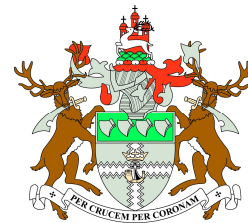


Supplementary Council Agenda



Epping Forest District Council

Council Tuesday, 22nd April, 2014

Place: Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Room: Council Chamber

Time: 7.30 pm

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

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY) (Pages 223 - 224)

To answer the attached question asked after notice in accordance with the provisions contained in paragraph 11.3 of the Council Procedure 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 the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; or
- (c) to any Portfolio Holder.

7. REPORTS FROM THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET (Pages 225 - 226)

To receive reports 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 Asset Management and Economic Development Portfolio Holder;
- (c) Report of the Environment Portfolio Holder;
- (d) Report of the Finance and Technology Portfolio Holder;
- (e) Report of the Housing Portfolio Holder;
- (f) Report of the Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder;
- (g) Report of the Planning Portfolio Holder;
- (h) Report of the Safer, Greener and Transport Portfolio Holder;
- (i) Report of the Support Services Portfolio Holder.

11. REPORT OF THE CABINET - CORPORATE PLAN 2011 -2015 - KEY OBJECTIVES 2014/15 (Pages 227 - 234)

Report attached.

12. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (Pages 235 - 246)

- (a) Report of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- (b) Reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (if any); and
- (c) Reports of Overview and Scrutiny Panels -

- (ii) Constitution and Member Services Standing Panel – Petitions Scheme – Review – to consider the attached report.

14A. COUNCIL AND REGULATORY FUNCTIONS - DELEGATION

Recommendation:

That the undermentioned post holders be appointed to the roles shown:

Constitution Reference	Officer Authorised	Role
CL 36	Performance Improvement Manager	Freedom of Information and Re-Use of Public Sector Information Officer
CL36	Assistant Director (Governance and Performance Management)	Deputy Freedom of Information and Re-Use of Public Sector Information Officer
CL52	Assistant Director (Governance and Performance Management)	Deputy Monitoring Officer
CL60	Chief Internal Auditor Senior Lawyer	Deputy RIPA Officers (Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act)

(Monitoring Officer) Following completion of Stage 1 of the Staff Restructuring, the Council is asked to approve the appointment of officers to the following roles: (a) Freedom of Information and Re-Use of Public Sector Information Officer and Deputy; (b) Deputy Monitoring Officer; and (c) Deputy RIPA Officers.

15. JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS (Pages 247 - 250)

- (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.

Council Meeting – 22 April 2014 – Public Questions

(a) Ninefields Brook – Question to the Environment Portfolio Holder from Mr S Kane, a resident of Waltham Abbey

“Can I thank the Portfolio Holder for taking time to join me in visiting the Ninefields Brook. As he is aware local residents are concerned about the ongoing problem with rubbish in the brook and also the ever growing rat problem. Will he agree to work with the local residents in tidying up the brook and also advise what is being done to solve the problem of rats in the area?”

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Report to Council

Subject: Support Services Portfolio

Date: 22 April 2014

Portfolio Holder: Councillor H Ulkun

Recommending:

That the report of the Support Services Portfolio Holder be noted.

1. COUNCIL APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME

I am pleased to report to members that the Council's eight apprentices continue to do well. The six business administration apprentices are coming to the end of their first placements and will start their new placements at the beginning of May. All have passed their BTEC tests and are well on their way to completing their NVQ Level 2 in Business Administration.

The two construction multi trade apprentices are undertaking a different NVQ course. They are both doing very well and are passing their practical assessments.

The apprentices have participated in a range of corporate training courses including minute taking, telephone training, business letter writing and diversity awareness. The Chief Executive has also run a session with them on the Council's Values and Behaviours.

All the apprentices were involved in organising and running the recent Careers Fair at Epping Forest College. They spoke to parents and students about the benefits of being part of an apprenticeship scheme at the Council.

They will also be taking part in the Council's Crucial Crew programme which starts in June.

The feedback from the Apprentices has been very positive; they are gaining confidence, learning new skills and meeting a range of different people.

2. REVIEW OF POLLING PLACES AND PLANNING STATIONS

I would draw the Council's attention to the statutory consultation on polling places and polling stations which is currently underway and closes on 30 May 2014.

The review covers polling districts and polling places. A polling district is a geographical area created by the sub-division of a UK Parliamentary constituency for the purposes of a UK Parliamentary election. Each parish is a separate polling district unless there are special circumstances (eg. a small number of electors). A polling place is an area or building in which polling stations will be selected by the (Acting)

Returning Officer. Polling stations should be within easy reach of all electors from across the polling district.

The review is designed to assess questions about the accessibility of polling stations to voters. A number of comments have been received.

