

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF GOVERNANCE SELECT COMMITTEE
HELD ON THURSDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER 2016
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.15 - 8.25 PM**

Members Present:	G Chambers (Vice-Chairman), D Dorrell, R Jennings, S Jones, S Kane, M McEwen, M Sartin, H Whitbread and D Wixley
Other members present:	R Bassett and G Waller
Apologies for Absence:	N Avey, L Hughes, H Kauffman, L Mead, B Rolfe and D Stallan
Officers Present	N Richardson (Assistant Director (Development Management)), S G Hill (Assistant Director (Governance & Performance Management)), B Copson (Senior Performance Improvement Officer), W MacLeod (Senior Electoral Services Officer) and M Jenkins (Democratic Services Officer)

11. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

The Select Committee noted that Councillors M Sartin and B Jennings were substituting for Councillors D Stallan and H Kauffman respectively.

12. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

In the absence of the Chairman who had tendered his apologies, the Vice-Chairman became the Chairman and requested nominations for the role of Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That, in the absence of a Vice-Chairman, Councillor H Whitbread be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

13. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the last meeting of the Select Committee held on 5 July 2016 be agreed as a correct record.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

15. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PROGRAMME

(a) Terms of Reference

The Select Committee's Terms of Reference were noted.

(b) Work Programme

(i) Item 5 Joint Meeting of Development Management Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

The Select Committee would receive feedback from the forthcoming meeting on 4 October 2016.

(ii) Item 12 Analysis of Compliments and Complaints procedures data in identifying trends.

The current Complaints Officer was resigning from the authority in November 2016. It was felt that this item should be scheduled for next year's Work Programme, probably May/June 2017.

(iii) Item 14 Invitation to Essex County Council Highways.

There would be a specific meeting on this issue on 31 January 2017 in the Council Chamber. The meeting would be open to all Members.

(iv) Item 15 Building Control

The Building Control Manager would give a presentation in April 2017.

16. REVIEW OF ELECTIONS AND EU REFERENDUM

The Select Committee received a report regarding the running of the Elections and EU Referendum 2016 from the Assistant Director of Governance and Performance Management.

The report discussed the planning processes and implementation of the following elections during 2016:

- (1) The election of a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Essex on 5 May.
- (2) 21 District Council wards.
- (3) 11 contested Parish Council wards.
- (4) The EU Referendum on 23 June.

On 1 December 2015, with the publication of the Electoral Register, the district's register held 100,862 electors.

(a) 8,700 postal packs were sent out for May, 250 of these had an issue error and were re-issued. 5,874 packs were returned and counted, a 67.5% return rate.

(b) 10,200 postal packs were sent out for the EU Referendum, 1,500 more than May. A further issue of 1,850 were sent out over a week later. 11,069 were returned and counted, a 91.9% return rate.

All the District's polling stations were operational for both the May and the June events. Heavy rainfalls caused concerns for some rural stations with localised flooding on rural roads although staff managed to open all stations on time and contingency arrangements were put in place. The Elections Office were busy on both days (22/23 June) as many callers needed advice on the voting process.

In May the verification of District, Parish and PCC votes took place on May 6 2016 at Theydon Bois Village Hall commencing at 8.30a.m. and was completed by 11.30a.m. In addition, the first stage PCC count commenced at 1.00p.m. and was completed by 2.15p.m. as no individual candidate polled more than 50% of the vote at this stage, a second stage count was completed at 5.15p.m. The Returning Officer had correctly decided that District and Parish/Town Counts should be held over to the Saturday as these counts could not have commenced until 6.00p.m.

The counting of District, Town and Parish ballot papers in May and the EU Referendum count in June took place at Debden Park High School. The school was particularly helpful to staff. It was the view of officers that this was the best venue where single type elections were concerned. In May, the first result was declared at 9.17a.m. and the last at 12.00 midday.

In June counting started as soon as the polling finished with postal voters. The process went smoothly using a mini count system. Officers had, by analysis, attempted to balance the likely number of votes on each table and this worked well. The district verification figure was supplied by 1.15a.m. and the final result transmitted at 3.25a.m.

Members asked about Whitebridge School, Loughton which was due for refurbishment during 2017-18, there was a need for locating a suitable polling station locally. The Select Committee was advised that officers would be meeting the Head Teacher of Whitebridge School to discuss any way forward on using the site as a polling station during this refurbishment period. It was advised by Members that a good alternative would be St Michael's and All Angels Church Hall in Roding Road.

A suggestion was raised that at the count, the ballot boxes being counted could have their numbers displayed on the relevant tables so observers were better aware of what was happening. A further point was to re-arrange the table layout into a "W" configuration so observers could see all of the counting.

Members queried the possibilities of using a portacabin or caravan for a polling station in Lower Sheering. There was no bus service between there and Sheering, the distance was over a mile and could be considered a dangerous journey to undertake on foot with narrow roads and traffic. Officers replied that the costs of hiring a portacabin or caravan were considerable, they needed to be delivered and electricity connected. However they would work with the Parish Council to resolve this problem, an option was paying for a local house to be used as a polling station. A further concern was the use of Theydon Bois Village Hall did not give adequate public access to the counting process. An alternative was Debden Park School.

