

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL COUNCILS' LIAISON COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Thursday, 4 July 2013 **Time:** 7.30 - 9.00 pm

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

**Members
Present:**

Representing Epping Forest District Council:

Councillor(s): Mrs M Sartin (Chairman), K Angold-Stephens, A Boyce
and Mrs J H Whitehouse

Other Councillors:

Councillor(s): R Bassett and G Chambers

Representing Essex County Council:

County Councillor(s): M McEwen and C Pond

Representing Local Councils:

Mrs S Jackman (Ongar Town Council), Councillor Mrs J Bowerman
(Matching Parish Council), G Castle (Nazeing Parish Council),
Mrs V Evans (Epping Upland Parish Council), Councillor B Miller
(Epping Upland Parish Council), N Moore (Buckhurst Hill Parish
Council), R Morgan (Matching Parish Council), R Northwood
(Sheering Parish Council), R E Russell (Stapleford Abbots Parish
Council), P Smith, Mrs E K Walsh (Loughton Town Council),
Cllr S Weston (Loughton TC) and J Whybrow (Roydon Parish
Council)

Apologies: Epping Forest District Council –

Councillor(s): B Rolfe

Essex County Council –

Councillor(s): Mrs R Gadsby, J Knapman and V Metcalfe

Parish/Town Councils: -

Mrs D Borton (Nazeing Parish Council), B Surtees (Ongar Town
Council), Mrs S De Luca (North Weald Bassett Parish Council),
Mrs A Jones (Moreton, Bobbingworth & The Lavers Parish Council),
R Balcombe (Fyfield Parish Council), Channing (Chigwell Parish
Council) and L Van-der-Mark (Fyfield Parish Council)

**Officers
Present:**

J Preston (Director of Planning and Economic Development),
R Ferriera (Assistant Solicitor), A Hendry (Democratic Services
Officer) and R Perrin (Democratic Services Assistant)

By Invitation:

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

The new District Council Chairman was confirmed as the Chairman of the Committee for the municipal year. The appointment of a Vice-Chairman from amongst the Local Council representatives was requested; Councillor S Jackman was nominated and seconded.

RESOLVED:

(1) That Councillor M Sartin be confirmed as the Chairman of the Local Councils Liaison Committee for 2013/14; and

(2) That Councillor S Jackman be appointed as the Vice-Chairman of the Local Councils Liaison Committee for 2013/14.

2. 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.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes for the meeting held on 7 March 2013 be agreed subject to noting that County Councillor Janet Whitehouse was present and that minute item 19(c), second line from the bottom, should read 'approval' and not approved.

4. ISSUES RAISED BY LOCAL COUNCILS

(1) Local Plan

The Director of Planning and Economic Development, John Preston took the meeting through the latest update on the Local Plan. They noted that the Community Choices consultation, which had taken place between 30 July and 15 October 2012, had been fully reviewed and a report had been submitted to the Cabinet Committee in June. Member workshop summaries were being circulated and a revised timetable was being agreed. Work was continuing to ensure that the next stage of the consultation, the Preferred Options was met.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Councillor Bassett informed the meeting that he had just been to the Rural Town Planning Institute where they had been discussing issues around Local Plans. All of the Councillors there agreed that it had proved very difficult to complete the Local Plans process because of a range of issues. These range from difficulties setting population numbers to 'duty to cooperate' as quite often it means duty to "agree".

Councillor Bassett noted that in a recent report only 15 out of 55 Local Plans had made it through the inspection and several of those were subject to early review. EFDC was looking at why so many were failing and where things had gone wrong. EFDC wanted to get it right first time, because if they fail they would have to start again with all the costs involved. The area of most importance and concern was population; the Office for National Statistics (ONS) had published statistics that suggested that our district would

get a lot of internal migration from London. EFDC had got Edge Analytics to look at the demographics figures for them and the work should be completed by the end of July.

He also thanked all the Town and Parish Councillors who had attended the workshops and gave their views and comments. EFDC would continue to work with and involve Parish and Town Councils wherever possible in the process. Local Authorities needed to work on transport and sustainability and help provide evidence for the Local Plan. He also highlighted the duty to co-operate with neighbouring authorities to enable them to handle decisions that cut across borders. There were ten other authorities that we border and as an example we are presently talking to Enfield/Broxbourne on Productive Landscapes, Harlow about developments around joint borders, Waltham Forest and Redbridge on Crossrail 2 consultations.

