



### NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETING

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL to be held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING at 8.00 pm on Tuesday, 24 April 2018 for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the agenda.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Macnab'.

Derek Macnab  
Acting Chief Executive

Democratic Services  
Officer:

Council Secretary: Simon Hill  
Tel: 01992 564249 Email:  
democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

#### WEBCASTING/FILMING NOTICE

Please note: this meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site - at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed. The meeting may also be otherwise filmed by third parties with the Chairman's permission.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during this webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

Therefore by entering the Chamber and using the lower public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for web casting and/or training purposes. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured they should sit in the upper council chamber public gallery area or otherwise indicate to the Chairman before the start of the meeting.

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact the Public Relations Manager on 01992 564039.

## **BUSINESS**

### **1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

This meeting is to be webcast. Members are reminded of the need to activate their microphones before speaking. The Assistant Director of Governance will read the following announcement:

“The chairman would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be broadcast live to the internet (or filmed) and will be capable of repeated viewing (or another use by such third parties).

If you are seated in the lower public seating area it is likely that the recording cameras will capture your image and this will result in the possibility that your image will become part of the broadcast.

This may infringe your human and data protection rights and if you wish to avoid this you should move to the upper public gallery.”

### **2. FORMER COUNCILLOR R. BRAYBROOK, S.D. RILEY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE INDEPENDENT MEMBER P. ADAMS**

The Council is invited to stand for a minute’s silence in tribute to the memory of former Councillors R. Braybrook, S.D. Riley and a Standards Committee Independent Member Mr P. Adams, who have recently passed away.

Former Councillor R. Braybrook was the Chairman of the Council for the 1989/90 municipal year and represented the Buckhurst Hill East Ward from 1981-84 and Buckhurst Hill West Ward from 1985-1994 of the District as a Conservative Councillor.

He served on many of the Council’s members bodies during this time, including Recreation and Amenities, Joint Staff, Joint Works, Policy & Co-Ordinating, Transportation, Public Health, Plans Sub-Committee ‘C’, Housing Committee and Housing Defects Panel. He also represented the Council on Outside Bodies including Air Training Corps – 2324 Chigwell Squadron Civilian Committee, Chigwell Old People’s Welfare Association, Epping Forest District Sports Council, Arts Association and Shows Committee, Eastern Arts Association, Buckhurst Hill and Debden Community Associations, Chigwell Safety Advisory Committee, National Housing & Town Planning Councils Liaison Committee and the governing body of Buckhurst Primary School.

Former Councillor S.D (Peter) Riley represented the Paternoster Ward from 1979-1998 of the District as a Labour Councillor and was the Leader of the Minority Group in 1979.

He served on many of the Council’s members bodies during this time, including Safety Sub-Committee, Libraries and Museums Sub-Committee, Joint Works Committee, Joint Staff Committee, Environmental Health & Control/ Environmental Protection, Grange Farm Review Committee, North Weald Airfield Sub-Committee, Staff appeals panel, Development Committee, Housing Management Committee, Recreation Committee, Public Health Committee, Leisure Services Committee, Libraries, Arts & Museum Sub-Committee, Personnel Sub-Committee, Resources Sub-Committee and Grant Aid Panel. He also represented the Council on Outside Bodies including Citizens’ Advice Bureau (Waltham Abbey Branch), Waltham Holy Cross Old People’s Welfare Association, Waltham Abbey Safety Council.

Peter Adams served as a Independent Person on the Standards Committee from 13 December 2012.

### **3. MINUTES (Pages 9 - 24)**

To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2018 (attached).

[Click here for the appendices to the Council Minutes on 22 February 2018.](#)

### **4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To declare interests in any item on the agenda.

### **5. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- (a) Apologies for Absence
- (b) Chairman's Announcements
- (c) Voluntary Action Epping Forest

The Chairman will present the Essex County Council Bowl and the High Sheriffs' grant of £1,500 to Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF). The Essex County Award gives credit to organisations or teams of people that have made extra effort beyond their statutory or formal duty to deliver programmes directly to the community. Furthermore, the High Sheriffs' grant will support the installation of enhanced key safes and other safety equipment in the homes of vulnerable people.

### **6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)**

To answer questions asked after notice in accordance with the provisions contained within Part 4 of the Council Rules of the Constitution on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the District:

- (a) to the Leader of the Council;
- (b) to any Portfolio Holder; or
- (c) to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Questions, if any, will follow if not received in time to be incorporated into the agenda.

### **7. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER NOTICE**

To answer questions asked after notice in accordance with the provisions contained within the Council Rules in Part 4 of the Constitution on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the District:

- (a) to the Chairman of the Council;
- (b) to the Leader of the Council;
- (c) to any Member of the Cabinet; or

- (d) the Chairman of any Committee or Sub-Committee.

The Council Rules provide that answers to questions under notice may take the form of:

- (a) direct oral answer;
- (b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
- (c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner.

Answers to questions falling within (a) and (b) above will be made available to the member asking the question one hour before the meeting. Answers to questions falling within (c) above will be circulated to all councillors.

Questions, if any, will follow if not received in time to be incorporated into the agenda.

**Question by Councillor R Butler to Portfolio Holder for Safer, Greener, Transport, Councillor S Kane**

There have been many residents complaining about the dangers of articulated trucks and lorries that seem to overflow from the Junction 26 lorry park and cause real problems in the adjacent roads that are supposed to be restricted and are not built for this kind of heavy duty traffic with lorries parking, turning and destroying some of the bollards, road surface and the road sign in the areas of Old Shire Lane, Honey Lane, Farthingdale Lane and Stoney Bridge Drive?

I have had communications from the Police Traffic Management Section, who have explained that parking in these areas is definitely a NEPP /Council issue and not a Police issue. This is an ongoing problem which is getting worse and traffic restrictions in Old Shire Lane need to be enforced or limited access restrictions put in place with the bollards and street sign replaced.

Could the Safer, Cleaner and Transport Portfolio Holder advise what action he will take in partnership with NEPP and ECC regarding these problems?

**8. COUNCILLOR A BOYCE, COUNCILLOR L GIRLING, COUNCILLOR G SHIELL & COUNCILLOR S WATSON**

To note that Councillor A Boyce, L Girling, G Shiell and S Watson have resigned and elections to fill these positions will be held in May 2018.

**9. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR IAN HADLEY**

The Chairman to welcome Councillor Ian Hadley, who was elected (unopposed) on 6 April 2018 to represent the Moreton and Fyfield Ward until May 2020.

**10. REPORTS FROM THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET (Pages 25 - 56)**

To receive reports and any announcements from the Leader and members of the Cabinet on matters falling within their area of responsibility:

- (a) Report of the Leader;

- (b) Report of the Assets and Economic Development Portfolio Holder;
- (c) Report of the Environment Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (d) Report of the Finance Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (e) Report of the Housing Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (f) Report of the Leisure and Community Services Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (g) Report of the Planning and Governance Portfolio Holder (attached);
- (i) Report of the Safer, Greener and Transport Portfolio Holder (attached); and
- (j) Report of the Technology and Support Services Portfolio Holder (attached).

## **11. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS WITHOUT NOTICE**

The Council Rules provide for questions by any member of the Council to the Leader or any Portfolio Holder, without notice on:

- (i) reports under the previous item; or
- (ii) any other matter of a non operational character in relation to the powers and duties of the Council or which affects all or part of the District or some or all of its inhabitants.

Council Rules provide that answers to questions without notice may take the form of:

- (a) direct oral answer from the Leader or, at the request of the Leader, from another member of the Cabinet;
- (b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication;
- (c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner; or
- (d) where the question relates to an operational matter, the Leader or a member of the Cabinet will request that a response be given direct to the questioner by the relevant Chief Officer.

In accordance with the Council Rules, a time limit of thirty minutes is set for questions. Any question not dealt with within the time available will receive a written reply. The Chairman may extend this period by up to a further 10 minutes at their discretion.

## **12. MOTIONS**

To consider any motions, notice of which has been given under Council Rules.

Motions, if any, will follow if not received in time to be incorporated into the agenda.

## **13. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Pages 57 - 58)**

- (a) To receive the report of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

and to answer any questions without notice asked in accordance with Council Rules.

#### 14. APPOINTMENT TO SENIOR MANAGEMENT SELECTION PANEL

##### Recommending:

- (1) That the Council appoint J M Whitehouse to the vacancy on the Senior Management Section Panel for the remainder of the 2017/18 municipal year; and
- (2) That the Council appoint J H Whitehouse to the vacancy on the Senior Management Appeals Panel for the remainder of the 2017/18 municipal year.

Following the death of former Councillor Surtees earlier this year, it is necessary to appoint a Liberal Democrat representative to the Senior Management Section Panel to ensure that any meetings or training can commence in the remainder of the 2017/18 municipal year.

The appointment of J M Whitehouse to the Senior Management Section Panel would create a vacancy on the Senior Management Appeals Panel. Therefore the Liberal Democrat Group have advised that they wish this position to be filled by J H Whitehouse for the remainder of 2017/18 municipal year.

#### 15. CONSTITUTION WORKING GROUP

To consider any recommendations arising from the Constitution working group on 16 April 2018. (To follow)

#### 16. JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- (a) To receive from Council representatives the reports (attached - if any) on the business of joint arrangements and external organisations and to receive answers to any questions on those bodies which may be put without notice; and
- (b) To request written reports from representatives on joint arrangements and external organisations for future meetings.

#### 17. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

**Exclusion:** To consider whether, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press should be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below on grounds that they will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the following paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) or are confidential under Section 100(A)(2):

Agenda Item No	Subject	Exempt Information Paragraph Number
18	Implementation of people Strategy	1

The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, which came into effect on 1 March 2006, requires the Council to consider whether maintaining the exemption listed above outweighs the potential public interest in disclosing the information. Any member who considers that this test should be applied to any

currently exempted matter on this agenda should contact the proper officer at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

**Background Papers:** Article 17 of the Constitution (Access to Information) define background papers as being documents relating to the subject matter of the report which in the Proper Officer's opinion:

(a) disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based; and

(b) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report and does not include published works or those which disclose exempt or confidential information and in respect of executive reports, the advice of any political advisor.

The Council will make available for public inspection for four years after the date of the meeting one copy of each of the documents on the list of background papers.

**18. IMPLEMENTATION OF PEOPLE STRATEGY (Pages 59 - 76)**

(Leader) To consider the attached restricted report.

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## EPHING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COUNCIL MINUTES

<b>Committee:</b>	Council	<b>Date:</b>	22 February 2018
<b>Place:</b>	Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping	<b>Time:</b>	7.30 - 10.15 pm
<b>Members Present:</b>	Councillors D Stallan (Chairman), R Bassett (Vice-Chairman), R Baldwin, A Beales, N Bedford, H Brady, W Breare-Hall, R Brookes, R Butler, G Chambers, D Dorrell, R Gadsby, L Girling, A Grigg, S Heap, L Hughes, R Jennings, H Kane, S Kane, H Kauffman, P Keska, J Knapman, A Lion, L Mead, G Mohindra, S Murray, S Neville, A Patel, J Philip, C P Pond, C C Pond, C Roberts, D Roberts, B Sandler, M Sartin, G Shiell, P Stalker, D Sunger, E Webster, C Whitbread, H Whitbread, J H Whitehouse, J M Whitehouse and D Wixley		
<b>Apologies:</b>	Councillors N Avey, A Boyce, K Chana, J Jennings, S Jones, Y Knight, J Lea, M McEwen, R Morgan, B Rolfe and S Stavrou		
<b>Officers Present:</b>	G Chipp (Chief Executive), D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), C O'Boyle (Director of Governance), R Palmer (Director of Resources), A Hall (Director of Communities), S Hill (Assistant Director (Governance)), S Kits (Social Media and Customer Services Officer), P Maddock (Assistant Director (Accountancy)), J Whittaker (Finance Officer), R Perrin (Democratic Services Officer) and P Seager (Chairman's Secretary)		

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### 87. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Assistant Director, Governance 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.

### 88. COUNCILLOR B SURTEES

It was with much sadness that the Chairman informed the Council of the death of Councillor Brian Surtees.

