

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Asset Management and Economic Development Cabinet Committee **Date:** Thursday, 11 December 2014

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.00 - 7.42 pm

Members Present: Councillors Mrs A Grigg (Chairman), W Breare-Hall (Vice-Chairman), Ms H Kane, Ms S Stavrou and C Whitbread

Other Councillors: Councillors D Stallan and J M Whitehouse

Apologies:

Officers Present: D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), C Pasterfield (Assistant Director (Asset Management and Economic Development)), V Willis (Economic Development Officer), J Leither (Democratic Services Assistant) and G J Woodhall (Democratic Services Officer)

27. 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.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(a) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor W Breare-Hall declared a personal interest in agenda item 6, Asset Management Co-Ordination Group Report, item 4, St John's Road by virtue of being a member of Epping Town Council and a resident of Epping. The Councillor had determined that his interest was non-pecuniary and would remain in the meeting for the consideration of the issue.

(b) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor C Whitbread declared a personal interest in agenda item 6, Asset Management Co-Ordination Group Report item 4, St John's Road by virtue of being a resident of Epping. The Councillor had determined that his interest was non-pecuniary and would remain in the meeting for the consideration of the issue.

(c) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor J Whitehouse declared a personal interest in agenda item 6, Asset Management Co-ordination Group Report, item 4, St John's Road by virtue of being a member of Epping Town Council and a resident of Epping. The Councillor had determined that his interest was non-pecuniary but would leave the meeting if the discussion became too detailed.

29. MINUTES

Resolved:

(1) That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2014 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

30. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TEAM PROGRESS REPORT

The Economic Development Officer (EDO) advised the Cabinet Committee on the current levels of staffing in the Economic Development Team. She stated that the position for a new Economic Development Officer had been agreed and would be advertised within the next few weeks and the position for an Economic Development Assistant would be going to the Job Evaluation Panel for agreement next week.

The EDO presented a report to the Cabinet Committee and updated them on a number of projects, themes and issues being explored by the Economic Development Team.

(1) **Waltham Abbey Town Centre** – Various studies were being carried out looking broadly across the spectrum at transport connections, tourism development, commercial development and town centres. The key would be bringing these pieces of work together and once received we would report the findings and hold discussions with members and other partners early next year.

(2) **Economic Development Priorities and Plans** – An economic development strategy framework document was issued, subsequent to the report, which was a work in progress. Questions were asked at the last meeting and the framework showed how the town centres would work and how they would feed into the broader economic development strategy.

(3) **Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)** – In 2011/12 an unsuccessful bid was made on behalf of Waltham Abbey for Heritage Lottery Funding. The Economic Development Team (EDT) were now revisiting that bid and looking to submit a new application to the HLF to undertake a heritage based development project in the Market Square area of Waltham Abbey. This was at an early stage and the EDT would be taking advice from the HLF in identifying the weaknesses in the last application.

At a meeting with the HLF they positively encouraged the Council to submit a project enquiry form. The Economic Development team are following up on that and have a meeting next week to discuss the next steps.

(4) **Tourism** – The post of Tourism Development Manager had now been filled by Quentin Buller and he would be working on various projects one of which was a Tourism Summit planned for March 2015, the details will be published early next year.

One of the key roles of the Tourism Development Manager would be to support the work of Visit Epping Forest which is a forum that brings together key individuals from a number of the main tourist destinations such as the Gunpowder Mills, Ongar Railway and the Lea Valley White Water Centre to name a few.

(5) **Access to Funding Roadshow** – The Access to Funding Roadshow was held on 17 November 2014 at the Civic Offices, in partnership with Essex County Council's Essex Innovation Programme. This brought a number of funding business support providers which met and gave advice to local business.

(6) **Start-Up Loans** – The Economic Development Team had been trying to promote the Start-Up Loans scheme which was a Government backed agency that offered loans to businesses that were pre-trading or within their first 12 months of trading. It was hoped that this would be promoted through the Council's website and the Start-up Loans website but the Economic Development Team have reached barriers in contacting Start-Up Loans. The EDT were looking at other ways to take this forward and were in contact with the Start-Up Loans delivery partners.

(7) **Business Support** – A new edition of the Business Briefing had been published and we were in the process of sending this out to businesses. The Economic Development Team were working with Essex County Council on a business needs survey for the County which was being funded by SELEP. The results of the survey are expected to be published this month and will then be reported to the Committee for discussion.

(8) **Working with Essex County Council** – It had been agreed to establish quarterly meetings with key members and officers at Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) and Essex County Council (ECC) who are involved with economic developments. ECC have briefed EFDC on its Economic Growth Fund for 2015/16 and the Economic Development Team were arranging to meet with EFDC officers to discuss what sort of projects EFDC could get involved with.

(9) **Partner Liaison** – Work is ongoing with our Partner Organisations and there is nothing further to report.

Resolved:

(1) That the progress and work programme of the Council's Economic Development Section be noted.

