

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Asset Management and Economic Development Cabinet Committee **Date:** Thursday, 14 April 2016

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.00 - 7.55 pm

Members Present: Councillors A Grigg (Chairman), W Breare-Hall (Vice-Chairman), H Kane and S Stavrou

Other Councillors: Councillors D Stallan, C Whitbread and J M Whitehouse

Apologies:

Officers Present: D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), M Warr (Economic Development Officer), J Leither (Democratic Services Officer) and A Rose (Marketing & Digital Content Officer)

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

44. 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.

45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(a) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor J M Whitehouse declared a personal interest in agenda item 7, 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 and required a pecuniary interest to be declared.

(b) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor J M Whitehouse declared a personal interest in agenda item 6, Town Centres by virtue of attending meetings of the Epping Town Centre Partnership. The Councillor had determined that his interest was non-pecuniary and would remain in the meeting for the consideration of the item.

(c) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor D Stallan declared a personal interest in agenda item 11, by virtue of having a family member who works for a franchise of one of the proposed tenants. The Councillor had determined that his interest was non-pecuniary and would remain in the meeting for the consideration of the item.

46. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2016 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

47. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TEAM 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.

(1) **One Business Briefing** – The Winter edition of One Business Briefing had been very positively received within the business community. Ten external partners contributed articles and graphics, all of which involved close liaison with economic development officers to secure and structure the content. Additionally, a number of these external partners featured the One Business Briefing on their social media streams resulting in a wider social media reach than previously achieved.

(2) **Eastern Plateau** – The Economic Development Team (EDT) has continued its representation on the Eastern Plateau Rural Development Programme's Local Action Group. There were several projects based within the district that are at an early stage in the application process. Applications were also from the wider area such as Uttlesford, East and North Hertfordshire. The Programme Facilitator advised that there were a number of projects coming through the pipeline but how many from the Epping Forest District was not known. The EDT would like to see more of our district's businesses apply for funding and be successful with future applications.

(3) **Visitor Economy** – The Economic Development team were working with colleagues in Planning to commission a Visitor Accommodation Needs Assessment, which would form a key part of the evidence base helping to inform tourism policies in the Local Plan. The assessment would address all types of accommodation such as hotels, public houses, bed and breakfast accommodation and youth hostels and assess the potential future demand and how it could change in the district with the adoption of the emerging Local Plan.

The Visit Epping Forest 2016 Tourism Conference took place at the start of English Tourism Week in March 2016. The event was generously sponsored by the Marriott Hotel together with Vibrant Partnerships and attracted more people than last year. Six speakers were featured including the Chairmen of Visit Essex and Vibrant Partnerships. Approximately ninety delegates represented a range of tourism and visitor sectors both large and small. The only negative identified was that poor public transport was a barrier for both a positive visitor experience and recruiting staff. As with previous conferences, networking was seen as one of the benefits of this event and everyone took advantage of the opportunity to discuss ideas and make new contacts during lunch. Once again a universally acclaimed event which delegates appreciated and affirmed that they would wish to remain a regular fixture.

(4) **Town Centres** – The Town & Village Centres Opportunities Fund had agreed a number of applications for funding. The creation of a new Visit Epping Forest website had been approved within EFDC's Town & Village Centres Opportunities Fund. The Team was also liaising with applicants to progress a handful of further applications to the Fund.

(5) **Business Support** – The Economic Development Team had been working on a valuable exercise to dramatically improve the information and contact details it holds for local businesses within the district. This work would mean we are better able to manipulate the data the EDT hold in order to disseminate relevant information as widely as possible and to encourage local awareness and take-up of the various programmes that are available e.g. funding, business support & advice, workshops. These enhanced contacts were a start point in developing stronger communication links with our local businesses in terms of understanding their needs, issues and opportunities and how these might then inform where our future priorities and focus should be. Part of the project is involving a tele-marketing exercise to obtain further details from some businesses as recently flagged-up to Members, partners and officers.

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

- 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

Recently the Epping Forest District Museum in Waltham Abbey was reopened and the Economic Development Team were delighted to see the high quality of the heritage and tourist attraction that the Museum would offer to the district. There were plans to host a business network event at the museum in the near future and we would like to congratulate the Museum team on their excellent work.