Councillor B Surtees had represented the Chipping Ongar, Greensted and Marden Ash Ward of the District as a Liberal Democrat Councillor from 2014 to 2018. He had served on many of the Council's Committees, Sub-Committees, Select Committees and member bodies during this time. He had also been a very active member of his local community, an Ongar Town Councillor and Minister for the Church of England.

Members paid tribute to the memory of Councillor B Surtees and stood for a minute's silence in his memory.

### 89. COUNCILLOR D COLLINS

It was with much sadness that the Chairman informed the Council of the death of former Councillor Diana Collins.

Diana Collins had represented the Epping Hemnall Ward between 1991-1999 and the Passingford Ward between 2001 and 2011 as a Conservative Councillor. She

had been the Leader of the Council between 2006 – 2011 and Leader of the Conservative Group from 2004 to 2011. She had served and attended many of the Executive Committees, Sub-Committees, Select Committees and Outside Bodies that had related to her Executive position. She had also supported a large number of local charities and charity groups in the district.

Members paid tribute to the memory of former Councillor D Collins and stood for a minute's silence in her memory.

## 90. MINUTES

### RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Council meetings on 14 December 2017 and 21 December 2017 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

## 91. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(a) Pursuant to the Council's Staff Code of Conduct, S Hill (Assistant Director of Governance) declared a personal interest in agenda item 18 (Appointment of Returning and Electoral Registration Officer and Associated Matters). He advised that he had determined that his interest was pecuniary and that he would leave the meeting for the consideration and voting on the matter.

(b) Pursuant to the Council's Staff Code of Conduct, D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), C O'Boyle (Director of Governance) and R Palmer (Director of Resources) declared a personal interest in agenda item 22 (Appointment of Acting Chief Executive and Associated Matters). They advised that they had determined that their interest was pecuniary and that they would leave the meeting for the consideration and voting on the matter.

(c) Pursuant to the Council's Staff Code of Conduct, A Hall (Director of Communities) declared a personal interest in agenda item 22 (Appointment of Acting Chief Executive and Associated Matters). He advised that he had determined that his interest was non-pecuniary but he would leave the meeting for the consideration and voting on the matter.

(d) Pursuant to the Council's Staff Code of Conduct, S Hill (Assistant Director of Governance) declared a personal interest in agenda item 22 (Appointment of Acting Chief Executive and Associated Matters). He advised that he had determined that his interest was non-pecuniary and he would remain in the meeting for the consideration and voting on the matter.

## 92. ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Announcements by the Chairman of Council

(i) Chairman's Events

The Chairman advised that he had attended and represented the Council at a number of events around the District since the last meeting.

(ii) Chairman's Civic Dinner

The Chairman asked Members to advise the Chairman's Secretary, Pat Seager whether they were attending the Chairman's Civic Dinner on Friday 16 March 2018.

(iii) Floral Display

The Chairman announced that he intended to send the flowers from tonight's meeting to Councillor S Stavrou.

**93. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)**

**(a) Traders at the Debden Broadway**

**Question from Duncan Gould to Councillor A Grigg, Assets and Economic Development Portfolio Holder**

"I would like to ask some questions at the meeting on Thursday 22 February as set out below. Some context is put at the start to clarify the questions.

The responses just received from a detailed written survey completed by approximately 30 (out of around 45) of the traders on Debden Broadway tell us at least three things:

- many of the businesses are suffering badly, unfortunately made worse by the opening of new business park, as footfall is being taken away from the Broadway (unlike was expected);
- the rent rises being seen of c40% this year will for many put them out of business. Even small rises are unsupportable for some of the traders. It seems keys may soon be handed back by more than a few traders, potentially worsening footfall and income to the Council; and
- the traders' own customers are saying that the severely inadequate parking caused by recent changes is putting those customers off coming back.

Hence my questions are:

1. What do you think is really going on, and what steps can be taken straight away to ensure that this historic shopping area survives before businesses collapse/customers go elsewhere?
2. The traders themselves in the survey have detailed a number of recommendations. How can their first-hand experience of the situation also best be assessed and acted on with some urgency? And
3. What else would need to happen to move this issue forward with pace?"

**Reply of Councillor A Grigg, Assets and Economic Development Portfolio Holder**

"I would like to thank Mr Gould for his question that covers a number of related points.

The Council manages a significant commercial estate comprising of commercial, light industrial and retail premises, in numerous locations across the District. As with all

the Council's assets, income received from shops and businesses in The Broadway goes towards funding the public services provided by this Council on behalf of everyone who lives and works in our District. It is, therefore, very much in the Council's interest, to ensure that The Broadway continues to thrive and remain a vibrant local shopping centre.

In the past, consultants reported that 85% of spending by Epping Forest residents was being spent outside our District. This led Members to invest in the Shopping Park in order to encourage a shift in that trend by giving our residents more opportunity to spend in our area. This, in turn, enables us to continue with our policies of quality services combined with low Council Tax.

In the Broadway, as with any High Street, some businesses do better than others for a variety of reasons, and some traders have concerns that their businesses are not performing to their expectations. However, I can confirm that demand for premises on The Broadway remains at a high level. There are significant levels of interest in any unit that becomes vacant, with demand well in excess of supply. It is also a fact that this interest is from a more diverse range of commercial tenants, including café and restaurants, which will both increase dwell time in The Broadway and encourage trade throughout the day and evening. Such expressions of interest support our belief that there may be an increase in footfall, which should continue to rise with the new residential developments at Burton Road, and Vere Road, to the benefit of all tenants on The Broadway.

The Council has invested in The Broadway improvement scheme and it should be noted that other retailers have demonstrated confidence in its future. For example the major refurbishment of Sainsbury's, the new M&S Simply Food in the petrol station and the prospective tenants expressing interest in the new retail shops in the Landmark Development.

It is true that rents are increasing. However, this is from a comparatively low base position, and whilst appearing significant in percentage terms, is not excessive in overall quantum terms. Current rents and proposed increases are still extremely competitive when compared to other similar locations within the M25.

It is suggested that tenants of the Shopping Park have benefited unfairly from rent-free periods. It is, in fact, normal practice to allow rent free periods over the time tenants are fitting out units at their cost, and tenants in The Broadway have, over the years, benefited from similar arrangements. At the time of the Shopping Park planning application, an impact assessment on local shopping centres was undertaken. Whilst this demonstrated no significant negative effect, it is our intention to commission a further impact assessment once all the units have traded for a period of time. I will keep Members advised of the outcome and any action I propose if there is demonstrable negative effect.

We are very happy to continue to liaise with Tenants and The Broadway Town Centre Partnership, who we have supported by way of grant-aid over a number of years. To date, and to the best of our knowledge, no tenant has ever returned their keys and I believe that our estates and valuation staff currently have the skills, experience and flexibility to support our tenants in remaining viable.

Finally, I have taken on board the concerns regarding parking at The Broadway. I know that there is a Parking Review for the area underway and I will be liaising with the Safer, Cleaner and Transport Portfolio Holder to ensure that future shopper parking requirements are being addressed as part of the review.

I appreciate that this is a long answer, but the topic is important. I will provide a written copy of my response to Mr Gould and Members.”

**Supplementary Question from Duncan Gould to Councillor A Grigg, Assets and Economic Development Portfolio Holder**

“How was the footfall of The Broadway being measured before and after the opening of the Retail Park?”

**Reply of Councillor A Grigg, Assets and Economic Development Portfolio Holder**

“There continues to be a great number of enquiries regarding any shops that became vacant in The Broadway. With the housing developments near by, there is an expectation that these residents would use the shops increasing footfall. Furthermore, there is a new restaurant opening with extended opening hours, which would create another reason for people to visit The Broadway and provide an opportunity for them to spend money in the shops.

With regards to a further retail impact study, this would be carried out later in the year, when all the units at the Retail Park had been let and were trading.”

**94. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER NOTICE**

**Question to Councillor W Breare-Hall, Portfolio Holder for Environment Portfolio Holder by Councillor R Butler.**

“Could the Environment Portfolio Holder confirm that the tons of waste paper collected weekly by our waste contractor throughout Epping Forest is actually being recycled and not shipped off to a landfill site far away?”

There have been recent reports in the media that waste paper being shipped off to India and other countries and not being recycled but left in landfill sites. Could the portfolio Holder guarantee that this is not happening in Epping Forest?”

**Answer to Councillor R Butler from Councillor W Breare-Hall, Portfolio Holder for Environment Portfolio Holder.**

“Ensuring the public can have confidence that the material they sort and put out for recycling is actually being recycled is very important, and something this Council takes very seriously. Articles in the press that highlight rogue traders and bad practice can inevitably cause concern.

I am pleased, therefore, to have this opportunity to reassure Epping Forest residents that all the recyclable material processed on our behalf by Biffa, our waste and recycling contractor, is indeed being recycled, and is not sent to landfill.

Biffa take the recycling collected from our doorsteps to their Material Recycling Facility in Edmonton, where it is separated, sorted and sold on to various companies who then use those materials in their manufacturing processes. Until recently, all of the paper produced by the Material Recycling Facility was being sold to China. This has now changed, due to the Chinese Government’s decision to encourage the use of their own recycling materials. However, Biffa continue to sell the recycling materials to other national and international businesses for use as raw material.

I hope this alleviates any concerns Cllr. Butler had, and I encourage him and all our residents to continue recycling as much of their waste as possible, safe in the knowledge that they really are helping reduce our impact on the environment.”

#### **95. REPORTS FROM THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET**

The Council received written reports from all the Portfolio Holders. The Chairman invited the Leader to provide an oral report and any other members of the Cabinet to give an update of their written report, if required.

##### **(a) Leader of Council**

The Leader advised that following the Council decision on 14 December 2017 to agree the Draft Local Plan, they were working towards the submission deadline. He would be supporting the process throughout this period and would be attending the Duty to Co-operate meetings.

In addition, he had recently attended sites in Epping, North Weald and Coopersale to look at the construction of new housing stock. He thanked A Hall and P Pledger who had accompanied him and advised that with the adjusted housing policy, more local residents should benefit from these houses.

Lastly, the Leader advised that this would be the last meeting of the current Chief Executive, Glen Chipp. He took the opportunity to thank him for his loyal service over the past 5 years and thanked him on a personal level for his support and guidance.

#### **96. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS WITHOUT NOTICE**

##### **(a) Epping Forest District Health & Wellbeing Strategy**

Councillor J H Whitehouse asked the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Community Services, what consultation had been done with the groups, she thought would benefit by the initiatives in the Epping Forest District Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2028?

Councillor G Mohindra, the Health and Wellbeing Champion for West Essex replied on behalf of Councillor H Kane as he had been involved with the Strategy. He assured Councillor J H Whitehouse that the strategy itself had been done in consultation with voluntary groups including VAEF, dentists, opticians and other local groups and he would send a list of organisations to her.

##### **(b) Alternative use of funding for the Police**

Councillor S Murray asked the Safer, Greener and Transport Portfolio Holder whether any consideration had been given to the District Development Funding for the extra Policing, to be alternatively used to fund the reintroduction of street lighting throughout the hours of darkness in the District.

Councillor S Kane advised that many residents had advocated the extra support to the local police and the Safer Communities Programme. Although it was not a statutory service, a three year initiative had been considered to bridge the gap between the shortfall of police officers today and the increase in police officers promised by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Roger Hurst.

(c) Policing Presence in the District

Councillor D Sunger asked the Safer, Greener and Transport Portfolio Holder what was being done to increase the policing presence in the district, especially in the Chigwell area.

Councillor S Kane advised that, in addition to the proposed Council funding for additional police officers, the Council had provided further funding for the Parkguard initiative, which provided a visual reassurance for residents and a valuable method of gathering information. The Council had been working closely with both the Essex Police and Metropolitan Police to provide a police presence in the Chigwell area. He advised that any crimes should be reported to the 101 hotline or if it was emergency to 999.

(d) Debden Parking Review

Councillor C Roberts asked the Safer, Greener and Transport Portfolio Holder that as landlord's of retail units on The Broadway, Debden and with the current parking review taking place; could this be an opportunity to provide the same concessions to customers as the retail park.

Councillor S Kane advised that there were many factors effecting the trading at The Broadway which included the parking. He advised that the Council had a duty to get the balance right between residents, commuters and businesses and the parking review would be the correct process.

(e) Local Plan – Member Involvement

Councillor J M Whitehouse asked the Planning and Governance Portfolio Holder whether he could give an update on his commitment to involve members in the implementation of the Local Plan.