Copies of the consultation material are available in hard copy from Democratic Services and at Council Information desks. Details are also available through the website. All members should bring forward any concerns as part of this review.

3. INDIVIDUAL ELECTOR REGISTRATION (IER)

Since my last report, officers have put together a funding bid to the Cabinet Office in support of the increased costs of producing IER registration forms in A3 format. These funding bids are due to be paid to the Council in April. This bid includes additional equipment for scanning in forms, printers and form folding equipment.

Alongside this bid, the Council will receive grant sums this month to support the increased workload in the transition to IER over the summer period and funding for specific public engagement activity. This will be coordinated with other councils across Essex to coincide with national awareness campaigns in July and August. Additional temporary staffing has been secured through the use of grant money and it is the intention to review staffing in the section as part of phase 2 of the Council Restructuring to ensure it is at an appropriate level going forward.

I am pleased to say that we have completed the process to secure the printing of the new style forms which, for this year, will be printed by the same company group that supplies the electoral registration IT system. With so many changes to the process this year I have taken the decision that printing new forms otherwise would pose too great a risk to the success of the transitional process. This will be reviewed again next year.

IER will see a significant shift in the way people register and it is a major undertaking to ensure that registration rates do not decline after the General Election.

4. HASTINGWOOD VILLAGE HALL – POLLING STATION

I have referred previously to concerns about access to this polling station and am pleased to say that the Council has arranged for a ramp to be available there for wheelchair user and others when necessary. This solution was relatively cheap and the ramp will be kept permanently at the Hall.

5. ELECTION TIMETABLE

I would draw the Council's attention to the timetable leading to the European Parliament and District Council elections which has been published on the website. This sets out the various important deadlines which must be met during the process.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 22 April 2014

Portfolio Holder: Councillor C Whitbread (Leader of the Council)

Subject: Corporate Plan 2011-2015 - Key Objectives 2014/15

Recommending:

That the attached proposed Key Objectives for 2014/15 be adopted.

1. The Corporate Plan is the Council's key strategic planning document, setting out its priorities over the four-year period from 2011/12 to the end of 2014/15, with strategic themes reflecting those of the Community Strategy for the district. Updates to the Corporate Plan are published annually, to reflect the key objectives adopted for each year of the plan period and progress against the achievement of objectives for previous years.
2. The annual adoption of key objectives and priorities supports the delivery of the Council's medium-term aims over the four-year period of the Corporate Plan, and provides an opportunity to focus attention on the achievement of specific outcomes and areas for improvement.
3. The key objectives are intended to address national and local challenges and to provide a clear statement of the Council's overall priorities for each year. The key objectives identify specific deliverables and outcomes to be achieved through projects and initiatives, and measurable timescales to demonstrate progress. Performance against the individual deliverables and actions is reviewed by us and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis.
4. In order to complete the Business Plans for 2014/15, Management Board has identified a range of proposed key objectives and supporting deliverables and outcomes. A number of actions have been carried forward from 2013/14 (with new or revised performance measures or timescales), alongside new deliverables and outcomes that respond to other issues of national or local importance. We considered initially the draft key objectives for 2014/15 at a joint Cabinet and Management Board meeting held in early March 2014.
5. Having now given further consideration to the proposed key objectives for 2014/15 we are recommending their adoption to the Council. Once adopted, the key objectives will be published on the Council's website as a supplement to the Corporate Plan, alongside details of outturn progress against the objectives for 2013/14.
6. In accordance with the recommendations of the recent review of the authority's Overview and Scrutiny arrangements, the Leader of the Council will present the priorities and the key objectives for the year ahead, to the first meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in each municipal year.
7. We recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.

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PROPOSED KEY OBJECTIVES 2014/15

