



EPPING FOREST LOCAL COUNCILS' LIAISON COMMITTEE

NOTICE OF MEETING

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Date:** Thursday, 7th November, 2013

Room: Council Chamber **Time:** 7.30 pm

Democratic Services Officer: Mark Jenkins (The Office of the Chief Executive)
Tel: 01992 564607 Email: democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Members:

District Council Representatives:

Councillors Smith, Mrs M Sartin (Chairman), K Angold-Stephens, A Boyce, B Rolfe and Mrs J H Whitehouse

Local Council Representatives:

Clerks and Chairmen/Members of Parish and Town Councils

County Council Representatives:

Members for the following divisions:

North Weald and Nazeing:	Councillor A Jackson
Loughton Central:	Councillor C Pond
Ongar and Rural:	Councillor M McEwen
Epping and Theydon Bois:	Councillor Mr J M Whitehouse
Buckhurst Hill and Loughton South:	Councillor V Metcalfe
Chigwell and Loughton Broadway:	Councillor J Knapman
Waltham Abbey:	Councillor Mrs R Gadsby

<p>PLEASE NOTE THE START DATE OF THE MEETING COFFEE/TEA WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE FROM 7.00 P.M IN THE MEMBERS ROOM</p>

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 12)**

To confirm the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 4 July 2013 (previously circulated and attached) and matters arising.

3. ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS

At the last Committee meeting, members requested that invitations to this meeting be passed to County Councillor Rodney Bass, Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transportation and a representative of the North Essex Parking Partnership, to discuss the general condition of the roads, particularly potholes etc. County Councillor Rodney Bass cannot attend this meeting as he is attending a conference that day. Therefore officers have extended an invitation to his deputy, County Councillor Edward Johnson and at the time of publication, officers were awaiting confirmation that he was attending.

4. NORTH ESSEX PARKING PARTNERSHIP

In attendance by invitation, at this meeting, will be Mr Richard Walker, Parking Partnership Group Manager, North Essex Parking Partnership. Mr Walker will give a presentation regarding the Partnership's role and responsibilities, followed by questions and answers.

5. ISSUES RAISED BY LOCAL COUNCILS (Pages 13 - 22)

To discuss the following matters raised by Local Council's:

(a) Town and Police Clauses Act 1847 for Providing Local Means of Road Closures for Temporary Events. To consider the attached report.

At 4th July EFDC Local Council Liaison Committee meeting, the Committee made a formal recommendation asking that Epping Forest District Council consider the possibility of taking on the powers under Town Police Clauses Act 1847 to provide local means of road closures for temporary events. At this stage, no update on progress has been received. Branch would like to receive an update on this issue, together with an explanation as to why Epping Forest District Council currently have chosen not to use their powers in enacting this legislation.

(Assistant Director of Corporate Support Services) To consider the attached report, page 13 of the agenda.

(b) Parish Support Grant

Branch would like to express their extreme concern regarding the decision taken by EFDC to pass on the reduction in support grant to both Parish and Town Councils, and request that in addition to the presentation by Bob Palmer, a detailed explanation is given as to the effect this will have on councils with both higher and lower numbers of benefit claimants.

(Director of Finance and ICT) To consider the attached report, page 15 of the agenda.

(c) Local Plan

Branch would like to invite members of the Forward Planning department to attend the EF Branch of EALC meetings to work with Parish and Town Councils and gain input at a local level with the creation of leaflets / publications / materials associated with the Local Plan process.

(d) Planning Consultations

Following a number of issues regarding recent consultations issued by EFDC, Branch would like to receive an update from Nigel Richardson, EFDC Principal Planning Officer, as to the methodology used for consultation with Town and Parish Councils.

(e) Planning Enforcement

Principal Planning Officer (Enforcement) will be present. Branch formally request that District Councillors are permitted to call-in decisions made by the planning department on enforcement issues.

6. INDIVIDUAL ELECTOR REGISTRATION (IER)

(Assistant to the Chief Executive) I Willett will brief the meeting on the changeover to individual elector registration and how Panels and Town Councils will be able to assist in the process.

7. REVIEW OF CODE OF CONDUCT/COMPLAINTS PROCESS AND PLANNING PROTOCOL

(Assistant to the Chief Executive) I Willett will refer to the current review.

8. PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARISH COUNCIL LIAISON (Pages 23 - 32)

(Director of Planning and Economic Development) To consider the attached report and set of minutes. The Planning and Economic Development Business Manager will be in attendance.

9. LOCAL HIGHWAYS PANEL

To receive an update on the work of the Local Highways Panel. This is now a standard item on the committee's agenda.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Thursday 6 March 2014 at 7.30p.m. in the Council Chamber.

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EPPING FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL COUNCILS' LIAISON COMMITTEE MINUTES

