

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

**Committee:** Asset Management and Economic Development Cabinet Committee      **Date:** Thursday, 19 April 2018

**Place:** Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping      **Time:** 7.10 - 7.50 pm

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

**Other Councillors:** Councillor J M Whitehouse

**Apologies:** G Mohindra

**Officers Present:** D Macnab (Acting Chief Executive), J Houston (Local Strategic Partnership Manager), M Warr (Economic Development Officer), J Leither (Democratic Services Officer) and A Rose (Marketing & Digital Content Officer)

**Also in attendance:**

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### **19. 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.

### **20. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

The Cabinet Committee noted that Councillor C Whitbread substituted for Councillor G Mohindra.

### **21. 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 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.

### **22. MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2018 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record with the exception of a typographical error on page 5 of the minutes under the St John's Road Redevelopment, where it says tri-partie agreement and should say tri-partite agreement.

## 23. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - PROGRESS REPORT

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

### 1. Visitor Economy

The Tourism and Visitor Strategy had been finalised and agreed by the Tourism and Visitor Board. It was planned to launch the Strategy during the summer.

The Strategy was an example of the collaborative approach that the Economic Development team (EDT) had been working towards in conjunction with partners such as Epping/Ongar Railway, Waltham Abbey Town Council, Epping Forest College, The Royal Gunpowder Mills and others.

The Visit Epping Forest website had continued to grow in content and audience. This was the first year that detailed analytics for the website were available. From the first quarter of this calendar year there were over 20,000 users viewing over 45,000 pages and the EDT had seen in excess of 80% of which were new users.

### 2. Economic Development Strategy

Following significant input into the employment aspects of the Local Plan, the EDT were now focussing on the delivery of a new long term Economic Development Strategy. It was currently anticipated that a draft strategy would be put forward for approval by the end of the calendar year. The Strategy will not be EFDC's alone but a partner document looking at the district as a 'place' and recognising the involvement, influence and role of many stakeholders in the local economy.

### 3. Town Centres

#### **Waltham Abbey Wayfinding Project**

As reported at the last meeting of the Cabinet Committee this project had been completed. There had been a Survey of local stakeholders to ascertain their views on the strategy and overall their responses were very agreeable. They welcomed the new signs around Waltham Abbey and thought that they were informative and an improvement of the town's appearance.

### 4. Business Support

#### **Business Briefing**

The EDT had produced a mini version of it's One Business Briefing which was issued and distributed alongside the Business Rate bills to just under 4,000 contacts with the District in March 2018.

#### **External Funding**

The EDT continued to work to attract external grant funding for businesses within the District. A few examples of this work are highlighted below:

South East Business Boost (SEBB) - A capital grants scheme for business growth was offering grants of £1,000 to £10,000 for up to 30% of total project costs. SEBB informed the EDT that to date this was the best response they have had to their workshop schemes across Essex. The very first funding grant has come out of the workshops and been given to a local business in Ongar.

## **6. Digital Innovation Programme**

ARUP consultants, one of the leading consultancies on digital innovation have been selected to work with the DIZ to develop a long term strategy for digital development in the area. The aim of the strategy, which will be completed by July, is to give a clear picture of what digital infrastructure and approaches already exist across the geographies and sectors that make up the DIZ and to set out the key challenges facing an area like this to become a Beacon for digitally enabled service delivery and economic development. The project is jointly funded by 11 organisations including private sector, health sector, local authorities and economic development organisations.

At the request of the Chairman the EDO would give a presentation at the next Cabinet Committee regarding the background and the work programme of the Digital Innovation Programme.

### **Resolved:**

- (1) That the current progress and work programme of the Council's Economic Development Section were noted; and
- (2) That the EDO would give a presentation at the next meeting of the Cabinet Committee regarding the background of the Digital Innovation Programme.

### **Reasons for Decision:**

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

### **Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

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

## **24. ASSET MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS - PROGRESS REPORT**

The Head of Economic Development presented a report to the Cabinet Committee and advised that the report was detailed and asked Members if they had any questions.

Councillor J M Whithouse asked if there were any updates on the St Johns Road Development and stated that he was conscious nationally that there had been quite a lot of movement in the retail market and more recently changes in the casual dining market and was wondering if that was relevant to this area and if it would have any effect on the progression and development of the site.

The Head of Economic Development advised that figures had been published this week alluding to footfall in the high street and trading through retail parks, evidence was emerging and he would feed that information back when it was available.

The Chairman advised that Frontier Estates were very keen to proceed but that Epping Town Council had still yet to sign and that it was all in the hands of the Solicitors.

Councillor J M Whitehouse asked if the development would look similar to the outline plans published in 2012 or were there any significant changes.

The Chairman advised that the cinema and the food store was still keen to progress and there were also plans for the residential development on the site.

**Resolved:**

That the current progress on the Council's Asset Management and Development projects were noted.

**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 was a monitoring report for information, not action.

**25. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

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

**26. 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>
7 (5)	North Weald Airfield	3

**27. NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD**

The Acting Chief Executive verbally updated the Cabinet Committee on the progress at North Weald Airfield. He advised that the Council were dealing with the Airfield and the non-aviation side.

Aviation

The Police Air Service base would be moving from Lippitts Hill in High Beach to North Weald Airfield by the end of 2018, once their base had been built. The Cabinet Committee noted that the Herts and Essex Air Ambulance Service have been successfully operating from North Weald Airfield for several years.

Non Aviation

The market at North Weald Airfield was running with more success since the new Operators took over the market.

Enquiries had been made from an outdoor events company who organised large events. They were looking at North Weald Airfield to potentially host a family orientated weekend event and also a classic car event.

**CHAIRMAN**