Theme	Key Objective	Medium-Term Aim	Key Deliverable	Target/How Measured	Lead Officer(s)
COMMUNICATIONS (Support Services Portfolio Holder)	Proactively promote the policies and reputation of the Council internally and externally;	Aim 3 - Innovative & transparent council; Aim 5 - Community leadership & protection of the character of the district;	(a) The communication of accurate and appropriate public information about the development of the Council's new waste management contract and future waste collection and recycling arrangements;	Publication/issue of relevant information at key stages of the development of the new waste management contract;	DoN
			(b) The communication of accurate and appropriate public information about the development of the new Local Plan for the Epping Forest District, which will guide future development decisions;	Publication/issue of relevant information at key stages of the Local Plan process;	DoN
			(c) The communication of accurate and appropriate information to make residents, members and partners aware of developments in respect of welfare reforms and the implications of reforms;	Publication/issue of relevant press releases and the inclusion of information in the Council Bulletin, within ten working days of any significant announcements by the government in respect of welfare reforms;	DoR
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (Leisure & Wellbeing Portfolio Holder/Housing Portfolio Holder/Safer, Greener & Transport Portfolio Holder) Page 229	Engage with communities to put them at the centre of the Council's policy development and service design;	Aim 1 - Safeguard frontline services; Aim 3 - Innovative & transparent council; Aim 5 - Community leadership & protection of the character of the district;	(a) The development of the Community Engagement Programme for super output areas within the district and those areas with identified health inequalities;	Delivery of programme of community focussed consultation and community well-being initiatives by 31 March 2015;	DoC
			(b) The introduction of new site licences and licence conditions on authorised gypsy roma and traveller sites in the district;	(i) Undertaking of a consultation exercise with residents about the introduction of new site licences and licence conditions by 31 July 2014;	DoC
				(ii) Introduction of new site licences and conditions by 31 March 2015;	DoC
			(c) The introduction of revised off-street charging arrangements for public car parks in the district;	(i) Undertaking of a public consultation exercise in respect of proposed car park tariffs by 31 October 2014;	DoN
(ii) Adoption of off-street car parking strategy and parking tariffs by 31 March 2015;	DoN				
LOCAL PLAN (Planning Portfolio Holder)	Deliver a robust and resilient Local Plan that facilitates appropriate growth, whilst protecting the special character of the district;	Aim 3 - Innovative & transparent council; Aim 5 - Community leadership & protection of the character of the district;	The delivery of a new Local Plan for the Epping Forest District to guide future development decisions;	Publication of local plan preferred options consultation document by 30 October 2014;	DoN
				Publication of the new Local Plan, following the preferred options consultation, by 30 September 2015;	DoN

OPERATING MODELS (Leader/Relevant Portfolio Holders)	Promote cultural change to breakdown silo working, and implement new, flexible ways of working;	Aim 1 - Safeguard frontline services;	(a) The development of an overarching Organisational Development Plan to provide direction for how the Council needs to develop in the future;	Adoption of Organisational Development Plan by 31 December 2014;	CE / Mgmt Board
		Aim 3 - Innovative & transparent council;	(b) The completion of the second phase ('Phase 2') of the organisational review of the Council's existing officer/service structure;	(i) Agreement of all Phase 2 organisational structures by 30 September 2014;	Mgmt Board
		Aim 4 - Improve efficiency & maximise revenue from assets;		(ii) Full implementation of all Phase 2 organisational structures by 31 March 2015;	Mgmt Board
		Aim 5 - Community leadership & protection of the character of the district;	(c) The delivery of the Council's organisational values and behaviours;	(i) Development of action plan to embed values and behaviours within each directorate, identifying processes and training needs, by 31 March 2014;	Mgmt Board
				(ii) Rollout of assessment of performance against values and behaviours through Performance and Development Review Process by 31 December 2014;	DoR
		(d) The development of a more commercial approach to service delivery;	(i) Adoption of corporate customer-focussed approach to service delivery by 30 September 2014;	(ii) Consideration of options for generation of increased revenue by appropriate traded services, by 31 March 2015;	CE / Mgmt Board
				(e) The review of the outsourced Out of Hours Call Handling Service for all emergency and routine housing repairs reports and appointments;	Consideration of review of operation of service by Management Board, by 31 March 2015;
		(f) The development of a corporate approach to flexible working arrangements;	(i) Investigation of options for flexible working, in terms of ICT and changes to corporate policy and culture, by 30 September 2014;	(ii) Adoption of appropriate flexible working strategies and policies by 31 March 2015;	CE / Mgmt Board
				(g) The implementation of the National Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) to provide unique identification of land and property within the district;	Achievement of a 'fit for purpose' standard of implementation of the LLPG proportionate to the Council's requirements for land and property identification, by 31 July 2014;
		(h) The review of the Council's new Housing Allocation Scheme and Tenancy Policy, after one year of operation;	(i) Completion of the review of the Allocation Scheme and Tenancy Policy by 31 December 2014;	(ii) Implementation of any changes required to the Policy by 31 March 2015;	DoC
				(i) The implementation of the Council's combined Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy, covering all aspects of safeguarding for children, young people and vulnerable adults;	Completion of appropriate training on the requirements of the Safeguarding Policy and full understanding of safeguarding roles by all members and identified staff, by 31 March 2015;

