

# EPPING FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL COUNCILS' LIAISON COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Date:** Thursday, 3 November 2011 **Time:** 7.30 - 9.45 pm

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

**Members Present:** **Representing Epping Forest District Council:**

Councillor(s): R Morgan, B Rolfe, Mrs P Smith and  
Mrs J H Whitehouse

**Other Councillors:**

Councillor(s): J M Whitehouse

**Representing Essex County Council:**

County Councillor(s): G McEwen and Mrs E Webster

**Representing Local Councils:**

Mrs D Borton (Nazeing Parish Council), Councillor E Borton (Nazeing Parish Council), R Balcombe, Mrs S De Luca (North Weald Parish Council), B Surtees (Ongar Town Council), Councillor Mrs J Bowerman (Matching Parish Council), R E Russell (Stapleford Abbots Parish Council), Mrs S Jackman (Ongar Town Council), K Avey (Epping Hemnall), Mrs M McEwen (High Ongar, Willingale & The Rodings), Mrs P Richardson (Loughton Broadway), C Pond (Loughton Central), C Buttlings (Chigwell Parish Council), Caves, Mrs V Evans (Epping Upland Parish Council), Councillor J Harrington (Sheering Parish Council), Jackman, A Middlehurst, Councillor B Miller (Epping Upland Parish Council), Mrs L Peters (Moreton, Bobbingworth & the Lavers) and Mrs E K Walsh (Loughton Town Council)

**Apologies:** **Epping Forest District Council –**

Councillor(s): K Angold-Stephens

**Essex County Council –**

Councillor(s):

**Parish/Town Councils: -**

Mrs K Canning (Chigwell Parish Council) and R Church (Buckhurst Hill Parish Council)

**Officers Present:** D Macnab (Acting Chief Executive), J Gilbert (Director of Environment and Street Scene), J Preston (Director of Planning and Economic Development), P Millward (Business Manager) and M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant)

**By Invitation:** County Councillor J Jowers (Portfolio Holder for Communities and Planning)

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## 10. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman took over the Chairmanship and proposed that Councillor C Pond fill the position of Vice-Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

### **RESOLVED:**

That Councillor C Pond serve as Vice-Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

## 11. MINUTES

### Minutes of the Last Meeting:

### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 21 July 2011 be agreed subject to the following amendments:

- Councillor Mrs J Whitehouse was representing the County Council rather than the District Council.
- Parish Councillor P Collins was representing the Parish Council rather than Bassett Community Action Group.
- Mrs K Canning, Clerk for Chigwell Parish Council and Parish Councillor R Alvin, Chigwell Parish Council had attended the meeting.

### Matters Arising:

#### **Minute Item 2 Matters Arising**

Members sought clarification regarding requests for work to the North Essex Parking Partnership. The Director of Environment and Street Scene advised that Essex County Council were undertaking three major parking reviews. However enquiries regarding signs and lines should be referred to the North Essex Parking Partnership. However enquiries could also be passed to the Director and Assistant Director of Environment and Street Scene if problems were being experienced.

Members were concerned about parking problems around train stations. The Director of Environment and Street Scene advised that officers have regular dialogue with Transport for London, and London Underground had attended the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recently and highlighted there was no more capacity on the Central Line at present and therefore additional parking would be counter productive.

#### **Minute Item 3 Demise of Area Forums**

The committee had expressed concern at its meeting in July about the cessation of the Local Area Forums. In attendance at this meeting was County Councillor J Jowers, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Planning who had been invited to the committee to discuss this issue.

**Minute Item 5 Safeguarding Training for Town and Parish Council Staff and Councillors**

The committee had received an invitation for Parish and Town Council staff and councillors to attend Child Protection and Safeguarding training provided by the Council. Currently Loughton Town Council had become involved, the offer was still open.

**Minute Item 6 Queen's Diamond Jubilee – Beacon Proposal**

The committee noted in July 2011 that a request had come in from the Chairman of the County Council that fire beacons would be erected in the district for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. A number of local councils were looking at buying a beacon, Stanford Rivers Parish Council had made their own beacon.

**Minute Item 7 Issues Raised by Local Councils****(2) Article Four Directions and Protection of Conservation Areas**

It was advised that K Polyzoides, Assistant Director of Planning (Policy and Conservation), would chair a forum involving Town and Parish Councils who had an interest in conservation areas. Members advised that the National Planning Framework would be all encompassing. It was important to designate conservation areas quickly before changes would occur through the implementation of the framework. The Assistant to the Chief Executive would discuss this with planning officers. It was felt that this should be an agenda item for the committee meeting in March 2012.

