

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES

Committee:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date:	Tuesday, 4 June 2019
Place:	Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping	Time:	7.30 - 8.38 pm
Members Present:	Councillors M Sartin (Chairman) R Jennings (Vice-Chairman) R Baldwin, L Burrows, D Dorrell, S Heather, Y Knight, S Murray, S Neville, S Rackham, P Stalker, D Sunger, J H Whitehouse, D Wixley and R Morgan		
Other Councillors:	Councillors S Kane, J Lea, J Leppert, C McCredie, J McIvor, A Patel, J Philip, S Stavrou, C Whitbread and H Whitbread		
Apologies:	Councillors G Mohindra		
Officers Present:	G Blakemore (Chief Executive), A Hendry (Senior Democratic Services Officer), S Kits (Social Media and Customer Services Officer), R Pavey (Service Director (Customer Services)), R Perrin (Democratic Services Officer) and S Tautz (Democratic Services Manager)		

1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman reminded everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was reported that Councillor R Morgan was substituting for Councillor G Mohindra.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 16 April 2019 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(a) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor S Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 (Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2019/20) by virtue of being part of the Epping Forest Sixth-Form Consortium in his previous employment. Councillor S Murray advised that he would remain in the meeting for the consideration of this item.

(b) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor D Dorrell declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 (Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2019/20) by virtue of his son attending one of the schools within the Epping Forest Sixth-Form Consortium.

(c) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor C Whitbread declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 (Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Work Programme 2019/20) by virtue of being the Deputy Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care at Essex County Council.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS & REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

It was noted that there were no public questions or requests to address the Committee.

6. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS - CALL-IN

It was noted that no executive decisions had been called-in for consideration at this meeting.

7. CORPORATE PRIORITIES 2019/20

The Leader gave a verbal report on the Corporate Priorities for 2019/20 (attached).

The Committee commented that although the Corporate Priorities for 2019/20 had been available in other documents, they would have liked a written copy of the Leader report, as it contained much more detail and would have enabled a better quality of scrutiny. The Leader advised that the Corporate Priorities were normally verbally reported to the Committee with an overview and general direction, which the Cabinet would be pursuing. The decisions would evolve, and many options would be considered for the benefit of the Council.

Further comments were raised concerning the Service Company & Development Company and what this decision would entail. The Leader advised that the Cabinet were considering all options to protect the Councils assets.

The Committee enquired whether the proceeding Cabinet's business could be considered by the Committee to enable discussions and concerns or resistance, if any, to be raised before the meeting. The Chief Executive advised this could be considered, although the Forward Plan of Key Decisions was included in every agenda of the Committee, which highlighted the Key Decisions or major projects for the forth coming year that the Cabinet would be taking.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Committee noted the Corporate Priorities for 2019/20 attached at appendix 1 of these minutes.

8. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

The Committee considered its draft work programme for the coming year.

The Committee noted that scrutiny of the Transformation Programme was to be deleted from the work programme, as ongoing projects and programme activity would be monitored by the Stronger Council Select Committee.

The Committee was also asked to consider the Reserve Programme and whether it would like to move any items to the work programme for 2019/20. The Committee support items (4) Local High Streets – Viability and Regeneration and (5) Adult Social Care (Scrutiny of External Organisation) being moved to the main work programme.

AGREED: The Committee agreed to add these to the work programme for 2019/20.

The Committee considered the other items on the Reserve Programme. The Committee commented that item (1) Epping Forest Sixth-Forum Consortium should remain on the reserve programme and be reconsidered once the Epping Forest College had attended and item (3) Essex Police/Essex Fire & Rescue Service -Joint Governance, would remain on the work programme, although scrutiny would be carried out through the Stronger Communities Select Committee.

AGREED: The Committee agreed that the Reserve Programme for 2019/20.

9. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEES - MEMBERSHIP 2019/20

The Chairman advised that the Committee had previously agreed the new Overview and Scrutiny framework at its meeting on 16 April 2019, which had been based on three new select committees, reflecting the themes of the Corporate Plan for 2018-2023; Stronger Council; Stronger Communities and Stronger Places.

The rules set out within Article 6 of the Council's Constitution required that the Committee determine the membership and work programme for the Select Committees for the new municipal year.

RESOLVED:

(1) That, each of the select committees comprise of 11 members for 2019-20;

(2) That, the appointment to the select committees for Stronger Council, Stronger Places and Stronger Communities as set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes be agreed; and

(3) That, the chairman and vice-chairman of each of the select committees for 2019/20 as set out in Appendix 2 to minutes be agreed.

10. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEES - TERMS OF REFERENCE & WORK PROGRAMMES 2019/20

The Committee considered the Terms of Reference and Work Programmes for the Stronger Communities, Stronger Council and Stronger Places select committees for 2019/20 that had been agreed at the last meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Terms of Reference and Work Programmes for the Stronger Council, Stronger Communities and Stronger Places select committees as set out in Appendix 3 for the municipal year 2019/20 be agreed.

11. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS - REVIEW

The Committee reviewed the Cabinet's programme of Key Decisions for 2019-20.

Planning Services

Councillor S Murray advised the Planning Services Portfolio Holder that he would be asking question about the Key Decision for the Statement of Community Involvement, when it was determined by Cabinet. The Planning Services Portfolio

Holder advised, that if the questions were put into writing beforehand, he would be able provide a detailed answer at the meeting.

Contract and Technical Services

Councillor R Jennings enquired whether a Task and Finish Panel could be set up around the Key Decision on the Waste Management Review. The Committee agreed to this suggestion and the Contract and Technical Services Portfolio Holder supported the request.

AGREED: That a Task and Finish Panel be set up to consider the Waste Management Review and a scoping exercise for the Panel be brought to the next meeting for consideration.

Councillor D Wixley asked whether the Council was considering recycling bins on the high streets of the District to increase the recycling rates and whether that would be considered by the Task and Finish Panel. The Chairman advised that the Task and Finish Panel would have to determine it's work programme and whether this type of item would be included. The Contract and Technical Services Portfolio Holder advised that he had been discussing these options with officers before and would continue.

Councillor J H Whitehouse enquired about a Task and Finish Panel for Air Pollution. The Democratic Services Manager advised that a written proposal for a Task and Finish Panel would be required, with some thought to the scope and timescale to the subject, as it was a broad topic.

Housing and Property Services

Councillor S Murray asked whether a detailed report would be made available for all members when the Key Decision regarding the Service Company & Development Company was made, and whether it would be about providing new rental income or possible transferring existing housing stock.

The Leader advised that the report would be submitted to a future Cabinet meeting and no further consideration had been given at this time.

The Chairman suggested that this item could benefit from a Task and Finish Panel in the forthcoming months and Councillor S Murray endorsed this idea.

Furthermore, Councillor S Murray enquired about a previous decision regarding the formation of an off-street parking area on land at Marlescroft Way, Loughton, for the provision of daytime parking for employees of the Council's depot at Oakwood Hill. The Leader advised that the Housing and Property Services Portfolio Holder had withdrawn the planning application and with the progression at Oakwood Hill depot and the Accommodation Strategy, the car parking requirements had been addressed by on-street parking permits.

12. FORMER OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEES - MINUTES OF MEETINGS

The Chairman advised that following the decision of the Committee to revise the existing overview and scrutiny select committee framework and reduce the number of select committees to three, based on the corporate priorities. The minutes of the final cycle of the previous select committees were required to be agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the final meetings of the Communities Select Committee (15 January 2019), the Governance Select Committee (26 March 2019), the Neighbourhoods Select Committee (19 March 2019) and the Resources Select Committee (2 April 2019) be agreed as a correct record.

CHAIRMAN

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Corporate Priorities 2019/20

As Members are aware, thanks to the excellent work of the O&S Select Committee Task & Finish group we now have a more streamlined Scrutiny function within the Council.

Along with this, we have a revised set of key performance indicators and work programmes, and a new Corporate Plan performance reporting format, which will contain a greater level of 'real time' information and make scrutiny of performance much easier.

Our priorities for 19/20 are contained within our new Corporate Plan Action Plan, which has a revised set of Key Performance Indicators and a range of Work Programmes. These are grouped under our Core Principles of;

Stronger Communities, Stronger Place and Stronger Council

Stronger Communities:

Engaging with the changing needs of our customers will be a key focus for us as we transform the way that we deliver our services to our residents and we have already embarked on a journey, to ensure that our residents have the digital skills to embrace this change. Our aim is to provide a service with first point resolution for customers, ensuring efficiency and effective customer care.

Our Customer Services Team is working with Citizens Online, to provide a series of Digital Inclusion workshops across the District for local residents and this was launched at the DIZ Smart Place Seminar in April. We are also bringing our own staff up to speed with new ways of working with the public and have a programme of workshops for Members and I very much hope that all members will take advantage of these.

Through our Community and Partnership work, we are continuing to develop local Community Champions who are local volunteers across the district who work to support the most vulnerable in their communities. Linked to this, we are aiming to increase users of the Careline service by 10% to ensure that our elderly residents and those with disabilities are safer in their own homes.

People with other vulnerabilities will be supported by us through initiatives such as our Home Safe and Sanctuary Schemes, which are provided for people subject to domestic abuse and violence, and we are aiming to reduce Homelessness in the district. This is a major issue for the district (and the rest of Essex) with the transfer of families out of London Boroughs, so we will be working to try and reduce the impact of this on our local services through our Homeless and Safeguarding Teams.

Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018–2025 sets out an excellent framework to support our residents of all ages to become or stay healthy throughout their lives, in order to help reduce future pressures on the already depleted NHS services and social care system.

Stronger Place:

Following the completion of the Local Plan Inspection which has taken place over the summer, we will be starting work on the Implementation Plan, which will see the range of development proposals realised across the district. This will include making a start on the roll out of our 11,000 new homes and embarking on a series of economic development proposals to increase the number of jobs available for your young people.

This work will be further enhanced through our Nurturing Growth Economic Development Strategy 2019- 2025. This will be the first Economic Strategy for the District and will help us to attract external funding to support business growth, employment and skills development

across the area. We have already secured £10m which was to boost our rural economy through installation of superfast broadband across our District and have just been advised that we were successful in our bid to DCMS for £2.1m, which is for the roll out of Local Full Fibre Network for all of our GP surgeries and those across West Essex and East Herts. This goes a long way to us achieving our aim of becoming the most business-friendly council in Essex.

We are also continuing to protect our frontline services and making the District an even greater place to live and work, including through our investment in the new leisure centre, shops and cinema in St John's Road, Epping. We anticipate this will be a great draw to the area, helping to shape our most central town and community, boosting our retail and visitor economy.

Our efforts to reduce overall household waste and increase recycling are a further key priority for Stronger Place, and we will be focussing on greater promotion and engagement with our residents to achieve this.

We are additionally in the process of completing work on the 51 homes in the Burton Road housing development and will soon be launching Phase 4 of our building programme using the new Strategic Alliance Framework. This will see 175 affordable homes being built by the Council, Housing Associations and developers on non-council owned sites, including through section 106 agreements.

Stronger Council:

Through our People and IT Strategies, we will be delivering a range of projects to develop the skills and flexibility of the Councils workforce to meet future needs and direction of the Council. This includes provision of bespoke training courses for staff and Members and roll out of Office 365 to enable staff and teams to work in different ways.

Our future accommodation needs continue to be considered, with feasibility studies for a range of options underway and we will consolidate our plans for these, 'in year'. We have already redesigned the way that our leadership team works by bringing Service Directors together on the second floor of the building and plans are underway to reconfigure this area, so that it can accommodate Service Managers and corporate services including HR, PR and Communications and Finance. This will ensure robust management of the Council's finances and wider services.

A further focus for 2019/20 is a complete review of Performance and Project Management within the Council. This is both in terms of monitoring our achievements related to the Corporate Plan and objectives, and in the performance of our staff.

We therefore have a very busy and exciting year ahead of us, with several new Cabinet members and a relatively new wider Leadership Team heading up the transformation and development of the Council and its' services.

I hope that with the establishment of the new Select Committees, we will be able to provide the right level of scrutiny to ensure that our services are the best they can be.

As a Cabinet we are committed to attending and supporting your work. We will also be keen to hear from O&S of any particular areas of the Executive Work programme that you would be interested in undertaking pre-scrutiny for.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEES

APPOINTMENTS 2019/20

Stronger Communities Select Committee (11)

Chairman: Y. Knight

Vice-Chairman: J. Share-Bernia

Conservative Group (7): I. Hadley, J. Lea, Y. Knight, J. Mclvor, A. Mitchell, S. Rackham, J. Share-Bernia

Green Party Group (1): D. Plummer

Liberal Democrat Group (1): J. H. Whitehouse

Loughton Residents Association Group (2): A. Beales, D. Wixley

Independent Members (0):

Stronger Council Select Committee (11)*

Chairman: P. Bolton

Vice-Chairman: D. Stocker

Conservative Group (7): P. Bolton, R. Bassett, D. Dorrell, H. Kane, S. Rackham, D. Stocker (+1 to be advised)

Green Party Group (1): No current nomination

Liberal Democrat Group (1): J. M. Whitehouse

Loughton Residents Association Group (2): R. Brookes, M. Owen

Independent Members (0):

*Councillors appointed to the Audit and Governance Committee may not also be members of the Cabinet or any select committee appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with responsibility for reviewing the Council's finances or financial procedures (Constitution – Article 11). For the purposes of the Council's current Overview and Scrutiny framework, this provision relates directly to the Stronger Council Select Committee.

Stronger Place Select Committee (11)

Chairman: D. Sunger

Vice-Chairman: S. Heather

Conservative Group (7): L. Burrows, I. Hadley, S. Heather, S. Jones, J. Mclvor, R. Morgan, D. Sunger

Green Party Group (1): S. Neville

Liberal Democrat Group (1): C. McCredie

Loughton Residents Association Group (2): J. Jennings, H. Kauffman

Independent Members (0):