			(j) The determination of the Council's Housing Strategy for 2013-2016, setting out the future strategic approach to housing within the district;	Adoption of new Housing Strategy by 31 December 2014;	DoC	
			(k) The development of the Council's Economic Development Strategy, setting out its support for the development of the local economy;	Adoption of Economic Development Strategy by 30 September 2014;	DoG	
			(l) The development of the Council's Waste Strategy, in conjunction with arrangements for the letting of a new waste management contract;	Adoption of Waste Strategy by 31 March 2015;	DoN	
			(m) The development of the Council's Leisure, Culture and Community Strategy, in conjunction with arrangements for the letting of a new Leisure Management Contract;	Adoption of Leisure, Culture and Community Strategy by 31 July 2014;	DoN / DoC	
			(n) The development of the Council's Operational Property Strategy, setting out arrangements for the effective management of its property assets;	Adoption of Operational Property Strategy by 30 September 2014;	CE / DoR	
PERFORMANCE (Finance & Technology Portfolio Holder)	Deliver key priorities within budget;	Aim 2 - Lowest District Council Tax in Essex; Aim 3 - Innovative & transparent council; Aim 5 - Community leadership & protection of the character of the district;	(a) The delivery of all key outcomes;	(i) Achievement of targets for all Key Performance Indicators for 2014/15 by 31 March 2015;	CE / Mgmt Board	
				(ii) Achievement of specified deliverables for all key objectives for 2014/15;	CE / Mgmt Board	
			(b) The consumption of resources within budget;	Containment of capital and revenue outturn for 2014/15 within the budget for the year;		DoR
			(c) The setting of a consistently low District Council Tax, whilst ensuring the protection of the delivery of front-line services;	Setting of low level of Council Tax for 2015/16, compared with other Essex district authorities, by 28 February 2015;		DoR
			(d) The undertaking of appropriate process improvement activity in accordance with the recommendations of the National Audit Office (NAO), following the NAO process review completed in 2013;	(i) Identification, review and re-engineering as necessary, of three sample processes across different directorates, by 31 March 2015;		CE / Mgmt Board
				(ii) Realignment of key performance indicator set to reflect additional qualitative outcomes, by 31 March 2015;		CE / Mgmt Board
PUBLIC HEALTH (Leisure & Wellbeing Portfolio Holder)	Prepare for changes arising from the transfer of public health responsibilities;	Aim 5 - Community leadership & protection of the character of the district;	The provision of appropriate services to meet the health and wellbeing needs of all residents of the Epping Forest District;	Adoption of the West Essex Health and Wellbeing Strategy by 31 July 2014;	DoN	

STRATEGIC SITES (Asset Management & Economic Development Portfolio Holder/Housing Portfolio Holder)	Maximise the potential of the Council's key development sites;	Aim 4 - Improve efficiency & maximise revenue from assets; Aim 5 - Community leadership & protection of the character of the district;	(a) The development, subject to agreement with third-party owners, external challenge market forces and member decisions, of robust plans for the development of the T11 site at Langston Road, Loughton;	(i) Completion of a development agreement with the owner of the T11 site by 31 March 2015;	DoG
				(ii) Facilitation of a detailed planning application for the T11 site by 30 November 2015;	DoG
				(iii) Commencement of development by 31 March 2016;	DoG
			(b) The preparation, subject to the resolution of relevant dependent factors, of a development brief for North Weald Airfield in accordance with the recommendations of the review undertaken by Deloitte;	Incorporation of agreed recommendations arising from the review of North Weald Airfield, as part of the development of the new Local Plan, by 31 March 2015;	DoN
			(c) The development, subject to the commitment of Essex County Council, Epping Town Council, and other third-party owners, of robust plans for the disposal of all or part of the site at St. John's Road, Epping, identified within the Development Brief;	Relocation of the Housing Repairs Depot by 31 March 2015, to enable the depot site to be developed as part of the St. Johns Road redevelopment and to meet current and future needs;	DoC
			(d) The disposal, subject to member decisions, of the Council's nursery site at Pyrles Lane, Loughton;	Relocation of the Nursery Service from the Pyrles Lane site by 30 September 2015;	DoG
			(e) The development of depot provision at Oakwood Hill, Loughton;	(i) Facilitation of a detailed planning application for depot provision by 31 July 2014;	DoG
				(ii) Procurement of the detailed design and development of the Oakwood Hill site by 30 October 2014;	DoG
				(iii) Commencement of development by 31 March 2015;	DoG
			(f) The commencement, subject to appropriate planning consents, of the Council's new housebuilding programme to provide additional affordable housing in the district;	(i) Start on site at first site in Phase 1 of the housebuilding programme (Waltham Abbey) by 31 August 2014,	DoC
				(ii) Obtain Investment Partner status with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), to become eligible for HCA funding by 31 December 2014;	DoC
				(iii) Start on site at Phase 2 of the housebuilding programme (Burton Road, Loughton) by 31 March 2015;	DoC
			(g) The conversion of twenty difficult-to-let bedsits at Marden Close and Faversham Hall, Chigwell Row, into twelve self-contained flats,	Completion of conversion scheme by 30 April 2015;	DoC
			(h) The extension and refurbishment of the Epping Forest District Museum, assisted by Heritage Lottery Funding, to increase the size of the Museum and improve accommodation for displaying exhibits;	Commencement of museum extension and refurbishment works by 31 December 2014;	DoC
(i) The undertaking of an Environmental Estate Improvement Scheme at Oakwood Hill, Loughton in partnership with Essex County Council and others;	Agreement and commencement of identified estate improvement works by 31 March 2015;	DoC			

