

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITIES SELECT
COMMITTEE
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 8 JULY 2015
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.30 - 9.15 PM**

Members Present: M Sartin (Chairman), , N Avey, L Hughes, R Jennings, S Neville, A Patel and B Surtees

Other members present: W Breare-Hall, G Waller and J H Whitehouse

Apologies for Absence: H Brady, R Gadsby, L Mead and A Mitchell MBE

Officers Present D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), K Durrani (Assistant Director (Technical Services)) and A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made pursuant to the Member's Code of Conduct.

2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

It was noted that there were no substitute members for this meeting.

3. DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PROGRAMME

(i) The Committee considered their draft terms of reference for the new Select Committee structure suggested by the Scrutiny Review Task and Finish Panel and instituted by the main Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee noted that Mr Macnab would be the lead officer and that he would, when the subject under discussion demanded, bring in other Assistant Directors or senior officers for their relevant expertise to aid the Committee in their discussions.

The Committee then went through their draft terms of reference and made the following comments and amendments:

- That it should specifically exclude Housing matters from the Communities section;
- That a regular review and update of the Local Plan be included; and
- That the monitoring and procurement of the Leisure Management Contract be added.

The Committee then went on to consider their draft work programme. They noted that:

- Under item 7, on the Bobbingworth Nature Reserve Liaison Group, in addition to receiving the notes of the meetings, the committee asked to have a specific updates, when appropriate, on the current position of the site;
- Under item 8, update on the Green Corporate Working Party, that they receive one at their November meeting; and

- That regular updates on the position of the Local Plan be added to the work programme.

They noted that a PICK form would be going to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee asking that the Waste Contract be looked at. In anticipation of receiving this item of work onto their work programme the meeting considered, that if the Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked them to look at this, that it should be scoped out at their September meeting and that if appropriate, a one item special meeting be arranged for November. This gap would enable the current situation to resolve itself and enable the committee consider not only the details but also the wider implications of the waste contract. The meeting should be opened out to all members and the public to attend. Also, it should not only have council officers in attendance but also officers from Biffa as well as the external consultant to enable a more complete picture to be had.

This meeting should be held in the Council Chamber and webcasting should also be considered.

(ii) The Committee then considered if they would like to receive the minutes of appropriate outside bodies that they would like to keep under review, namely the Local Highway Panel; the North Essex Parking Partnership; the Police and Crime Panel; and the Leisure Partnership Board.

Receipt of these minutes proved to be erratic for the Safer Cleaner Greener Scrutiny Panel and the Committee thought it better that they should be put in the Council Bulletin when they were received, to eliminate any delay in members seeing them. In this way they can identify any items of interest and could ask appropriate officers to report back on these specific matters at the next Select Committee meeting.

Councillor Sartin asked about tourism in our district and where was this reported on. She was told that it was reported to the Asset Management and Economic Development Cabinet Committee.

Councillor Whitehouse asked about One Epping Forest and for any feedback from the LSP. She was told that they published their minutes on their website; a link could be put into the Council Bulletin highlighting this.

Councillor Waller noted that the minutes for NEPP could run into a lot of pages. Could this be summarised and then put into bulletin, as it would save a lot of paper.

AGREED that the notes of meetings for the Local Highways Panel, the North Essex Parking Partnership, the Police and Crime Panel, and the Leisure Partnership Board be published in the Council Bulletin when they were first received by officers.

4. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2014/15 QUARTER 4 (OUTTURN) PERFORMANCE

The Committee considered the outturn (Q4) report for the Key Performance Indicators for 2014/15 specific to this Select Committee area of responsibility.

Nine of the thirty-six KPI for 2014/15 that was adopted by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee in March 2014 fell within the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Select Committee area of responsibility. The overall position in regard to the achievement of target performance at the end of the year for the nine indicators was:

- 6 (67%) indicators achieved the end of year target;
- 3 (33%) indicators did not achieve the cumulative end of year target.

Councillor Patel noted that the percentages given were useful but corresponding figures would be more helpful in making sense of the percentage figures.

The Committee went on to review each indicator and question any inconsistencies that they came across.

NEI002 - *% of all household waste sent to be recycled, reused or composted* – Mr Durrani the Assistant Director, Technical Services, commented that this target had not been achieved; the target of 60% had not been an easy one. Although, he noted that we were the 10th best authority in England for this. Officers still had to keep reminding the residents to recycle. Food was not being recycled in flats and that 50 to 60% of black bin waste was food.

The target for the coming year was to be 60% again.

Councillor Neville commented that he had observed that some bags had things falling out of them, and that the spillage was not being collected by the refuse collectors and was being left for their street cleaning colleagues. Mr Durrani replied that they should have picked up any spillage as that was part of the contract. If members know of any such incident that they should let him know, giving the time and location, and officers would chase it up.

Councillor Whitehouse asked why did the targets for each quarter change. She was told that it used to be a static 60%, but with food and recycling being seasonal, attempts were made to even this out over the year and give it a seasonal profile.

Councillor Surtees commented that it was unfortunate that such a small percentage would mean the difference between pass or fail. Would it be possible to have the tonnage put in as well? Mr Durrani said that this could be put into the comments section.