Future Elections and Lessons Learned

In May 2017 there would be County Council elections only. In May 2018 there were solely District elections. Lessons learnt would be fed back into the process for next year which would be beginning shortly. It was advised that in 2020 the district had scheduled quadruple elections, Parliamentary, PCC, District and Parish.

Boundary Commission Proposals

The Select Committee were advised of initial proposals from the Boundary Commission on Parliamentary boundaries which proposed no change for the Epping Forest Constituency but did make proposals to both Harlow and Brentwood and Ongar. There would be further updates as details became clearer. A report would be

submitted to the November 2016 Select Committee and an item placed in the Council Bulletin advising all members inviting comments.

The Select Committee extended their gratitude to the Elections Team staff for their hard work during the period of these elections and referendum.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Review of Elections and EU Referendum be noted;
- (2) That officers explore using St Michael's and All Angels Church Hall, Roding Road, Loughton as a polling station in place of Whitebridge School, Loughton during the school's refurbishment;
- (3) That officers consider arranging the layout of tables at future counts to allow greater access for observers;
- (4) That officers liaise with Sheering Parish Council in regard to finding a suitable polling station for this area; and
- (5) That a report be submitted to the November 2016 Select Committee regarding the Boundary Commission's proposals on Parliamentary boundaries for Harlow and Brentwood and Ongar and that notification be circulated in the Council Bulletin of the proposals.

17. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2016/17 - QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE

The Select Committee received a report from the Performance Improvement Officer regarding Key Performance Indicators 2016/17 – Quarter 1 Performance.

The Local Government Act 1999 required that the Council make arrangements for securing continuous improvement in the way in which its functions and services were exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. A range of 37 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2016/17 was adopted in March 2016. These were important to the improvement of the Council's services and the achievement of its key objectives and comprised a combination of some former statutory indicators and locally determined performance measures.

The overall position for all 37 KPIs at the end of Quarter 1 was as follows:

- (a) 25 (68%) indicators achieved target.
- (b) 12 (32%) indicators did not achieve target.
- (c) 3 (8%) of these indicators performed within the agreed tolerance for the indicator.
- (d) 28 (76%) of indicators were currently anticipated to achieve year end target and a further 2 (5%) were uncertain whether they would achieve year end target.

There were 5 KPIs which fell within this Select Committee's areas of responsibility, the overall position with regard to the achievement of target performance at Q1 for these were:

- (i) 2 (40%) indicators achieved target.

- (ii) 3 (60%) indicators did not achieve target.
- (iii) 2 (40%) performed within the agreed tolerance for the indicator.
- (iv) 4 (80%) indicators were currently anticipated to achieve year end target and a further 1 (20%) indicator was uncertain as to whether it would achieve year end target.

RESOLVED:

That the Key Performance Indicators 2016/17 for Quarter 1 be noted.

18. CORPORATE PLAN KEY ACTION PLAN 2016/17 - QUARTER 1 PROGRESS REPORT

The Select Committee received a report regarding the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2016/17 – Quarter 1 from the Performance Improvement Officer.

The Corporate Plan was the Council's key strategic planning document, setting out its priorities over the five year period from 2015/16 to 2019/20. The priorities or Corporate Aims were supported by Key Objectives providing a clear statement of the Council's overall intentions for these five years.

The Key Objectives were delivered by an annual action plan with each year building upon the progress against the achievement of the Key Objectives for previous years. The annual action plans contained a range of actions designed to achieve specific outcomes and were working documents and subject to change.

The Corporate Plan Key Action Plan for 2016/17 was agreed in March 2016, progress in relation to all actions and deliverables was reviewed by the Cabinet, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the appropriate select committee on a quarterly basis.

There were 50 actions in total for which progress updates for Quarter 1 were as follows:

- (a) 32 (64%) of these actions had been Achieved or were On Target.
- (b) 7 (14%) of these actions were Under Control.
- (c) 2 (4%) were Behind Schedule.
- (d) 9 (18%) were Pending.

There were 8 actions that fell within the areas of responsibility of this Select Committee, these were:

- (i) 8 (100%) of these actions had been Achieved or were On Target.
- (ii) 0 (0%) of these actions were Under Control.
- (iii) 0 (0%) of these actions were Behind Schedule.
- (iv) 0 (0%) of these actions were Pending.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2016/17 Quarter 1 Progress Report be noted.

19. ANNUAL EQUALITY INFORMATION REPORT 2016

The Select Committee received the Annual Equality Information Report 2016 from the Performance Improvement Officer.

The Equality Act 2010 required that authorities subject to the public sector equality duty, publish equality information annually to demonstrate compliance with the duty. The Council published its last equality information report in September 2015, this report set out progress made since then, to improve the Council's services and employment practices for people with protected characteristics.

The Equality Act 2010 required that public bodies, including the Council had due regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization.
- (b) Advancing equality of opportunity between different groups.
- (c) Fostering good relations between different groups.

The equality duty covered age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. This duty also covered marriage and civil partnerships.

The broad purpose of the equality duty was to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the day to day business of public bodies. Understanding how services affected different groups made it more likely that the services had the intended effect and this could lead to greater equality and better outcomes.

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Equality Information Report for 2016 be noted.

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

There were no reports for recommendation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, however the Select Committee Chairman would usually make a verbal report to the Committee at its next meeting.

21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Select committee would be held on Tuesday 29 November 2016 at 7.15p.m. in Committee Room 1.