- Date:** Thursday, 4 July 2013 **Time:** 7.30 - 9.00 pm
- Place:** Council Chamber, Civic
Offices, High Street, Epping
- Members Present:**
- Representing Epping Forest District Council:**
- Councillor(s): Mrs M Sartin (Chairman), K Angold-Stephens, A Boyce and Mrs J H Whitehouse
- Other Councillors:**
- Councillor(s): R Bassett and G Chambers
- Representing Essex County Council:**
- County Councillor(s): M McEwen and C Pond
- Representing Local Councils:**
- Mrs S Jackman (Ongar Town Council), Councillor Mrs J Bowerman (Matching Parish Council), G Castle (Nazeing Parish Council), Mrs V Evans (Epping Upland Parish Council), Councillor B Miller (Epping Upland Parish Council), N Moore (Buckhurst Hill Parish Council), R Morgan (Matching Parish Council), R Northwood (Sheering Parish Council), R E Russell (Stapleford Abbots Parish Council), P Smith, Mrs E K Walsh (Loughton Town Council), Cllr S Weston (Loughton TC) and J Whybrow (Roydon Parish Council)
- Apologies:**
- Epping Forest District Council –**
- Councillor(s): B Rolfe
- Essex County Council –**
- Councillor(s): Mrs R Gadsby, J Knapman and V Metcalfe
- Parish/Town Councils: -**
- Mrs D Borton (Nazeing Parish Council), B Surtees (Ongar Town Council), Mrs S De Luca (North Weald Bassett Parish Council), Mrs A Jones (Moreton, Bobbingworth & The Lavers Parish Council), R Balcombe (Fyfield Parish Council), Channing (Chigwell Parish Council) and L Van-der-Mark (Fyfield Parish Council)
- Officers Present:**
- J Preston (Director of Planning and Economic Development), R Ferriera (Assistant Solicitor), A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer) and R Perrin (Democratic Services Assistant)
- By Invitation:**

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

The new District Council Chairman was confirmed as the Chairman of the Committee for the municipal year. The appointment of a Vice-Chairman from amongst the Local Council representatives was requested; Councillor S Jackman was nominated and seconded.

RESOLVED:

(1) That Councillor M Sartin be confirmed as the Chairman of the Local Councils Liaison Committee for 2013/14; and

(2) That Councillor S Jackman be appointed as the Vice-Chairman of the Local Councils Liaison Committee for 2013/14.

2. 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.

3. MINUTES**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes for the meeting held on 7 March 2013 be agreed subject to noting that County Councillor Janet Whitehouse was present and that minute item 19(c), second line from the bottom, should read 'approval' and not approved.

4. ISSUES RAISED BY LOCAL COUNCILS**(1) Local Plan**

The Director of Planning and Economic Development, John Preston took the meeting through the latest update on the Local Plan. They noted that the Community Choices consultation, which had taken place between 30 July and 15 October 2012, had been fully reviewed and a report had been submitted to the Cabinet Committee in June. Member workshop summaries were being circulated and a revised timetable was being agreed. Work was continuing to ensure that the next stage of the consultation, the Preferred Options was met.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Councillor Bassett informed the meeting that he had just been to the Rural Town Planning Institute where they had been discussing issues around Local Plans. All of the Councillors there agreed that it had proved very difficult to complete the Local Plans process because of a range of issues. These range from difficulties setting population numbers to 'duty to cooperate' as quite often it means duty to "agree".

Councillor Bassett noted that in a recent report only 15 out of 55 Local Plans had made it through the inspection and several of those were subject to early review. EFDC was looking at why so many were failing and where things had gone wrong. EFDC wanted to get it right first time, because if they fail they would have to start again with all the costs involved. The area of most importance and concern was population; the Office for National Statistics (ONS) had published statistics that suggested that our district would

get a lot of internal migration from London. EFDC had got Edge Analytics to look at the demographics figures for them and the work should be completed by the end of July.

He also thanked all the Town and Parish Councillors who had attended the workshops and gave their views and comments. EFDC would continue to work with and involve Parish and Town Councils wherever possible in the process. Local Authorities needed to work on transport and sustainability and help provide evidence for the Local Plan. He also highlighted the duty to co-operate with neighbouring authorities to enable them to handle decisions that cut across borders. There were ten other authorities that we border and as an example we are presently talking to Enfield/Broxbourne on Productive Landscapes, Harlow about developments around joint borders, Waltham Forest and Redbridge on Crossrail 2 consultations.

Members asked about sustainability, how was it defined by the government and how did it differ from the way developers used it. Mr Preston said it was based on what they thought was sustainable, involving the use of resources carefully and travelling long distances for basic facilities etc. Councillor Bassett added that the planning inspectors had one definition of sustainability and the developers had another.

Members from Matching asked when they would see some results from the workshops and with the ambiguity of the word 'sustainability' could we put pressure on the government to explain what they mean. Mr Preston said that they wanted a genuine discussion so it was too early to start pulling out results from the workshops. As for sustainability, we did not have a good definition of this at first, it was challenged and we now have a better but still quite complicated definition. Councillor Bassett noted that the government were aware of the confusion and it may have to be defined by a court.

A member from Loughton TC noted that the responses had not been analysed by geographical areas, also that the expenses and resources for Town and Parish Councils could not be understated. Mr Preston noted that there was some sense from the consultation that some comments were from people commenting on areas that were not their local areas. Officers were looking into this and would provide an update.

Councillor Bassett asked Town and Parish Councils to keep engaging with the District Council on the Local Plan Workshops that were being organised; we need to understand your concerns. If we met all your concerns then a Local Plan would be superfluous. Councillor Bassett agreed that they did not have to go all the way to a Neighbourhood Plan; they could have such things as a Village Plan, a smaller document that could be useful to us.

A Buckhurst Hill member asked about what was happening to the new conservation areas. Mr Preston said they were gathering evidence and consulting. This was a different process from the Local Plan and it took time to do this.

The meeting agreed that they should be updated on the progress made to the Local Plan at every meeting, included as a standard item on the agenda. Officers were happy to do this.

In discussions on Neighbourhood Plans Councillor Bassett noted that there were only three successful Neighbourhood Plans in the country as it was more difficult than people had first thought. He would put together some of this information and send it out to the Town and Parish Councils for their information.

Updated Neighbourhood Planning guidance was placed on the Council's website and circulated to Town and Parish Councils. The first designation of a Neighbourhood Area would be considered for Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers at the July Cabinet

meeting. This would enable them to make progress on a Neighbourhood Plan. This had been publicised on the Council's website in accordance with regulations and representations invited. A report has been prepared to go to Cabinet on 29 July 2013 asking for the designation of the Neighbourhood Area and to agree future Governance arrangements.