Councillor J Philip advised that the calendar of meetings had re-established the Local Plan Cabinet Committee and there would be a Members briefing on the 15 March 2018. It had not been decided how exactly the Master Plans would be dealt with although the Council would be considering the planning approaches through the Constitutional Working Party.

(f) Localism Task and Finish Panel Essex County Council (ECC)

Councillor C C Pond asked the Leader to respond and attend the ECC Task and Finish Panel's request regarding what prospective services they would like devolved to the District Council.

Councillor C Whitbread advised that he would attend the meetings and respond to the request about services that EFDC would benefit in providing and taking from ECC.

(g) Local Plan – Jessel Green

Councillor S Murray asked the Planning and Governance Portfolio Holder whether the Cabinet had faith in the Local Plan and whether Loughton, in particular Jessel Green had been treated fairly.

Councillor J Philip advised that he had faith in the Local Plan and that with the hierarchy of assessment that had been required in terms of how the sites were

assessed, it had been clear that green space within a built up area would be rated as a higher selection choice for proposed development. He stated that at the beginning of the process, five green sites within Loughton had been selected for housing and by the time the Council had reached Regulation 19, this had been reduced to one and the area had been reduced to 50%. Some changes had occurred and he would have been happy for more housing within Theydon Bois, although the sites were not available. He was confident that the Local Plan would be submitted within the required time scales.

#### 97. MOTIONS

The Chairman reported that there were no motions to be considered at this meeting.

#### 98. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2018/19

**Mover: Councillor A Lion, Portfolio, Technology and Support Services**

Councillor A Lion submitted a report regarding the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2018/19 which was required by Section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011 to be published each financial year. It specifically included the Council's approach to its highest and lowest paid employees.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

##### **RESOLVED:**

That, the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2018/19 attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes be adopted.

#### 99. CALENDAR OF COUNCIL MEETINGS 2018/19

**Mover: J Philip, Planning and Governance Portfolio Holder.**

Councillor J Philip submitted a report regarding the Calendar of Council meetings for 2018/19.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED:**

##### **RESOLVED:**

That, as attached at Appendix 2 to these minutes, the draft Calendar of Council meetings for 2018/19 be adopted.

#### 100. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2018/19

**Mover: Councillor G Mohindra, Finance Portfolio Holder.**

Councillor G Mohindra presented a report on the Council's Treasury Management Strategy, Annual Investment Strategy and the prudential indicators.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

##### **RESOLVED:**

That the following documents attached to these minutes as Appendices 3 and 4 be adopted;



- (a) Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2018/19;
- (b) Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy;
- (c) Treasury Management Prudential Indicators for 2018/19 to 2020/21;
- (d) Rate of interest to be applied to any inter-fund balances; and
- (e) The Treasury Management Policy Statement.

#### 101. COUNCIL BUDGET 2018/19

##### **Mover: Councillor G Mohindra, Finance Portfolio Holder**

Councillor G Mohindra presented a report on the Budget and Council Tax Declarations for 2018/19. He thanked Finance Officers for an excellent budget and sound financial advice.

There voted for the recommendations (41) namely: R Baldwin, R Bassett, A Beales, N Bedford, H Brady, W Breare-Hall, R Butler, G Chambers, D Dorrell, R Gadsby, L Girling, A Grigg, L Hughes, B Jennings, H Kane, S Kane, H Kauffman, P Keska, J Knapman, A Lion, L Mead, G Mohindra, S Neville, A Patel, J Philip, C C Pond, C P Pond, C Roberts, D Roberts, B Sandler, M Sartin, G Shiell, P Stalker, D Stallan, D Sunger, E Webster, C Whitbread, H Whitbread, J H Whitehouse, J M Whitehouse and D Wixley.

There voted against the recommendation (1) namely: S Murray

Abstentions (2) namely: R Brookes and S Heap.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

##### **RESOLVED:**

##### **Budget**

- (1) That the list of CSB growth and savings for the 2018/19 budget (set out in Annex 1) be approved;
- (2) That the list of District Development Fund and Invest to Save items for the 2018/19 budget (set out in Annexes 2 and 3 to these minutes) be approved;
- (3) That the revenue estimates for 2018/19 and the draft Capital Programme for 2018/19 be approved as set out in Annexes 4, 5 (a-f) and 6 to these minutes including all contributions to and from reserves as set out in the attached Annexes;
- (4) That the Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved as set out in Annexes 9 a and 9 b to these minutes;
- (5) That the 2018/19 HRA budget be approved on the basis that the contribution to the self-financing reserve continues to be suspended, and that the application of rent decreases resulting in an average decrease of 1% from £96.30 to £95.34, be approved;

(6) That the Council's policy of retaining revenue balances at no lower than £4.0M or 25% of the net budget requirement whichever is the higher for the four year period to 2020/21 be amended to no lower than £4.0M or 25% of the net budget requirement whichever is the higher during the four year period up to and including 2021/22;

(7) That the report of the Chief Financial Officer on the robustness of the estimates for the purposes of the Council's 2018/19 budgets and the adequacy of the reserves (Annex 10 attached to these minutes) be noted.

#### **Declaration of Council Tax**

(8) That it be noted that under delegated authority the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder, calculated the Council Tax Base 2018/19:

(a) for the whole Council area as 53,562.8 (Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended); and

(b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates as set out below and in Annex 7 attached to these minutes:

	Tax Base
Abbess, Beauchamp & Berners Roding	224.1
Buckhurst Hill	5,211.0
Chigwell	6,125.3
Epping Town	5,251.6
Epping Upland	407.5
Fyfield	413.4
High Ongar	553.2
Lambourne	884.9
Loughton Town	12,408.9
Matching	439.1
Moreton, Bobbingworth and The Lavers	584.1
Nazeing	2,064.9
North Weald Bassett	2,544.3
Ongar	2,726.1
Roydon	1,337.5
Sheering	1,352.0
Stanford Rivers	357.5
Stapleford Abbots	522.3
Stapleford Tawney	79.5
Theydon Bois	1,986.8
Theydon Garnon	84.4
Theydon Mount	118.4
Waltham Abbey Town	7,650.3
Willingale	235.7

(9) That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2018/19 in accordance with sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:

- (a) £117,101,309 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils;
- (b) £105,454,170 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act;
- (c) £11,647,139 being the amount by which the aggregate at 9 (a) above exceeds the aggregate at 9 (b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act);
- (d) £217.45 being the amount at 9 (c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (the amount at 8 (a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts);
- (e) £3,480,955 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per the attached Annex 7 to these minutes);
- (f) £152.46 being the amount at 9 (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 9 (e) above by Item T (8 (a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.
- (10) That it be noted that the County Council, the Police Authority and the Fire Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each of the category of dwellings in the Council's area as shown in Annex 8 (attached to these minutes);
- (11) That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts in Annex 8 Part B (tabled) as the amounts of Council Tax for 2018/19 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.
- (12) That in accordance with section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, Council determines that the amount of Council Tax shown at (9) (f) of £152.46 for 2018/19, being an increase of 2.48% from 2017/18 is not excessive and therefore there is no need to hold a local referendum.

## **102. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Council noted the written report from Councillor M Sartin, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**103. CONSTITUTION WORKING PARTY REPORT**

**Mover: Councillor M Sartin, Vice-Chairman of the Constitution Working Party, in the absence of the Chairman**

Councillor M Sartin presented a report of the Constitution Working party following a review of the Procurement Rules.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Council's updated Procurement Rules, attached as Appendix 5 to these minutes, be adopted.

**104. COUNCILLOR D DORRELL**

The Chairman advised that in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, Councillor D Dorrell had given notice that he had joined the Conservative Group.

**RESOLVED:**

(1) That in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committee and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, Councillor D Dorrell had given notice that he had joined the Conservative Group; and

(2) The Council also noted that following this notification there had been no request for a review of pro rata membership of Committee and Sub-Committee places pending the forthcoming elections.

**105. APPOINTMENT OF RETURNING AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS**

The Monitoring Officer presented a report to the Council regarding the appointment of an Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer.

**RESOLVED:**

(1) That, in accordance with the Representation of the People Act 1983 and all related legislation, S Hill, be confirmed as Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) for the Council with immediate effect with authority to appoint deputy or deputies as may be required;

(2) That, in terms of Section 41 of the Local Government Act 1972 and all related legislation, and with immediate effect, S Hill be appointed as Returning Officer for the Council, with authority to act in that capacity for elections to the District Council and all or any parish and town councils within the Epping Forest District. This appointment to continue until a further review of the position when a new chief executive was appointed by the Council;

(3) That the Council's Returning Officer/Electoral Registration Officer be also appointed or authorised to act in respect of all related electoral, poll or referendum duties, including those in relation to County Council elections,

elections to the European Parliament (if required), and for national and regional or local polls and referendums;

(4) That, in relation to the duties of Returning Officer or any other electoral, referendum or polling duties arising from such appointment, the Returning Officer shall be entitled to be remunerated in accordance with scale of fees approved by the Council for local elections, or the relevant scale of fees prescribed by a Fees Order in respect of national, regional or European Parliament elections, polls or referendums;

(5) That in all cases where it is a legal requirement or normal practice to do so, fees paid to the Returning Officer shall be superannuable, and the Council shall pay the appropriate employer's contribution to the superannuation fund, recovering such employer's contributions from central government or other local authorities or agencies where this can be done;

(6) That, in relation to the conduct of local authority elections and polls, and elections to the United Kingdom Parliament, and all other electoral duties where the Council is entitled by law to do so, the Council shall take out and maintain in force insurance indemnifying the Council and the Returning Officer against legal expenses reasonably incurred in connection with the defence of any proceedings brought against the Council or the Returning Officer and/or the cost of holding another election in the event of the original election being declared invalid (provided that such proceedings or invalidation are the result of the accidental contravention of the Representation of the People Acts or other legislation governing the electoral process, or accidental breach of any ministerial or other duty by the Returning Officer or any other person employed by or officially acting for him in connection with the election or poll); and

(7) That any such insurance carrying an 'excess' clause by which an initial portion of risk is not insured, the Council, through its internal insurance fund or otherwise, will indemnify the Returning Officer up to the value of such excess.

#### **106. EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING**

The Chairman of the Council reported that an Extraordinary Council meeting would be held on 24 April 2018 to confer the Freedom of the District on 56 Squadron RAF and would be followed by the Ordinary Council meeting at 8 pm.

##### **RESOLVED:**

(1) That a Extraordinary Council meeting of Epping Forest District Council be convened at 7pm on 24 April 2018 for the sole purpose of conferring the Freedom of Epping Forest District on Number 56 Squadron RAF be approved; and

(2) That the change of time of the Ordinary Council meeting of Epping Forest District Council to 8pm for the purposes of transacting the normal items of business for that evening, be approved.

#### **107. JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

(a) The Council received an oral report from Councillor H Kane, the Council's representative on the Royal Gun Powder Mills Ltd. She advised that a new business

plan had been put forward for the future of the Royal Gun Powder Mills. The proposals had been submitted to the foundation company and a joint working arrangement had been suggested with consultations starting between stakeholders, neighbours and EFDC. She would keep members informed on the progress.

(b) The Council received an oral report from Councillor M Sartin, on behalf of Councillor R Morgan, the Council's representative on the Stansted Airport Community Trust Fund. She advised that two grants from the district had been successful which included the North Weald Airfield Museum and Epping Ongar Railway. Members were advised that there was an opportunity for organisations within a 10 mile radius of Stansted Airport to qualify and asked members to make organisations aware of these grants where possible.

(c) The Council received an oral report from Councillor M Sartin, the Council's representative on the Stansted Airport Consultative Committee. She advised that Stansted Airport Ltd had submitted a planning application to Uttlesford District Council, to grow passenger numbers from 35 million to 40 million passengers per annum.

(d) There were no requests made for written reports by representatives on joint arrangements and external organisations for the next meeting.

#### 108. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

##### RESOLVED:

That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the item of business set out below as it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Act indicated and the exemption is considered to outweigh the potential public interest in disclosing the information:

<u>Agenda Item No</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Exempt Information Paragraph Number</u>
22	Appointment of Acting Chief Executive and Associated Matters	1

#### 109. APPOINTMENT OF ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS

##### Mover: The Leader of Council

The Leader submitted a report regarding the appointment of Acting Chief Executive and Associated Matters.