Reasons for Decision:

To update the Cabinet Committee on the progress made with regard to Economic Development issues.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

None, as this monitoring report is for information not action.

31. MATTERS ARISING

North Weald Airfield Update

The Director of Neighbourhoods advised Members that there was a reference in the previous minutes and a discussion regarding income generation at North Weald Airfield. The Director advised that Savills had now been appointed and they would be assisting the Council in identifying a suitable operational partner. There was a meeting earlier this week and it was agreed that in mid-January 2015 the Council would be advertising to the market through trade media.

Members will be aware that the initiative to allow a pilot scheme on flight training at North Weald Airfield was agreed by the Cabinet and we are hopefully going to see additional revenue from that initiative.

The outdoor events season has now closed and we are actively marketing the venue for outdoor events for the next year. The market however continued to trade throughout the year. A further update would be given at a future meeting.

Park and Ride Scheme

The Assistant Director, Asset Management and Economic Development gave an oral update on the Park and Ride scheme and the enquiries the Council have made since the last meeting.

He advised the Cabinet Committee that he had a meeting with three officers from Essex County Council, David Sprunt, Senior Highways Officer and two transport planners. The officers explained that they were in liaison with the Council's planning consultants for the North Weald masterplan, Allies and Morrison and that they were preparing a detailed report regarding the viability of a Park and Ride scheme at North Weald Airfield. The report would be completed by the end of March 2015.

The Officers advised that there were a number of park and ride schemes in this part of the country including a new scheme in Colchester, seven sites in Norwich and 2 sites in Chelmsford. The calculation was complicated and the viability of a park and ride scheme working would depend on the number of trips being made and whether it was largely for commuters or whether there would be other trips during the day for shoppers or leisure. They also advised that a car park for around 1,000 vehicles would need 6-7 acres of land.

32. ASSET MANAGEMENT CO-ORDINATION GROUP REPORT

The Cabinet Committee noted a report from the Asset Management Co-ordination Group on the progress made with the development of the Council's property assets.

The Assistant Director, Asset Management & Economic Development reported orally on further progress which had been achieved since the matters had been considered by the Group.

(1) Epping Forest Shopping Park – All of the legal and accountancy advice had now been received and negotiations were concluding with our joint venture partners. We are in possession of a detailed legal document which will be going to cabinet on the 15 December 2014 for members to discuss.

A marketing exercise of the units had been taking place and there were a number of alternative tenant mixes that the Council would be able to consider in due course.

Detailed investigation work is going on at the moment mainly on site for geo technical and contamination work a revised detailed development appraisal will not be available until the end of January 2015.

(2) Oakwood Hill Depot – A detailed programme and costings had been received from the Council's quantity surveyors and this report would be presented to the Cabinet at their meeting on the 15 December 2014. The works should start in April 2015 and be completed by the end of 2015. This new facility would provide a state of the art depot for two or more of the Council's services and allow the Langston Road site to be vacated for work to commence on the Epping Forest Shopping Park.

(3) Pyrles Lane Nursery – Grounds maintenance services were being relocated to the Pyrles Lane Nursery and a planning application would be submitted by the 23

January 2015. A part of that new facility would include a glasshouse for growing plants and storage for storing plants that were bought in.

(4) **St John's Road** – Legal meetings had begun with the Council's solicitors and Frontier Estates who were the developers. Essex County Council were in the process of instructing their solicitors. We were arranging a date to meet with Essex County Council and a meeting would then be arranged with Epping Town Council to keep them informed of the current situation.

(5) **North Weald Airfield** – The Director of Neighbourhoods had given an update on North Weald Airfield earlier on in the Agenda.

(6) **Torrington Drive** – TFL have advised the Council that they are concentrating on other priorities and the Debden Station car park was not on their current development programme. We will continue to press them to move this development forward.

(7) **Winston Churchill Public House** – The developers have asked the Council to consider a variation to the agreement which would be presented to Cabinet on the 15 December 2014.

(8) **Broadway Car Parks / Burton Road Depot** – There were a number of developments being led by housing and these were making progress.

(9) **Lindsey House Epping** – Essex County Council had expressed an interest in this property in conjunction with the St Johns Road development and discussions were taking place with the adjoining church.

(10) **Town Mead Depot** – The Council were awaiting detailed designs from architects, to address the flooding issues which will be taken back to the Environment Agency and the Council's consultants, Peter Brett Associates. We would then be in a position to report further on taking this project forward.

(11) **Leader Lodge** – The contracts have been exchanged on the sale of that property and the Council are awaiting a completion date.

Resolved:

(1) That the monitoring report on the development of the Council's property assets be noted.

Reasons for Decision:

To comply with the Cabinet Committee's previous request to monitor the development of the Council's property assets periodically.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

None, as this monitoring report is for information not action.

33. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Cabinet Committee noted that there was no other urgent business for consideration.

34. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Cabinet Committee noted that there were no items of business on the agenda that necessitated the exclusion of the public and press from the meeting.

CHAIRMAN