

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL COUNCILS' LIAISON COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 21 June 2006 **Time:** 7.30 - 8.25 pm

Place: Council Chamber, Civic
Offices, High Street, Epping

**Members
Present:**

Representing Epping Forest District Council:

Councillor(s): Mrs A Haigh (Chairman), R Morgan, Mrs C Pond and
Mrs J H Whitehouse

Other Councillors:

Councillor(s):

Representing Essex County Council:

County Councillor(s): A Jackson, T Spencer, M Tomkins and C Finn

Representing Local Councils:

Councillor Mrs J McCulloch, Councillor Mrs P Wiltshire (Buckhurst
Hill Parish Council), Ms S De Luca (Chigwell Parish Council),
Councillor P Trendall (Chigwell Parish Council),
Councillor Ms J Hedges (Epping Town Council), Councillor K Percy
(Fyfield Parish Council), Councillor Mrs J Woods (Loughton Town
Council), Councillor R Pearce (Loughton Town Council),
Councillor P Latchford (Matching Parish Council),
Councillor Ms G Castle (Nazeing Parish Council),
Councillor Mrs D Borton, Councillor E Borton (Nazeing Parish
Council), Councillor R Ainswoth (Sheering Parish Council),
Councillor R Northwood (Sheering Parish Council), Councillor R
Russell (Stapleford Abbots Parish Council) and Councillor R James
(Waltham Abbey Town Council)

Apologies:

Epping Forest District Council –

Councillor(s): B Sandler

Essex County Council –

Councillor(s): Councillor C Pond

Parish/Town Councils: -

Councillor J Salter (Abbess, Beauchamp and Berners Roding Parish
Council), Councillor J A Smith (Epping Town Council), Councillor L R
Norman (Matching Parish Council), Mrs J Ballard (Roydon Parish
Council), Ms H Nicholas (Roydon Parish Council) and
Councillor Ms N Wilkinson (Roydon Parish Council)

Officers Present: J Scott (Joint Chief Executive), J Gilbert (Head of Environmental Services), B Land (Assistant Head of Planning and Economic Development), P Sutton (Asst Head of Planning Services (Forward Planning & Environment)), A Wintle (Planning Officer) and Z Folley (Democratic Services Assistant)

By Invitation:

24. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE - CHAIRMAN

(a) District Councillor Mrs A Haigh was confirmed as the Chairman of the Committee for the Civic Year.

(b) Parish Councillor J Salter was appointed as Vice – Chairman of the Committee for the Civic Year.

25. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2006 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record

26. APPOINTMENT OF VICE - CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING

In view of the unavailability the Vice – Chairman Councillor J Salter, the Committee were asked to appoint a Member to that position for this meeting.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor E Borton be appointed Vice – Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

27. ISSUES RAISED BY LOCAL COUNCILS

(a) Refuse Collection

The Head of Environmental Services reported the current position.

He reported that in mid April 2006, the then Council's waste contractor South Herts Waste Management went into administration. During this period in anticipation of this the Council engaged in discussions with alternatives waste companies including Cory Environmental Municipal Services Limited (Cory) who have since taken over the service. The system had now been in place for one month and was working well. Collection performance had improved. However, problems were still occurring in certain areas and some collections were still being missed. This was under investigation. The Council had entered into an initial three month agreement with Cory. Negotiations would also ensure over the possibility of them taking over the existing contract up until the end date of 2009. In the event that this was not pursued the contact would be subject to the usual procurement route to identify another contractor. The company had invested additional resources into the service resulting in real improvements. Telephone call about missed collections and more general issues had subsided. Local representatives congratulated the service for the overall improvements and expressed appreciation at the recent presentation given by David Marsh, the District Council Principal waste management

officer. The Head of Environmental Services undertook to report these sentiments back to the staff involved in the refuse collection service.

Alongside the above, action had continued to implement the wheeled bin service to be completed by the end of this calendar year. The report due to be submitted to the Cabinet regarding enforcement policy for the recycling arrangements had been delayed. The new Portfolio Holder for Environmental Protection wished to review the new service and allow it to settle down first before making a decision on this aspect to be reported to the Cabinet.