The meeting noted that there would be some large cost involved in putting the processes through even with limited financial support from government. It was also important for Town and Parish Councils to actively engage with planning officers as local councils fulfilled a very important function of providing a link between EFDC and the local communities and a detailed knowledge of their localities.

Members asked about the cost so far for the Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers designation of a Neighbourhood Area on their way to a completed Neighbourhood Plan. They were told officers did not know the current costs as yet, but on average it could come out as much as £70k and take two years to complete a Neighbourhood Plan. They noted that in Cumbria, 17 local parish authorities had got together to produce one plan. Maybe this joint working could apply to some of our parishes. Parishes and Town councils could also look at other options such as Village Design Guides which although they were not so high on material consideration were useful documents. However, with the Local Plan still at the consultation stage we would suggest the best way forward for most would be close engagement with EFDC to ensure their views were heard.

Members noted that there had been considerable slippage in the timetable since the last update. There was a concern that a few developers may chance their arm on applications with the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Officers noted that there was a good reason for the slippage; there had been a lot of responses to the consultation and they had realised that because of figures produced by the Office of National Statistics we needed a lot more work done on the population figures and mitigation. Also we have lots of work involved with the 'Duty to Cooperate' and this all had taken time. We also need to do further work in some areas, such as Transport Assessments and this was done by outside groups where we wanted timescales from them. It should also be noted that the National Planning Policy Framework has now gone past its initial transition period and it was noticed that there was not a large increase in developers trying to promote their schemes in our district. It should also be noted that developers themselves are obliged under the Duty to Cooperate with residents and authorities.

The Chairman thanked officers for the work done so far, noting that there was a lot more to come and also the local councils should note the list of forthcoming workshops that they could attend.

(2) Road Closures

The Legal Officer, Rosaline Ferreira, explained that at present Essex County Council, as the Highways Authority, deal with the applications for the temporary road closure orders under Highways legislation.

The District Council has powers under the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 to make temporary road closure orders in a response to a request. However, as there was no delegation in place at present it could mean that an application for a temporary road closure order may have to be referred to full Council.

Temporary road closure orders can be used for street parties, fetes, processions etc.

The question whether EFDC should make temporary road closure orders was previously brought before the Licensing Committee in 2010. At that time members of the Council asked for more information regarding costs and the resources required before making a decision. The matter did not proceed as Essex County Council, as the Highways Authority, indicated that they would prefer to continue to make such orders in the appropriate cases due to the exceptional occasion i.e. the Jubilee.

If the Committee desired, the matter could be taken again to the Licensing Committee to make a decision on whether to make temporary road closure orders. The report will give further information on the work and resources required. Any final decision will have to be made by full Council.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee made a formal recommendation asking that Epping Forest District Council consider the possibility of taking on the powers under Town Police Clauses Act 1847 to provide local means of road closures for temporary events.

(3) Potholes

The Committee noted that the County Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transportation, Councillor R Bass could not attend this meeting but officers were hopeful that he could attend the meeting scheduled for November 2013. In view of this, the meeting decided that it would also be helpful to get representatives from the North Essex Parking Partnership to attend the same November meeting so that there was some synergy to the items to be discussed.

RESOLVED:

That officers attempt to get Councillor R Bass and representatives from the North Essex Parking Partnership to attend the November meeting to speak about the state of the roads and parking in general.

5. CROSSRAIL 2 CONSULTATION

The Director of Planning and Economic Development, John Preston informed the meeting of the new Crossrail2 consultation. This concept came from the former Chelsea – Hackney line and was intended to do the same on a south-west, north-east axis.

The route had been safeguarded since 1991, and has now been resurrected and reviewed by Transport for London (TfL). They are now carrying on a consultation on the different routes proposed, one being a smaller, metro route and the other being a larger, regional route. Information on these routes could be found on the consultation website at www.crossrail2.co.uk

A report went to the Planning Scrutiny Standing Panel seeking their views on the consultation and their views would go on to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Issues for EFDC would be a possible terminus station at Epping which may bring a significant opportunity for economic development. There would be some benefits if Crossrail2 went to the west of the District. What would happen to the Central Line without Crossrail2? The Central Line had reached its capacity and that could not be increased. The concerns were not only for this authority but also for other councils that the Central Line ran through. If investment was diverted to the Crossrail2 development

how would this affect Central Line investment in infrastructure. Should the new line go to Stansted or Cheshunt? If the line went to Cheshunt, then any Marshalling Yard or Maintenance Depot would go near to that station which would mean some employment benefits may come to our area as it would be relatively close to our District boundaries. If however, it went to Stansted then we may lose this benefit. It may be that they would have a Marshalling Yard or Maintenance Depot at both end of the line as that would make more sense.

RESOLVED:

The meeting noted the report on the Crossrail2 consultation exercise.

6. PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS - HR TRAINING / ADVICE FOR MEMBERS

The meeting noted that EFDC was approached from time to time regarding Human Resource problems that were being experienced by Parish and Town Councils.

The District Council had always tried to assist with advice and guidance but the resources of the EFDC were not limitless and in fact the Council had no jurisdiction over the affairs of independent Parish and Town Councils and there were often circumstances where Councils should obtain their own advice.

The Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) are known to offer advice and support to Local Councils in a number of ways and it may be that this is one source. However, sometimes in formal proceedings something more may be required and it may be worth Local Councils making arrangements for a local resource to be provided on a jointly funded basis.