##### RESOLVED:

(1) That D Macnab, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods, be designated Acting Chief Executive with effect from 23 February 2018 for a fixed period until 22 February 2019; on existing terms and conditions and salary of annum (as at 1 April 2017) as outlined in the report;

(2) That an option to extend the arrangement above (1) for up to 6 months, subject to the agreement of both parties be agreed;

- (3) That, in accordance with Section 4(1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Acting Chief Executive be designated Head of Paid Service with effect from 23 February 2018;
- (4) That Settlement Agreements for R Palmer, Director of Resources and C O'Boyle, Director of Governance, be approved;
- (5) That the cost of the proposal under (4) be met from existing provision approved in the District Development Fund budget for 2017/18 relating to the implementation of the Common Operating Model;
- (6) That the Chief Executive, G Chipp, be authorised to agree and sign off final terms of the Settlement Agreements under (4) above;
- (7) That P Maddock, Assistant Director – Accountancy and Deputy Chief Finance Officer, be designated as Chief Finance Officer, on a temporary basis, being the officer having responsibility under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, Section 73 of the Local Government Act 1985 and Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 with immediate effect;
- (8) That S Hill, Assistant Director – Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer, be designated as Monitoring Officer, on a temporary basis, in accordance with Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Sections 26-37 of the Localism Act 2011 for the purpose of performing the duties imposed by those sections; and to be responsible for any Parish or Town Councils which are affiliated for the time being to the Epping Forest Standards Committee under Chapter 7 of the Localism Act with immediate effect;
- (9) That consequential changes made by the Leader of the Council to the Scheme of Executive Delegation be noted;
- (10) That the proposed changes to the Council Scheme of Delegation attached at Appendix 6 be approved; and
- (11) That a further report on the Common Operating Model, covering the new management structure for the Council, be brought to Council on 24 April 2018.

**CHAIRMAN**

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## ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 24 April 2018

**Subject:** Environment

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor W Breare-Hall

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### **Recommending:**

**That the report of the Environment Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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### **Fly-tipping**

Fly-tipping incidents remain at a high level. The District has recently fallen victim to several industrial sized fly-tips, including an estimated 20-30 tonne trailer, with a full container of waste being left on the highway. Any identifying marks had been deliberately removed. Environment & Neighbourhood Officers (ENO) have found some evidence that could possibly lead to the source of the waste, and this evidence has been passed to the Environment Agency (EA), who have ongoing investigations into organised criminal fly-tipping. If the fly-tipping leads to sites in the District, the EN team will continue with the investigation in partnership with the EA, but invariably these large industrial sized fly-tips lead to sites outside the district, usually in London.

These large fly-tips impose significant clearance costs on landowners, including this Council. Anybody who has unused buildings that may be accessible to vehicles should be particularly vigilant to ensure that their land is as secure as reasonably possible. Organised fly-tippers have recently illegally entered a site between Ongar and North Weald, changed the locks, and returned to fly-tip waste. The EA are investigating this incident.

Officers recently reported to the Neighbourhood Select Committee, detailing last year's results for legal action in relation to waste offences. Officers reported that £13,677 of financial penalties had been imposed on offenders through prosecution action. In addition, 14 fixed penalty notices were paid, amounting to an additional £2,800.

A number of questions were raised in relation to fly-tipping. The fixed penalty notice (FPN) for fly-tipping offences is currently set at a default level of £200. Officers currently only offer (as an alternative to prosecution) a FPN for minor offences (a few bags of waste or an individual item such as fridge), when the offender has cooperated and admitted the offence under caution. It was agreed that Officers will produce a report for members to consider whether or not the FPN level should now be increased to its maximum of £400.

### **Hazardous fly tipping**

This authority, in common with others, has been experiencing increasing problems with the removal and disposal of fly-tipped hazardous and asbestos waste. In the past we had to use the Waste Disposal (Essex County Council) contractor, who is based in Stevenage, Hertfordshire.

In order to speed up the process and remove all fly-tips, hazardous as well as non-hazardous, as quickly as practicable we have negotiated a revised arrangement with ECC.

This will mean that the Council can collect and dispose of both categories of fly-tips. We are now making the necessary arrangements to enable this to happen. I am hopeful that this will result in fly-tips being cleared from the public highway more quickly.

### **Fly-tipping in Loughton**

Evidence gathered by the Council's Environment & Neighbourhood team led to a prosecution in Chelmsford Magistrates Court on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018 against Mr Gavin James Pye of Chelmsford Road, Holland-on-Sea, who pleaded guilty to the offence of fly-tipping. Mr Pye admitted to fly tipping cardboard and other waste in bins intended for the use of residents of flats at the Broadway, Loughton. He told the Council that he ran a gardening business and had deposited waste in the bins on a number of previous occasions.

The Magistrates stated that it was a negligent act and Mr Pye was ordered to pay a fine of £231. He was also ordered to pay the Council's prosecution costs of £500 together with a Victim Surcharge £30.

### **Change in littering law**

From April 2018, for the first time, the EN team are able to apply penalties for littering to vehicle owners if it can be proved the litter was thrown from their vehicle, even if it was discarded by somebody other than the vehicle owner. Previously it was necessary to identify the person who dropped the litter.

The new penalty is different to the existing litter FPN that is still available for other littering offences. The new penalty is a civil penalty akin to parking penalty charge notices. Indeed the new penalty introduces an internal and external appeals process using the Traffic Penalty Tribunal as an independent adjudicator for this enforcement regime. The penalty doubles and becomes a civil debt if unpaid (rather than resulting in a prosecution if an existing litter FPN is unpaid).

The external appeals process is not yet in place. When details have been confirmed, officers will be looking to introduce a procedure to use the new penalty to tackle littering from vehicles.

Also from April 2018, the maximum fine local authorities can issue for dropping litter will increase, from £80 to £150. The minimum fine will increase from £50 to £65, while the default fine will increase from £75 to £100. The Council currently uses the default level but the actual level can be set by Members and will be the subject of a report in due course.

The Cleaner Essex Group (CEG), made up of local authority representatives from across Essex, will be running a campaign later in the year to highlight the change in the law. The CEG will also be encouraging members of the public with good evidence to report vehicle litter offenders. Such evidence will be much more likely to result in a litter penalty than was previously the case, particularly if that evidence is recorded as video on a vehicle dash cam. Members of the public who are willing to provide vehicle dash cam evidence and attend an appeal or court hearing, if necessary, can do so without their address being revealed to the alleged offender.

### **Recycling banks**

We have a number of Recycling Bring Banks across the District where residents can deposit various recycling materials. Despite the Council offering a comprehensive door step recycling scheme, some of the Bring Banks remain popular with residents. An audit of the

Banks will be carried out to establish their popularity, and whether or not it is feasible to keep them operational. Those that receive enough recycling materials will be retained and upgraded to modern standards.

### **Compost giveaway**

Officers are working with ECC to organise a “Compost giveaway” during the ever-popular Compost Awareness Week; 7th to 11th May. On Tuesday 8th May, between 10am and 2pm, residents will be able to collect, in their own bags, free compost from outside Bakers Lane car park in Epping. Officers will be there to answer any questions and offer advice to residents.

### **DCLG Recycling Rewards project**

As a part of the DCLG Recycling Rewards project, that I have reported on previously, we will deliver food waste wheeled bins to selected blocks of flats. The residents will also receive a kitchen caddy, information leaflet and free plastic compostable caddy liners. The object of this exercise is to encourage the separation of food waste, and to increase the level and quality of all recycling in flats.

### **Misconnections campaign**

Working in conjunction with the Roding, Beam and Ingrebourne Catchment Partnership, the Engineering Drainage and Water Team have designed a small campaign to raise awareness of the issue of misconnections within the District. Misconnections occur when foul and surface water systems are incorrectly fed into each other; for example, if the foul water drain is misconnected into the surface water drain, then waste water can travel untreated directly into the environment where it has a negative impact on ecology and local wildlife and causes a nuisance to residents. When the opposite happens and the surface drain is misconnected into the foul drain, rainwater collects and disposes into the foul water sewer adding to the volume flowing through the system, potentially causing it to overwhelm and flood.

As a result, misconnections are causing real problems. In accordance with The EU Water Framework Directive, all UK water bodies must be of good ecological health by 2027. In England and Wales only 27% are currently achieving this target. Reports indicate that 15% of our rivers and 9% of our beaches are failing water quality standards due to misconnections alone. Analysis suggests the River Roding may be particularly susceptible to pollution from misconnections. This initial campaign involves distributing upwards of 500 leaflets and letters to houses within the river’s catchment. Furthermore, the Council’s PR team is organising a press release to go out to local media and an article will be placed on the Council’s website. The objective is to highlight the negative impact misconnected pipes are having within our district and to encourage residents to work collaboratively with the Council in an effort to tackle pollution together. Follow up campaigns are also planned.

### **And finally...**

As this is my last report to Full Council I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank the many excellent officers I have had the pleasure of working with during my time as a councillor and as Environment Portfolio Holder. Their professionalism, knowledge and dedication are all too easy to take for granted, but their commitment to serving our residents is what makes Epping Forest District Council a great authority.

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# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee: Cabinet**

**Date: 24 April 2018**

**Subject: Finance**

**Portfolio Holder: Councillor G Mohindra**

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**Recommending:**

**That the report of the Finance Portfolio Holder be noted**

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## **Accountancy**

Whilst we have now entered the new financial year, 2018/19, the section will be spending April and May finalising the financial position and statement of accounts for 2017/18.

The deadline set by the Central Government for submitting the accounts for audit has been moved from 30<sup>th</sup> June to 31<sup>st</sup> May, with the completion of the audit moving from 30<sup>th</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> July. In order to achieve this deadline we are reliant on receiving Pension information from the Actuary, Valuation information from external valuers and various other information from across the Council. This target is extremely challenging.

Having said that considerable efforts have been made to ensure that this target will be achieved. This includes work carried out earlier than usual by the section and work by the external auditors on the first nine months transactions during February and the final three months during April. The main problem with bringing the date forward is the increase in use of estimates rather than waiting for actuals the trade off being a potential loss of accuracy. The risk of non-achievement is considered high but providing key staff are available particularly in second half of May the target is achievable. So far things are going well.

E-Invoicing is now operational across the Council but there have been some teething problems on the way. The next stage is to look at bringing those suppliers within Communities that do not use the Marketplace into E-invoicing which will be looked at during 2018/19

## **Benefits**

There have been several welfare reform changes implemented throughout the year and I am sure that Members will be pleased to note that from April 2018 housing costs for temporary accommodation have been taken out of Universal Credit and brought back into Housing Benefit. This has been a significant problem area for the Councils who have been live with Universal Credit for some time and this welcome change will provide more financial security for people who find themselves homeless and it will significantly reduce rent arrears for these people.

With regard to Universal Credit, there are currently pockets of the District where people of working age have to claim their housing costs through Universal Credit and

not Housing Benefit, but the majority of the District will not be affected until December 2018. From the experience of other Councils, the numbers of new Housing Benefit claims will reduce then but the number of notified changes in circumstances will significantly increase and many Councils are finding it difficult to manage the additional work.

Another piece of good news is from the Pan Essex Data Matching project where all the Essex Authorities, including Essex County Council are working together to investigate council tax discount fraud, which includes Local Council Tax Support, with the aim of increasing the council tax base. It has only been operating since September 2017 and despite some initial problems, I am pleased to report that so far this council has increased its council tax base by £30,410 and overall across Essex, the tax base has been increased by £254,000. This work is ongoing with 125 discrepancies already resolved and 234 currently under investigation.

The year-end position on the key performance indicators will be considered at the July meeting of the Resources Select Committee, but I will take this opportunity to give a brief update. The average time taken on processing a new claim was 21.61 days which is an improvement on 2016/17 but has just missed the target of 21 days which was reduced for 2017/18 from 22 days to 21 days. The other processing indicator is for changes of circumstance and at 4.55 days this performed better than the target of 6 days and also the performance for 2016/17.