WELFARE REFORM Finance & Technology Portfolio Holder)	Prepare and plan for the effects of welfare reforms in an effective and co-ordinated way;	Aim 1 - Safeguard frontline services; Aim 5 - Community leadership & protection of the character of the district;	(a) The implementation of an amended and updated scheme of local support for Council Tax, to provide the greatest possible protection to residents whilst remaining cost neutral;	Adoption of updated local Council Tax Support Scheme by 31 December 2014;	DoR
			(b) The retention of adequate resources to ensure that the threat of fraud is effectively managed;	Determination of the Council's response to any further announcements by the Department for Work and Pensions on the reation of a Single Fraud Investigation Service, by 31 December 2014;	DoR
			(c) The retention of adequate resources to ensure that the Council's benefit function is effectively operated and managed;	Determination of the Council's response to any further announcements by the Department for Work and Pensions on Universal Credit and the role of local authorities in future service provision by 31 December 2014;	DoR

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Report to Council

Date of meeting: 22 April 2014

Report: Constitution and members Services Standing Scrutiny Panel

Subject: Petitions Scheme - Review

Chairman: Councillor J Philip



Recommending:

- (1) That the redrafted Council petitions scheme attached at Appendix 1 to this report be adopted and incorporated into the Council's Constitution
- (2) That, consequential on the approval of recommendation (1) above to note the proposed revised website information on petitions as attached at Appendix 2 to this report.

Report:

1. The Constitution and Members Services Panel last considered the petitions scheme in September 2012. At that time members were advised that in December 2010 the Council had approved a new Petitions Scheme which had been required by Government. The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (2009 Act), and subsequent statutory guidance had placed a requirement on the Council to have a scheme which included the introduction of an ePetitions facility through the Council's website by 15 December that year.
2. In the autumn of that year, following the general election earlier that year, the Government withdrew the statutory guidance and gave authorities more scope to define their own scheme. At that time the 2009 Act remained in force. During December 2010 the Government gave notice that provisions of the Localism Act would remove any duty to provide such a system. The Localism Act gained Royal Assent in November 2011. Section 46 of the Localism Act completely repealed the earlier acts provisions including having a petitions scheme.
3. The review in 2012 made a number of minor amendments to the scheme but at that time it was acknowledged that the scheme was poorly written but had been based upon statutory guidance at the time and needed redrafting. This review brings to members a suggested redrafted scheme.
4. In reviewing the document we believe that some sections may require some further attention.

Thresholds

5. In section (7) of the re-drafted scheme officers have tried to provide clarity on how petitions are dealt with related to the amount of support they receive. No petitions have ever met the threshold for debate at either Overview and Scrutiny or Full Council. Whilst we believe that the threshold level are appropriate, the original provisions that envisaged allowing petitioners to seek officers to report at an Overview and Scrutiny have never been requested. Experience has shown that petitioners are interested in issues, not their

management and this threshold has never been reached in any event.

6. We are therefore of the view that dealing with petitions over 1200 should require a Portfolio Holder to prepare a report to the full Cabinet for a decision. Such decisions would be open to call-in should Overview and Scrutiny wish to give them consideration. We are also suggesting that it should be open to the Portfolio Holder to decide to treat a smaller petition in this way should he/she so choose.

Dissatisfied Petitioners

7. A section of the current scheme provides an opportunity for a petition organiser to seek a review by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the process and the adequacy of the response. This is no longer a statutory requirement and it is felt by members of the Panel that any concerns raised by petitioners regarding the councils handling of their petition would be more appropriately directed to the established complaints process.

Other changes

8. We have suggested that the receipt of petitions are notified to ward members to ensure that local councillors are aware of received petitions. We have also asked officers to ensure that all petitions are subject to commentary in portfolio holder reports to Council as envisaged by the recent Overview and Scrutiny Review. We have also made minor changes to clarify timescales for response to petitions.

9. We have also suggested that where Lead Petitioners currently have the right to address the full Council when their petition is debated, this right should also extend to those being reported to Cabinet.

Website Guide

10. Attached at Appendix 2 is the proposed wording of the website guide for submitting petitions which seeks to differentiate information that is aimed at petitioners as a guide to submitting their petition.

11. The Council are asked to endorse the scheme and associated website wording and recommend accordingly.

Appendix 1

Petition Scheme – Epping Forest District Council

Proposed new Standing Order

1. Definition

1.1 For the purpose of this procedure a petition is a request to the Council made either (i) in writing; or (ii) through the Council's e-petitions system on its website.

