

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF NEIGHBOURHOODS SELECT COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2018
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES
AT 7.30 - 8.20 PM**

Members Present:	N Bedford (Chairman), H Brady (Vice-Chairman), P Bolton, R Brookes, K Chana, S Heather, J Jennings, L Mead, S Neville, M Sartin, D Stocker, H Whitbread and J H Whitehouse
Other members present:	H Kane and S Kane
Apologies for Absence:	A Beales, I Hadley, L Hughes and A Patel
Officers Present	D Macnab (Acting Chief Executive), Q Durrani (Service Director (Contracts & Technical Services)) and V Messenger (Democratic Services Officer)

31. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

The following substitutes were reported:

- That Councillor J Jennings was substituting for Councillor A Beales; and
- That Councillor H Whitbread was substituting for Councillor L Hughes.

32. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the last meeting of the Neighbourhoods Select Committee held on 20 September 2018 be agreed.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

34. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PROGRAMME

(1) Terms of Reference

The Committee noted the Terms of Reference.

(2) Work Programme

The Committee noted the current Work Programme.

35. CORPORATE PLAN 2018-2023 - PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTERS 1 & 2 2018-19

The Corporate Plan 2018-2023 was the authority's key strategic planning document. A corporate specification (previously called the Key Action Plan) for each year was

being delivered through operational objectives, which in turn were linked to annual Service business plans. The previous regular performance reports that had covered the annual Corporate Plan Key Action Plan, Key Performance Indicators and Transformation Highlight Report had now been superseded by this single integrated performance report.

The success of the Corporate Plan was being assessed through the achievement of a set of benefits, each measured through one or more performance indicators. This provided the Council with the opportunity to focus on what could be achieved for its customers – on how specific improvements would be addressed, opportunities exploited and better outcomes delivered. The Corporate Plan when viewed as a set of benefits maps had one map for each of the ten corporate aims. A benefit was a measurable improvement from an outcome that was perceived as an advantage, and contributed to an organisational objective(s). All benefits from individual corporate objectives connected back to four key benefits, which were:

- K1 Improved customer value – recognising what customers' value about our services and placing them as the heart of everything we do;
- K2 Increased efficiency – focussing on our speed of delivery and getting things right first time;
- K3 Increased agility – reducing red tape, simplifying how we work through joined up services; and
- K4 Increased savings and income – delivery of resource savings and income generation, to keep Council Tax low.

The Committee attempted to identify any actions and/or projects, performance indicators and/or benefits that might require in-depth scrutiny, but Councillor H Whitbread voiced the concerns of Councillor A Patel, in his absence, over the presentation of performance data in these reports. The Acting Chief Executive replied that the Leadership Team was in dialogue with the Project/Performance Management Team with a remit to try and make improvements to these reports, if this was possible, but officers were restricted by the limitations of the Pentana software.

The Chairman, Councillor N Bedford, remarked that under aim 1, People live longer, healthier and independent lives, on performance indicator M1.2, Number of take-away restaurants signed up to 'Tuck In' pledge, it showed that only three premises were signed up and he was therefore concerned about officers' time on this project. The Acting Chief Executive replied that 'Tuck In' was an Essex County Council Trading Standards initiative. The District had over 650 licensed premises and the aim of the project was to promote healthy take-away food choices. Public Health Improvement Officer, F Ferrari, had been working with GP surgeries to monitor how well this had been done. Councillor S Neville asked if a Trading Standards Officer could be invited to tell members about this initiative, especially on the healthy food options of take-aways? The Acting Chief Executive replied that 'Tuck In' was a country-wide initiative that focussed on aspects such as cooking methods and sugar levels in drinks. He would ask the responsible officer to provide information to members that could be publicised in the Council Bulletin, which was agreed.

The Portfolio Holder (Safer, Greener and Transport) Councillor S Kane was concerned that under aim 3, People and communities achieve their potential, M3.1, Number of community champions and volunteers, this was in red but there were no expansion notes provided.

Councillor S Neville referred to performance indicator M3.2, Leisure centre attendance, as only estimated performance data had been provided. Leisure and Community Services Portfolio Holder Councillor H Kane replied that these figures could be provided. The Leisure Management Contract Partnership Board undertook a regular review of performance of the Council's leisure contract with Places for People (Leisure). The agendas and minutes of the Partnership Board were available to members on the Intranet.

