

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 2018
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.00 - 8.00 PM**

Members Present: H Whitbread (Chairman), J Lea (Vice-Chairman), A Beales, K Chana, S Heather, A Mitchell, A Patel, C Roberts, D Roberts, D Stocker, J H Whitehouse and W Marshall (Tenants and Leaseholders Panel)

Other members present: S Stavrou

Apologies for Absence: S Heap

Officers Present A Hall (Strategic Director), J Chandler (Service Director (Community & Partnership Services)), J Leither (Democratic Services Officer) and A O'Connor (Museum, Heritage & Culture Manager)

16. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (MINUTE ITEM 39 - 23.7.02)

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

17. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

In the absence of the Vice-Chairman, who was late, the Chairman nominated Councillor A Patel to be Vice Chairman which was seconded by Councillor K Chana.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor A Patel be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Communities Select Committee for the duration of the meeting.

18. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the last meeting of the Select Committee held on 12 June 2018 be agreed as a correct record, subject to Item 4. Declarations of Interest, whereby Councillor J H Whitehouse was recorded as being a trustee of Epping Forest Foodbank. Councillor Whitehouse had stated that she was a trustee of Epping Forest Reuse and a volunteer at Epping Forest Foodbank.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

20. TERMS OF REFERENCE/WORK PROGRAMME

(1) Terms of Reference

The Committee noted their terms of reference.

(2) Work Programme

The Director of Communities advised that Item (20), Fire Safety Policy for residential Council properties would be considered at the next scheduled meeting on the 13 November 2018.

He also advised that Item (21) Review of EFDC Tenancy Policy and West Essex Tenancy Strategy should be deleted from the work programme as the Government were now reviewing the introduction of 5 year fixed term tenancies.

(3) Extra Meeting – Consultation Documents

The Director of Communities advised that two important consultation papers had recently been published by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) which were felt to be sufficiently important to warrant a response from the Council. The consultation papers are on:

- Social Housing Green Paper; and
- Use of receipts from Right to Buy sales.

Under the Council's protocol for responding to consultation papers, it was the responsibility of the relevant Select Committee to agree the response. Since both consultation papers are housing-related, it fell to the responsibility of the Communities Select Committee to agree the response.

The consultation was open until the 9 October 2018 and it was therefore proposed that an extra meeting of the Select Committee be convened, with the agreement of the Chairman, on Monday 24 September at 6pm.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Terms of Reference were noted;
- (2) That the amendments to the Work Programme were noted; and
- (3) That the Select Committee agreed to an extra meeting to discuss the consultation papers published by the MHCLG.

21. MUSEUM, HERITAGE & CULTURE LGA PEER CHALLENGE

The Museum, Heritage and Culture Manager, T O'Connor introduced a report to the Select Committee regarding the Museum, Heritage and Culture LGA Peer Challenge. He advised that earlier this year, the Council's Museum, Heritage and Culture service was successful in securing a competitive Peer Challenge Review of its services undertaken by the Local Government Association (LGA). The cost of £7000 was fully funded by Arts Council England and the Local Government Association.

In November 2017 EFDC were made aware of an offer from the LGA to undertake a fully funded Peer Challenge review of Museum, Heritage and Culture Services. In consultation with Councillor H Kane, A Hall (Director of Communities) and J Chandler (Assistant Director, Community Services) an application was made.

EFDC were one of only three authorities in the country selected for this type of review which was undertaken by the following team of experienced professionals from the museum and cultural sector:

- Mark Harrison – LGA Peer Challenge Manager;
- Councillor Nick Worth – Executive Member for Culture & Emergency Services, Lincolnshire County Council and Deputy Leader South Holland Council; and,
- Tony Witton – Cultural and Creative Economy Service Manager, Kent County Council.

The team prepared for the peer challenge by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the Council and the challenges it was facing. They then spent two days onsite at Epping Forest Museum, during which they; spoke to more than 25 people including a range of council staff together with councillors and external partners and stakeholders; gathered information and views from more than 12 meetings and collectively spent more than 75 hours to determine their findings.

It was important to highlight that this was not an inspection. Peer challenges were improvement focussed and tailored to meet individual councils' needs. They were designed to complement and add value to a council's own performance and improvement and the process was not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by the people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The Peer Review team identified areas and made key recommendations to the Council as follows:

- (1) Prioritise the completion of the business plan (2018-2023) and implementation of the new staffing structure;
- (2) Consider the value of a developing cultural forum;
- (3) Review capacity when considering new projects;
- (4) Agree a coherent commercial approach;
- (5) Take a strategic approach to outreach and embrace hard to reach groups;
- (6) Establish a cultural strategy;
- (7) Agree the relationship with the development trust;
- (8) Prioritise a dedicated website, building on the success of social media campaigns;
- (9) Explore the viability of digitalisation to bring greater access to collections and the potential of commercial opportunities; and
- (10) Review the collections and disposal policy.

In conclusion the Peer Review team reported that they saw evidence of an excellent well run service, supported by enthusiastic and professional staff. There was a high level of political and stakeholder support for the service and this enthusiasm had helped in securing additional external funding. The newly refurbished museum in Waltham Abbey showed the benefit of this shared ambition and there was a clear appreciation of the main purpose of service delivery that was to collect, preserve and promote the heritage of the Epping Forest District and to provide opportunities for people to engage in wider cultural opportunities.