The EDT recently met with Grangewood Investments in Oakwood Hill to understand more about its investment plans at Oakwood Hill Industrial Estate, particularly in light of its Cr@te development on the Industrial Estate receiving planning consent in February. Cr@te were a forward thinking company bringing a suite of business premises for start up or new businesses based on the conversion of former shipping containers into office facilities. Working with more of these organisations and business will have a very positive effect of attracting new businesses to the district.

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 is for information not action.

48. 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 near completion and would be ready for use by mid May 2016. A specialist consultancy had been appointed to transfer the Council's Fleet Maintenance operation to the new premises, specifically to achieve VOSA accreditation for the MOT Service, which generated income for the Council.

(3) **Pyrles Lane Nursery** – The revised planning application was agreed at the District Development Management Committee on the 24 February 2016. The redesign had widened the access from 4.1m to 4.3m which would help vehicle access and include a pedestrian footpath. A report was being prepared for Cabinet regarding the sales strategy for disposal. The Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee have expressed an interest in purchasing any affordable properties from any potential developer by using capital receipts.

(4) **St John's Road** – A conclusion had been reached with Essex County Council and Frontier Estates concerning issues in relation to overage provisions and the number of residential properties on the site. Essex County Council's Cabinet would formally consider the approval of the terms of their sale to EFDC, at a meeting of their Cabinet Committee in April 2016. An update will be provided at the next meeting of this Cabinet Committee.

(5) **North Weald Airfield** – Advice had been received from external solicitors regarding the letting of a concessionary contract to appoint an operational partner, reflecting the key principles previously agreed by Members. Work on the specification and requirements for the operational partner are ongoing and a further update would be brought back to the next Cabinet Committee meeting for consideration.

(6) **Site of former Sir Winston Churchill Public House** – Higgins, the developers of this site have now completed the piling works with an anticipated completion date for the development of the site in July 2017. The Council are actively marketing the retail area and a number of largely food and beverage operatives have expressed an interest in the development. Regarding the allocation of car parking spaces on the development this was now progressing and a further update will be reported at the next Cabinet Committee meeting.

(7) **Ongar Academy** – At a meeting held earlier today with the new head teacher, the planning application had been submitted and was due to be heard by the District Development Cabinet Committee at the end of April 2016. Discussions are ongoing with the school around the use of the adjacent leisure centre to deliver parts of the schools PE Curriculum.

(8) **Town Mead Depot** – The depot was being used temporarily as storage for Country Care while alternative options for use of the depot were still being considered.

(9) **Hillhouse Leisure / Community Hub** – A firm of Master Planners have been appointed jointly by Epping Forest District Council, Essex County Council and NHS England to establish a master plan for the site with a view to a joint outline planning application being sought.

Resolved:

To note 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.

49. NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD COMMUNITY DAY - 17 JULY 2016

The Director of Neighbourhoods presented a report to the Cabinet Committee regarding the North Weald Airfield Community Day. He advised that the event was being held on 17 July 2016 and would be facilitated by one of the airfields tenants, Weald Aviation. The theme North Weald Airfield – 100 not out would take the form of an old fashioned village fete with associated attractions.

The Director advised that following the tragic events at Shoreham last year, the airfield would be unable to stage any form of air display however it was hoped that some historic aircraft would visit the airfield during the day. To mark their involvement in World War II, the Norwegian air force had been invited to the event and will be bringing in a C-130 Hercules. Saunders Markets, the new market operator have indicated that they are keen to be involved in the community event.

Ward members requested a report after the event to come back to a future meeting of the Cabinet Committee.

Resolved:

To note the progress of the organisation of the North Weald Community Day 2016.

Reasons for Decision:

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

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

50. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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

51. 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 – Progress Report	3

52. EPPING FOREST SHOPPING PARK PROGRESS REPORT

The Asset Management Development Consultant presented a report to the Cabinet Committee regarding the progress on the Epping Forest Shopping Park. He advised that ongoing talks with Essex Highways regarding the Section 278 works were progressing unfortunately, however, the meetings are not attended by all Essex Highways Departments and the Council were at a stage to appoint a contractor for the works.

Consultants from Colliers International and White Young Green attended the meeting and updated the Cabinet Committee on the progress to date. The Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) submissions had been completed and an Invitation to Tender (ITT), which was the second stage was progressing. There was much interest in the units at the Epping Forest Shopping Park and talks were progressing with potential tenants.

Resolved:

- (1) To note the marketing report from Colliers International and Harvey Spack Field regarding progressing 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 following a request from tenderers for Stage 2 of the tender process the tender date has been extended by four weeks to 29 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