## **Revenues**

Rates growth within our District is essential in sustaining the Council's financial position as we move to 75% local Business Rates retention in 2020, and ultimately 100% in the future. The billing process for Revenues has again been a challenging time for the team, particularly in response to larger than average increases from some preceptors, particularly from the Police and Crime Commissioner. However, careful signposting and information during the process enabled residents' enquiries to be routed to the appropriate organisation (Police leaflet). There were however 2,000 calls received by the team in the days after the bills were despatched with only 8 abandoned calls and an average waiting time of 50 seconds. The Revenues team achieves this performance through adopting increased flexible working arrangements during this time so a consistent level of service is available throughout the day. I would like to thank and congratulate the team for this excellent service provided at a very busy time.

However, the bottom line for the team is the collection of income for the Council and this has again been a good year. For Council Tax the collection rate target was achieved with 97.82% and for Business Rates the target of 97.8% was missed by just 0.1%. However, late new bills in March with no time to collect the income more than makes up for any shortfall. Indeed, the amount of Business Rates arrears from previous years that were collected in 2017/18 increased by 11% from 2016/17. I would also like to remind Members that the KPI for the collection rates are only that, an indicator of how well our Collection Fund is performing. In reality, it is how much Business Rates and Council Tax that we are generating that is important – 'a 100% collection rate of not enough income' is not a good place to be. That is why Epping Forest Shopping Park is an illustration of this with additional Business Rates income of around £600,000 generated in 2017/8 and £1,200,000 in 2018/19.

Staying with Business Rates, the Council developed its own Revaluation Discretionary Relief Scheme in 2017/18, funded by Central Government. This enabled the Council to provide around £300,000 of rates relief to almost 500 of the

smaller businesses adversely affected by the 2017 Business Rates Revaluation. In line with Government funding there will be also be £145,000 for those businesses in 2018/19 to help them adjust to their new rates bills.

I thought Members would like to be aware of several developments with Revenues in 2017/18 that have contributed to the Council's Transformation Programme. Having established a self-service option for residents and businesses to view their accounts and documents on-line this initially led to 800 users register for this facility and 200 to receive their bills electronically. By the time of annual billing this year the number registered for self-service had risen to 2,500 and around 1,200 residents and businesses received their bills electronically. This not only meets a customer need but provides back-office efficiencies in terms of less contacts but reduced printing and postage costs.

The direction of travel the Revenues team has taken with regard to on-line transactions has taken shape in 2017/18. Traditionally users have been able to report information or transact on-line which has created an item requiring manual input by officers in the back-office. The processes that have come on-line or will do in the future are to provide convenience for users but also provide more efficiencies in that back-office. This has first been implemented with Direct Debits. A user completing a Direct Debit application on-line now has their details updated automatically on the back-office Capita Revenues system without the need for re-keying by officers. Almost a 1,000 transactions have been handled this way. This is to be followed in the very near future with changes of address and later in the year with discounts and exemptions. This should reduce the number of transactions input by back-office staff thereby creating further efficiencies and build in future capacity for the team as the 11,000 homes come on stream with the Local Plan.

The Revenues team has also started to provide users with SMS text messages should they not pay their Council Tax or Business Rates instalments on time. The text message provides a link to the Council's payment system so the instalment can be paid there and then. Obviously the messages can be sent to those users who we hold a mobile phone number for but this has already led to a reduction of 11% in reminders sent. An obvious spike can be seen in payments made at the time the messages are sent so it has been successful and has led currently to a 11% reduction in reminders sent, saving the Council money in postage and printing costs and enabling customers to keep on time of their bills and moving into formal recovery action and associated administration costs for the Council.

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# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 24 April 2018

**Subject:** Housing

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor S Stavrou

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**Recommending:**

**That the report of the Housing Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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## **Additional Housing Association Preferred Partners**

In 2007, the Council adopted a Scheme of Preferred Housing Association (HA) Partnering. The purpose of the Scheme is to work with specific housing associations - that have a proven track record of successfully providing affordable housing and of providing a good housing service to tenants - to identify, pursue and deliver affordable housing developments within the District.

The Scheme enables the Council to have a very good working relationship with a relatively small number of housing associations. Preferred HA Partners then have a much better understanding of the District's housing needs and the Council's expectations and are able to influence and improve the affordable housing provision on developments, as well as its design, due to their early involvement in schemes. They also provide useful advice, guidance and feedback to the Council on affordable housing issues and policies, and are able to bring in additional investment in the District, because they are all investment partners of Homes England (previously the Homes and Communities Agency). As Preferred Partners, they are able to increase and consolidate their housing stock within the District, thereby assisting them to reduce their unit management and maintenance costs and to achieve better value for money. All Preferred Partners have signed district-wide nomination agreements with the Council, setting out detailed nomination arrangements.

In view of the increased affordable housing opportunities that are now coming forward, as a result of increased interest from developers wanting to develop in the District, together with the increased development that will come forward once the Council's new Local Plan is adopted, it is important that the Council has a sufficient number of Preferred Partners who are committed to work in partnership with the Council to pursue and deliver affordable housing opportunities in the District. I have therefore appointed two new housing associations as Preferred Housing Association Partners of the Council – CHP and Aldwyck Housing Group.

CHP is based in Chelmsford and was established in 2002 as a result of a stock transfer from Chelmsford City Council. They are an approved Homes England investment partner and have recently been shortlisted in the Development Programme of the Year category for the UK Housing Awards. CHP has 8,160 social rented and affordable rented properties located in 13 of the 14 districts in Essex. The only district that they don't currently have stock in is Epping Forest. They are therefore very keen to undertake new developments in the District.

Aldwyck Housing Group has been providing affordable housing across the South East and East of England since 1968. They currently provide over 11,000 homes and management services for around 25,000 people in a variety of tenures, including rented (6,700 homes), shared ownership (1,090 homes) and owner-occupied homes. They also provide specialist support and accommodation for young people, those with disabilities and older people (745 homes). They are very keen to work within the Epping Forest, and have already secured two sites in the District - despite not yet being a Preferred Housing Association Partner of the Council.

I have also agreed with East Thames Housing Association (who have now merged with London & Quadrant Housing Society) that they will no longer be a Preferred Housing Association Partner of the Council.

The Council's Preferred Partners are therefore as follows:

- Aldwyck Housing Group
- B3 Living
- CHP
- Hastoe Housing Association (Specialist rural partner)
- Moat Group

### **Commencement of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017**

The new homelessness provisions of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 commenced on 3 April 2018.

Under the Act, and the new associated Homelessness Code of Guidance, there are considerable additional duties placed upon authorities nationally to prevent and reduce homelessness.

The main additional duties are (in summary) as follows:

- The period that a person can be considered to be threatened with homelessness, or it is likely that they will become homeless, is extended from 28 days to 56 days
- An applicant is now considered to be threatened with homelessness at the point the Section 21 Notice (which is the standard notice period provided by private landlords to tenants and is recognised as the single biggest cause of homelessness) has been served as opposed to at the end of the notice period. This also prevents councils advising applicants to remain in occupation beyond the expiry of the notice
- Placing an emphasis on services preventing homelessness from occurring - strengthening the duties on local authorities to provide advice, securing accommodation and other help available
- A duty to carry out an assessment of an applicant's case, notifying the applicant of the assessment in writing and the provision of a Personalised Housing Plan in order to provide effective support
- A requirement to secure accommodation (under the new "Relief Duty") for at least 6 months for all applicants who the Council is satisfied are eligible for assistance
- Right to Reviews for a range of decisions made by the Council

Due to the additional burdens being placed on authorities, the Government has provided financial support to help meet with the consequences of the new duties. The Council will receive three grants in total. Set out below are the amounts received under each of the grants and the various uses that have been agreed by the Cabinet.

#### *Flexible Homelessness Support Grant*

Under the Government's Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (required to be ring-fenced and only used for homelessness services), the Council received £277,000 in 2017/18 and will receive £313,000 in 2018/19. The Cabinet agreed that these grants should be used as follows:

- Continuing to work with Genesis Housing Association to provide private rented accommodation to homeless applicants in order to prevent homelessness;
- Meeting the housing-related support costs of the young parents scheme at Railway Meadow, Ongar;
- Funding an additional part-time Deputy Hostel Manager post at Norway House, North Weald - the Council's Homeless Persons' Hostel;
- Funding additional rental and damage deposit guarantee loans given to homeless applicants to secure private rented accommodation;
- Re-introducing a Preventing Repossession Fund – to provide loans to potentially homeless applicants to continue to occupy their existing accommodation;
- Funding up to 9 single homeless applicants to be accommodated at the Zinc Arts Project;
- Funding landlord incentive payments of £2,000 per property, to enable Genesis Housing Association to secure additional private rented housing to accommodate homeless applicants for a minimum period of 2 years;
- Providing funding of £10,500 to CHESS (Churches Homeless Emergency Support Scheme) to provide an outreach service to visit, and provide advice and assistance to, rough sleepers in the District.

#### *Homelessness Reduction Act Grant*

The Council received a further £134,000 under the Government's Homelessness Reduction Act Grant. The Cabinet agreed that, in order to assist with meeting the additional duties of the Act, a new post of Homelessness Strategy Officer be created on a temporary contract for 3 years.

#### *Further Flexible Homelessness Support Grant*

The Government has very recently announced further allocations of Flexible Homelessness Support Grant for next year (2019/2020). The Grant is ring-fenced for a third year "to enable authorities to focus where possible on homelessness prevention." It is expected that the Council will receive around £358,000 in 2019/2010. A report will be considered by Members at a later date to consider options for its use.

### **Strategy and Statement on Anti-Social Behaviour Policies and Procedures**

At its meeting on 13 March 2018, the Communities Select Committee considered and endorsed the Council's proposed new Strategy and Statement on Anti-Social Behaviour Policies and Procedures and passed on its comments to the Housing Portfolio Holder for incorporation.

The Strategy and Statement has been formulated in accordance with the provisions of the Housing Act 1996 and the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014. It meets the requirement of the Housing Act 1996 that all social landlords must publish a Statement of their policies and procedures on anti-social behaviour, together with an associated summary. The Council's summary is produced in leaflet form and will be updated when the draft Strategy and Statement has been agreed.

The Strategy and Statement will next be considered by the Epping Forest Tenants and Leaseholders Panel at its meeting on 23 April 2018 prior to me formally approving the document.

## **Single Homelessness Accommodation – Norway House Pods**

On Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> April, I'm pleased to say that the Area Planning (East) Sub-Committee gave the Council planning permission for the provision of three units of modular accommodation (pods) at Norway House, North Weald, to accommodate 6 single homeless people. Although permanent planning permission was sought, the Sub-Committee gave approval for a 10-year temporary period.

Tenders are now being prepared, ready to start works on site in July 2018.

## **Council Housebuilding Programme**

Since the last Council meeting in February 2018, much has happened with the Council Housebuilding Programme - with further completions of two 3-bed houses and two 2-bed flats at Bluemans End, North Weald and a single 3-bed house at London Road, Stapleford Abbots. In June 2018, further completions are planned for Stewards Green Road, Springfield and Centre Avenue in Epping and at Parkfields, Coopersale.

In March 2018, the Development Agency Contract with East Thames ended after its 4-year period. For the future, instead of continuing to use an external organisation to oversee the delivery of the Housebuilding Programme, the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee agreed that developments should be managed in-house, using internal staffing resources, supplemented by specialist design consultancies appointed directly by the Council. At its meeting in April 2018, the Cabinet Committee therefore approved the appointment of ECD Architects Ltd as the Architects and Multi-disciplinary Design Team, and Airey Millar Ltd as the Employers Agents, with each appointment based on a quality/price/interview (50/40/10) assessment following an EU procurement exercise.

A further framework of four contractors was also approved, comprising: Neilcott Construction Ltd; Roof Ltd; TSG Building Services Ltd; and Indecon Building Ltd. This was based on a quality/price/interview (60/30/10) evaluation, from which second-stage tenders will be sought to construct future homes under the Programme.

A number of sites where the Council has either failed to obtain planning permission, or where schemes had been withdrawn, were re-presented to the Cabinet Committee at the April meeting to decide on their most appropriate future use. The Cabinet Committee decided that seven sites in Loughton, Matching Green, Roydon, Nazeing and Epping should be re-designed and re-submitted for planning approval.