2. Scope of Scheme

2.1 The Council will accept paper based petitions, e-petitions (but only those submitted on through its own petitions system) or a mix of paper and e-petitions. The proper officer for petitions is the Assistant Director of Governance and Performance Management.

3. Acknowledgement

3.1 All petitions sent or presented to the council shall receive an acknowledgement from the council within seven days of receipt. This acknowledgement will set out what the Council plan to do with the petition. The Council shall treat something as a petition if it is identified as being a petition, or if it seems to the Council that it is intended to be a petition.

4. Exceptions to Petitions

4.1 The following petitions do not fall within the scope of this petitions scheme:

(a) Emailed petitions, as email systems are not secure. Petitioners must use either paper or the Council's EPetitions system. The Council will not monitor third party petitions systems.

(b) Petitions which are considered to be vexatious, abusive, anonymous or otherwise inappropriate will not be accepted. In the period immediately before an election or referendum the Council may need to deal with a petition differently – if this is the case the Council will explain the reasons with the petitioner and discuss the revised timescale which will apply.

(c) Petitions relating to a planning decision; (as the Planning application process deals with objections to applications), including those about a development plan document or the community infrastructure levy.

(d) Petitions relating to a licensing decision; (as the Licensing scheme deals with objections to applications)

(e) Petitions relating to an individual or entity in respect of which that individual or entity has a right of recourse to a review or right of appeal.

(f) Any matter for which the Standards Committee has powers for determining complaints received under the Local Assessment process.

(g) Any complaint made against an employee of the District Council.

(h) Any matter which is substantially the same as a petition submitted in the previous 12 months.

(i) Where the subject matter is subject to ongoing legal proceedings.

(j) Petitions made during formal Council consultations related to the subject matter of the consultations (these will be formally referred to that process as appropriate)

4.2 Where a petition submitted relates to one of the categories set out above the Council will write to the lead petitioner and explain why the matter is not covered by the authority's Petitions Scheme. In appropriate circumstances, the Council may advise how the public views can be considered via alternative means.

5. Submission guidelines/Signatory Requirements

5.1 Petitions submitted to the council must include:

(a) A clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition. It should state what action the petitioners wish the council to take.

(b) The name and address and signature of any person supporting the petition.

(c) Contact details, including an address (and a valid email address if submitted electronically), for the petition organiser

5.2 If the petitioner contacts the Council to start an e-Petition, then the Council and the Lead Petitioner will agree the period over which signatures will be collected and to agree the final wording of the petition. The petition will then be available to sign 'electronically' for the agreed period on the Council's website. On the expiration of that time, the Council will respond in accordance with Section 7 below.

5.3 Anyone who lives, works or studies in Epping Forest District is entitled to sign to support a petition. The supporters Name, Address, a valid email address and/or postcode are required to sign an e-Petition on the Council's website. For paper petitions signatories must provide their, name, address and signature

5.4 E-petitions will run on the Council website for a maximum of 3 months, but the Council and the lead petitioner can choose a shorter timeframe up to the maximum.

6. The procedure when the Council receives a petition

6.1 The Council will send the lead petitioner an acknowledgement of the petition within 7 **working** days. **Local ward councillors will be informed of the receipt of a petition.**

6.2 If the Council is able to do what the petition asks for, the acknowledgement may confirm that the Council have taken the action requested and the petition will be closed.

6.3 If the petition needs more investigation, the Council will tell the lead petitioner the steps the Council plan to take.

6.4 If the lead petitioner has created an e-petition, the Council will check that the content of the e-petition is suitable before it is made available for signature. This will take a maximum of ten working days.

6.5 If the Council cannot publish an e-petition for some reason, the Council will contact the lead petitioner within ten **working** days to explain the reason for not publishing a petition based upon the exceptions in section 4 above.

6.6 A lead petitioner is able to change and resubmit their e-petition within 10 working days, if they fail to do so within that time, a summary of the e-petition and the reason why it has not been accepted will be published under the 'rejected petitions' section of the website.

7. How the Council considers petitions

Petition type	Response
Correspondence with fewer than 20 signatures	This will normally be dealt with by the appropriate Directorate as ordinary correspondence, unless the Service Director concerned is of the opinion that the subject matter is sufficiently important or contentious to warrant referring the matter to the appropriate Portfolio Holder.
Petitions with more than 20 but fewer than 1200 signatures	These will be considered and dealt with by the relevant portfolio holder who may: (a) take action if he or she has delegated powers to act alone; <u>(b) prepare a report to the Cabinet or a Sub-Committee of the Cabinet for decision if appropriate.</u>
<u>Petition containing at least 1200 signatures.</u>	<u>The relevant Portfolio Holder will prepare a report to the Cabinet for decision on the matter.</u>
2400 signatures or more	These large petitions will be scheduled for a council debate and if this is the case we will let you know whether this will happen
e-petitions	When an e-petition has closed for signature, it will automatically be submitted to the relevant officer, portfolio holder or Council In the same way as a paper petition.

