

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Stronger Place Select Committee **Date:** Monday, 16 January 2023

Place: Council Chamber - Civic Offices **Time:** 7.00 - 8.20 pm

Members Present: Councillors R Balcombe (Chairman), R Pugsley (Vice-Chairman), R Bassett, S Heather, S Heap, C McCredie, I Allgood, P Bolton, R Morgan and H Brady

Other Councillors: Councillors N Avey, N Bedford, S Kane and K Williamson

Apologies: Councillor J Jennings

Officers Present: L Kirman (Democratic Services Officer), J Gould (Interim Strategic Director), A. Hoke (Team Manager- Leisure and Parking), B Stalabrass (Environmental Health Team Manager Commercial & Air Quality), M Thompson (Interim Acting Service Director (Technical)), J Warwick (Interim Acting Service Director (Contracts)), Ventura (Environmental Officer Air Quality) and A Buckley (Higher Level Apprentice (Internal Communications))

Officers Present (Virtually): V Messenger (Democratic Services Officer)

19. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman made a short address to remind everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the internet, and would be capable of repeated viewing, which could infringe their human and data protection rights.

20. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Committee noted that there were no substitute members.

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

22. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Notes of the previous meeting held on 8 November 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

23. MATTERS ARISING AND OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

The Committee noted there were no matters arising or outstanding actions.

24. TERMS OF REFERENCE & WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the Terms of Reference and agreed that the Climate Change Action Plan would be proposed as an item for the Stronger Place work programme in the next municipal year (2023/4). The Committee did not provide any further proposal for inclusion in the work programme for 2022/3.

25. PARKING UPDATE

J Warwick, Interim Acting Service Director (Contracts), presented the parking update report and highlighted that the tariff changes agreed by Cabinet in November 2021 were successfully implemented on 4 April 2022. This would give a projected annual increase of approximately £150,000 in parking fees and charges, compared to the previous year (post-pandemic). The Committee were advised that pre-pandemic parking income levels had not been reached, and car park income and occupancy rates were continually reviewed by EFDC officers.

The Committee were advised that

- the Council had installed 2 x rapid EV charging stations in Oakwood Hill East car park, Loughton, and would install InstaVolt for 4 x rapid EV charging stations in Basons Lane car park, Ongar in partnership with InstaVolt Ltd. Further work would involve EV charging stations in Cornmill car park, Waltham Abbey and Burton Road car park, Debden.
- pavement parking was not prohibited in Essex the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) could not enforce against obstructive parking and this could only be carried out by the Police.
- 3PR was a school-led initiative offered across the NEPP to help prevent inconsiderate and dangerous parking around schools. Several schools had been involved in the initiative and EFDC had supported a Park and Stride scheme in the EFDC Traps Hill car park for Staples Road Primary School (Loughton).
- there was a new online process for Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) applications.

After questions and comments the Committee were advised that:

- levels of parking was likely to stay at the current level. The projected annual increase of approximately £150,000 in parking fees and charges had accounted for the current occupancy rates.
- officers would take back a request to reconsider the hours associated with a recent TRO in Buckhurst East to NEPP, if details could be provided
- there had been approximately 12 TROs per year for the last couple of years in the district. This was greater than the allocated 6 TROs, as TROs implemented under health and safety, and junction protection do not count as part of the allocation. Officers would liaise with NEPP to assess their capacity if funding for additional TROs could be allocated.
- there was demand for EV charging. Restriction to installation in off street car parks, included power supply and costs which could be in the region of £100,000- £150,000 to install. InstaVolt had surveyed the Council's car parks and had funded EV charging points in four of them. On Street Electric Vehicle charging points were the responsibility of Essex County Council, this would be covered in the Sustainable Transport report at the next Committee meeting.
- cars could only park in EV bays when charging, this was enforced by Civil Enforcement officers.

Resolved:

The Committee Commented and commended the parking update report.