A local representatives reported that the system appeared to be working well in the rural areas. The Head of Environmental Services undertook to make available the schedule for the waste paper collection service.

A Member referred to concerns raised by an Elderly Persons Advisory Group who were confused about collections times and schedules. Flats were still using black sacks with a weekly collection service. Discussions would be held over how best to introduce a recycling system for such dwellings. The Head of Environmental Services stated that if this was not happening they should let him know.

RESOLVED:

That Environmental Services be congratulated for vastly improving the refuse collection service

(b) Community Bus Services – ‘Shop and Go Service’

The Chairman introduced and welcomed Sue – De Luca of Chigwell Parish Council who reported on the ‘Shop and Go’ Bus Service.

Councillor E Borton of Nazeing Parish Council reported that Councillor Thompson of Moreton Bobbingworth and the Lavers Parish Council had raised this item for two reasons: the concern that the charge levelled against his Parish Council (one of the smallest in the consortium set up to run the group) was too much and to encourage more Local Councils to join the scheme.

Ms DeLuca reported some background to the service. Following discussions with County Councillor G McEwen and a meeting arranged by Essex County Council, a transport needs survey was undertaken. Arising from this the ‘Shop and Go’ Service was established for any persons who experienced problems accessing public transport either because they were physically unable to or because they lived in a remote rural location. The service was run by a cluster group and Essex County Council.

Local Councils were contacted about the service which now comprised six Local Councils. No clerks from the smaller Councils responded to this officer. Consequently, Ms DeLuca alongside Mr B Whittome, the clerk for Epping Town Council had taken up informal voluntary positions in the cluster group from offices at Epping Town Council and Chigwell Parish Council. Additional funding had recently been made available for the service which would be presented this month by Essex County Council. Ms DeLuca stated that all participating Councils were charged the same price for the service and welcomed other to join. It was clarified that the cluster group and the Epping Forest Community Transport Scheme were two separate schemes yet a Council must be a Member of the former to participate in the ‘Shop- and Go’ service. It was reported that in future non Members would not be able to use the service. The County Portfolio Holder R Bass had welcomed the additional funding allocated to the service and was of the view that the provision was relied upon and well used.

(c) East of England Plan – Inspectors Report

The District Council's Principal Planning Officer advised that the report was due out on the 14 June 2006. The Council had not yet received the proposals but were expecting a hardcopy version of it tomorrow (22 June 2006) which would be circulated. He set out the timetable for the process. Based on the Inspectors report, the Secretary of State would produce proposals in September/October 2006. The final plan was expected in Spring 2007. It was requested that further consideration be given to the plan at the next meeting of the Committee in November 2006.

RESOLVED:

That consideration be given to the East of England Plan at the next meeting in November 2006.

(d) EFDC Local Plan

The Council had now received the Inspectors report which agreed most of its policies including glasshouse policies for the Roydon and Nazeing areas. Additional provisions had been added on 'lifetime homes'. The final version was due out in 23 June 2006. The report was binding on the Council so no further amendments could be made to this final version. The Portfolio Holder had delegated powers to adopt the revisions and was expected to do so in July 2006.

(e) Local Development Framework

The District Council's Principal Planning Officer reported that a statement of community involvement setting out the consultation process for the framework went out in April 2006. A further version was due to go out in shortly taking into account comments received to date.

(f) Development Control Performance Targets

The District Council Assistant Head of Planning Services referred to the concern raised by Local representatives that the eight week planning target for the determination of planning applications was having a detrimental effect on the quality of the service. He advised that the District Council had no influence over this target and explained the risks associated with not achieving it including the implications for the Planning Delivery Grant. He advised that the emphasis being placed on the aim had meant that certain services for applicants had been set aside resulting in more refusals. However, such outcomes resulted in further consultation so no issues were missed. Experience suggested that applicants wanted firstly approval for their applications rather than a speedy decision. Concerns had been raised at the effect efforts to meet the target was having on the quality of the service and the end result. A Planning Contact Team had been set up to address this and the Website had been approved.

It was clarified that there was no relationship between enforcement and the issues around the target for the speed of decision making as it was a separate service. In terms of enforcement performance it was reported that statistics indicated that the Council cleared 427 open investigations at 12 June 2006, resolved 167 enforcement cases during the first quarter of the year and by 1 April 2006 determined 150 of the 196 cases received.