Local Councils may continue to come to the district council if they wished and they would always endeavour to help but it may be that this would not be enough in some circumstances and a local source of HR and Legal advice may be desirable.

Local Councillors expressed their gratitude for the support given by EFDC; it was a good example of good practice.

They noted that EALC had negotiated discount rates from some companies that would act as advisors for local councils and this could be a satisfactory way forward.

RESOLVED:

That the Local Councils would take this forward and contact EALC about the possibility of getting outside advisors.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was raised.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The following meeting dates of the Committee were noted:

7 November 2013; and
6 March 2014

CHAIRMAN

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Report to Local Council Liaison Committee

Date of meeting: 7 November 2013

Subject: Road Closures

Officer contact for further information: Alison Mitchell (01992 56 4017)

Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins (01992 56 4607)

Recommendations:

To note the decision of the Licensing Committee made on 9th October 2013

Report:

1. On 4th July 2013 this Committee resolved:

'That the Committee made a formal recommendation asking that Epping Forest District Council consider the possibility of taking on the powers under the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 to provide local means of road closures for temporary events.

This request was considered by the next meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 9th October 2013.

2. It was reported to the Committee that temporary road closures have been made in the past by Essex County Council under its powers as the highways authority. The Committee noted that, following an application by Waltham Abbey Town Council for a temporary road closure in December for the switching on of their Christmas Lights, Essex County Council had responded that they were no longer considering such requests, which should be directed to the District Council. The District Council currently did not have the ability to make such orders, and Officers were negotiating with the County Council to continue this service for a few more months until the District Council was able to commence the provision of the service.

3. The Licensing Committee noted that additional resources would be required to assimilate this area of work; training would be required as there would be public safety implications in making road closure orders and there may be a need for equipment. Further investigation was required as to the numbers of likely road closures involved and what was required to set up the necessary procedures.

4. The Licensing Committee decided that:

(1) That the resolution of the Local Councils Liaison Committee requesting the District Council to exercise its powers to make temporary road closure orders be noted;

(2) That the Assistant Director of Corporate Support Services (Legal) be requested to report back to the Local Councils Liaison Committee and inform them that their resolution had been considered and noted but that the necessary powers could not be assimilated until further investigations and discussions had taken place.'

5. This work is being undertaken and a report will be made to the next Licensing Committee.

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Report to Local Council's Liaison Committee

Date of meeting: 7 November 2013

Subject: Local Support for Council Tax

Officer contact for further information: Bob Palmer (01992) 564279

Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

To note the potential reductions in support grant for 2014/15 and 2015/16.

Report:

Background

1. To understand what is happening here you first need to be sure you understand what is meant by "Council Tax Base" and how it is calculated. For the purposes of Council Tax, properties are placed in one of eight bands from A to H depending on their value, with band H being the most expensive properties. Calculations for Council Tax are done on the basis of 9ths, with Band D being the standard charge at 9/9, Band A being the lowest at 6/9 and Band H being charged twice the value of a Band D at 18/9.
2. The Council Tax Base for an area is the total number of properties in that area adjusted for their bandings. For example if a parish had 10 properties that were all Band D the tax base would be 10. If another parish had 10 properties and 5 of these were Band D and 5 Band H the tax base would be 15 or if all 10 were Band H the tax base would be 20.
3. The total income from Council Tax for an area is the Band D charge multiplied by the tax base, using the example of Theydon Garnon $\text{£}12.29 \times 78.9 = \text{£}970$. This equation can be worked round depending on which outcome you want, using the example of Abbess, Berners and Beauchamp Roding where it appears that the decision was made to have a precept of $\text{£}4,700$ so dividing this by the tax base of 202.1 gives the Band D charge of $\text{£}23.26$. Alternatively some parishes chose to keep the Band D charge constant, for example Epping Upland maintained a charge of $\text{£}28.54$ which was multiplied by their tax base of 390.0 to give income of $\text{£}11,132$.
4. At the start of this financial year Council Tax Benefit was replaced by Local Support for Council Tax. Under the old system, the council tax base was unaffected by changes in council tax benefit granted. However, under the new local council tax reduction scheme, the council tax base is affected by whether persons living in a dwelling are in receipt of a council tax reduction awarded under the scheme. As the billing authority will be foregoing council tax income from those dwellings.
5. For the 2013/14 financial year the Members of Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) decided to pay town and parish councils an amount of support grant that compensated them for the reduction in their tax bases. This meant that, subject to other changes affecting the tax base, the introduction of local support should have had a neutral financial impact. In total the value of the grants paid out was $\text{£}320,272$, which was $\text{£}7,460$ more than the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) stated as being the allocation for local councils.

Council Tax Setting for 2013/14

6. It was not possible to confirm the amount of support grant until the DCLG provided the final settlement figures for the year. Unfortunately this delayed the budget setting process for many authorities. However, liaison between EFDC staff and colleagues at local councils was effective and all precepts were determined in time for EFDC to go on and set the district wide charges in time. Out of the 24 local councils in the district only 5 increased their Band D charge by more than 3.4%, see Annex 1. This demonstrates that most authorities understood the support grant and took it into account in setting their charges.

Draft Settlements for 2014/15 and 2015/16

7. As part of a consultation exercise DCLG have published draft settlement figures for the next two financial years. The amount of overall Local Council Tax Support Grant has not been provided as a separate figure. At this time the only number given is for the total "Funding Assessment", which shows reductions of 13.6% for 2014/15 and 14.1% for 2015/16. These likely reductions were considered by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee on 19 September and Members felt the amount given to local councils in support grant should reduce by the same % as the Council's overall funding reduces.

