

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE
FRAMEWORK TASK & FINISH PANEL
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2019
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES
AT 7.00 - 8.33 PM**

Members Present: P Bolton (Chairman), R Jennings (Vice-Chairman), N Bedford, D Dorrell, A Patel and J H Whitehouse

Other members present: G Mohindra

Apologies for Absence: H Brady, M Sartin and H Whitbread

Officers Present G Blakemore (Strategic Director), R Pavey (Service Director (Customer Services)) and A Hendry (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

12. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The notes of the meeting of the Task and Finish Panel held on 31 January 2019 were agreed as a correct record subject to including the word 'stronger' when referring to any of the Select Committees, so that they would read Stronger Communities, Stronger Council and Stronger Place Select Committee.

13. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Panel noted its terms of reference, which had been agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 18 December 2018.

14. WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

The Panel noted their Work Programme.

15. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE FRAMEWORK - REVIEW

The Panel considered the draft Terms of Reference and draft Work Programmes for the three proposed Select Committees. They noted that a revised and extended work programme for the Stronger Communities Select Committee had been tabled. This added extra items to the work programme, with the Strategic Director adding proposed dates to each item of work. She noted that the new Select Committees were not orientated towards services; they were more cross cutting and so as yet they had not had any officer resources applied to them.

A member raised a question on which Select Committee should look into certain specific subjects such as the provision of mobility scooters or the sheltered housing review as all the Select Committees seemed to have similar Terms of Reference. And, how these subjects could be raised to a Committee as a request to be reviewed. The Panel was told that if the question was customer related it could go through the Chairman of the appropriate Committee. They can also go via the O&S Committee or officers, who could feed the request into the correct committee.

It was also noted that this new Select Committee system would be reviewed within a year to see if it needed modification.

The Panel debated if the Audit and Governance Committee could send items to the Select Committee to review. They noted that the Audit and Governance Committee had a very specific role and there may not be a lot of cross over in their work. But as they reported to Council, the Council could ask for a Select Committee to review a specific item. However, it may be possible to refer things up to that committee if it was warranted.

Stronger Communities Select Committee

The Panel considered the Work Programme for the Stronger Communities Select Committee. It was suggested that scrutiny of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy be added to the work programme; this could either be the County Council's or EFDC's strategy, as long as it affected the residents of this district.

AGREED: that the Health and Wellbeing strategy be added to the Stronger Communities Select Committee.

The Panel also noted that the Police and Crime Commissioner had been talking about volunteer officers in the district. Could they ask for some feedback from the Chief Officers. In response to this the Chairman said that the Terms of Reference were flexible and things could be brought in if warranted.

Another suggestion of the Panel was to ask officers who represented the Council on the Neighbourhood Group meetings (based around health) to report back to the Select Committee to keep them informed of what was happening, especially around mental health issues. The Chairman said that these topics did fit into the Select Committee's Terms of Reference.

AGREED: that EFDC representatives on the Neighbourhood Group meetings be asked to report to the Committee especially on mental health issues.

Stronger Council Select Committee

The Panel reviewed the draft set of Terms of Reference. They noted that the word 'Plan' was used too many times under paragraph 2, 'to monitor the Corporate Plan Action Plan Performance Report' and would like the second word taken out so that it read: 'Corporate Action Plan Performance Report'.

They noted that the three corporate projects listed, 'People Strategy, Accommodation Strategy and Digital Enablement' should cover everything needed for this Select Committee; it would also include the performance reports covering the Council's performance.

The Panel noted that the performance reports would be by 'live system reporting by exception', with no pre-distributed reports as they would be out of date by the time of the meeting. The full reports would always be available electronically to members. Officers would consider the best way to make this available to members before the meeting, maybe via a link in the Members Bulletin.

AGREED: that all indicators would be available on line and only the Red or Amber indicators would be brought to the attention of this Select Committee.

This system would enable the Select Committee to have smaller working agendas with large background papers available online.

The Panel asked if the word 'Accommodation' referred all council accommodation. They were told that it referred to all Council accommodation and was not just officer related.

The Panel wanted 'Value for Money' to be added to the Committee's Terms of Reference as a principle and not to the Work Programme as it had been in the Resources Select Committee's Terms of Reference. This should be broadened out to all the Select Committee's Terms of Reference.

AGREED: that consideration of 'Value for Money' be added to all three of the Select Committee's Terms of Reference as a principle to be considered when scrutinising appropriate topics.

The Panel also agreed to add an annual review of elections to the work programme as it had proved useful in the past.

AGREED: to add an annual review of elections to the work programme.

Stronger Places Select Committee

A Panel member noted that there was nothing on there about Local Plan delivery. Although it was still under examination, it should be referred to somewhere.

The panel also needed to look at how many houses were coming in through the Local Plan, be they Private Sector or Council Housing and also to include Assisted Living Accommodation. This was especially needed over the next few years. An annual report would be enough. They were also reminded that the Local Plan also contained employment plans.

AGREED: to have an annual report on how many houses were coming in through the Local Plan, be they Private Sector or Council Housing and also to include Assisted Living Accommodation.

Another member asked where 'customer focused' items were on all the Terms of Reference. Officers said that any customer focused items should be sent to the Stronger Communities SC as the first port of call.

The Panel agreed that North Weald Master Planning should be added to this Committee as it may require some specific scrutiny in the coming years.

AGREED: that North Weald Master Planning be added to the Terms of Reference of this Committee.

Outline Work Plan and Timetable

AGREED: The Panel would also like the outline work-plan and timetable to be publicised in the Members Bulletin so that members could see what was being considered and when.

General Comments on KPIs

It was noted that the KPI's would be still be considered and their presentation format should be made much easier to read. They should only be looking at Red or Amber indicators.

The current IT measure was not very good as it did not state which were the big projects or the important ones. This measure needed to be reconsidered.

It was noted that the Service Managers were currently reviewing the KPIs and should have it available by April.

They noted that the Resources Select Committee had made a number of recommendations such as putting in 'project milestones', where members would like to know what should have been the anticipated progress at anyone time. This would be useful and should be taken into consideration when looking at a KPI's performance. Also they would like to see quarterly measures and not just yearly ones. They were told that project delivery would include project plans with milestones.

The Panel noted that they would like a discussion on how the KPI's were presented to members to enable them to have useful discussions at their meetings. They needed a level of understanding of the figures and the front sheets presented to them to be more user friendly. If possible the format should be assessed at the first meeting and agreed for future use.

Another problem raised on the KPI was that percentages did not help, figures would be more useful.

AGREED:

- (1) That the format for KPIs be re-considered and adjusted once the lay out had been assessed after the first meeting of the Stronger Council Select Committee; and
- (2) That a recommendation to this effect should be added to the Panel report going to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Projects

There was no mention of costs in any of the projects so they did not know if they were under or over budget. Although it was acknowledged that money was a poor indicator as it tended to stop and start over the lifetime of a project and relying on this could be misleading. It would be better to ask the Project Manager about the budget when they could give an explanation for any variances.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Panel formally thanked the officers for their work in providing material for this Panel to consider in pursuance of their Terms of Reference.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Panel agreed that this would be their last meeting and another one would not be required. The Chairman would present a report on their findings and recommendations to the April meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.