Officer time was often absorbed by work on large impact cases which was time consuming.

Since the end of March 2006, the team had been operating with one vacancy. The post had recently been offered to an experienced enforcement officer. The service was aware of the problems however work was being carried out to address this.

28. STRUCTURE OF AREA PLANNING SUB - COMMITTEES

The Chairman of the District Council Constitution and Member Services Panel Councillor R Morgan, reported that the Panel were currently undertaking a review of the structure of the District Council Area Planning Sub – Committees. He reported the principles behind the review aimed at ensuring all Member were given the opportunity to serve on a Sub – Committee – (at present only 47 of the 58 Members served them), equalising the work loads and Membership size of the Sub – Committee reviewing the areas they covered and improving performance against the Best Value Performance Indicator Targets for processing planning applications.

Consideration had also been given to whether there should be three rather than four Area Plans Sub – Committees given that this might improve Best Value performance by speeding up the decision making process. The Panel was in favour of this but had asked that Local Councils views be sought on this in particularly the areas, and membership of the three Sub – Committee and the possibility of the local nature of them being changed. The District Council was looking to implement these changes during the current year or at the latest from 2007/08. The Panel would give further consideration to the review at its next meeting on 3 July 2006.

In response, a Nazeing Parish Councillor welcomed the proposal to regroup the areas covered to separate rural and urban areas and the desire to give all Members the opportunity to serve on a Sub – Committee if that was their wish. However expressed concern at the proposal to move to a three area structure as this would speed up the turn around time which Local Councils already struggled to keep up with. Nazeing Parish Council already held two meeting per month for planning and extraordinary meetings for significant applications. This workload was significant and it was likely that a three area solution would result in more work and further pressures on local representatives time and could effect the quality of the decisions.

A Loughton Member stated that the local nature of the structure should be retained and that that other Loughton local representatives shared this view. The step to hold their Sub Committee in Loughton had been well received in that area and changes to this would be a 'backward step'.

A Stapleford Abbots Parish Council Member questioned whether any loss of the local nature/local knowledge aspect of the Sub – Committee could increase the need for site visits? Under the area system, there was an expectation that the Memberships had knowledge of the sites under consideration as they were located in their wards which would not be so if the Area based structure was disbanded.

Local representatives requested more time to explore the various options possible at their next planning meetings and that the Councils not present be also given the chance to contribute to the discussion. The Chairman of the Scrutiny Panel agreed to this and asked for comments to be submitted back to Democratic Services for submission to the review.

29. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Community Initiative Fund 2006/2007

Councillor E Borton of Nazeing Parish Council reported on the County Council initiative dealt with by Local Councils. He advised that Beverly Davies had now replaced Peter Pearson as the support officer for the project. Applications submitted for grants from the 2006/07 budget would all be taken directly in the first instance. The deadline for the first round of which was 25 August 2006. This years new application form was available on the website www.communityinitiativesfund.co.uk and is attached to these minutes. This referred to recent changes to the qualification rules. The Local Sub – Committee tasked with dealing with the project were due to meet between 16-20 August 2006 to formulate recommendations for the deadline. Applications that were unsuccessful last year could be resubmitted to Ms Davies. There might be a further opportunity to bid for funding in the second half of the year.

It was clarified that Community Groups were able to submit bids to the initiative. These would be referred to the relevant Parish Council. The Copped Hall Trust and Ongar Boxing Club had submitted bids in response it was recommended that the latter be funded by the West Essex Forum. A Member asked about the publicity arrangements for raising awareness amongst community groups and stressed the importance of this.

30. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee noted that meetings of the Committee were scheduled for the following dates this year:

8 November 2006
28 March 2007.

CHAIRMAN



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COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FUND - 2005/2006: GUIDANCE NOTE

WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FUND?

Essex County Council will provide support for communities throughout Essex to deliver improvements that matter to local residents.

The County Council is inviting local bodies to make bids for grants for projects and initiatives which will help to improve the quality of life for local residents and communities.

The grant scheme is aimed at bodies which are properly constituted and broadly representative of their local community or neighbourhood:

- town and parish councils;
- neighbourhood committees and forums;
- community associations and;
- voluntary and community organisations.