8. Given the potential size of these reductions it was felt important to inform town and parish councils of the potential reductions to inform the consideration of their budgets. I wrote to the Vice Chairman of this Committee on 24 September and asked that the information on potential reductions was shared with colleagues at town and parish councils.

9. It would be possible to achieve the total reductions required in a number of ways and colleague's views are invited on the extent of any additional protection or weighting that should be considered. The figures provided for each authority on Annex 2 reduce all authorities support grant by 13.6% for 2014/15 and a further 14.1% for 2015/16.

Next Steps

10. The final settlement figures are unlikely to be available until late December or possibly even January. As soon as the figures are confirmed the information will be shared. For the moment it would be prudent to budget based on a reduction in support grant of at least 13.6% in 2014/15.

11. DCLG have not yet imposed the requirement to conduct a referendum on increases in Council Tax on town and parish councils, although this remains a possibility. The limit on major preceptors for 2014/15 is 2%, with a positive referendum outcome being needed before an increase greater than 2% can be made.

Local Council	Council Tax Requirement		LCTS Grant	Total Funding	Increase/ (Decrease)	Council Tax Band D		Increase %
	2012/13 £	2013/14 £	2013/14 £	2013/14 £	2013/14 £	2012/13 £	2013/14 £	
Abbess, Berners and Beauchamp Roding	5,000	4,700	206	4,906	-94	23.49	23.26	-0.98
Buckhurst Hill	367,800	343,089	24,840	367,929	129	69.25	68.90	-0.51
Chigwell	223,918	270,575	14,551	285,126	61,208	37.34	47.69	27.72
Epping Town	434,200	402,406	40,034	442,440	8,240	83.84	83.84	0.00
Epping Upland	11,876	11,132	679	11,811	-65	28.54	28.54	0.00
Fyfield	10,423	10,095	505	10,600	177	24.75	24.77	0.08
High Ongar	13,500	12,422	1,078	13,500	0	23.44	23.46	0.09
Lambourne	29,860	26,616	3,614	30,230	370	32.07	32.45	1.18
Loughton Town	643,200	574,600	69,526	644,126	926	49.18	49.18	0.00
Matching	14,035	13,320	896	14,216	181	31.44	32.50	3.37
Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers	12,300	13,314	997	14,311	2,011	21.49	24.87	15.73
Nazeing	72,494	67,367	5,233	72,600	106	34.38	34.37	-0.03
North Weald Bassett	138,815	138,737	13,265	152,002	13,187	52.45	57.61	9.84
Ongar Town	230,469	229,782	22,770	252,552	22,083	82.83	90.80	9.62
Roydon	29,109	27,826	1,574	29,400	291	22.01	22.26	1.14
Sheering	30,810	28,947	1,923	30,870	60	22.62	22.73	0.49
Stanford Rivers	11,700	16,627	886	17,513	5,813	32.59	48.42	48.57
Stapleford Abbots	6,629	6,135	313	6,448	-181	12.79	12.45	-2.66
Stapleford Tawney	1,461	1,463	41	1,504	43	19.58	19.66	0.41
Theydon Bois	103,280	97,783	4,715	102,498	-782	51.14	51.14	0.00
Theydon Garnon	1,000	970	30	1,000	0	14.84	12.29	-17.18
Theydon Mount	1,507	1,424	20	1,444	-63	13.46	13.46	0.00
Waltham Abbey Town	768,901	686,203	112,256	798,459	29,558	94.46	96.92	2.60
Willingale	4,500	4,182	319	4,501	1	18.21	18.24	0.16

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Local Council	LCTS Grant	LCTS Grant	Decrease	LCTS Grant	Decrease
	2013/14	2014/15	2014/15	2015/16	2015/16
	£	£	£	£	£
Abbess, Berners and Beauchamp Roding	206	178	-28	153	-25
Buckhurst Hill	24,840	21,462	-3,378	18,436	-3,026
Chigwell	14,551	12,572	-1,979	10,799	-1,773
Epping Town	40,034	34,589	-5,445	29,712	-4,877
Epping Upland	679	587	-92	504	-83
Fyfield	505	436	-69	375	-62
High Ongar	1,078	931	-147	800	-131
Lambourne	3,614	3,122	-492	2,682	-440
Loughton Town	69,526	60,070	-9,456	51,601	-8,470
Matching	896	774	-122	665	-109
Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers	997	861	-136	740	-121
Nazeing	5,233	4,521	-712	3,884	-638
North Weald Bassett	13,265	11,461	-1,804	9,845	-1,616
Ongar Town	22,770	19,673	-3,097	16,899	-2,774
Roydon	1,574	1,360	-214	1,168	-192
Sheering	1,923	1,661	-262	1,427	-234
Stanford Rivers	886	766	-120	658	-108
Stapleford Abbots	313	270	-43	232	-38
Stapleford Tawney	41	35	-6	30	-5
Theydon Bois	4,715	4,074	-641	3,499	-574
Theydon Garnon	30	26	-4	22	-4
Theydon Mount	20	17	-3	15	-2
Waltham Abbey Town	112,256	96,989	-15,267	83,314	-13,675
Willingale	319	276	-43	237	-39

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Subject: Local Council Tax Support Grant for Town & Parish Councils
From: Bob Palmer (BPalmer@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)
To: jackman.ongar@btinternet.com;
Cc: marysartin@yahoo.com; sydstavrou@hotmail.co.uk;
Date: Tuesday, 24 September 2013, 11:48

Dear Mrs Jackman,

Previously when I have attended the Local Councils Liaison Committee I have promised to keep you informed of any developments in Local Council Tax Support Grants. Last Thursday the Finance Cabinet Committee considered the grant reductions for 2014/15 and 2015/16 that are currently part of a consultation by the DCLG. The Committee felt that reductions in this Council's grant should be reflected in the grant paid to local councils and this would mean a reduction of 13.6% in 2014/15 and a further reduction of 14.1% in 2015/16.

