



## **EPPING FOREST LOCAL COUNCILS' LIAISON COMMITTEE**

### **NOTICE OF MEETING**

**Place:** Council Chamber - Civic Offices    **Date:** Tuesday, 28th March, 2023

**Room:** Council Chamber    **Time:** 7.00 pm

**Democratic Services Officer:** R. Perrin  
Tel: (01992) 564243 Email: [democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

#### **Members:**

##### **District Council Representatives:**

Councillors M Sartin, H Kane, J Lea, R Morgan, D Sunger and J H Whitehouse

##### **Local Council Representatives:**

Clerks and Chairmen/Members of Parish and Town Councils

##### **County Council Representatives:**

Members for the following divisions:

North Weald and Nazeing:	Councillor C Whitbread
Loughton Central:	Councillor C C Pond
Ongar and Rural:	Councillor J McIvor
Epping and Theydon Bois:	Councillor H Whitbread
Buckhurst Hill and Loughton South:	Councillor M Vance
Chigwell and Loughton Broadway:	Councillor L Scott
Waltham Abbey:	Councillor S Kane

**PLEASE NOTE THE START TIME OF THE MEETING**

#### **1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

The Chairman will read the following announcement:

"I would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be broadcast live to the internet (or filmed) and will be capable of repeated viewing (or another use by such third parties).

Therefore by participating in this meeting, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured they should ensure that their video setting throughout the virtual meeting is turned off and set to audio only

Please also be aware that if technical difficulties interrupt the meeting that cannot be overcome, I may need to adjourn the meeting.”

**Members are reminded to activate their microphones before speaking.**

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

EFDC Councillors - Please use the Members Portal webpage to report non-attendance at meetings [https://eppingforestdc-self.achieveservice.com/service/Member\\_Contact](https://eppingforestdc-self.achieveservice.com/service/Member_Contact) to ensure your query is properly logged.

Alternatively, you can access the Members portal from the front page of the Council's website, at the bottom under 'Contact Us' <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/your-council/members-portal/>

Members, county councillors, and town/parish council representatives are reminded to sign the attendance register, in order to ensure that the minutes of the meeting accurately reflect attendance.

## **3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 5 - 10)**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29 November 2022 and any matters arising therefrom.

## **4. ECC CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT, CLLR LEE SCOTT**

(Cllr Lee Scott, ECC Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport)

To provide an update on his plans for the future of Highways in the County, and to address any areas of general concern that Parish and Town Councils may have, including:

- The efficacy of the Local Highways Panel and the adequacy of budgets provided to them.
- The prime remit of Local Highway Panels
- What (if any) options are available for introducing traffic calming measures on rural country roads
- The contract with Ringway Jacobs, how long this is in place for, when it is due for renewal, and whether or not they offer value for taxpayers money.
- Why are many of the roads across the district in such a poor state, with poor surface dressing and a shocking number of potholes. Potholes are always a hot topic, however the number and prevalence of them at this current time is highly concerning.
- Road Signs and Highway Fingerposts around many villages, especially those rural in nature, are in a dire state, or missing altogether. What plans are there to remedy this, and/or could funds be made available to parishes to address their own signage defects.
- Why is it the case that Parish Councils have no direct access in to ECC Highways, and no dedicated contact points. We feel completely

disempowered. What is the process for if a Parish / Town Council wishes to escalate a matter with ECC Highways.

## 5. ISSUES RAISED BY LOCAL COUNCILS

To discuss the following matters raised by the local councils:

### Code of Conduct

How do EFDC monitor the conduct of EFDC Councillors at meetings. There have been a number of complaints from local residents watching webcasts which show Councillors actively arguing with each other, giving a poor impression of local government.

*(Response from Monitoring Officer, N. Boateng) The Monitoring Officer will investigate complaints report to her about the conduct of Councillors. If the Monitoring Officer directly witness a Code of Conduct issue at a meeting, this would be raised with the Councillor concerned. The next Code of Conduct training will be held on 12 May 2023 and can be booked by contacting K. Partridge ([kpartridge@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:kpartridge@eppingforestdc.gov.uk))*

### Training for Local Councillors

What training is available for Local Councillors, and when.