Members asked about sustainability, how was it defined by the government and how did it differ from the way developers used it. Mr Preston said it was based on what they thought was sustainable, involving the use of resources carefully and travelling long distances for basic facilities etc. Councillor Bassett added that the planning inspectors had one definition of sustainability and the developers had another.

Members from Matching asked when they would see some results from the workshops and with the ambiguity of the word 'sustainability' could we put pressure on the government to explain what they mean. Mr Preston said that they wanted a genuine discussion so it was too early to start pulling out results from the workshops. As for sustainability, we did not have a good definition of this at first, it was challenged and we now have a better but still quite complicated definition. Councillor Bassett noted that the government were aware of the confusion and it may have to be defined by a court.

A member from Loughton TC noted that the responses had not been analysed by geographical areas, also that the expenses and resources for Town and Parish Councils could not be understated. Mr Preston noted that there was some sense from the consultation that some comments were from people commenting on areas that were not their local areas. Officers were looking into this and would provide an update.

Councillor Bassett asked Town and Parish Councils to keep engaging with the District Council on the Local Plan Workshops that were being organised; we need to understand your concerns. If we met all your concerns then a Local Plan would be superfluous. Councillor Bassett agreed that they did not have to go all the way to a Neighbourhood Plan; they could have such things as a Village Plan, a smaller document that could be useful to us.

A Buckhurst Hill member asked about what was happening to the new conservation areas. Mr Preston said they were gathering evidence and consulting. This was a different process from the Local Plan and it took time to do this.

The meeting agreed that they should be updated on the progress made to the Local Plan at every meeting, included as a standard item on the agenda. Officers were happy to do this.

In discussions on Neighbourhood Plans Councillor Bassett noted that there were only three successful Neighbourhood Plans in the country as it was more difficult than people had first thought. He would put together some of this information and send it out to the Town and Parish Councils for their information.

Updated Neighbourhood Planning guidance was placed on the Council's website and circulated to Town and Parish Councils. The first designation of a Neighbourhood Area would be considered for Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers at the July Cabinet

meeting. This would enable them to make progress on a Neighbourhood Plan. This had been publicised on the Council's website in accordance with regulations and representations invited. A report has been prepared to go to Cabinet on 29 July 2013 asking for the designation of the Neighbourhood Area and to agree future Governance arrangements.

The meeting noted that there would be some large cost involved in putting the processes through even with limited financial support from government. It was also important for Town and Parish Councils to actively engage with planning officers as local councils fulfilled a very important function of providing a link between EFDC and the local communities and a detailed knowledge of their localities.

Members asked about the cost so far for the Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers designation of a Neighbourhood Area on their way to a completed Neighbourhood Plan. They were told officers did not know the current costs as yet, but on average it could come out as much as £70k and take two years to complete a Neighbourhood Plan. They noted that in Cumbria, 17 local parish authorities had got together to produce one plan. Maybe this joint working could apply to some of our parishes. Parishes and Town councils could also look at other options such as Village Design Guides which although they were not so high on material consideration were useful documents. However, with the Local Plan still at the consultation stage we would suggest the best way forward for most would be close engagement with EFDC to ensure their views were heard.

Members noted that there had been considerable slippage in the timetable since the last update. There was a concern that a few developers may chance their arm on applications with the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Officers noted that there was a good reason for the slippage; there had been a lot of responses to the consultation and they had realised that because of figures produced by the Office of National Statistics we needed a lot more work done on the population figures and mitigation. Also we have lots of work involved with the 'Duty to Cooperate' and this all had taken time. We also need to do further work in some areas, such as Transport Assessments and this was done by outside groups where we wanted timescales from them. It should also be noted that the National Planning Policy Framework has now gone past its initial transition period and it was noticed that there was not a large increase in developers trying to promote their schemes in our district. It should also be noted that developers themselves are obliged under the Duty to Cooperate with residents and authorities.

The Chairman thanked officers for the work done so far, noting that there was a lot more to come and also the local councils should note the list of forthcoming workshops that they could attend.