These reductions should not be taken as final and definite as the reductions we are facing may change as a result of the consultation. However, to allow you and your colleagues to start reviewing your own budgets as early as possible I thought it best to write to you now to make you aware of the likely magnitude of the reductions. I will be attending the next meeting of your committee in November but would be grateful if you could share the contents of this email with your colleagues on other town and parish councils before then.

Kind regards

Bob

Bob Palmer

Director of Finance & ICT

Epping Forest District Council

tel: 01992 564279

email: bpalmer@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

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This email is for the use of the intended recipients only. Any opinion or

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Report to Local Council Liaison Committee



Date of meeting: 7 November 2013

Subject: Parish Council Liaison

Officer contact for further information: Peter Millward (4338)

Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins (4607)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1). That the progress of the Parish Council iPlan User Group meetings and minutes be noted;**
- (2). That due to the rural nature of Epping Forest District the placement online of electronic planning information is an integral part of the council's strategy in promoting the availability and transparency of planning records be noted; and**
- (3). That as a result of the increasing amount and percentage of electronic planning applications being made via the National Planning Portal, the distribution and circulation of paper plans to Parish/Town Councils may no longer be sustainable in the future be noted.**

Summary

This report details the results of the iPlan User Group that met on 16th July 2013 and a copy of the minutes are attached.

A range of issues relating mainly to iPlan and electronic planning records on the Epping Forest District Council Website was discussed. The overall outcome was that steady progress is being made regarding a number of areas of iPlan and planning information on the council website.

In addition the inevitable movement towards electronic records was discussed and further information regarding the need to reduce and eventually eliminate the circulation of paper copies of plans and documents to Parish/Town Councils is detailed in sections 2, 3 and 4 of this report.

Report

To report on progress to the Local Council Liaison Committee on iPlan User Group Meetings and highlight the following;

1. That given the rural nature of Epping Forest District Council, the placement of electronic planning information online mainly via the EFDC Website and iPlan are an integral part of Planning and Economic Development Directorate's strategy in promoting the availability and transparency of planning records information across the district, which potentially saves considerable time and journeys to Epping Civic Offices to view plans and planning records.
2. However there is a need to promote a greater degree of partnership working between Planning and Economic Development and the council with Parish and Town Councils to further improve the use of electronic planning records to achieve the long term objective of reducing and/or eliminating the circulation of paper records and plans to all Parish and Town Councils.

3. Epping Forest currently receives 40% of all Planning applications electronically via the Planning Portal and nationally this figure for all councils in England and Wales is closer to 60%. In addition further steps are being taken to increase this with some councils aiming to achieve over 80% of their planning applications received electronically via the Planning Portal.
4. Every planning application received electronically requires printing by Planning and Economic Development for distribution to Parish and Town Councils. The average cost of this is approximately £7.50 per application and with an average of 2500 applications per year this results in an additional cost to the council of £7 500 per year. Clearly this is not sustainable in the long terms as it is estimated that both the quantity of planning applications and electronically submitted applications will increase. As a result future additional costs may well soon exceed £13 500 per annum.
5. Significant steps are currently under consideration to improve the quality of plans available to Parish/Town Councils by enabling access to download better plans in high quality image format as compared with the PDF format plans currently available on the EFDC Website.
6. At the Parish Council iPlan User Group meeting held on 16th July 2013 it was agreed that further work needed to be carried out to identify those Parish/Town Councils that could consider moving towards full electronic use of planning applications to eliminate the need for the circulation of paper copies and that a small working party should try to identify those Parish Councils that are under resourced who may need assistance and support to move towards setting up paperless planning meetings.
7. The Parish Councils iPlan User Group continues to indicate that steps need to be taken to improve the quality of plans which are not always clear. It was agreed that a greater emphasis should be placed on ensuring that the quality of plans at validations/registration stage meet a minimum criteria in image quality as a positive step towards ensuring plans meet acceptable viewing standards on the council website.
8. That the Joint Working iPlan User Group comprising of nominated Parish/Town Council representative and officers from Planning and Economic Development should continue with the following terms of reference and membership composition;
 - (a). Record, receive feedback and take action to resolve any difficulties that Parish/Town Councils experience in using iPlan and/or accessing planning records/information on the council website.
 - (b). Investigate and report back to both the User Group and Local Liaison Committee regarding progress or lack of progress made in resolving difficulties raised in using iPlan.
 - (c). Suggest future improvements to iPlan and Electronic Website Planning Records in order to assist Parish/Town Councils in moving from paper planning records to greater use of electronic website planning records.
 - (d). Invite Parish/Town Councillors, Parish Clerks and other Parish/Town Council staff to regularly visit Planning and Economic Development as part of an improvement process to familiarise Parish/Town Councils with planning service operations.
 - (e). The nominated Parish/Town Council representatives are;

Richard Witham – Lambourne Parish Council,
 Brian Surtees and/or Eileen Gough – Ongar Town Council
 Joan Bowerman – Matching Parish Council
 Chris Pond – Loughton Town Council
 Adriana Jones – Moreton Parish Council.

9. The user group were agreed that some progress had been made regarding the ease of access for planning information and looked forward towards further improvements being carried out, particularly regarding the provision of mapping information and regular improvements in the quality of plans for viewing. This included the provision of additional historical planning information being made available via iPlan.

Reason for this report

To report the progress made and provide feedback in terms of the setting up of the iPlan User Group as requested by the Local Council Liaison Committee on 9th March 2011.