The Committee also agreed that local residents should be consulted on proposals to provide off-street parking schemes on a further three sites in Waltham Abbey, Buckhurst Hill and Nazeing, on the basis that users are charged for the use of the parking bays provided. If there is insufficient interest shown by residents for such parking schemes in their area, then the Cabinet Committee agreed that the site(s) should be sold on the open market, with the sale proceeds being recycled back into the Council Housebuilding Programme.

The Committee also agreed that consideration of the site at Mallion Court, Waltham Abbey should be deferred for 12 months, until after the new Leisure Centre has been completed.

## **Review of the Housing Repairs Service**

With just 2 years remaining for the current "in-sourced" Repairs Management Contract with Mears, the Council has appointed Cameron Consulting to undertake a detailed option appraisal for the future delivery of the Housing Repairs Service beyond 2020. The review includes consideration of the following options:

- Outsourced Service – Where the entire Housing Repairs Service would be competitively tendered and subsequently delivered by an outsourced commercial partner;

- In-House Service – Where EFDC would deliver the service itself, using in-house resources (directly employed personnel).
- Insourced Service – Which would be similar to the current service provided by Mears, where the service would be overseen by an external contractor, who manages the Council’s staff. However, other aspects of the service could be outsourced, such as the provision of material supplies, IT (repairs ordering) and an out of hours call centre.
- Other Delivery Options – including a joint venture, wholly-owned subsidiary and a shared service.

Cameron Consulting will soon be holding a stakeholder engagement process with key members, officers and tenant representatives. Ultimately, whatever delivery model is adopted by the Cabinet, it must meet the Council’s objectives for delivering a quality customer-focused, affordable and value for money service.

The outcome of the Review will be reported to the Cabinet prior to any decision being made on the preferred option.

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# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Subject:** Leisure & Community Services

**Date:** February 2018

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor H Kane

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## **Recommending:**

**That the report of the Leisure and Community Services Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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## **Community, Health and Wellbeing**

### **Launch of the Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2018-28:**

I was very pleased to be present at the launch of our District Health & Wellbeing Strategy on 28<sup>th</sup> March, along with over 70 delegates representing 37 different organisations. To set the scene for the morning, proceedings kicked off with an invigorating “Wake and Shake” session, which was followed by key note speakers from our Leader of Council, Director of Primary Care for the CCG, ECC Public Health Consultant and the Director of Active Essex. Delegates were also shown a film highlighting a range of health and wellbeing activities delivered by our Community, Health & Wellbeing Team across the district, which included interviews with participants of the Council’s Active Living Programme and walking football sessions, who explained the positive impact the sessions have had on their lives and their physical and mental health.

### **Senior Safety Day in Loughton:**

Over 60 senior residents from Loughton took part in a Senior Safety Day at Trinity Church, in March and were reminded how to keep safe in and around their homes. With speakers from Essex Fire & Rescue Service, Essex Police, Crime Stoppers and Neighbourhood Watch who spoke about fraud, scams and fire safety, all attendees went away more aware, and having had a good interaction with their peers and professionals.

### **Active Living:**

Our Active Living programme is proving very successful, with participants stating that they feel supported by their peers and the Active Living team and that they really benefit from the physical activity and social aspect of the sessions. Participants have the opportunity to try different activities each week and are given ideas for how they can keep active without the need for a gym membership. We have some excellent examples of how people’s health has been improved through Active Living, including a gentleman who has managed to reduce his cholesterol levels significantly without medication, to enabling another participant to regain enough strength within six months, to get back to the gym and walk 3-4 miles per day.

### **Easter Holiday Programme:**

As usual, the Council’s Easter activity programme has a range of opportunities for children and young people to take part in, including multi-sport days in Epping and Waltham Abbey, play in the park in partnership with local town and parish councils, play in the forest and ‘customise your own t-shirt’ workshops. There is also a variety of activities on offer for children and young people with disabilities through our Disability Inclusion Project, such as bounce and swim, multi-sports, canal ability, Epping and Ongar Railway Trip and suntrap activity days. Many of these activities are already fully booked,

### **Walking Football:**

The walking football session in Waltham Abbey continues to be very popular and a friendly match has been arranged against another walking football scheme. Due to the success of this session, a new walking football session is due to start at Roding Valley Recreation Ground, Loughton.

### **Sports Award Winner:**

This year's sports award winner is Christianna Vitanova, a rhythmic gymnast who lives in Chigwell and attends Epping St Johns School. Christianna is 3 times British champion in the junior category and is a non-travelling reserve for the Commonwealth Games 2018 and will represent Great Britain at this year's world championship

### **Grant Aid Celebration Event:**

On Friday 23rd March, I was pleased to host a special celebration event for over 60 volunteers from across the district, to thank them for their dedication and hard **work** on behalf of their community. Groups in attendance represented a variety of projects who had received grant aid and shared details of their projects and how their work impacts so positively on our residents. The Grant Aid Scheme is celebrating 20 years of support to the local voluntary sector and over forty groups applied for grant aid funding in this year alone. Since it was started, the grant aid scheme has financially assisted groups from almost every area in the district, including 1041 volunteer roles.

## **Museums, Heritage and Culture**

### **Science Week Event:**

For British Science Week, the museum hosted a visit from the Essex Rock and Mineral Society. They provided an interactive display showing how the rocks and stones found in the local area reveal the ancient history of the landscape around us. 117 adults and 69 children took part in this event.

### **Motiv8:**

I was able to attend the opening evening and I was very moved by the talented dancers.. The Motiv8 Youth Dance Platform had a new theme for 2018 - 'Celebrating Different Cultures in Epping Forest'. People have always used **dance, music and storytelling** as an everyday means of understanding and self-expression – this event is a great way to continue that exploration. It makes you aware of the different cultures and the diversity in our society , but at the same time it manages to bring everyone together. The groups participating interpreted this creatively, covering a diversity of cultures through dance and song. From Latino, African and Indian inspired moves through to the representation of Street, Youth and Circus Culture, the dancers impressed the audience with their fantastic performances. Over 200 dancers took part and both shows were sold out and the collaboration with the college enabled music, photography, media, fine arts and beauty students to also take part.

### **Easter Egg Hunt:**

Epping Forest District and Lowewood Museums hosted Easter Egg Hunts on Easter Saturday, attracting an additional 200 children and their families across the sites.

### **First World War Projects:**

Lowewood museum's First World War exhibition: "Stephen Warner: One Man's Journey through War" will be open to the public from Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May and will include loans from the Museum of Military Medicine, Essex Regiment Museum and the Royal Gunpowder Mills. A series of events are being provided to celebrate the launch of the exhibition and a private view will precede the opening of the exhibition on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> May, which will be open to councillors, stakeholders, volunteers, Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant and college



students who produced work for the project. On the following night (Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May), we are hosting 'Museums at Night', which is part of a nationwide festival with external promotion and publicity. We are tying this event in with the new exhibition and are hosting a themed night about entertainment during the First World War, with a professional dance couple teaching the 'One-Step'. A full day of activities will follow on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> May which will include poppy making and talks from a re-enactor.

**Royal Opera House Bridge:**

MHC has been commissioned by the Royal Opera House Bridge, with a grant of £3000 to undertake a pilot project developing resources and work with a number of schools to support the extension of the Artsmark and Arts week initiatives. Artsmark is the creative quality standard for schools, accredited by Arts Council England.

**Save the Willingale Treasure:**

I am delighted to advise that our campaign to purchase a medieval gold ring found in the parish of Willingale, was successful. This is the first medieval gem set ring to be found in the district, and the first known finger-ring to be discovered in Willingale. In total £11,500 was needed to save the ring and display it at the museum. We were successful in securing grants from the ACE/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, SHARE Museums East and the Art Fund and our crowdfunding campaign (the first that the Council has tried) attracted £3500 from the public, to complete the total needed to secure the purchase of the ring. Work will now begin on acquiring the ring, creating the associated displays before the ring will go on display at the museum in the coming months.

**Museums, Heritage and Culture Peer Review:**

As part of our business planning process, Museums, Heritage and Culture have been successful with an application to the Local Government Association (LGA) for them to undertake a peer review of the service. This is part of a scheme funded by Arts Council England. The peer review will take place at the end of April and we shall take the opportunity to discuss our draft five year business plan with the LGA before publication.

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# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee: Cabinet**

**Date 24 April 2018**

**Subject: Planning and Governance Portfolio**

**Portfolio Holder: Councillor J Philip**

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**Recommending:**

**That the report of the Planning and Governance Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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## **1. Local Plan**

As members will be aware the submission of the Local Plan has been delayed following a Planning Court ruling on 20 March 2018. The Court granted CK Properties Theydon Bois Limited (CK Properties) permission to apply for judicial review of the Council's decision on 14 December 2017 to approve the Epping Forest District Local Plan Submission Version 2017 (LPSV) for publication and submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination.

CK Properties complains that its land to the east of Theydon Bois was not allocated for residential development in the LPSV and contends that it has been prejudiced by the unavailability of Appendix B to the Site Selection Report (Arup December 2017), during the Regulation 19 publication period.

The Court ordered that the Council be restrained from submitting the LPSV for independent examination until the final determination of the judicial review claim, or further order. The Court also ordered that the judicial review hearing can be expedited and it is listed for hearing on 23 and 24 May 2018 with a time estimate of 1½ days. The Court order sets out dates for filing and serving additional evidence prior to the hearings.

It is the Council's case that from the material contained in the report to Council and previous work and briefings with Members that we were in a position to make an informed decision on the Submission Version. Indeed, the merit of the site in Theydon Bois, promoted by CK Property Developments Ltd was, as you may recall, specifically debated.

The Council will be contesting all the claims made and to be heard at the full hearing but the ruling means the Council could not meet the agreed submission date of 31 March 2018. Council was recommended to submit the plan by the 31 March 2018, not only to mitigate the risk of higher housing numbers due to the new targets. It was also to assist the Council in meeting the requirements of the Housing Delivery Test which remains a challenging target for 2018 and without a local Plan potentially unachievable in the following years. It also reduces the likelihood of Central Government intervention in the plan making process. The Council website has been updated with all the proposed submission documents.

## **2. Implementation of the Local Plan**

In December 2017, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) issued a prospectus for the Planning Delivery Fund which is part of the resource funding announced in the Housing White Paper. The Council submitted a bid for funding for 2017/18 and 2018/19 under the Design Quality funding stream to support the implementation of the local plan. Support under the funding stream is offered to increase design skills in local authorities to ensure that new development meets the Governments ambitions for quality as

well as quantity. The Council has sought funding, in particular, to support the masterplanning process identified in the Submission Version Local Plan - £100,000 in 2017/18 and £50,000 in 2018/19. The Council was advised on 23 February 2018 that the bid had been successful and the full amount awarded to the Council. This has enabled the Council to accelerate the Implementation Team recruitment. *Jobsgopublic* have been appointed to support the recruitment of an Implementation Manager, two Principal Planning Officers and a Strategic Infrastructure and Planning Obligations Officer.

The Quality Review Panel for both the Garden Town and for the District has been established and the terms of reference have been finalised and are on the website. Peter Maxwell who is the Head of Design at the London Legacy Development Corporation and a panel of planning, architecture, urban design and construction experts to provide impartial expert advice in relation to development schemes and proposals have been appointed. The Quality Review Panel's feedback will be a material planning consideration for local authorities and the planning inspectorate when determining planning applications and will help ensure that new development is of a high quality and contributes to place making.

### **3. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town**

The Project Director for the Garden Town has worked with officers from the three districts and two counties to further develop the work streams required to take the Project forward. There are 12 work streams underway which are being reported regularly to the Garden Town Board which meets monthly. The Council's representatives on the Board are currently Cllr Whitbread, Bedford and Philip.

Work is well advanced on the preparation of a spatial vision and design charter and proposals for the implementation of sustainable transport corridors for the Garden Town which will be subject to community engagement prior to finalisation. Public Exhibitions are planned for week commencing 8 May 2018 in locations close to the strategic sites around Harlow and static exhibitions will also be on display at Harlow and Epping Forest District Civic Offices.

The bid submitted on behalf of the Garden Town under the Joint Working fundstream of the Planning Delivery Fund for a total of £113,000 for 2017/18 and £290,000 for 2018/19 to provide support on the preparation of a Garden Town Infrastructure Plan, identifying and setting out all the infrastructure requirements for the Garden Town and its hinterland and to carry out more detailed work to take the sustainable transport proposals to design stage was also successful.