The Chairman queried under aim 4, Delivering effective core services that people want, performance indicator M4.3 Number of new residential properties built or acquired by the Council, which was in red. The Acting Chief Executive replied that this performance indicator was improving in relation to the number of affordable houses being built.

Councillor J H Whitehouse also asked for more information on performance indicator M4.3. The Acting Chief Executive explained that under aim 5, A District with planned development, performance indicator M5.1 Number of new dwellings completed in the District, the information provided was in relation to all properties that had been granted planning permission. The Communities Select Committee had another indicator to monitor performance of Council housebuilding properties.

Also under aim 4, Councillor M Sartin asked for feedback on corporate objective 4.1, Keeping the District clean and green, especially operational objective 4.1.1, Implement change in waste contract. Service Director (Contracts and Technical Services) Q Durrani explained that this could involve a number of potential changes but was on hold as Waste Management would be looking at a number of options. The Acting Chief Executive advised this was not a review of charging for all green waste collection, but the possible option of charging for an additional green waste bin. The Service Director added that the number of options available would be dictated by policy and that composting of green waste would be encouraged. However, if this was not feasible for all residents then there could be the option of a larger green waste bin or a second green bin but there would be associated cost implications with this that needed to be evaluated.

Also under aim 4, performance indicator M4.1, Number of businesses that joined the 'Buy with confidence' scheme, the Chairman asked if people using Planning Services and Building Control could be sent a letter on the possible consequences of using an unapproved waste contractor where they could be taken to court if their waste was fly-tipped by rogue traders. Service Director (Contracts and Technical Services) replied that the public could be duped by rogue traders if their waste was illegally dumped instead. This scheme needed to be reassessed to help make it more successful.

The Leisure and Communities Services Portfolio Holder queried why project P114, St John's Road Development, was in red but 92 per cent progress had been achieved, and why the due date was given as 31 March 2018? The Acting Chief Executive replied that the project was on the verge of completion when the Tripartite agreement had fallen apart and this had been a timely item to discuss at the Leisure Management Contract Partnership Board meeting in September 2018. Therefore, the information given in the report was no longer relevant, but was showing how it had been monitored.

Councillor R Brookes was concerned at the number of empty outlets in The Broadway, Loughton, under aim 10, Financial independence with low Council Tax, operational objective 10.2.1, Receive income from commercial leases. The Acting

Chief Executive replied that a retail impact assessment of The Broadway had originally been commissioned in 2009 at the time of the Epping Forest Shopping Park application. There were in excess of forty properties of which three were empty. He reassured members that The Broadway was holding its own since the Epping Forest Shopping Park had opened last year. High streets were under strain on a nationwide basis.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Select Committee reviewed and noted the progress of the Corporate Plan Performance Report for 2018/19, Quarters 1 and 2 (outturn position), in relation to its area of responsibility.
- (ii) That information on the 'Tuck In' Trading Standards initiative would be publicised in the Council Bulletin – Acting Chief Executive to liaise with the responsible officer.

36. LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

The Acting Chief Executive, D Macnab, provided the following Local Plan update in the absence of the Planning and Governance Portfolio Holder, Councillor J Philip, who had given his apologies for this meeting. This update was based on the Epping Forest District Local Plan Update (report LPC-003-2018/19), which would be made by the Interim Assistant Director (Planning Policy), A Blom-Cooper, at the Local Plan Cabinet Committee on 22 November 2018.

The Council had been delayed in submitting the Local Plan Submission Version for independent examination following a claim for judicial review in March 2018. When the claimant's application for permission to appeal to the Court of Appeal was refused, the Local Plan Submission Version was submitted to the Secretary of State on 21 September 2018. Louise Phillips MA MSc MRTPI, the Inspector appointed to carry out the independent examination of the Local Plan, was currently appraising it and the representations submitted at the Regulation 19 stage. It was likely that the public hearing sessions would start in February 2019 at the Civic Offices. Any member of the public who had submitted comments would be able to attend. When confirmed, the hearing dates would be publicised on the Council's website.