FUNDING AVAILABLE

A total of **£150,000** is available in each local government District area for the financial year **2005/06**. Within this overall amount no minimum or maximum limits are placed on individual projects.

IDENTIFYING THE PROJECT

The County Council wishes to work with local organisations to identify projects which are suitable for funding taking into account:

- The project or facility will promote the social, economic or environmental well-being of the locality and will result in the creation of a new physical asset.
- This could include community, social and sporting facilities, transport initiatives, commemorative features, land purchases, playground equipment and any related



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feasibility, design and planning work or publicity. The fund cannot be spent on staff costs or ongoing running costs.

- The project should take account of Essex County Council and Essex Partnership priorities including tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, improving local environmental features, access to services and supporting communities.
- Projects may be given preference if they can attract matched funding, have the potential to add value to other work being undertaken in the locality and have been identified in local 'health checks' or parish plans.

QUALIFYING CRITERIA

- The project must have the support of town or parish council where this exists, or another appropriate, constituted community group.
- The expenditure must be capital in nature.
- Grant funds must be spent on the project for which the application was made. Essex County Council retains the right to access the awarded body's records (financial and otherwise) and to such answers as may be required to any questions arising from the project.
- Projects should be complete within two years of receipt of funding. Any grant remains the property of Essex County Council until spent. Unspent balances must be returned by 31 March 2008.
- Evidence that the project meets local needs should be submitted with grant applications.
- The applicant should be able to demonstrate that it can meet any ongoing revenue costs.
- Applications which have secured match funding may be given preference.
- The facility or project should be available to all sectors of the local community and must not be political in nature.
- Any permissions, consents or licences required will need to be in place before a grant can be confirmed, where appropriate.
- Project milestones and a completion date must be agreed prior to commencement of the project for the purposes of monitoring delivery of the project and accounting for expenditure.



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- Successful applicants will be expected to work with the County Council in promoting and publicising their initiative.

ASSESSMENT OF BIDS

- All applications will be judged locally by relevant groups where these exist, such as District Associations of Local Councils or Town and Parish Clerks' Forums. Where such bodies do not exist, the County Council in partnership with the local district or borough council will convene a group of relevant local representatives to carry out the judging process.
- The County Council will approve projects and reserves the right to reject or alter a grant recommendation, but this right will only be exercised in exceptional circumstances.
- A grant offer may be withdrawn if it becomes apparent the proposal will not be initiated.
- The grant will be repaid to the County Council if the project or facility is withdrawn within three years of the grant being paid.

TIMESCALE

- All applications must be made on the attached form, with supporting information where appropriate, and should be submitted to Sandra Bushby at the address set out at the bottom of the application form by 24 February 2006.
- Projects should be completed by 31 March 2008.

FUTURE YEARS

Details of funding arrangements in 2006/07 will be subject to decisions on the overall County Council budget in spring 2006. Conditions relating to the scheme may be revised to take account of public feedback.

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COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FUND

Application Form 2005/06

1	Name of Town/Parish Council or local organisation	
2	Contact details: Name Address Tel/Fax e-mail Position held	
3	Full description of project, including critical dates, milestones and completion date (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)	



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4	What is the intended benefit or impact of the proposal? (continue on a separate sheet if necessary)	
5	Please provide evidence of community/public support where possible – this should include details of expected activity by volunteers	



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6	Details of necessary permissions, consents, licences sought or received(continue on a separate sheet if necessary)	
7	Total cost of project	
8	Total value of grant sought	
8b	How are you ensuring value for money in the project?	
8c	If the grant application is for more than £10,000 please include evidence of 3 or more estimates	



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9	Date the grant is required	
10	Has funding from other sources been <u>applied</u> for or <u>secured</u> for this initiative (if yes please provide details)	
11	Please provide details of any ongoing revenue funding this project will receive and how it will be provided	
12	I have read, understood and accept the Community Initiatives Fund grant criteria conditions Signed: _____ Date: _____	

Applications for 2005/06 to be submitted by Friday 24 February 2006 to: Sandra Bushby, Essex County Council, Room C230, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1LX. E-mail: sbushby@essexcc.gov.uk