8. Decisions on petitions

The Council's response to a petition will depend on what a petition asks for and how many people have signed it, but may include one or more of the following:

- taking the action requested in the petition
- considering the petition at a council meeting

- holding an inquiry into the matter
- undertaking research into the matter
- holding a public meeting
- holding a consultation
- holding a meeting with petitioners
- referring the petition for consideration by the Cabinet or a Cabinet Committee
- writing to the petition organiser setting out our views about the request in the petition

In addition to these steps, the council will consider all the specific actions it can potentially take on the issues highlighted in a petition.

If a petition is about something over which the council has no direct control (for example healthcare or transport) the responsible body (under section 7 above) will consider making representations on behalf of the community to the relevant body.

If the Council are not able to meet the petitioners requests for any reason (for example if what the petition calls for conflicts with council policy), then the Council will set out the reasons for not taking the action requested in writing to the Lead Petitioner.

Decisions made by the Portfolio Holder will be recorded in writing and notified to the public, the lead petitioner and all members of the Council.

All received petitions will be reported to Council via regular Portfolio Holder reports.

9. Petitions received after a decision is made

In cases where a petition is received after a decision has been made by the Council on any matter, the following steps will be taken by the Director unless the petition meets the threshold for a Council debate:

- (a) a letter of acknowledgement shall be sent to the lead petitioner, including a statement of the action already taken by the Council;
- (b) in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder, Committee or Sub-Committee Chairman a decision will be taken as to whether the petition raises new evidence requiring further consideration by the Portfolio Holder or Committee concerned;
- (c) if it is decided that no new matters are raised by the petition, the lead petitioner shall be advised accordingly;
- (d) if new matters are raised then the petition will be treated as 'new' under this scheme.

10. Full Council and Cabinet debates

If a petition contains more than 2400 signatures it will be debated by the full council at its next ordinary meeting.

If a petition contains more than 1200 signatures it will be subject to report and debate by the cabinet at its next available meeting.

The petition organiser will be given five minutes to present the petition at the meeting and the petition will then be discussed by councillors.

The Council or Cabinet will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting.

The Council or Cabinet may:

- (a) decide to take the action the petition requests, and in the case of a Cabinet debate, report to Council if appropriate (see paragraph 11 below)
- (b) not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate, or
- (c) commission further investigation into the matter, for example by the Cabinet (if the matter was debated at Council) or a relevant Cabinet committee.

11. Council Referrals

Where the issue is one on which the council executive are required to make the final decision (i.e. within the financial and policy framework), the council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision. The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of this decision. This confirmation will also be published on our website.

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EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

PETITION SCHEME GUIDANCE

Introduction

The Council welcomes petitions and recognises that petitions are one way in which people can let us know their concerns.

You have a choice in the way you submit petitions. It can be done in the traditional paper way or using our electronic petitions (e-petitions) system.

How to submit a Petition

Paper petitions can be sent to:

Assistant Director of Governance and Performance Management
Epping Forest District Council
Civic Offices
High Street
Epping
Essex CM16 4BZ

e-petitions can be submitted at:

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/petitions

Who can submit or sign a petition?

A petition can be submitted or signed by a person who lives, works or studies in Epping Forest District.

What does a Petition need to be valid?

Petitions must relate to matters that directly affect the Council or Epping Forest, and about which the Council has powers to act or lobby. National and foreign issues are not valid subjects for petitions.

Petitions submitted to the Council must include:

- A clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition and on each page of the petition
- It should state what action the petitioners would like the Council to take
- The full name and contact details and the signature of the person leading the petition, and if submitted online via our e-petition system, a valid email address.

Petition types we don't accept under this scheme

- (a) Emailed petitions or petitions started on third party websites;
- (b) Petitions that are vexatious, abusive, anonymous or otherwise inappropriate or subject to legal proceedings;

- (c) Petitions about a planning application (these will be referred to the planning process)
- (d) Petitions about a proposed licensing decision (these will be referred to the licensing section)
- (e) Petitions made about a decision made about a person or entity where they have a separate right of review or appeal or where another formal consultation is being undertaken at the time (we will refer your petition to that process)
- (f) Petitions that relate to a matter over which the Council's Standards Committee have jurisdiction (for example a complaint about a Councillor).
- (g) Petitions that are a complaint about an employee. (these would be referred to the Council's complaints process)

What happens when I submit a petition?