Councillor H Whitbread asked if the museum had volunteers and if so how many. Mr O'Connor stated that the museum currently had 27 volunteers and their help included:

- A team of 5 volunteers who attended and looked after the gardens;

- Help in the shop and reception area;
- A team that helped with the collections and updating the records; and
- A range of various other all important tasks that needed attending to.

If they were all to leave tomorrow the museum would be in serious trouble as they gave over 4,000 volunteer hours to the museum each year.

Councillor H Whitbread asked if there had been any engagement with schools. Mr O'Connor advised that they offered school programmes and supported dance and development courses.

RESOLVED:

That the report on the Museum, Heritage and Culture LGA Peer Challenge be noted by the Select Committee.

**22. ATTENDANCE BY ESSEX POLICE DISTRICT COMMANDER AT NEXT MEETING
- DISCUSSION ON ISSUES TO RAISE**

The Select Committee received a report from the Director of Communities regarding the attendance of the Essex Police District Commander, who would be attending the Communities Select Committee meeting on 13 November 2018, to give a presentation on the current policing issues and concerns relating to the Epping Forest District.

The Director asked the Select Committee if they had any issues that they would like the District Commander to cover in his presentation and if there were any areas of local policing on which Members would like to question the District Commander on, so that he could be notified in advance of the meeting.

The Select Committee agreed the following issues that they would like the District Commander to either cover in his presentation or answer through questions:

- The Police's approach to dealing with offenders and suspects with mental health problems – this was suggested to be one of the main issues that Members would like the District Commander to cover in the presentation:
 - The pathways used by the Police to help and deal with such people.
- Current retention and recruitment issues for front line police officers:
 - Current numbers of police officers covering the Epping Forest District and the recent and forecast trend.
- An assessment of anti-social behaviour in the District, particularly over the Summer (compared to last summer):
 - The Police's general approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour; and
 - Your plans for preparing for Halloween this year.
- Current service levels and response times for handling 101 and 999 calls.
- Average response times to emergency calls (from receipt to attendance).
- Current crime clear up / detection rates and recent trends:
 - Proposed strategies for improving detection rates.

- The Police's response to the recent increase in burglaries in the District.
- How the Police work pro-actively with young people, particularly for the prevention of ASB and the outcomes from any associated initiatives:
 - The scope for more pro-active work to be done in local schools to prevent crime.
- How often, if at all, the 3 EFDC-funded Police Officers have been called to incidents outside of the District "to date":
 - A general view on the success or otherwise to date of the 3 EFDC-funded Police Officers.
- How local town and parish councils can fund PCSOs or Special Constables for their areas and, if funded, how they are tasked and the involvement of the local councils in tasking:
 - The cost of funding PCSOs or Special Constables by town and parish councils.
- What was going to be done to tackle crime rates across the district specifically in relation to the recent thefts and intimidation of young people, over the summer period in Loughton and Buckhurst Hill.

The Chairman of the Select Committee, Cllr Holly Whitbread, extended an invitation to all Members of the Council who have an interest in policing in the District to attend the Select Committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the questions and areas of concern highlighted in the minute item above be submitted to the Essex Police District Commander for his attendance at the Select Committee meeting on 13 November 2018.

23. TRANSFORMATION - PROJECT CLOSURE REPORT

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee had requested that Project Closure reports from the Transformation Programme be submitted to the relevant Select Committee for information.

Project P010 – Review of the Careline Alarm Monitoring Service

The Director of Communities advised that the outsourcing of this service was an extremely well managed procurement exercise by Roger Wilson, Assistant Director – Housing Operations and the Select Committee. All issues with staffing were resolved and the transfer of the service to Tunstall Healthcare (UK) Limited went smoothly. There had been no complaints and this project has resulted in savings of £103,400 for the Council.

RESOLVED:

That the Select Committee noted the Transformation Project Closure report which related to the Communities Directorate.

24. TRANSFORMATION - PROJECT DOSSIER REPORT

The Director of Communities introduced the report reviewing the updated Project Dossier for the Transformation programme for the Communities Directorate, on behalf of the Head of Transformation. He noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had requested the progress of projects and programmes within the Transformation Programme – known as the Project Dossier – be reported to regular meetings of the Committee for review.

The Director advised that the Council's performance management system, Pentana, which all projects that come into the remit of the Communities Select Committee could be found.

Councillor Whitehouse commented that at the last meeting of the Communities Select Committee she asked for more information on each project in the dossier to explain the project and noticed that the report was in the same format as last time. She advised that it would be helpful to know:

- Why was the project being undertaken;
- What was the project for; and
- What was the final outcome.

The Director advised that the Head of Transformation had attended all four of the Select Committee meetings and the report format was the outcome from these meetings. Members are able to access the Pentana system where they could see all of the information behind each project. He advised that he would ask the Transformation Team to send out information to all Members to enable them to access Pentana.

RESOLVED:

That the Select Committee noted the updated Project Dossier for the Transformation Programme affecting the Communities Directorate.

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

The Select Committee noted that there were no reports for recommendation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

26. FUTURE MEETINGS

The Select Committee noted the dates of their future meetings and that an extra meeting had been convened for Monday 24 September 2018 at 6pm in Committee Room 1.