

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Asset Management and Economic Development Cabinet Committee **Date:** Thursday, 25 October 2018

Place: Council Chamber - Civic Offices **Time:** 7.30 - 7.58 pm

Members Present: Councillors A Grigg (Chairman), H Kane, S Kane, G Mohindra and A Lion

Other Councillors: Councillors C Whitbread

Apologies: N Avey

Officers Present: D Macnab (Acting Chief Executive), M Warr (Economic Development Officer), J Houston (Local Strategic Partnership Manager), J Leither (Democratic Services Officer) and T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer)

9. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman reminded everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the Internet and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

10. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Cabinet Committee noted that Councillor A Lion substituted for Councillor N Avey.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(a) Pursuant to the Council's Member Code of Conduct, Cllr A Lion declared an interest in agenda item 6, Digital Innovation Programme, by virtue of being Chairman of the Digital Innovation Zone (DIZ). The Councillor had determined that his interest was non-pecuniary and would remain in the meeting for the consideration of the issue.

(b) Pursuant to the Council's Member Code of Conduct, Cllr G Mohindra declared an interest in agenda item 7, item 7, Hillhouse Development, Waltham Abbey, by virtue of being an Essex County Council Cabinet Member. The Councillor had determined that his interest was non-pecuniary and would remain in the meeting for the consideration of the issue.

12. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2018 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

13. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - PROGRESS REPORT

The Economic Development Officer (EDO) presented a report to the Cabinet Committee and updated them on a number of projects and issues being explored by the Economic Development Team.

Digital Innovation Programme

The ED Team continued to promote the work of and raise the profile of the Essex and Herts Digital Innovation Zone (DIZ), with numerous engagement events undertaken. In particular, the work of the project team exploring digital opportunities to improve information flow to ambulance crews in emergency situations had been presented to health partners on the Urgent Care Local Delivery Board and the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership Clinical Expert Oversight Group. Discussions were taking place to explore the potential for local pilot projects. Presentations on the DIZ have also been given to the LSCC, and Superfast Essex Steering Board. The programme had also achieved coverage at a national level. A number of external bids have been made under the umbrella of the DIZ but led by different external partners.

Councillor Lion added that the programme was moving ahead fast and at a meeting earlier today with Southend-on-Sea Borough Council they advised that they were looking at their commercial approach and considering the way the EFDC ED Team have worked to engage industry and other sectors to make this programme work, rather than it being a solely local authority driven initiative. There may be potential for the EFDC ED Team to provide some expertise to support their initiatives.

Visitor Economy

The 2018 Tourism and Visitor Conference was being held at the Marriott Hotel Waltham Abbey on Friday, 26 October 2018. The event will include presentations from key tourism partners, including, Vibrant Partnerships as well as a funding update from Best Growth Hub. Attendees would also review the performance of the sector over the last year and discuss increasing levels of work and opportunities being explored across borders with neighbouring authorities.

Superfast Broadband

The new Phase 4a Superfast Essex broadband project remained in the planning stage. Once plans were finalised, the ED Team would look to bring the contractors, Gigaclear, in to a project kick-off meeting with key council departments to ensure the impact of the plans were fully understood and the interests of the council and its residents and businesses were properly considered. This £3.1million contract with Gigaclear would bring full fibre ultrafast speeds to a further 2,100 homes and businesses in the Epping Forest District by December 2019.

Resolved:

(1) That the current progress and work programme of the Council's Economic Development Section were noted.

Reasons for Decision:

To appraise the Committee on the progress made with regard to Economic Development issues.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

None, as this monitoring report was for information not action.

14. ASSET MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS - PROGRESS REPORT

The Acting Chief Executive (ACE) presented a report to the Cabinet Committee and updated Members on further developments to the report since it had been published.

(1) Epping Forest Shopping Park

The three remaining units had now been secured. Mountain Warehouse and Home Bargains were actively trading and Boots were in the process of fitting out their unit.