All petitions sent or presented to the Council will receive an acknowledgement from the Council within 7 working days of receipt. This acknowledgement will set out how the Council will respond to petitions. Details of your petition will also be sent to your local ward councillors.

If you create an e-petition, we will check that the content is suitable and then make it available for electronic signature for a maximum period of three months.

Depending on how many signatures there are to support a petition it will be considered in different ways:

Petition type	Response
Correspondence with fewer than 20 signatures	This will normally be dealt with by the appropriate Directorate as ordinary correspondence, unless the Service Director concerned is of the opinion that the subject matter is sufficiently important or contentious to warrant referring the matter to the appropriate Portfolio Holder.
Petitions with more than 20 but fewer than 1200 signatures	These will be considered and dealt with by the relevant portfolio holder who may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) take action if he or she has delegated powers to act alone; (b) prepare a report to the Cabinet or a Sub-Committee of the Cabinet for decision if appropriate.
Petition containing at least 1200 signatures.	The relevant Portfolio Holder will prepare a report to the Cabinet for decision on the matter.
2400 signatures or more	These large petitions will be scheduled for a council debate and if this is the case we will let you know whether this will happen

Petition type	Response
e-petitions	When an e-petition has closed for signature, it will automatically be submitted to the relevant officer, portfolio holder or Council In the same way as a paper petition.

How Will the Council Respond to Petitions?

Our response to a petition will depend on what a petition asks for and how many people have signed it, but may include one or more of the following:

- Taking the action requested in the petition.
- Not taking the action requested and responding with the reasons why.
- Considering the petition at a council meeting.
- Making enquiries to find out more about the matter.
- Referring the matter for review by a committee of the Council
- Holding a meeting with petitioners.
- Writing to the petition organiser setting out the Council's views about the request in the petition.

If you submit a petition after a decision has been made about the issue we will look to see if you are raising new matters before we decide how to respond to you. The petition organiser will always receive a written decision on their petition request.

What happens if the matter is referred to the Council or Cabinet for debate?

If a petition contains the required number of signatures the issue raised in the petition will be discussed by councillors at the next available ordinary meeting of the Council (if your petition has over 2400 signatures) or Cabinet (if you petition has at least 1200 signatures),

At the meeting the petition organiser will be given five minutes to present the petition at the meeting and the petition will then be discussed by councillors.

The councillors will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting.

The Council/Cabinet may decide to:

- take the action the petition requests,
- not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate, or
- to commission further investigation into the matter, for example by a relevant committee.

Where the issue is one on which the Council's cabinet is required to make the final decision, the councillors will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision. The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of this decision.

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Waltham Abbey Royal Gunpowder Mills – Report of Councillor Helen Kane

Meeting held with the Directors on the 22nd of February 2014.

The Chairman opened the meeting thanking everyone present. He mentioned the three publicity events that had raised the profile of the site to a wider audience as Jeremy Paxton had visited the site when he was filming a documentary about the World War I, The TV programme “Flog it” and the “Antiques Shop”. As a result the Gunpowder Mills had been given major exposure through the national TV channels.

The Chairman introduced Mr Brian Harvey, with a proposal as a new trustee. The members agreed the nomination.

Report from the Chief Executive:

Year end report: With 20,000 visitors, school visits have proven very successful, so the company is continuing with the educational functions and birthday parties.

The storms caused enough damage to close the site for one day. Volunteers had cleared the branches fallen from the trees and had worked on the L160 building /Barn roof which was badly damaged. The cost of maintaining the site is increasing, more than what has been budgeted for but the company is optimistic that this will be balanced with the amount of visitors. There is a Conservation Management Plan in place.

The Deer management is on -going. At the moment there are 40 deer on site, the target is 16-20.

The official opening, other than school visits, was from half term 15-23 February and Easter from 5-21 April. The company is concentrating on school visits for KS1 and KS2 from January to almost the end of the year.

In general the Waltham Abbey Gunpowder Mills have an excellent record of visitors for all ages, but especially for children , attracting young visitors not only from the local schools but from all over the UK.

Councillor Helen Kane

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STANSTED AIRPORT COMMUNITY TRUST

The trust comprises of District & County Councillor within a 10 mile radius of Stansted Airport.

Each year Stansted Airport gives to the Trust approximately £100,000, which comes from aircraft straying off the flight path and also being very noisy.

Applications are open to any charity organisation, who can apply for up to £2000 each.

This is not open to Parish Councils.

At a recent meeting 32 successful applications were awarded a total of £34,000.

The Trust meets twice a year, and the closing date for the next round of applications is 31st August 2014. The next meeting of the Trustees is on Friday 26th September 2014.

Information and application forms can be obtained from Jackie Large, PO Box 11, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1LX

Cllr Richard Morgan
EFDC Representative.

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