**(4) ECC Salt Bins – Agreements between EFDC and ECC on winter services**

Members asked when the County would start re-filling salt bins. It was advised that officers would make enquiries and inform Town and Parish Councils.

**12. ISSUES RAISED BY LOCAL COUNCILS****(a) Invite to County Councillor Mrs T Chapman, Portfolio Holder for Highways to speak on Highways issues and principally the North Essex Parking Partnership.**

At the committee's last meeting on 21 July 2011, members requested that the County Portfolio Holder for Highways be invited to speak and answer questions on highways issues and in particular the North Essex Parking Partnership. Subsequently an invite was sent to the County Portfolio Holder who said that she could not attend this committee meeting on 3 November. An invite was also sent to her Deputy Portfolio Holder, County Councillor Mrs P Channer who also advised that she could not attend. It was advised that officers had attempted to approach the North Essex Parking Partnership for a representative to attend this meeting but the Partnership was unable to provide an officer to attend.

Members requested that the invite should be issued again to the County Council for the Portfolio Holder or her Deputy to attend the committee meeting on 22 March 2012.

**RESOLVED:**

That an invite be sent to the Essex County Council Portfolio Holder, or Deputy Portfolio Holder, for Highways to attend the next Local Council's Liaison Committee on 22 March 2012.

**(b) County Councillor J Jowers, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Planning**

County Councillor J Jowers, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Planning was introduced to the committee. He had been invited to speak on the demise of area forums. He had been a parish councillor at Mersea Island and Leader of Colchester Council.

County Councillor J Jowers accepted that many Town and Parish Councils valued the opportunity to meet with County afforded through the area forums. However, the County Council was required to save a further £340 million and on the basis that the Area Forum cost some £500,000 per annum to administer, it was felt the expenditure could no longer be justified. He went on to explain that the County Council was consulting generally on Essex wide partnership arrangements as a number of districts were no longer proceeding with their Local Strategic Partnerships, however he understood that the Epping Forest LSP was very active. In a response to a question from the Acting Chief Executive Councillor Jowers confirmed that the county would be prepared to contribute £15,000 to the local LSP costs. Councillor Jowers spoke about the proposed locality boards that were being considered involving District and County members. It was explained that a one size fits all approach was not being taken and agreed that the Local Council's Liaison Committee was potentially a blue print for future arrangements in Epping Forest. Councillor Jowers felt that an option paper would be useful. He also went on to say that the Community Initiative Funding for the County (replaced by the Big Society Fund) had been protected and he welcomed applications from local groups.

**RESOLVED:**

That a paper on some of the options being considered for replacing Area Forums should be drafted and circulated to members.

**(c) The Committee received a report from J Preston, Director of Planning and Economic Development, regarding the Draft National Planning Policy Framework Consultation and the views which EFDC had given.**

The proposed National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) involved the deletion of all but one of the current Planning Policy Statements (PPS), all of the current Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG), and a small number of circulars, replacing these with a much shorter single document. The overall intentions were to:

- (a) consolidate and streamline national planning policy reducing bureaucracy;
- (b) promote sustainable economic growth while retaining important environmental and social objectives;
- (c) empowering local communities to do things their way instead of control from central government; and
- (d) more user friendly and accessible, making it easier for the public to have a meaningful say in planning decisions.

The consultation ran from a 12 week period from 25 July to 17 October 2011, there were 13,000 responses to the consultation nationally. The Director warned the members of the challenges to come. A lot of glasshouses in the area might be converted to housing later on for example, some changes to the application of Green belt policy could mean that the council had to have a 5 year supply of land plus an extra 20%.

It was advised that the growth of development was the only reasonable option. However this would cost the council more in resources. The presumption was in favour of sustainable development.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report regarding the Draft National Planning Policy Framework Consultation be noted.

**13. "LOOK AND FEEL" PUBLIC SPACES DRESSING FOR THE 2012 OLYMPIC GAMES**

The Committee received a report from J Gilbert, Director of Environment and Street Scene, regarding the Olympic Games in 2012.

The venue for the Olympic Games canoe and kayak events was at the new White Water Centre located in Broxbourne, Hertfordshire. Additionally, one of the two park and ride facilities for the venue would be located at North Weald Airfield and significant parts of the Olympic Route Network (ORN) also passed through the district.