Consultation undertaken: N/A

Resource implications: N/A

Background papers:

i-Plan Users Group Meeting Minutes 16 July 2013

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**Minutes of an iPlan Users Group held on 16 July 2013
at 10:30am in Committee Room 2, Civic Offices, Epping**

Chair: Peter Millward (PM)

Attendees:

Brian Surtees (BS) – Ongar Town Council
 Chris Pond (CP) – Loughton Town Council
 Eileen Gough (EG) – Ongar Town Council
 Joan Bowerman (JB) – Matching Parish Council
 Stephen Bacon (SB) – Epping Forest District Council
 Nigel Richardson (NR) – Epping Forest District Council
 Theresa Parker (TP) – Epping Forest District Council
 Mavis Bird (MB) – Epping Forest District Council
 Andrew Rich (AR) – Epping Forest District Council
 Michelle Harding (MH) – Epping Forest District Council
 Andrew Gardener (AG) – Epping Forest District Council
 Chris Redman (CR) Minutes – Epping Forest District Council

PM welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Action

1.0 APOLOGIES –

Adriana Jones (AJ) – North Weald Parish Council, Richard Witham (RW) – Lambourne Parish Council

2.0 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

All approved the minutes of the previous meeting.

3.0 MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Navigation of Website

CP mentioned that the navigation of the website was still difficult, although agreed with NR that the signposting for accessing planning applications on the homepage had improved. SB explained that ICT had an action plan for improving the website navigation, but this had been frozen as there was opposing guidance from Members. The news site has recently successfully changed its menu system to make it more accessible for mobile phone users – work on improving the navigation of the main site should take place within the next 4 – 5 weeks.

CP noted that Licensing do not have an online archive – this would be useful as there was often a need to ascertain permitted opening hours. SB and PM agreed that this would be useful, but Licensing are not yet as advanced in electronic records and scanning as Planning. It was agreed that a letter from CP to the Chief Executive explaining how useful this would be could help to move matters along.

CP

3.2 Read-only access to Information@Work

(EG entered the meeting)

NR explained that read-only access to Information@Work for Councillors to view documents not currently published to the website was still being looked into - there are problems if you do not use Windows 7 and another browser would need to be downloaded for other versions. ICT are currently investigating this. PM added that we are keen for Councillors to be able to access this extra information, and would like to extend this to Parish Councillors. PM explained that we do not have the resources to place all documents on the website, as many documents (including neighbour letters) have telephone numbers and signatures that will need redacting, but we would like to give the Parish Councillors the opportunity to view them. BS was concerned that Councillors may not be aware that un-redacted information should not be used in a public meeting – PM responded that they would need to sign a data protection agreement first. SB mentioned that if more comments were submitted online, then they could automatically be placed on the website – it was hoped that Councillor access to Information@Work should be in place by next meeting.

(JB entered the meeting)

BS added that although neighbour consultation letters encouraged forwarding any comment to the appropriate local Town / Parish Council, there was not a similar message on the website. CR to update website to include this message.

CR

3.3 Use of WiFi in Committees

SB has now had permission from the Chief Executive to use site-wide dirty access which should improve WiFi access at Committees – this will trial within the next 2 weeks.

3.4 Mapping Systems

SB reported that due to priorities in updating the Gazetteer, the development of the open source mapping system to replace Pinpoint mapping had been delayed – ICT and Environmental Services to meet next week to get the project back on track. PM noted that this would replace Pinpoint that was removed from the old website due to inaccuracies as it was hosted externally. SB added that as we would control the information for the new system we can display not only Planning data with greater accuracy, but also other relevant information from other Directorates.

3.5 Search results

SB has managed to make some amendments to the search facility – he has been able to duplicate the search button as requested, and is waiting to remove the 'wild card' search and altered the wording on the front page to ease usage. CP agreed that it was much better after these alterations, and PM urged Parish Councils to send us their feedback if they have issues in the future with the search facility.

CP asked if there was any progress on the confusion of using apostrophes in the searches, and whether the program could be altered to ignore them. SB and PM noted that a lot of the problems stem from current work to update the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) where we are trying to streamline and standardise existing entries to move toward greater accuracy – standard guidelines are to ignore all apostrophes when inputting new data. CP suggested that Parishes could be involved in updating the LLPG as they have a good understanding of the true names of streets / properties in their area – PM advised the LLPG Custodian Carolyn Bintley would be able to work with this. SB noted that when all the information is mapped this will solve many of the existing Parish boundary problems and improve the quality of Parish data.

3.6 Microfiche

PM indicated that while 650,000 images had been scanned in 2012/13, it was estimated that there remained a further four million images on 130 000 microfiche jackets to be scanned. The original pre 1974 planning and building control microfiche records were scanned due to their age and condition as they were considered more prone to deterioration. These can now be used by EFDC to respond to enquiries more efficiently, and we are able to email images on request. PM hopes to have another batch scanned before the end of the year and make further progress with this.

MB added that some of the records are pre 1948 – CP expressed interest in seeing some of these, including previous systems of building plans, and queried whether they should be held in the Essex Record Office. It was agreed that CP and JB would liaise with PM to visit the Civic Offices to view some of the earlier microfiche to look into possible preservation of historic records.

CP / JB
PM

3.7 Issues with browsers

Issues with browsers have been largely resolved, Webcasts are now Apple-friendly – SB advised that ICT were now improving their use with mobile phones.

3.8 Standardisation of plans

NR reported that Local Government has asked each Council to update their validation checklist regarding standardisation of plans and speeding up the validation stage – we are currently in the process of updating ours before this goes to Members for approval. It was agreed that it would be useful for the group to see these amendments for comments before they were submitted – NR to action.