### **4. Development Management**

The income figures for Development Control (DC) and Building Control (BC) continues to demonstrate both resilience and optimism regarding the overall increased levels of planning and building control activity across the district.

While DC income for 2017/18 has dropped by 13% compared to 2016/17, DC Income of £845,729 exceeded budget by nearly £6,000.

BC Income has performed remarkably well despite increased private sector competition to exceed the £500,000 barrier for the first time in seven years to record an impressive £532,000 for 2017/18.

Overall the Development Management charges including pre-application income and Building Control fees recorded a total income of £1,490,019.

## **Building Control**

BC income for 2017/18 recorded a very strong income of £532,070 (2016/17 £482,224) and exceeded their revised budget of £530,000. Given the strong competition from Approved Inspectors (AI's) BC have maintained their focus on matching Expenditure with Income recording a 10% increase in income (2016/17 increase over previous year was 2%).

The outlook for Building Control is very positive with a resilient team of Building Control Surveyors in place and vacancy rate of less than 10%. The success of their Workforce Development Plan with the emphasis on internal professional development is particularly encouraging as all Local Authorities are experiencing difficulties in filling Professional Technical Surveyor posts. The recent growth in independent Approved Inspectors who are now competing for Building Control work means that BC needs to ensure they have enough professionally qualified staff available to respond to these competitive pressures.

## **Development Control**

Development Control had a good year in 2017/18 generating £845,729 in income (2016/17 £975,188). Although this constitutes a 13% decrease (2016/17 15% rise) in revenue there are cautious grounds for optimism given the proposed development across the district combined with the planning fees increase.

Pre-Application income for DC in 2017/18 was £112,219 (2016/17 £120,922) and added to the DC income this brings the total DC income to £959,948 (2016/17 £1,096,110). The consistency of Pre-Application Fees has demonstrated an element of improvement where we now expect Pre-Application fees to exceed £100,000 each year.

Development Control has taken steps in their Workforce Improvement Plan to improve the processing of planning applications. This is against a background of increased planning applications combined with significant development across the district to focus on producing internally trained planning officers and currently has two Planning Officers completing Master's level development at two highly regarded London Universities'.

Finally, we have been successful in recruiting to the new Compliance Officer post, approved by Cabinet in 2017 from CSB funding, who will support the enforcing of planning control, particularly in respect of clearing details and compliance of conditions attached to planning permissions. It is anticipated that the officer will start in May.

## **5. Elections – 3 May 2018**

Preparations for the District Elections in May are now well advanced. There are a total of twenty two seats across twenty wards being elected this year. Polling cards were delivered on time and by the time of the Council meeting postal votes will have been dispatched.

Councillors and Candidates are reminded that Electoral Commission guidance states that although candidate are uniquely placed to encourage people to vote (please direct them to the Government Portal at [www.go.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.go.uk/register-to-vote)) campaigners should never handle completed postal vote packs either from supporters or from the public on the doorstep.

Due to the number of wards up for Election this year admittance to the Count, which will be held on the evening o 3 May 2018 at Debden Park School, will be strictly by ticket only and for security reasons you may be asked for identification on the door. If you have any problems, please speak to the Returning Officer directly.

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# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 28 April 2018

**Subject:** Safer, Greener & Transport

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor S Kane

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## **Recommending:**

**That the report of the Safer, Greener & Transport Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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## **Community Safety**

### **Development of Community Safety Hub:**

The project to introduce direct funding of police officers to work with the council's Community Safety Team is progressing well. The team has undergone a security review and inspection by Essex Police Strategic Designing Out Crime Officer and Information Management Officer which included the physical security of the accommodation, together with working practices such as information sharing agreements and vetting status of all officers. A further inspection was made of the council's server room.

A small project team which includes operational stakeholders is in place, to determine further policing requirements and to re-structure the Community Safety Office to accommodate the increased numbers, as well as facilitating the council's transformation requirements for hot desk working.

### **Vulnerable Victims:**

Vulnerable victim referrals continue to be regularly received into the Community Safety team, from internal and external bodies, including EFDC housing, Safer Places, Essex Police and Health Visitors. These are dealt with by our Community Safety Officer with either the police Crime Prevention Tactical Advisor (if assessed as high risk) or, our volunteer active citizen and Crime Prevention Advisor if they do not fall into the high risk category. However, I have to advise, that the police Crime Prevention Tactical Advisor who was working from the Community Safety office has now advanced to a specialised team with national responsibilities and it is not yet known about replacement proposals by the police.

### **Parkguard:**

Parkguard have been employed by the council since the end of January 2018 to provide high visibility targeted engagement. In particular, they have been used to deter 'purse dippers' in Epping High Street during the Monday market. They have also provided high visibility presence at Limes Farm, Chigwell and The Broadway, Loughton, including Epping Forest College where they have worked with staff to identify and challenge unacceptable behaviour. There have been other deployments in relation to reported anti-social behaviour at Hill House, Waltham Abbey, Parklands, Coopersale, Birch View, Epping, St Margarets Hospital, Epping, and noise nuisance at Macdonalds, Waltham Abbey. Their deployments activities are constantly changing depending on demand at the time. Parkguard officers also assisted our Housing teams to re-possess a property in Loughton which was subject of a Closure Order and provided security for officers whilst re-possessing a council garage in Waltham Abbey. The council has received a letter of thanks from a member of the public who Parkguard assisted after her vehicle broke down on Epping New Road.

### **'Mates' Crime:**

A current ASB investigation concerns 'mates crime.' This is where perpetrators befriend a person with vulnerabilities and persuade, threaten or bully them into handing over cash. It normally happens around the time that benefits are paid and in many cases, the victims are too frightened to come forward and report it and just pay up to make the perpetrators go away. Working with Integrated Offender Management and Community Policing Team our investigator has issued the perpetrators with a Community Protection Notice Warning letter, setting out strict restrictions on contacting the victim. Failure to comply with the warning will result in the issue of a Community Protection Notice which, if breached, can be dealt with by issuing a fixed penalty fine or court appearance. Since the warning was issued there has been no further contact with the victim by the perpetrators.

### **Neighbour Dispute:**

ASB investigators were asked to assist Housing colleagues with an ongoing and complex neighbour dispute in Waltham Abbey, following a number of complaints from two neighbours concerning the anti-social actions of each other. Numerous attempts to diffuse the situation had failed and the situation was becoming a considerable drain on council resources. The ASB investigator determined that an approach of mediation would be a viable option and as a result, was able to obtain consent from both parties to try mediation. Both were referred to Essex Restorative Justice and Mediation Service, which is a service provided by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. I am happy to report that as a result of both parties participating with this service they have reconciled their differences and complaints have ceased. This shows the benefit of this service and the practical outcome it can achieve.

### **Safeguarding:**

Our safeguarding team have dealt with **28** new cases this month which include a total of 12 children and 23 adults. Mental health concerns are currently the highest factor in cases identified, often in addition to other issues and cases related to our tenants with mental health issues who commit ASB, tend to be very time consuming and complex, and often involve several EFDC departments.

### **CCTV**

**New Systems:** A new CCTV system is currently being installed at Norway House. This replaces the old system as well as expanding its coverage and is being placed in a more secure area after the recent break in. Further to this a second stage of CCTV development is being proposed which will include coverage for the new single occupancy pods expected to be installed later this year. Planning applications are being submitted for additional CCTV along High Road Epping to extend as far as Tesco's and we are ready to install a CCTV system as part of the ongoing car park improvement program at Quaker Lane Car park.

**Hill House & Leisure Centre:** CCTV design has been submitted to the project team to install external car park CCTV at the new leisure centre at Hill House, this will also incorporate a permanent CCTV system for the residential area and shopping precinct. Estimated completion for both parts autumn 2018.

**Successful Outcomes:** Broadway CCTV captured incident involving an ATM robbery of an elderly male, suspect was captured and arrested and 4 insurance claims received where EFDC have charged a total of £480 for our services. Surveillance is continuing in one area where a number of vehicle registrations and fly-tips have been captured.

**Training:** Our career grade CCTV Assistant Terri Gill, has completed a BTEC level 3 CCTV Foundation course.



# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee: Cabinet**

**Date: 24 April 2018**

**Subject: Technology and Support Services**

**Portfolio Holder: Councillor A Lion**

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## **Recommending:**

**That the report of the Technology and Support Services Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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## **Support Services**

### **People Strategy – Developing the Organisation**

#### **Common Operating Model**

The Council appointed a Business Support Manager in January 2018 to take forward the review of all administration teams and functions across the Council with the aim of aligning with the Council's Common Operating Model, removing duplication, streamlining processes and bringing the resources together into one team to support the organisation.

Since January 2018 the Business Support Manager has reviewed 37 of 82 job roles resulting in 28 job roles being identified as Business Support and the other 9 roles split between Customer Service or Technical as per the Common Operating Model.

The Resources Directorate Business Processing and Support Teams and one of the two Neighbourhood Support teams have merged to build the first element of the Corporate Business Support Team. The second Neighbourhood Support Team is due to join the Corporate team by mid-April.

Process mapping for tasks undertaken by the teams mentioned above started mid-March, improvements are already being identified and changes are being implemented.

The areas identified to review throughout the project are tasks and processes, teams' targets and performance, job descriptions (to create flexibility), work patterns and hours (to ensure they still suit the business), the overall team structure and staff training to up skill (to create flexibility).

This month the Head of Customer Services and the Business Support Manager will start process mapping and reviewing tasks in the Planning Development.

#### **Implementing iTrent**

I am pleased to inform members that the annual leave pilot using iTrent was successful and consequently the electronic requesting and recording of annual leave is now "live" for all staff.

## **People Strategy - Developing Skills of the Workforce**

### **Skills Audit**

The People Team and ICT have worked together to develop an electronic survey which will ask staff to record their qualifications. The information will assist in the development of staff and management training programmes to fit the needs of the new organisational roles, skills and structure.

As part of the skills audit there will be specific questions on IT training needs and gaps. This information will be used by ICT to plan a comprehensive training programme which supports appropriate digital skills development for staff. This is an area where it has been identified there is an urgent need to update staff skills.

## **People Strategy – Resourcing the Council**

### **Employee Probation Policy**

The People Team have developed an Employee Probation Policy which will be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 whereby all newly appointed employees will be subject to a 6 month probation period.

The probation period follows a set programme which includes;

- Induction in the first 4 weeks of employment to help the new employee with orientation, getting to know their work colleagues and familiarisation with key policies and procedures
- Set formal reviews at 1, 3, 5 and 6 months to ensure that objectives are set, understood and performance meets the required standards
- Regular one to one meetings to support the new employee to settle in, provide praise/address issues and to meet the required standards of performance.

The probation process allows early release in the first 4 weeks where there are clear indications that the new employee is not suitable for the role appointed to. Where difficulties arise during probation it is intended that the formal reviews will give the new employee every opportunity to fully understand what is required of them to meet the required standards. With the formal reviews and one to ones providing support to the new employee during the first 6 months of employment it is expected that the majority will successfully complete their probation period and be confirmed in post. In exceptional circumstances the probation period may be allowed for up to a maximum of 3 months.

## **People Strategy – Pay and Benefits**

### **Review**

The Council's Transformation Programme Board has recently agreed a Project Initiation Document for a fundamental review to take place of the organisation's job evaluation (JE) processes, pay model and its Collective Agreements and Terms and Conditions.

To enable the Council take forward a challenging agenda it needs to ensure pay, JE Scheme, terms & conditions and benefit arrangements will attract, engage and retain a suitable workforce.

The review will look at the current pay, pay structures, collective agreements, terms and conditions, benefits and job evaluation arrangements.

A small team of EFDC staff will form a Negotiation Board to discuss proposals with the Trade Unions and to agree a Joint Collective Agreement. The Transformation Programme Board will provide direction and any proposals will be agreed by Cabinet and Council as necessary.

### **Mental Health Awareness Week 14<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

Mental Health Awareness Week is organised by the Mental Health Foundation and this year it focuses on managing stress.

The Council's cohort of apprentices have designed a plan to communicate Mental Health Week and the current support available to staff. They will use posters, the intranet, training sessions and District Lines to promote ideas about what can help with stress. To highlight the Week 'Supporting Personal Resilience' sessions have been arranged which have already been fully booked.