Government money had been made available to host authorities, in this case Broxbourne Borough Council, to "dress" the areas in the immediate vicinity of venues, this was named the Olympic "Look and Feel," and consisted of street decorations such as lamp column banners/flags, bunting, fencing scrim and similar. These decorations were all in prescribed form and design which were found in the "Look Book" published by LOCOG, the organising committee for the London Olympic Games.

The District Council and Broxbourne Borough Council had been working closely to formulate what was called a "Look and Feel" plan, enabling the immediate locality to be dressed. It was advised that the budget from the government did not enable other parts of the district to be included.

The Cabinet, at its meeting on the 24 October 2011 considered a report seeking a funding package enabling towns and parishes to apply for Olympic "Look and Feel" dressing. A community "Look and Feel" package was suggested, comprising of 12 lamp column banners, 10 barrier scrim and 100 metres of bunting, the value being around £3,500. It was proposed that interested local councils would meet half the cost.

It was important that local councils gave this matter urgent consideration. There was a deadline of early December 2011 for ordering the "Look and Feel" decorations in order to obtain them at the cheapest price from LOCOG's provider. Since the "Look and Book" referred to earlier was not and could not be allowed into the public domain, local councils interested in seeing the types of decoration available, would need to achieve this by the same deadline. It was advised that a primary school in Stapleford Abbots, the pupils had received a commemorative coin in connection with the Olympics.

All Parish and Town Council clerks had received a letter from the Director of Environment and Street Scene seeking a response in respect of "Look and Feel."

**RESOLVED:**

(1) That the report regarding local councils' consideration to purchase, through joint funding arrangements with the District Council, "Look and Feel" decorations for their area, be noted; and

- (2) That local Councils respond to the initiative to purchase Look and Feel banners etc, as soon as possible but by the latest at the end of November 2011.

#### 14. JOINT USER GROUP FOR IPLAN

The Committee received a report from Mr P Millward, Business Manager for Planning and Economic Development, regarding the Joint User Group for iPlan.

At a meeting of the Essex Association of Local Councils, Epping Forest Branch held at Ongar Town Offices, five Parish and Town Council representatives were nominated to participate in the iPlan User Group. These representatives would be participating in meetings with Planning and Economic Development officers. The first meeting was held on 25 July 2011 between the nominated representatives, the Business Manager of Planning and Economic Development and five officers responsible for different elements of Planning Information. At this meeting the following Terms of Reference were agreed:

- (a) Record and receive feedback regarding any difficulties that Parish/Town Councils experience using iPlan.
- (b) Investigate and report back to the User Group on progress, or the lack thereof, made in resolving difficulties raised in using iPlan.
- (c) Compile an action plan list of all issues raised, order to resolve difficulties raised and identify those issues can only be resolved using additional resources.
- (d) Suggest future improvements to IPlan and Electronic Website Planning Records to assist Parish/Town Councils in moving from paper planning records to greater use of electronic website planning records.
- (e) Invite Parish/Town Councillors, Parish Clerks and other local council staff to participate in work based placements within the Directorate to familiarise themselves with Planning and Economic Development in the District Council.
- (f) Liaise with ICT to enable iPlan to be compatible for use with Google Chrome, Firefox and other recognised internet search engines.

Formalised training on iPlan was not currently possible due to resource implications, it was decided that groups of Councillors and/or staff from Parish/Town Councils to visit Planning and Economic Development to enable them to gain a greater awareness of all planning processes from application stage through to placing planning applications onto the Corporate EFDC website. Five Parish/Town Councils had participated to date. Positive feedback had been received from all participants and it was proposed that further efforts would be made to encourage more local councils to visit the directorate, promoting a greater emphasis on partnership working between local councils and the District Council. In addition, the Development Control Team had allocated officers to local councils as appoint of contact for Development Control and planning application matters. Officers have attended parish council meetings in Chigwell, Stanford Rivers, Theydon Bois and Stapleford Abbots in the last few months to discuss matters ranging from pre-application enquiries, permitted development, approaches to considering Green Belt household extensions and validating requirements/concerns of plans.

The committee thanked P Millward for his work with local councils assisting them with iPlan.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report regarding the Joint User Group for iPlan be noted.

**15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Members requested that Local Council's Liaison Committee should be webcast. The Acting Chief Executive agreed to investigate this and support a pilot scheme of webcasts.

**RESOLVED:**

That a pilot scheme of webcasts of the Local Council's Liaison Committee take place.

**16. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next meeting of the committee will take place on Thursday 22 March 2012 at 7.30p.m.

**CHAIRMAN**