*(Response from Members Support) Our Town and Parish partners (Councillors and Officers) are encouraged to join EFDC Councillors at the following sessions on 12 May 2023;*

- *Code of Conduct / Constitution*
- *Planning Enforcement*
- *Planning*
- *Data Protection*

*If they are unable to attend or prefer more bespoke session, the following services provide an extensive list of training opportunities for our Town and Parish colleagues Essex Association of Local Council [EALC Training – The Essex Association of Local Councils](#)*

*If you wish to book onto any of these sessions, please email K. Partridge ([kpartridge@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:kpartridge@eppingforestdc.gov.uk))*

### Planning

- What changes / improvements have been made to the new online planning system following the numerous suggestions / issues that were sent directly to the planning department late last year.
- At the November meeting, Parish and Town Councils requested training on the new system. Will this be forthcoming, and when.

- With regard to Planning Enforcement, what is the current situation in terms of staff numbers and the approach to dealing with enforcement matters.

## 6. EPPING FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN - PROGRESS

(Epping Forest District Council) To report to the Committee on the current position of the new Local Plan for the Epping Forest District.

Local Councils raised the following issue:

Following adoption of the Local Plan, can the Council advise as to the publication and promulgation of the newly adopted plan, and confirm that colour hard copies of both parts 1 and 2 will be provided to Parish and Town Councils.

## 7. SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

Sustainable Transport Officer (S Lloyd-Jones) will be in attendance to discuss

1. EV charging funding opportunity for parish council car parks, village halls
  2. Potential grants scheme for energy generation/insulation improvements at village halls, parish offices, rural community and sports halls etc
  3. The *Epping Forest Community Transport* and other rural transport options
- SB09 – Abridge-Epping-Loughton – Monday and Wednesdays
  - Dart 7 covering – Moreton, Toot Hill, Epping – Monday and Thursdays – Provided with financial support from Essex County Council
  - HSBO1 covering – Toot Hill, Moreton, Old Harlow, Harlow – Monday, Wednesday & Friday – Demand Responsive (Dart) is an alternative – Provided with financial support from Essex County Council
  - Dart 87 – covering – Debden, Theydon Bois, Epping Green, Harlow Monday-Saturday – Funded by Epping Forest District Council
  - SB07 – The Elms – Loughton - Mondays
  - 347 – Barnfields, Hatfield Broad Oak, Lower Sheering to Harlow Bus Station – Tuesdays and Thursdays
  - C392 – Hoddesdon – Harlow Bus Station – Monday to Friday (reduced timetable due to the closure of Broxbourne Bridge).

## 8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

To be confirmed.

## EPPING FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL COUNCILS' LIAISON COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Date:** Tuesday, 29 November 2022 **Time:** 7.00 - 8.25 pm