NEI003 – *what % of the district had unacceptable levels of litter* – and **NEI004** – *what % of the district had unacceptable levels of detritus* – the committee noted that these were linked. Partly responsible for not meeting the targets was the change over from Sita to Biffa. There should be an improvement over the coming months. This system looked at random sections of the district and it could be that it just happened to look at a bad part of the district, but we do have high standards, better than most districts in Essex.

It should be noted that we now recycle the detritus and can even make some money from this.

Councillor Neville noted that officers said that they chose areas at random across the district, but was there a good mix of the different type of areas. Mr Durrani said that they did try to have a representative mix of urban and rural sites.

Councillor Surtees said that it was right to say that the settling down of the Biffa contract would take some time. Was it unreal to say that we would be getting good results soon and that we would need some time for it to settle down?

NEI006 – *what % of recorded incidences of fly-tipping are investigated within 3 working days of being recorded;*

NEI007 – *what % of recorded incidents of recorded fly-tipping (contract cleared) are removed within 5 working days of being recorded; and*

NEI008 – *what % of recorded incidents of fly-tipping (variation order/non-contract) are removed within 10 working days of being recorded.*

The Committee considered the above KPIs on fly-tipping.

Councillor Surtees asked if we could stop and search vehicles carrying waste. He was told that was part of the licensing system and the Environment Agency assisted by the Police could do this but not our officers. The District Council did have use of mobile CCTV and this was used in certain hotspots.

Councillor Patel wondered what was the difference between contract clearance in 5 working days and non-contract clearance in 10 working days. He was told that contract clearing was for land owned by this authority. This was easier to manage as we were also responsible by statute. Non-contract clearing was in areas not owned by us, this was private land and it was more complicated in that we have to identify the land owner and serve notice on them to remove the waste.

Councillor Neville noted that under NEI008, the percentage had gone down to 91% from 97% in quarter 1. He was told that this indicator was driven by what we were told about the various sites. Mr Nolan could give him a fuller explanation.

NEO009 – *what % of out of hours noise complaints are responded to within 15 minutes* – it was noted that officers did go out with noise meters but they had to make judgement calls on the complaints and they also needed evidence.

Councillor Surtees noted the comments section said that “issues needed to be improved regarding Mears initial call handling” was this getting any better? He was told that this was a more efficient way of dealing with out of hours complaints, but there was some issues encountered in the early days. They were now becoming more confident in handling this type of complaint and getting better.

The Committee asked that in future the sheets on the KPIs be reproduced in colour. Officers agreed to do so.

RESOLVED:

That the Quarter 4 (outturn) performance figures in relation to the Key Performance Indicators relevant to this Select Committee be noted.

5. UPDATE ON THE ADOPTION OF THE RIVER RODING FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Committee considered the letter from the Environment Agency updating the council on the River Roding Flood Risk Management Strategy. It was noted that the Environment Agency (EA) attended the Safer Cleaner Greener Scrutiny Panel sometime ago to brief them on this management strategy. This letter was sent to every property next to the river and to us as we had land by the river. It was noted that members were very unhappy about this strategy.

This was the first part of the strategy. The EA was responsible for the overview of flood risk management in England and had identified the best way to manage flood

risk in the Roding catchment over the next 100 years, with the aim of protecting as many properties as possible while carefully balancing the amount of public money they spent. It was noted that the assets and channel which they would cease to maintain would remain the responsibility of the riparian owner.

The EA would also be investigating proposals for a flood storage area in the north of the catchment which would provide increased protection from flooding to over 1000 properties downstream. They would be contacting those affected shortly with further information on this proposal.

6. UPDATE ON WASTE MATTERS

The Portfolio Holder for the Environment, Councillor Breare-Hall gave a short update on the recent problems with the collection of waste in the District.

He noted that the situation was slowly getting better, the number of missed collections continued to decline as did the calls of complaint.

There were still issues that needed to be improved such as improving the working relationship with Biffa, and the problems with consistently missed collections. They would be meeting again to ask for an explanation and the need to put in additional resources to make it work.

Councillor Sartin asked if there was any improvement in the assisted collections. She was told that there had been an improvement. It seemed that the IT was not working and they were currently trying to put it right. They had heavily invested in IT for each vehicle. But this was still causing problems both for us and them and residents. As it was not fully operational some residents were being missed.

Councillor Patel wondered that, as the vehicles were being monitored electronically, was there anything on this system to say why roads were being missed. He was told that roads were missed in the early days as they were not shown clearly on the PDAs and the crews were not familiar with the routes; they were missing some side roads, although they were being marked off as being collected. It was not deliberate as Biffa would be losing money on this as they would have to follow up on these missed collections.

Councillor Neville asked if it was down certain roads that houses were being collected but not the flats. Mr Durrani said that some properties were not on our gazetteer and so was not on their devices. Other factors also were in play such as not having the key for access to the flats, or too narrow access roads etc.

Councillor Surtees commented that some Biffa employees felt that the balancing of the routes was still not right and that they were also critical of upper management.

Councillor Whitehouse asked if officers had to channel any complaints through the computer system or could they still phone? Mr Durrani replied that they could still be contacted directly by phone if need be. But the computer system was better for as soon as a complaint was logged on our system it went straight through to the Biffa system.

Councillor Breare-Hall concluded that when they were back to a level service they would recommence trying to re-educate the public on what we do and how they can help us achieve our goals.

7. REPORTS TO BE MADE TO THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The committee noted that their terms of reference and work programme would be going to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

8. FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee noted their scheduled future meeting dates.