26. OFF STREET CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT POLICY

The Team Manager, Leisure and Parking, A Hoke, advised the Committee that Civil Parking Enforcement policy had been reviewed and amended. The updated policy provided a simplified document with updated terminology. The policy reflected the legal process, covered Electric Vehicle (EV) bays, virtual payments and the introduction of a £50 administration fee which had been added to suspension requests in addition to standard suspension charges per bay fee.

After questions and discussion the Committee were:

- advised that motorist could challenge the penalty charge notice for exceptional circumstances including breakdown, each representation was considered on its own merits and assessed in line with best practice, this was covered in policy.
- reminded that blue badge holders parked free of charge if they correctly displayed a valid blue badge. Enforcement officers could confiscate blue badges but could only challenge users when they were seen leaving the vehicle. The officers would look to develop publicity around the misuse and confiscation of blue badges, and
- advised that the observation period for offences were set by legislation, the grace period was set locally at 10 mins as set out in the policy

Resolved:

The Committee endorsed the off-street civil parking enforcement policy.

27. AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN

Cllr Williamson thanked the officers for the work in preparing the draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) and commended the plan to the Committee. M Thompson, Technical Service Manager, advised the Committee that the process to develop the AQAP was prescribed in law and required a public consultation exercise before submission to Defra for approval and the subsequent adoption by Council. The proposed draft AQAP sought to improve air quality in the district and supported the aims of the Climate Change Action Plan and work around improving air quality for the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation.

The Committee raised several points and A Ventura (Environmental Officer Air Quality) and B Stalabrass (Environmental Health Team Manager Commercial & Air Quality)

- freight movements formed part of planning policy, some planning application had construction management plans which contained provision for the entry and exit routes of vehicles.
- the impact of ULEZ was of concern. There had been liaison with TfL and monitoring would be included in status report. No actions had been included in the AQAP as the impact was unknown
- there would be awareness and education in partnership with schools
- work with schools to trail monitoring and the introduction of schools exclusion zones for car drop offs near schools would be considered
- the impact of the pollution levels impact on the houses and places near the wake arms roundabout would be considered

- confirmed the district level of mortality attributable to long-term exposure to PM_{2.5} was 6.1% above the England average of 5.6 %
- Qualis were on the steering group as they had been involved through several construction sites, input from all business would be welcomed, and
- a response would be provided on the detail of pollution levels and the current position of Essex CC Freight Strategy.

The Committee suggested that transport was critical to the delivery of the AQAP and the impact on non-human sensitive receptors e.g., bees should be considered.

Cllr Bedford advised the Committee that the Portfolio Holder Advisory Group for Air Quality considered air quality in Epping Forest and as part of the mitigation strategy associated with the special area of conservation (SAC). Monitoring sites near the Wake Arms roundabout had been agreed with the City of London (CoL) who were considering the installation of temporary signs to advised motorists to turn off their engines, rather than sit with engines idling. Road improvements has also been agreed on the A1403 between the Wake Arms and Woodford.

Cllr Heap advised that he would submit written comments to the officers.

The Committee were advised that sustainable transport was an item on the agenda for the next meeting and safe cycleways for new developments could be covered by that item

Resolved:

The Committee endorsed the Draft AQAP and approved the four-week public consultation between the months of January and February 2023.

Officers provided a written response to queries after the meeting:

- Essex County Council had an aspiration for an Essex Freight Strategy, but there was no programme in place.
- In relation to pollution levels:
Table 3.1(b) (agenda, page 88) of the draft Air Quality Action Plan shows the trend of fraction (%) of mortality attributable to long-term exposure to PM_{2.5}). In 2018, Epping Forest had a value of 8.0% as compared to the England average of 7.1%, in 2019 Epping Forest had a value of 8.1% as compared to the England average of 7.1% and in 2020, Epping Forest had a value of 6.1% as compared to the England value of 5.6%.
Table 3.1(c) (agenda, page 89) shows how Epping Forest compares to neighbouring authorities

28. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The date of the next meeting was scheduled for 7:00pm, 7 March 2023.

CHAIRMAN