

## **EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**Committee:** Asset Management and Economic Development Cabinet Committee      **Date:** Thursday, 11 February 2016

**Place:** Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping      **Time:** 7.00 - 8.20 pm

**Members Present:** Councillors W Breare-Hall (Chairman), H Kane, S Stavrou, G Waller and C Whitbread

**Other Councillors:** Councillors H Kauffman and J M Whitehouse

**Apologies:** Councillor A Grigg

**Officers Present:** D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), Q Buller (Local Strategic Partnership Manager), K Pabani (Chief Estates Officer), K Polyzoides (Assistant Director (Policy & Conservation)), J Leither (Democratic Services Officer) and S Mitchell (PR Website Editor)

**Also in attendance:** C Pasterfield (Asset Management Development Consultant), L Edwards (Colliers International) and A Charalambous (White Young Green)

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### **34. 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.

### **35. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

The Cabinet Committee noted that Councillor C Whitbread substituted for Councillor A Grigg.

### **36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

(a) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor J M Whitehouse declared a personal interest in agenda item 6, St John's Road Development by virtue of being an Essex County Councillor, an Epping Town Councillor and a resident of St John's Road, Epping. The Councillor had determined that his interest was non-pecuniary but would leave the meeting if the discussion became too detailed.

### **37. MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2015 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the Declarations of Interest, where Councillor J Whitehouse declared that he was an Essex County Councillor which was omitted.

### 38. ASSET MANAGEMENT CO-ORDINATION GROUP REPORT

The Director of Neighbourhoods presented a report to the Cabinet Committee and updated them on further progress which had been achieved since the publication of the Agenda.

(1) **Epping Forest Shopping Park** – There was a separate report before the Cabinet Committee at Agenda Item 11 which would be heard in private session.

(2) **Oakwood Hill Depot** – Construction of the new depot was progressing, the contract was at week 24 out of a contract period of 36 weeks. The cladding was complete, the windows were installed and the inside building works were complete. The Section 278 road works to relocate the bus stop and install traffic islands commenced on the 26 January. There were regular meetings and the Depot was on schedule to complete in April 2016.

(3) **Pyrles Lane Nursery** – A revised planning application for the site would be considered by the District Development Management Committee on the 24 February 2016. It was hoped that the revised application would resolve some of the concerns regarding density and access on which the application was originally refused. The redesign had widened the access from 4.1m to 4.3m which would help vehicle access and include a pedestrian footpath.

(4) **St John's Road** – One of the major delays on this scheme was getting an agreement between Essex County Council (ECC) and the developer Frontier Developments with respect to an overage agreement that ECC required to be put into place to protect their position, in the event that the component parts of the scheme, which currently met the design and development brief, were to change or there was to be an excessive developers profit.

Epping Forest District Council hosted a meeting on the 29 January, with senior officers of ECC and directors of Frontier Developments. A number of issues were discussed and negotiations should be completed by the end of the month. It was hoped that an indicative time table with key milestones would be available at the next meeting.

Options were being looked at to temporarily use the land. A car park had been suggested, but this was deemed as not viable due to issues around security and the comparative quality of provision with regard to the adjacent car parks which were fully covered by CCTV and had new pay and display machines. Once the land came into the Council's ownership this would be revisited.

(5) **North Weald Airfield** – At their meeting on 3 December 2015, the Cabinet agreed with the results of a marketing exercise for an Operational Partner at North Weald Airfield and this would go out to advert in April/May 2016.

(6) **Sir Winston Churchill / The Broadway, Debden** – The development was now in the hands of Higgins Construction who were developing the site. Completion was originally due July 2017 but problems have arisen with the ground being too soft and the piling going very slow.

There was an area to the rear of the Sir Winston Churchill site which was being considered for affordable housing. Moat Homes, a housing association were going to develop this area building approximately 15 units but with the Governments change in the rental arrangements they have determined that this was no longer affordable.

This was now going through the Council House-building programme to present options to Members on how the Council should take this site forward.