NR

CP mentioned that the lack of scale bars on some historical plans was still a problem.

3.9 Notification of applications to Committee level

MB is continuing to send a list of all applications going to Committee to Town and Parish Councils.

3.10 Site notices

NR to investigate the possibility of officers taking photographs of site notices displayed and importing these as a new document type to be published to the website.

NR

3.11 Shared resources/legibility of plans

CP noted that at their last Parish meeting, 3 out of 13 plans were deemed illegible and so paper copies had to be referred to. It seems the problem in some instances is the paper that is used has a 'silvering' effect when scanned, in particular on plans submitted by Colin Southgate. MB suggested that perhaps AR and AG could try to alter settings on these scanned images to see if any improvement could be made – BS thought that this would prove time-consuming for the person scanning if they were constantly adjusting contrast controls. CP thought that Loughton could probably do without paper copies except for these images by Colin Southgate, and NR suggested that perhaps we could contact him to see if other paper could be used.

PM asked whether there was any feasibility of some of the Parish Council's meetings to be fully electronic and to stop receiving paper copies by a certain date,

CP / BS /

possibly 31 December? CP, BS and EG thought that this would be possible for Loughton and Ongar, although CP stipulated that they would need an extension to the time limit for responses for illegible plans so that a paper copy could be obtained. TP noted that the Weekly List contains hyperlinks straight to each set of plans that should help to locate each item easily for meetings. BS added that we would need to be aware that some of the smaller Parish Councils do not have the resources to be fully electronic yet – JB agreed, and commented that Matching still work from paper copies as their Broadband is very slow. SB mentioned that we are trialling 4G on our servers, which will allow us to upload extremely quickly and would be of benefit to small Parish Councils. He added that Final Wireless Broadband will also be installed shortly in the tower at North Weald Airfield, which will improve WiFi throughout the district, and will keep us updated of any further developments with this.

EG

It was agreed that PM would create a list of Parish Councils who were willing to stop receiving paper copies and be fully electronic by 31 December. JB to compile a list of Parishes with least resources, to see whether we can visit them and supply advice / equipment. TP to put a note on the Weekly List summarising both of these points to see who else would be willing to stop receiving paper copies, and who may need more resources.

PM / JB
TP

4.0 VISITS TO PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BY PARISH / TOWN COUNCILLORS AND PARISH CLERKS

PM noted that earlier in the meeting it was agreed that JB and CP would visit to look at pre 1948 historical information that we may hold on microfiche.

JB / CP

PM also mentioned that any Parish Councillors (especially new members) and Clerks are welcome to visit to familiarise themselves with our processes, and to contact him for further arrangements.

SB suggested that the creation of an online learning package for Parish Councillors may prove useful. JB noted that in the past they have attended sessions arranged by Ian Willett – NR added that 3 more sessions were planned for September.

5.0 PROGRESS REPORT ON EFDC WEBSITE

Much of this already covered earlier in the meeting. SB noted that since the flood at the Civic Offices, we will be moving the website externally, and are learning some useful lessons from the incident.

CP asked whether webcasts were archived and how he could gain access to them? SB to provide log-in for CP to gain access to these on trial, and also to use the read-only access to Information@Work as a pilot.

SB / CP

6.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

PM asked the members of the group for confirmation of their continued representation, and all agreed.

NR enquired whether comments from Ongar were not always submitted – BS replied they always met to discuss applications and comments were always sent, and EG agreed that they were sent to both the Planning Officer and appcomment@eppingforestdc.gov.uk. NR suggested that the 'appcomment' email was the preferred method in case an officer was on holiday and a comment was missed from their email account. NR also noted Stapleford Abbots had not supplied any comments for quite a while.

CP wondered whether our address could be shortened from 'eppingforestdc' to 'efdc' – SB noted that although we have procured the address 'efdc' we cannot use it at present, although we are looking into this further.

SB asked for volunteers from the Parish Clerks for a training session in the use of the system for preparation for electronic meetings – CP suggested that there may be a possibility of him attending the Parishes to see assess their equipment and provide suggestions. PM/SB to liaise. PM /SB

SB also suggested that a home page for Parishes could be created on the website so that all pertinent information for them is all in one place, in a similar way that a Members home page was created. All agreed that this was a good idea, and that all the feedback provided was proving useful. SB

BS noted that although the quality of plans had already been discussed, some of the hand drawn plans of the owner occupied applications were not very good – PM suggested that he supply us with feedback when these plans arise, and that we could then look at this perhaps as part of the validation process.

SB has had interest from Chigwell Parish Council in the use of our minutes system – if others Parish Councils are interested, then this could be made available to them. CP suggested that Enid Walsh would be a good contact for this, who could then pass on this information to the network of clerks. CP

7.0 ADDITIONAL ITEM

Councillor Richard Witham (Lambourne Parish Council) was unable to attend the meeting but however forwarded some comments for the information of the iPlan User Group members which were received after the meeting; PM/SB

In his e-mail RM said;

I like the way the single link from the EFDC home page to the Planning search page has been created, well done

It would also appear that issues regarding confused/muddled screen layouts on android tablets has been resolved, well done.

There are still some parish councils who do not have access to broadband and asked if EFDC is doing anything to support the Essex County Council's BBUK bid?

Do the EFDC head office's in High Street Epping have public access to broadband Wi-Fi, so that Town, Parish councillors and others can access on-line information, when required, such as for planning discussions? If not why not, as the new Chief Exec promised the EALC he would look into this some months ago.

8.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

January/February 2014, PM to confirm date.

PM thanked everyone for attending. Meeting closed 12:10pm

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