(2) Road Closures

The Legal Officer, Rosaline Ferreira, explained that at present Essex County Council, as the Highways Authority, deal with the applications for the temporary road closure orders under Highways legislation.

The District Council has powers under the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 to make temporary road closure orders in a response to a request. However, as there was no delegation in place at present it could mean that an application for a temporary road closure order may have to be referred to full Council.

Temporary road closure orders can be used for street parties, fetes, processions etc.

The question whether EFDC should make temporary road closure orders was previously brought before the Licensing Committee in 2010. At that time members of the Council asked for more information regarding costs and the resources required before making a decision. The matter did not proceed as Essex County Council, as the Highways Authority, indicated that they would prefer to continue to make such orders in the appropriate cases due to the exceptional occasion i.e. the Jubilee.

If the Committee desired, the matter could be taken again to the Licensing Committee to make a decision on whether to make temporary road closure orders. The report will give further information on the work and resources required. Any final decision will have to be made by full Council.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee made a formal recommendation asking that Epping Forest District Council consider the possibility of taking on the powers under Town Police Clauses Act 1847 to provide local means of road closures for temporary events.

(3) Potholes

The Committee noted that the County Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transportation, Councillor R Bass could not attend this meeting but officers were hopeful that he could attend the meeting scheduled for November 2013. In view of this, the meeting decided that it would also be helpful to get representatives from the North Essex Parking Partnership to attend the same November meeting so that there was some synergy to the items to be discussed.

RESOLVED:

That officers attempt to get Councillor R Bass and representatives from the North Essex Parking Partnership to attend the November meeting to speak about the state of the roads and parking in general.

5. CROSSRAIL 2 CONSULTATION

The Director of Planning and Economic Development, John Preston informed the meeting of the new Crossrail2 consultation. This concept came from the former Chelsea – Hackney line and was intended to do the same on a south-west, north-east axis.

The route had been safeguarded since 1991, and has now been resurrected and reviewed by Transport for London (TfL). They are now carrying on a consultation on the different routes proposed, one being a smaller, metro route and the other being a larger, regional route. Information on these routes could be found on the consultation website at www.crossrail2.co.uk

A report went to the Planning Scrutiny Standing Panel seeking their views on the consultation and their views would go on to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Issues for EFDC would be a possible terminus station at Epping which may bring a significant opportunity for economic development. There would be some benefits if Crossrail2 went to the west of the District. What would happen to the Central Line without Crossrail2? The Central Line had reached its capacity and that could not be increased. The concerns were not only for this authority but also for other councils that the Central Line ran through. If investment was diverted to the Crossrail2 development

how would this affect Central Line investment in infrastructure. Should the new line go to Stansted or Cheshunt? If the line went to Cheshunt, then any Marshalling Yard or Maintenance Depot would go near to that station which would mean some employment benefits may come to our area as it would be relatively close to our District boundaries. If however, it went to Stansted then we may lose this benefit. It may be that they would have a Marshalling Yard or Maintenance Depot at both end of the line as that would make more sense.

RESOLVED:

The meeting noted the report on the Crossrail2 consultation exercise.

6. PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS - HR TRAINING / ADVICE FOR MEMBERS

The meeting noted that EFDC was approached from time to time regarding Human Resource problems that were being experienced by Parish and Town Councils.

The District Council had always tried to assist with advice and guidance but the resources of the EFDC were not limitless and in fact the Council had no jurisdiction over the affairs of independent Parish and Town Councils and there were often circumstances where Councils should obtain their own advice.

The Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) are known to offer advice and support to Local Councils in a number of ways and it may be that this is one source. However, sometimes in formal proceedings something more may be required and it may be worth Local Councils making arrangements for a local resource to be provided on a jointly funded basis.

Local Councils may continue to come to the district council if they wished and they would always endeavour to help but it may be that this would not be enough in some circumstances and a local source of HR and Legal advice may be desirable.

Local Councillors expressed their gratitude for the support given by EFDC; it was a good example of good practice.

They noted that EALC had negotiated discount rates from some companies that would act as advisors for local councils and this could be a satisfactory way forward.

RESOLVED:

That the Local Councils would take this forward and contact EALC about the possibility of getting outside advisors.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was raised.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The following meeting dates of the Committee were noted:

7 November 2013; and
6 March 2014

CHAIRMAN