Officers of the Asset Management team have recently come into possession of the mandate for the letting of the ground floor retail space and agents Latham High were advising of the various merits of apportioning the space and the advising on the kind of tenant we could expect to attract. This will be guided by Higgins with regard to the timescale.

(7) **Ongar Academy** – A full planning application had now been received and would be considered by the District Development Management Committee early this year. It was hoped that the new school would be ready to take year 7 pupils in at the start of the school year in September 2017.

(8) **Town Mead Depot** – As a result of the Environment Agency's advice that this site was not suitable for any form of residential development other options were being considered.

(9) **Hillhouse Leisure / Community Hub** – Five companies had been invited to tender for the Leisure Management Contract. The proposal was for a new Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre which would house a new swimming pool and a new Health Centre and the potential for care and independent living accommodation to be provided by Essex County Council. There would be community consultation events scheduled for late May 2016.

**Resolved:**

To note the progress on the Council's Asset Management and Development Projects.

**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 not action.

### **39. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TEAM PROGRESS REPORT**

The Local Strategic Partnership Manager presented a report to the Cabinet Committee and updated them on a number of projects and issues being explored by the Economic Development Team.

(1) **Visitor Economy** – The Visit Epping Forest 2016 Tourism Conference was taking place on the 4 March 2016 at Marriott Hotel, Waltham Abbey. Key speakers had been booked including Michael Veasey of Eastern Plateau/ BEST Growth Hub, Del Goddard of Vibrant Partnerships and George Kieffer of Visit Essex. After a soft launch within the winter tourism e-newsletter there are already over 40 delegates booked in and a dedicated campaign will promote the event throughout January and February.

Two new display banners have been produced for the use of tourism members at events. They were used at the Visit Epping Forest stand at the 2016 Excursions trade show at the Alexandra Palace.

Work had started on a new website following recommendations for an upgraded site as a key outcome from tourism workshops in 2015. The new site will work across all devices and contain information on different areas of the district as well as the key visitor attractions and an improved "What's On" page. Accessibility for easy updating and editorial control will be included via a new Content Management System (CMS).

An updated general area leaflet was being produced which would contain information about the different areas of the district. Display units for the leaflets were also being ordered to be sited in a wider range of local outlets.

(2) **Town Centres** – The Economic Development Officers were working with the Waltham Abbey Town Partnership. They had been successful in acquiring funding from Essex County Council's Community Initiatives Fund to commission consultancy support to design a wayfinding project for Waltham Abbey's town centre.

There were five applications, varying in scale and nature, either under consideration or approved within EFDC's Town & Village Centres Opportunities Fund. There was a further bid that was currently being prepared for submission to the Fund and this would be encouraging partners to consider further bids at the District Town Centres Team meeting.

(3) **Business Support** – The Economic Development Team (EDT) were working with BEST Growth Hub to promote and encourage take-up of its services by our local business community.

The team were promoting a suite of free workshops for start-up and established businesses across Essex from January to March and have had confirmation that four of these sessions will be held at Epping Rugby Club and Epping Forest College. BEST will also have a presence at the Tourism Conference and the EDT are exploring opportunities for some different format events i.e. drop-in surgery session for businesses or a Pop-up Business Café.

The next edition of One Business Briefing is currently being compiled and would be distributed to business contacts and partners during February.

(4) **Superfast Essex / Rural Challenge Project** – The build phase of the Superfast Essex Rural Challenge Project continued to make progress in the Bobbingworth and Moreton areas of the district. A second fibre cabinet has been built just outside Fyfield and works to connect up this cabinet to the wider network have also begun. The first customer of the Gigaclear ultrafast network was connected and went live just before Christmas, with the event being marked by a visit to Bobbingworth by Ed Vaizey, MP, Minister of State for Culture and the Digital Economy. The next cabinet planned for the network will be located in the Norton Heath area.

Superfast Essex will be running a series of digital workshops to encourage more business take-up. One of the workshops would be about 'How to stay ahead of competitors online' and will be hosted in Ongar on 3 March 2016 at the Essex Technology & Innovation Centre. It was planned to promote these workshops and a digital toolkit, also developed by Superfast Essex, in the next edition of One Business Briefing.

