problem not encountered to the same degree in other areas. While much progress has been made to augment the CCTV provision in the district it remains underdeveloped and uncoordinated because of the lack of a major town centre. This means that residents particularly in urban areas with much higher crime rates do not have the reassurance provided by an integrated system with extensive coverage, and the added benefits for crime detection and deterrence. Parents and residents generally are concerned about provision of additional, purposeful activities for children while the Killed and Seriously Injured rate due to road accidents remains stubbornly high even though it is declining.

The communities that make up our district are changing and our population is becoming more diverse, and while this can and does bring many benefits it can also bring challenges. While the vast majority of our residents, from whatever culture they come from wish to live in peace with their neighbors and provide an environment for themselves and their families to flourish there are some who wish to exhort people, often preying on the most vulnerable and suggestible to promote violent acts to bring about change. While over 87% of residents feel that people from different backgrounds get on well together in Epping Forest it requires all parts of our community to work together to undermine those that would cause division and discord that would encourage those intent on attacking those things that make our communities strong.

What are we going to do about it?

1 Support opportunities for public reassurance and for all residents and stakeholders to play an active role in making their communities safer,

2 Build better links with colleagues in London and across Essex to deliver more integrated programmes

3 Develop and deliver an effective PREVENT Strategy that helps all residents to have a sense of belonging

4 Develop activities for target hardening including enhanced and integrated use of CCTV

5 Continue to deliver high quality diversionary activity programmes for younger residents and initiatives to reduce reoffending

Key performance indicators

How will we measure success?

The main measure of success will be

Increases in the percentage of people saying they feel safe in the district

Achieving annual decreases in the overall crime rate in the district

Achieving further significant reductions in the KSI rate for the Epping Forest District.

Delivering with other partners an effective PREVENT strategy

Aim Two - Building Sustainable Communities

Making effective, innovative provision for the district to meet the needs of a growing, changing population while protecting our environmental legacy

Mini Vision

A Place where together we protect and enhance the green and unique environmental heritage of our district but plan effectively for meeting the needs of current and future generations for homes, jobs, services and transport in a manner always sensitive to our environment

Why is this an issue?

Epping Forest district is a great place to live, and our residents tell us that a major factor in people living their lives here or aspiring to live here is its green and unique nature and environment. In our 'Your Voice Matters' survey this was one of the top two priorities for the Partnership to address now and the single most important issue for the future. The Forest, the Lee Valley Regional Park and the fact that over 92% of the district is green belt confirm the wealth Residents and partners are aware of the need to constantly improve how we all protect the environment in its widest sense, reducing carbon emissions and recycling and reusing more.

However, there is recognition that the area must develop as the population grows and new sustainable ways need to be found to conserve and reduce energy consumption, and meet the needs of future generations. This is an extremely difficult balance, particularly in an area where housing is already very expensive, with a significant shortfall in providing the numbers the district needs. The district's rural nature and underdeveloped public transport options also make it very difficult for people to get about without access to private transport. These challenges are compounded by significant hotspots of deprivation in an otherwise affluent area requiring action by a range of partners if they are to be effectively addressed. The tube network in the district makes it accessible and an even more attractive place for commuters, but there are significant transport challenges around expanding access to the M11, enhancing and protecting overland rail provision, the future of North Weald Airfield and tackling congestion and emissions from clogged up roads within the district.

While a significant and growing proportion of the community commutes out there remains the need to provide enough good quality employment options in the district which can provide greater choice for local residents and reduce the environment impact of commuting. Proposals to promote and expand digital links to enable more people to work from home, or utilise changing use of small barn complexes for sites for employment units, might help the rural economy while meeting new environmental concerns. The need to ensure an effective legacy from the Olympic Games and a concern that we should be using the environmental legacy we have to support employment and tourism more remains apparent. A new long term plan for economic development could set out the challenges the future might bring for the district, and draw up an agreed vision with all stakeholders on for how we want to meet them. It could provide an effective base for engagement with central government and regional development agencies to ensure the area receives its fair share of grant aid in competition with other 'Havens or Gateways'. The Partnership recognises that economic disadvantage can also have major impacts on ill health, crime and

educational attainment, and will work together to build prosperity that everyone can share particularly in areas of high need such as Waltham Abbey.

As our population grows and continues to change provision needs to be made for housing them in a manner appropriate to our already expressed priorities. The continuing high cost of housing makes it very difficult for people on good salaries to get on the housing ladder, and in many cases this leads to young people moving out of the district to access housing. More housing is required than is being delivered and new targets have been proposed as part of the East of England Plan for ?????? by ?????, but will this be enough ? Decisions need to be taken on the proportion of affordable homes on new developments and a new look taken at high density, high rise provision for appropriate sections of the community, in appropriate areas if need is to be met but green space not swallowed up. In an area where residents clearly place such a high value on protecting the environment, approvals should only be given for new build which meets the highest standards for energy efficiency and can be homes for life. These will be largely questions for the new Local Development Framework (LDF) which replaces the Local Plan but overall policy guidance is sought from this Sustainable Community Strategy on a preferred approach. However, the analysis of public consultation and the evidence and data being collected as preparation for the production of the LDF suggest a number of actions.

What are we going to do about it?

6 Produce an Economic Development Strategy which identifies opportunities for growing and supporting skills, business and employment , including rural enterprise and access to broadband which tackles economic deprivation in hotspot areas

7 Develop a West Essex Economic Partnership to promote the needs of the district more effectively with regional and central government.

8 Together support the provision of a range of affordable, innovative and environmentally friendly, lifetime housing including high density/High rise homes on appropriate sites.