### **Facilities**

The Facilities Management team has been very busy finishing off works to complete year 1 of the 5 year planned maintenance programme.

Jetting of landlord's foul and surface water drainage systems at numerous EFDC shopping parades, industrial estates and General Improvement Areas has been completed.

Various health and safety improvement works have been completed at Townmead depot. Fencing and wall strengthening works have been undertaken and a fire alarm detection and warning system has been installed in the occupied gatehouse. A simple fire alarm warning system is also now in place around the yard areas. The old redundant water tank and housing has also been removed from the roof of Building 21.

At the museum, the first floor windows in front gallery and rear office areas have been overhauled and balancers to each sash replaced.

The pedestrian walkway adjacent shop 42 The Broadway, Loughton has been refurbished with a new coating to the floor and walls and ceiling have been redecorated.

The Limes Centre in Chigwell has been redecorated externally and a mansafe system installed on the roof to facilitate safe working at height when undertaking future maintenance works.

Essex Lift Services Ltd has been appointed to refurbish the nine passenger lifts on the Limes Farm Housing Estate in Chigwell. Survey and design work for the first lift is complete and works are due to start on 9th April.

### **Legal**

We have sadly said goodbye to Ruth Rose, the Council's Senior Lawyer, who has retired. She will be missed not only for her legal expertise but for the support that she readily gave to all in legal and throughout the Council.

The Council has appointed Elaine Bell, who is a solicitor on a temporary basis to undertake the planning work including providing support to the Local Plan. We wish her well.

Congratulations to Ioanna Tsiachri, Property Executive, who has qualified as a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives.

## **Legal and Corporate Fraud**

Among the cases that went to court this March, was the prosecution of Fadimana Altinsoy for four offences of Housing Fraud. The basis of the prosecution was that when applying for Council housing in 2003 Ms. Altinsoy had failed to declare her ownership of two properties jointly owned by herself and other relatives in Forest Gate London E7 and Grays in Essex. She was granted a tenancy of a property in Copperfield Chigwell Essex on 22nd January 2007 and the following day she completed a further Housing Application form seeking a move from a flat to a house and again failing to state that she jointly owned other properties. Had the Council been aware of her ownerships, she would not have been given the tenancy of the property at Copperfield Chigwell.

On 18th June 2010 Ms Altinsoy applied to the Council for a grant to assist her in purchasing a private property and again failed to reveal that she had an interest in two other properties. Epping Forest District Council gave Ms Altinsoy a grant of £28,000 which she used to purchase a property in Basildon Essex on 24 June 2011. However, not having been entitled to the grant of the tenancy of the property in Copperfield Chigwell, she was not therefore entitled to have received the grant.

This case was heard at the Chelmsford Crown Court. She pleaded guilty on the first day of the hearing and agreed to pay the sum of £28,000 back to the Council together with its prosecution costs of £12,500 before 5th March 2018. At a later sentence hearing Ms Altinsoy was sentenced to 2 years imprisonment suspended for 2 years together with a requirement to carry out 200 hours unpaid work with a probation supervision order for 12 months.

## **Technology**

ICT have successfully recruited to the two new posts created by the Technology Strategy, (Technology Support Officer (eForms & CRM) and Technology Support Officer (Project Management)), we now have one resultant vacancy to fill - recruitment to which is in progress. This additional capacity will allow further development of our online form and Customer Relationship Management System, and to further enhance the way we manage projects within the Technology Strategy Programme

In terms of the Technology Strategy, a number of projects have been reprioritised based on the changes to the timeline for the accommodation strategy, we have however proceeded with the large scale laptop procurement, and the tendering exercise is now complete. We are proceeding with this project to enable flexible working so the necessary technical and cultural changes can be embedded ahead of the accommodation changes, and also because we have been managing our hardware procurement based upon this exercise, and failure to complete the tender would mean that we would still need to procure a larger quantity of laptops to meet normal business need, the process of briefing staff on this rollout has now begun. The Strategy progress will be reported to the next Resources Select Committee. Other key projects from the Strategy that are already in progress include the Security Review which will inform a number of other projects over the coming year, and ensure that our ICT security is proportionate and relevant.

The Gazetteer team have been working on the implementation of the new Corporate Gazetteer system, as well as ensuring our Gazetteer data is updated to meet changes in national requirements. The GIS team has carried out a number of UAV flights, and has otherwise been focusing on developing corporate capacity for GIS by delivery of training and

preparations for significant system upgrade this year which will improve resilience of this key system

The CRM/eForms team have provided a number of solutions to the business around mobile working and forms, a complete Mobile Working solution is now under test in the Neighbourhoods team, and the CRM system has been handed over for initial go-live by the customer team. Online form development continues, and a number of new external forms have been published in this period, and development of further forms continues as does enhancement of existing forms by the addition of integration to business systems.

The Mobile Working team assumed responsibility for the rollout of the Sky Guard lone worker system, and have largely completed this large task. They are now working with the eForms team to develop a new process for the issue of mobile devices ahead of the laptop rollout. We are also working on remote management tools and mobile device management, again ahead of the laptop rollout.

Our Business Analysts have been working on the preparatory work for three major system upgrades that will take place during this coming year, an upgrade to our Document Management System (Information@work), and to our Planning/Building Control and Environmental systems. These upgrades improve the customer facing offering significantly, and also will make these three key applications available to staff on mobile devices more readily. We have also been engaged in the work to enable the rollout of Office 365, including the deployment of Sharepoint to replace our corporate intranet. The team has also been supporting the business in the evaluation of a new Corporate Debtors system, further rollouts of Document Management and significant work around PCI-DSS security compliance for payments systems. We have also developed in house a solution to automatically import emails into our Document Management system, simplifying workflows in the business.

The Service desk team has now extended their operational hours in line with the Strategy, they are now available 8-6 each weekday. An ongoing internal customer feedback system has also been put into place to enable ongoing service improvement. As part of the development of the Service Desk all three recent appointees to the team have successfully completed their required initial external training. Our support arrangements have been further enhanced by the implementation of the agreed extension of on call arrangement to cover GIS and eForms to ensure our customer facing systems have the level of support required. The team has also delivered the pilot batch of 20 laptops to the Council, and also rebuilt 15 laptops for reallocation to VAEF, as well as supporting office moves on a number of sites.

The Networking Team is liaising closely with the Head of Customer Service, Council Tax and Benefits to reconfigure the telephony system to provide a more efficient experience. A survey of the Council's wireless environment is currently under way using a Fluke Network Management tool. This will give a full view of wireless at the Council Offices and will highlight any black-spots or channel interference.

Citrix Unified Gateway is installed and configured to allow for secure connection from the Internet to the Council's Citrix environment. Work is under way to configure this Internet facing appliance so that only authorised devices can connect to EFDC resources and security is sufficient to give best possible protection from undesirable connection requests. The Council's virtual server environment is currently being upgraded from v5.5 to v6.5 giving more management options and better performance.

The Council's vpn connectivity is currently being upgraded. This allows for a more flexible and manageable environment with improved logging capability and the ability to tie down

connectivity to authorised devices only. This is not only required for the Council's compliance certification but is also needed for remaining legally compliant with software licensing.

External resource has been booked to carry out a thorough check and review of the Council's Security environment. Issues and recommendations for improvements in the report will be considered and possibly implemented.

### **Superfast Broadband High Speed Internet**

As at March 2018 the network build had reached just over 4100 premises passed as it closes in on completion. A number of properties around the intervention area remain to be built as and when wayleave negotiations and some fault finding are completed. The most significant number to be completed are in the Hastingwood cabinet area as negotiations to facilitate Gigaclear to build part of its network across North Weald Airfield continue. It is still hoped that all remaining properties will be reached by the end of April 2018.

A report has been submitted to Cabinet 10 April 2018 seeking the utilisation of the existing capital provision of £350,000 for Phase 4 of the Superfast Essex broadband rollout which is match funded by contributions from BDUK and with an additional contribution from Essex County Council. A competitive procurement process has been undertaken by Essex County Council to commission a suitable provider to deliver additional broadband coverage in Epping Forest District. This competitive process has now been completed and the preferred bidder has been selected. Essex County Council is therefore seeking, prior to formalisation of the contract award, a written agreement with the Council to commit the additional funding of £350,000 in full. The Cabinet report is therefore seeking approval that such a written agreement may be entered into.

### **Digital Innovation Programme**

Having successfully submitted an application in November to the LGA / Design Council 'Design in the Public Sector' programme, an Economic Development Officer as part of a team that includes Princess Alexandra Hospital, Essex Partnership University Trust and West Essex CCG, is now working closely with the LGA and Design Council to deploy the latest design tools and approaches to service redesign to enable residents to remain at home with ongoing medical conditions rather than in the emergency department of the local hospital. The team has already received positive feedback on its efforts to date which have seen members accompany an ambulance crew on a day of emergency calls as well as observing and interviewing visitors to the A&E department of Princess Alexandra Hospital. The training programme is due to be completed by May 2018 although it is anticipated that the project will continue to be developed beyond that date and the skills acquired used in future projects.

The third Smart Places Seminar focusing on Digital Skills for future jobs took place on 09 February 2018 at Haileybury College in Broxbourne Borough. The event delivered a programme of excellent speakers from the private and public sectors. Almost 60 partners came together to share their thoughts on where we are currently and what needed to happen to make sure that there is a supply chain of digitally skilled people in place to enable business to grow, public services to develop and local people to get the opportunities to secure the great jobs that this would inevitably bring. An executive report of the event has been produced and circulated to all attendees. This report will be used to further raise awareness and understanding of the digital work programme.

ARUP consultants, one of the leading consultancies on digital innovation has 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.

Digital Catapult, working on behalf of central government, has approached the partnership to take part in its Things Connected innovation programme exploring the use of LPWAN (Low Powered Wide Area Network) technology to solve service challenges Epping Forest DC has agreed to coordinate a joint response as part of the DIZ programme. Funding has been identified and Digital Catapult has confirmed that the DIZ will be one of the four areas nationally that will take part in the next wave. Partners have suggested that the challenge could focus on parking and particularly disabled parking spaces to provide up-to-the minute information on free spaces.

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## **Report to Council**

**Date of meeting: 24 April 2018**

**Subject: Overview and Scrutiny Report to Council**

**Contact for further information: Councillor M Sartin  
(Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee)**

**Committee Secretary:** Adrian Hendry, ext.4246

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report from February 2018 to the present be noted.**

### **Report:**

#### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 27 February 2018**

1. At our meeting on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> February, we received the Principal of Epping Forest College, Ms Famili. She was accompanied by the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Councillor Mohindra.
2. Together they went through the steps they were taking to bring the college back up to standard after the concerns raised by the Ofsted report at the beginning of 2017. This was her second visit to us within the space of a year to respond to the concerns of our members.
3. Ms Famili informed the Committee that during the year the college had noticeably improved. It had become a safer environment for students; they had made some significant partnership arrangements; and now had a 100 to 0 system, where people took 100% responsibility and 0% blame. However, there were some subjects that were still below the national benchmark and their apprenticeship programme was still not where they wanted it to be.
4. We then received an annual report from the Head of Customer Services, Ms Shaw, on an update of the Customer Service Programme. This report covered activity from November 2016 to January 2018. The Customer Service Programme had been designed to focus on 4 key projects: the Civic Offices Reception; the Corporate Contact Centre; the Systems and Digital Development; and Customer Satisfaction.
5. Ms Shaw proceeded to outline the progress made and pieces of work that were either still in progress or yet to be started. As part of the ongoing review of the systems there would be an annual Customer Satisfaction Survey looking at how customer satisfaction was changing over the lifetime of the programme. We also noted that they were, via the Website Development Board, looking at a complete re-design of our website. They hoped to reduce the nearly 4,000 pages we have at present on the site to around 350 pages. This would make the site easier to navigate

by members of the public as well as making it easier to access and navigate by smart phone and tablets.

6. We then reviewed the third quarter performance of the Key Action Plan for 2017/18 and also received an update of the Transformation Programme as well as considering Cabinet's Forward Plan.

7. Finally we reviewed our ongoing scrutiny of external organisations. We noted that the Chief Executive of the East of England Ambulance Service had been invited to attend our April meeting and in preparation for this the committee was asked to identify areas that they wished to be covered. Some of the topics identified were response times, attendance times and stress areas in the system.

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