**Place:** Council Chamber - Civic  
Offices

**Members  
Present:**

**Representing Epping Forest District Council:**

Councillors M Sartin, R Morgan and D Sunger

**Other Councillors:**

Councillors R Balcombe, N Bedford, L Burrows, A Lion, A Patel and  
K Williamson

**Representing Essex County Council:**

County Councillors H Whitbread, C Whitbread, J Mclvor, S Kane and  
Chris Pond

**Representing Local Councils:**

Abbess, Beauchamp and Berners Roding Parish Clerk (Abbess,  
Beauchamp and Berners Roding Parish Council),  
Buckhurst Hill Parish Clerk (Buckhurst Hill Parish Council),  
Chigwell Parish Clerk (Chigwell Parish Council), Epping Town Clerk  
(Epping Town Council), Fyfield Parish Clerk (Fyfield Parish Council),  
Epping Upland Parish Clerk (Epping Upland Parish Council),  
High Ongar Parish Clerk (High Ongar Parish Council),  
Lambourne Parish Clerk (Lambourne Parish Council),  
Loughton Town Clerk (Loughton Town Council),  
Matching Parish Clerk (Matching Parish Council),  
Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers Parish Clerk (Moreton,  
Bobbingworth and the Lavers Parish Council), Nazeing Parish Clerk  
(Nazeing Parish Council), North Weald Baseett Parish Clerk (North  
Weald Bassett Parish Council), Ongar Town Clerk (Ongar Town  
Council), Roydon Parish Clerk (Roydon Parish Council),  
Stanford Rivers Parish Clerk (Stanford Rivers Parish Council),  
Stapleford Abbots Parish Clerk (Stapleford Abbots Parish Council),  
Stapleford Tawney Parish Clerk (Stapleford Tawney Parish Council),  
Theydon Bois Parish Clerk (Theydon Bois Parish Council),  
Theydon Garnon Parish Clerk (Theydon Garnon Parish Council) and  
Theydon Mount Parish Clerk (Theydon Mount Parish Council)

**Other  
members  
virtually:**

Councillor J H Whitehouse

**Apologies: Epping Forest District Council –**

Councillors H Kane and J Lea

**Essex County Council –**

Councillors L Scott

**Parish/Town Councils: -**

Sheering Parish Clerk (Sheering Parish Council) and  
Waltham Abbey Town Clerk (Waltham Abbey Town Council)

**Officers  
Present:**

J Gould (Interim Strategic Director), N Richardson (Service Director (Planning Services)), S Lewis (Customer Services Manager), A Marx (Development Manager Service Manager (Planning)), T Scott (Complaints and Customer Satisfaction Team Manager), A Buckley (Higher Level Apprentice (Internal Communications)) and R Perrin (Democratic and Electoral Services Officer)

**Officers  
present  
virtually:**

J Warwick (Interim Acting Service Director (Contracts)), D Marsh (Waste Management Team Manager) and A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer)

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**20. 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.

**21. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN & VICE-CHAIRMAN****RESOLVED:**

1. It was confirmed that District Councillor M Sartin would be the Chairman of the Committee for this municipal year; and
2. Councillor B Scrutton was appointed the Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the municipal year.

**22. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING****RESOLVED:**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 March 2022 be taken as a correct record.

**23. ISSUES RAISED BY LOCAL COUNCILS**

The Committee received written responses which were set out in the agenda for the New Planning System and Epping Forest Recycling Hubs. It was noted that the ECC Cabinet Member for Highways, Councillor Lee Scott had sent his apologies for this meeting, although he would be invited to the next meeting.

Officers for Customer Services and Planning and Waste were in attendance to clarify any further questions. The webcast for this meeting can be found here [Local Councils' Liaison Committee - Tuesday, 29th November 2022 at 7:00pm - Epping Forest District Council webcasts \(public-i.tv\)](#)

Written responses to the questions raised regarding Communication were set out below.

- **How does the new communication system installed by EFDC benefit its residents?**

*First point of contact for all service areas excluding Housing & Rev/Benefits was managed by the customer contact centre. The team were not a switchboard but highly trained to resolve customer queries at first point of contact and in approximately 65% of cases they could do this using scripts developed in conjunction with our technical officers. If they cannot a call back request was allocated to the relevant Officer for response and the contact centre would ensure a response was given in a timely manner in line with SLA's. We must free up our technical officer's time to focus on their day jobs and we must introduce more efficient ways of managing contact. We were going through change, 80% of our residents use digital in everyday lives, we were in the process of making our online experience as simple to use as possible with customers involved in the consultation. If we can deflect those residents who prefer to use digital to a simple online solution, we free up our phone lines and improve our answer rate for the 20% who cannot use digital. The majority of people do not want to hold on to speak to someone they want the transaction to be as simple and quick as possible.*

- **How does the new communication system installed by EFDC help to forge and maintain good relationships with Town and Parish Councils?**