(5) **Partner Liaison** – The EDT continued to liaise with, support and attend meetings with a number of Partner Organisations. These included, at varying intervals:

- Essex County Council
- South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SE LEP)
- Invest Essex and Essex Innovation Programme
- Lea Valley Food Taskforce
- Essex Economic Development Officer group
- Essex Tourism Officer Group
- Epping Forest District Town Team
- Eastern Plateau Local Action Group
- Stansted Airport Local Authority Forum
- Tourism & Visitor Board
- West Essex Skills & Learning Forum
- Waltham Abbey Town Partnership
- One Epping Forest

The EDT was represented at a new grouping in January termed the West Essex Economic & Investment Officer Forum. This new group has been well received by partners and had been established to help communication foster a stronger common understanding of the issues and projects across West Essex and to ensure that West Essex had a joined-up voice (when inputting into LSCC, SE LEP etc.). The meeting was attended by Officers from Epping Forest District, Harlow, Uttlesford and Essex County Council (Economic Regeneration, Inward Investment and Highways).

The Team had also been represented at the Essex Economic Development Officers Group in January 2016. As well as being a valuable forum at which we gleaned great information on business funding and support, activity at Essex County Council etc., it was an introduction to the operation of the Hive Enterprise Centre in Southend.

**Resolved:**

To note the progress and work programme of the Council's Economic Development Section.

**Reasons for Decision:**

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

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

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

**40. NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD - COMMUNITY DAY**

The Director of Neighbourhoods presented a report to the Cabinet Committee regarding the Community Day to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of North Weald Airfield.

The Director advised that a Community Day event had been hosted at North Weald Airfield since 2008, which celebrated the proud history of the Airfield and demonstrated the diversity of uses and provided an opportunity for local voluntary sector organisations to showcase their services.

In August 1916, North Weald Airfield became operational as a Home Defence Flight Station, It was therefore intended that this year's Community Day formed the centrepiece of the 100 Year Anniversary celebrations. Weald Aviation have indicated

that they were willing to undertake the lead role in organising the event in liaison with the District Council, and were prepared to underwrite the event with respect to funding infrastructure/deposits on bookings etc. A date has been selected for the 17 July 2016 and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight have been advised in order to ascertain their availability. It should be noted that, whilst as in previous years, the intention was to include a flying element this will not constitute an air display with high velocity manoeuvres, but rather a series of fly-pasts in accordance with current CAA guidance regarding Airshows.

**Resolved:**

To note progress on planning for the North Weald Airfield Community Day 2016.

**Reasons for Decision:**

Members requested an update report on the event at their previous meeting.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**41. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

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

**42. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED:**

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below on the grounds that they would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

<u>Agenda Item No.</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Exempt Information Paragraph Number</u>
11	Epping Forest Shopping Park – Marketing Report	3

**43. EPPING FOREST SHOPPING PARK - MARKETING REPORT**

The Director of Neighbourhoods presented a report to the Cabinet Committee and updated them on further progress which had been achieved since the publication of the Agenda.

Consultants from Colliers International and White Young Green attended the meeting and reported that the first stage tender process was now closed and the evaluation process would start on the 15 February 2016. It was hoped to appoint a Contractor in May/June 2016 where the contract would run for approximately 9 months. Negotiations were progressing with various outlets who were showing interest in renting units at the Epping Forest Shopping Park. The overall picture was looking extremely good now everything was anticipated to achieve completion early in 2017.

**Resolved:**

- (1) To note the marketing report from Colliers International and Harvey Spack Field regarding progress on the leasing of units in the Epping Forest Shopping Park.
- (2) To note the report on Project Management from White Young Green regarding the procurement of the main construction contract for Epping Forest Shopping Park and general progress.
- (3) To note that the revised tender date for the Shopping Park main contract was for submissions by 1 April 2016.

**Reasons for Decision:**

To comply with the Cabinet Committee's previous request to monitor the development of the Council's property assets periodically and in particular report in detail on progress relating to the development of the Epping Forest Shopping Park.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

To report direct to Cabinet.

**CHAIRMAN**