There was an issue with litter bins getting overfull and therefore litter being left on the floor in the Shopping Park. The frequency of litter bin collections had now been increased and more litter bins were on order.

The car park was being abused by other local businesses and commuters who were covering their number plates or driving in the exit lane to avoid the ANPR cameras. It had been established that the traffic management of the shopping park needed to be looked at as cars were congregating one end of the car park, near Aldi, which in turn made the traffic queue across the lanes making it hard for people to turn in and out of the shopping park and causing tailbacks as far back to the M11 exit.

To control the traffic situation additional controls needed to be put into place and Essex Highways have been requested to assess the problems and help find a solution.

There was still a problem with the roof leaking at the Smyth Toys unit therefore the retention had not been released for the roof works. The contractors had been called back to look at the roof and stop it from leaking.

At a recent meeting of the Debden Town Centre Partnership the traders of Debden Broadway had raised concerns that the Shopping Park was negatively affecting the footfall and trade to local businesses. EFDC have re-commissioned the original consultants to repeat the impact assessment and a report should be ready by the end of November 2018.

Councillor Mohindra commented that there had been no official opening of the Shopping Park and now that all of the units were occupied an official opening should be considered as this was a great achievement for EFDC. The ACE said he would look into arranging an official opening date of the Shopping Park.

(2) Oakwood Hill Depot

All feasibility work on the relocation of the Housing Repairs Service to the site had now been largely completed. The planning application had yet to be considered by the Area Plans South Sub-Committee while mitigation measures asked for by Natural England were being agreed with respect to visitor pressures on the nearby Roding Valley Nature Reserve.

(3) Pyrles Lane Nursery

On the 18 October 2018 a private report was considered by Cabinet where the sale of Pyrles Lane Nursery in excess of £3 million was agreed, on the basis of a

development of 36 homes to which 40% of the homes would comprise of affordable housing, in the ratio of 75% affordable rented and 25% shared ownership.

(4) St John's Road Redevelopment

Despite an extensive period of negotiation with Frontier Estates, it had not been possible to conclude a mutually agreeable sale.

On the 18 October 2018 a report went to Cabinet to seek funding for a feasibility study to look at relocating the Epping Sports Centre to the site, now becoming a potential option and resources to undertake a partial demolition of the site and conduct a site survey. It was noted that two of the buildings had heritage value and that they would be retained.

(5) North Weald Airfield

The lease to the National Police Air Service has been completed and funding from the Home Office had been approved and they were waiting for the funding to be released for the practical construction of the new base for the helicopters.

(6) Landmark Building

Tenants have now been secured for all of the retail units and were in the process of submitting the necessary planning and building regulation applications.

One of the tenants, the restaurant at 30 Barrington Green have had their planning application refused by Area Plans South Sub-Committee due to the size of the outside seating area and the extraction ventilation discharge points.

(7) Hillhouse Development

The new Leisure Centre was on track to open on the 17 November 2018. A planning application has been submitted for the Independent Living Scheme which was currently being assessed. Cabinet agreed on the 18 October 2018, that Essex Housing, be appointed as the development consultants for the preparation and submission of an outline planning application and the demolition of, Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool, Roundhills, Waltham Abbey.

Councillor S Kane advised that the residents were concerned that the empty site would attract antisocial behaviour and that travellers could take up residence on the site.

The ACE advised that the site would be securely boarded up and patrolled as necessary.

Resolved:

- (1) That the current progress on the Council's Asset Management and Development projects were noted;
- (2) That the Acting Chief Executive would consult with Essex Highways to resolve the traffic issues at the Epping Forest Shopping Park; and
- (3) That the ACE would look into arranging an official opening date of the Shopping Park.

Reasons for Decision:

To comply with the Cabinet Committee's previous request to monitor the development of the Council's Property Assets on a regular basis.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

None as this monitoring report was for information only, not action.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Cabinet Committee noted that there was no other urgent business for consideration.

16. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Cabinet Committee noted that there were no items of business on the agenda that necessitated the exclusion of the public and press from the meeting.

CHAIRMAN

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