9 Lobby on behalf of major capital infrastructure improvement programmes to road, rail and tube, and support the development of sustainable transport policies which tackle congestion, reduce the need for journeys and promote cycling and car sharing

10 Develop a new environmental charter and education and information programmes which enable local organisations to commit collectively to ambitious targets to reduce carbon emissions and waste reduction

11 Develop new waste minimisation programmes together with education and information campaigns that expand recycling

12 Support the growth of the forest and buffer land acquisition and the development of environmental tourism in the district building on the green heritage of Epping Forest, the lea Valley Regional Park and the Olympic Legacy

13 In partnership and with full public engagement, develop an Integrated Local Development Framework that provides spatial expression to the vision, values, aims and objectives of this strategy

14 Protect and enhance the provision of allotments in the district and develop other plans for productive use of green space

Key performance indicators

How will we measure success?

Aim Three - Delivering Healthier Communities

Addressing the factors generating and sustaining ill health in our district with a particular focus on narrowing the health divide

Mini Vision

A place where all our residents are helped to live healthy lives, with partners focusing on the communities that suffer the greatest health inequality, supporting them to transform their lives while positively tackling the other social and environmental factors which create the health divide.

Why is this an issue?

Health issues are fundamental to a person's quality of life and our district is a very healthy place to be for a majority of residents. We have some of the healthiest areas in the county, in terms of life expectancy and this continues to increase, along with sickness rates. Our health services in general are good, and the hospitals and primary care services which serve our area show good levels of satisfaction in the main. Our housing is liked by over 90% of residents and over 90% of our properties meet the decent home standards. However our age structure is older than the national average, and over the next 15 years the over 65s will increase by 27% and the over 85s by 52% population. The district also has some of the widest disparities of health inequality in Essex and both these factors while impacting on the individual and their families also have significant implications for service providers. The gap between the areas with the best and worst life expectancy is over 11 years. Understanding why this gap exists locally and taking concerted action to address the factors that are making it happen are key aims. The Partnership needs to be aware what lifestyle factors, environmental issues or access to services and advice and support might be underlying this problem and to intervene where possible. On almost all the indicators of ill health, Waltham Abbey and the surrounding area appears to be a significant hotspot. Some parts of our district are also, it appears, recording falls in life expectancy when the trend seems to be inexorably rising elsewhere. Issues around obesity are becoming a greater problem nationally and locally. While the impacts on health of smoking, alcohol and teenage conception rates are below average in the district as whole, there are pockets within the district where they are higher.

What are we going to do about it?

15 Prioritise interventions to reduce the gap in health inequality, targeting resources to the areas and people most affected, improving access to services while addressing the lifestyle choices and environmental causes of ill health.

16 Identify and support partnership projects that help to promote healthy living and 'well being' across the district, sharing information and resources effectively

17 Monitor and challenge the performance of all the agencies with responsibility for delivering these objectives

Key performance indicators

How will we measure success

Aim 4 - Children And Young People

Developing the capacity of the district to increase educational attainment, well being, citizenship and lifelong learning

Mini Vision

A place where all our children and young people are cherished and protected, where aspiration and attainment are prized and the infrastructure and support to make the area a beacon of excellence is provided.

Why is this an issue?

There are just under 30,000 children and young people living in Epping Forest District. Drawn from an increasing diverse range of ethnic backgrounds, many live, like 35% of the population, in small rural settlements in the green belt. While the district has very significant and often hidden areas of disadvantage it remains overall a fairly affluent area with some very good schools especially at primary level, but our overall educational attainment level is much below where we would expect it to be at secondary and further education level. This has a real impact on children's life chances, particularly those children from the most deprived areas; their employment and health prospects and a range of other important quality of life issues. Many parents recognise this and place their children in schools and colleges outside the district; we have the highest numbers of children travelling both in and out of the district to attend school. This attainment gap and out commute also have major implications for building strength and achievement in local provision, as well as impacting on the environmental and community cohesion.

While we, thankfully, have relatively few children and young people at risk in the district our priority must be to work effectively in partnership to safeguard and promote wellbeing. Obesity and its associated health issues are a growing problem among young people and the rates in Epping Forest District are increasing, while the teenage pregnancy rate is now beginning to fall termination rates are higher than East of England average and both these factors poses major challenges for both the individual and wider society which needs to support them.

What are we going to do about it?

18 Improve partnerships and strengthen capacity to increase attainment in our schools and college.

19 Develop new opportunities for capital investment and enhanced higher education opportunities in the district

20 Support, monitor and challenge arrangements for safeguarding our most vulnerable children while working to give all our children the healthiest start in life

21 Develop and coordinate programmes to support citizenship enabling young people to play a full part in decision making processes

Key Performance Indicators

How will we measure success

What is one Epping Forest?

One Epping Forest is the Local Strategic Partnership for the District, originally established in 2003, it was restructured and renamed in 2009. The Partnership is made up from representatives from the public, private and community sectors, and its key aim is to improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the area through the agreement and implementation of a long term vision and plan. This is set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy, a document that is required by law, which helps influence and focus the work of government bodies and services operating in the area.

The Partnership is made up of four theme groups which manage and lead work in key areas, such as crime, health, children's services and issues affecting Sustainability. A structure chart is set out below.



The Partnership's Board meetings are open to the public, and are webcast live. The Partnership publishes an annual report and is overseen by the District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Each year the Partnership holds an annual stakeholder conference to review performance and help identify current or emerging issues to be addressed.

For more information on the role and structure of One Epping Forest please visit oneeppingforest.org.uk, or call 01992 564454.

Chart 1 - What are we going to do about it?