The revised Local Development Scheme (appended to the Local Plan Cabinet Committee agenda) set out an ambitious target of July 2019 for the receipt of (final) report, Regulation 25, and October 2019 for the expected adoption and publication, Regulation 26.

One of the tests of the Inspector would be to evaluate if the Council would be able to deliver the Local Plan. The Developer Forum was regularly liaising with the Planning Policy Team. The Implementation Team had been created in April 2018 following a Cabinet decision on 7 December 2017 when funding was agreed, but its final structure was currently under discussion. The Implementation Team was already working on the delivery of Local Planning allocation sites, including the Strategic Masterplan Areas and Concept Framework Areas. Over time as the Implementation Team moved Local Plan sites forward, it would become cost neutral by self-financing either from income from Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) or income related to the fees for processing planning applications.

Work on the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town project had progressed significantly during 2018. It was essential that a collaborative and co-ordinated approach was

taken to development implementation to ensure successful delivery across the partnership. Agreement to establish a wider Garden Town Team and Joint Implementation Team had been reached in principle. An application for a £250,000 grant had been submitted to Central Government for the Garden Town programme, which was currently being appraised. There would be much work to facilitate 16,500 homes on the key strategic sites around Harlow, along the transport corridors, i.e. of the A414, and regeneration of Harlow town centre.

Councillor J H Whitehouse asked why the public hearing sessions would be held in the Committee Rooms. The Acting Chief Executive replied that the independent Programme Officer assisting the Inspector with all aspects of the examination, had reviewed the Chamber but decided the Committee Rooms were more suitable accommodation as they were on one level and more accessible. The public hearing sessions would be webcast in the interests of transparency.

37. LEISURE CONTRACT UPDATE

The Acting Chief Executive provided the following update on the leisure contract with Places for People (PfP).

PfP had reported on the management of the Contract from its commencement in April 2017 – August 2018 at the last meeting of the Leisure Management Contract Partnership Board on 27 September 2018. The PfP performance report had showed a very rewarding start to the contract since taking it over. There had been many changes and achievements with usage up in virtually every category of membership and casual usage across all four centres at Epping, Loughton, Ongar and Waltham Abbey. The performance report detailed the investment and improvements made to the buildings, facilities, work practices, staffing levels and also covered health and safety. Since taking over, PfP had invested in excess of £14 million.

The new Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre had been officially opened by the Leisure and Community Services Portfolio Holder, Councillor H Kane, on 17 November 2018. The opening weekend had received a very successful start when lots of people had joined the leisure centre.

Both Epping Sports Centre and Ongar Leisure Centre were aging centres that required ongoing maintenance. The Epping Sports Centre site had been allocated for residential development in the Local Plan, while Ongar had not been part of the allocation process. There was potential for a leisure centre at North Weald to service the Epping and Ongar areas but no decision had been made by the Council. With the failure of the Tripartite agreement on the Epping St John's Road site, new opportunities had been created. Consultants were currently conducting a feasibility study of the St John's Road site to include a new leisure centre, retail shops, a cinema and housing. A report would be going to Cabinet on 10 December 2018 to seek additional capital for the future development of this important town centre site.

The Leisure and Community Services Portfolio Holder reported that this Council was one of the few local authorities that was investing in leisure services, and on the second date of the Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre opening, PfP had exceeded its target on memberships. There were also exciting development opportunities with the St John's Road site and the vision for a community hub.

The Chairman commented that it would be important for PfP to retain existing memberships and build on the new ones at the Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre.

Councillor R Brookes, who had attended the official opening, acknowledged the real team effort that was evident across the board between the Portfolio Holder, officers and PfP. She also added that Loughton Leisure Centre was very well used and Epping would also benefit from a new community leisure centre.

Councillor S Neville agreed that Loughton Leisure Centre was very popular, but had had a high turnover of staff and he would be interested in seeing the statistics on this. The Acting Chief Executive replied that all the performance data given by PfP to the Leisure Management Contract Partnership Board was published in the agendas of the Board and available on the Intranet for members to view.

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

The Chairman reported that there were no reports to be made to the next O&S Committee on 18 December 2018.

39. FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the next meeting of the Neighbourhoods Select Committee would be held on 29 January 2019 at 7.30pm.