*It would seem that the engagement with T&P was not to the level it should have been when the new operating model was implemented. We must now look forwards together, be mindful of budget constraints and resource challenges to mutually agree communication channels and ways of working. We have developed a process for T&P to get queries resolved in the most efficient way and that was by using our online form, the query would be logged, allocated, triaged, and tracked to ensure a response was given within the agreed SLA. If the query was an emergency i.e. risk of life & death, then you can call our contact centre. A copy of the flow diagram describing this process has been attached.*

- **Why must Town and Parish Councils first point of call be to the contact centre and not to relevant EFDC Officers?**

*The agreed operating model was outlined above, Members approved this model to ensure we manage contact in the most efficient manner. We would welcome any Town or Parish Councillor to spend some time with our contact centre to see the process in action. We now work in a flexible agile manner, but all Officers have committed to ensure they are available, if they were not, they would ensure a timely response is given should a query require a technical response, if this does not happen it will be managed via the above process and escalation on your behalf.*

- **The EFDC Constitution states that the Monitoring Officer will make arrangements to ensure good communication with the Town and Parish Councils in the District – What are these arrangements?**

*Moving forwards as described we were keen to ensure that communication channels were in place. We now have monthly catch up's and invite T&P to nominate others to join this group and ensure effective two-way communication.*

- **Does EFDC accept that its relationship with the first tier of local Government needs improvement, and if so how and by when does it intend on doing this?**

*Yes, for the reasons described above, in a nutshell, we would ensure two-way communication channels, work with you to take on board feedback and find solutions that work for both sides. We cannot go back to the old way of working we are not resourced to do so, and it does not fit the agreed operating model approved by Members.*

*Rest assured customer service and in particular communication was a priority for everyone here at EFDC and it is our job to make sure it improves. Our wider leadership team were committing to making improvements to communication, we were introducing a customer service best practise 'health check' for them to carry out with their teams. They would commit to action plans for the improvements required. We welcome your ongoing feedback and look forward to working with you moving forwards.*

It was noted that the Customer Services, Service Manager and Complaints and Customer Satisfaction, Team Manager would be hosting monthly meetings with interested Town and Parish Clerks to discuss customer services issues. The details of these meeting would be emailed to all Town and Parish Clerks by the Epping Forest Branch Secretary, Adriana Jones.

### **New Planning System**

The Town and Parish Councils requested training for the new planning system and a point of contact that they could forward comment, suggestions, or improvements to, which would assist users. The Planning and Development Management Service Director requested that town and parish members also use and experiment with the new system.

### **Epping Forest Recycling Hubs**

The Service Director for Contracts advised that officers were discussing enforcement and mobile CCTV units for these areas to improve the issues of fly tipping at recycling hubs in Epping Forest.

#### **ACTIONS:**

1. EFDC to look at providing short demonstration videos of how to use the new planning system for the Town and Parish Councils.
2. Parish and Town Councils to experiment with the new planning system.
3. EFDC to establish a method of collating the feedback, suggestions, and improvements on the new planning system to the planning department.

***(Feedback and suggestions of Town and Parish Councils on the new system should be sent to [contactplanning@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:contactplanning@eppingforestdc.gov.uk) . )***

## **24. EPPING FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN - PROGRESS**



The Planning and Development Management Service Director advised that the consultation on the Further Main Modifications to the Local Plan was currently running until 9 December 2023. This was an opportunity to comments on the Further Main Modifications only, and if there were any comments that exceeded 300 words, an executive summary would be required. The Council would then submit the all the comments to the Inspector.

It was expected that the Local Plan would be adopted by the Council in late January or February 2023.

It was noted that a final Local Plan document would be created with the policies set out, although it would probably not be in a paper format and if required, a charge would be applied.

**25. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

1. It was noted that Parish Council Tax Bases for 2023/24, along with the annual pro forma Precept returns should be submitted by 31st January 2023.
2. That the preference for future meetings of the LCLC should be face-to-face and that there were no preferences to the day or time of these meetings.
3. That future items of interest would be discussed by the Epping Forest Branch and forwarded to the Committee Officer.

**26. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The date of the next meeting would be changed due to the decision for face-to-face meetings and emailed to Parish and Town Councils accordingly.

**CHAIRMAN**

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