

EPHING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee **Date:** Monday, 12 January 2015

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.30 - 8.30 pm

Members Present: Councillors R Morgan (Chairman) K Angold-Stephens (Vice-Chairman) G Chambers, K Chana, T Church, D Dorrell, P Keska, Mrs J Lea, A Mitchell MBE, S Murray, B Rolfe, Mrs M Sartin, Ms G Shiell, B Surtees and D Wixley

Other Councillors: Councillors K Adams, Mrs A Grigg, Ms H Kane, J Philip, D Stallan, Ms S Stavrou, G Waller and C Whitbread

Apologies: Councillors L Girling and A Watts

Officers Present: D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), S G Hill (Assistant Director (Governance & Performance Management)), G Wallis (Community, Health & Wellbeing Manager), D Butler (Young Persons Officer), L Walton (Young Persons Assistant), G. Nicholas (National Management Trainee), A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer) and M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant)

43. 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.

44. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute Members for the meeting.

45. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2014 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made pursuant to the Member's Code of Conduct.

47. PRESENTATION FROM YOUTH COUNCIL

The Committee received a presentation from six members of the Youth Council, Doncho Atanassov, Matthew Tinker, Olivia Storey, Joseph Pascoe, Jaymey Mclvor and Leonora Troshupa. They were joined by thirteen other Youth Council members.

They were there to give an overview of what the Epping Forest Youth Council has been up to over the past year. This was their first year in office of the two they were elected for.

The Committee noted that:

- There had been 45 candidates standing for just 21 seats, all aged between 13 and 17;
- 2488 votes were cast;
- Their aim was to ensure that all their peers and their schools became involved in their work and to continue to be a link between school Councils, the wider youth of the district and the District Council.

By far their highest profile event last year was the Youth conference held in the Council officers on 14 October 2014. 90 pupils from years 7, 8, 9 and 10 representing ten secondary schools from the District attended. They were consulted about issues affecting the lives of local young people; gathering their views on possible solutions and gather ideas on how to improve the local community. They were also keen to promote local democracy.

Three main concerns were highlighted. They were alcohol misuse, bullying and stress. Other issues raised were around skills and jobs and the need for more volunteering opportunities, the misuse of drugs particularly 'legal highs'.

They asked the Council Members to consider how they could help them lobby for these issues to be addressed. Their findings were shared with the Local Strategic Partnership and the Epping Forest Youth Strategy Group.

The Youth Council launched a campaign called '#URNotAlone' during national Bullying Awareness week in November; highlighting services and support groups for victims of bullying and their parents and also gave presentations to all year 9 pupils in the district. To complement this presentation they designed a USB memory stick wrist band that promoted the #URNotAlone Bullying Awareness campaign. It included a link to the EFYC web page which had the fact sheet promoting phone numbers and support groups. The project was deemed a great success by pupils, parents and teaching staff and the Youth Council were really proud of this piece of work.

Social Media was also an important part of their work as it promoted their work and raised the profile of young people in the district. They had 458 followers on Twitter and 185 'likes' on Facebook. Recently they had over 7200 views on Twitter and 42 new followers and by last week this had doubled.

They had been asked to contribute to 10 consultations this year and were pleased to have representations on the Epping Forest Youth Strategy Group.

Youth volunteering was a big theme for them and as young volunteers they were passionate about encouraging other young people to volunteer. The Council's Youth Volunteer Programme was now being taken up by all secondary schools in the district. They had tried out one of the youth volunteer days back in August when they were supported by staff from the City of London to help clear an area of woodland.

They have also noted that there was a need to break down barriers between the older residents and the young people in the district. The previous youth councillors developed the inter-generational project which had been well received by the residents from Jubilee Court in Waltham Abbey and Leonard Davis House in North

Weald. They were aiming to organise two events in different areas over the forthcoming year. One of these events would be held at Buckhurst Court in Buckhurst Hill in partnership with the Voluntary Action Epping Forest Carers Group and the Sheltered Housing Team.

Another event they have been involved in was a project developed by Community Services called Rural Roots. A large scale community fun day was organised in the village of Fyfield in the summer and they were pleased to support this in a number of ways. In advance of the event they spoke to businessmen and collected donations to the value of £400 and manned stalls on the day and raised a further £120 for the Help the Heroes charity, a total of £520.

They had secured external funding of £1200 from the Jack Petchey Foundation, £900 from Think Big O2 for their project work and a further £750 from the Jack Petchey Small Grants awards. That made a total of £2850 that the Youth Council had brought into the district over the last 9 months.

A further notable achievement was youth councillor Evangeline Foster, who was selected as an Ambassador for the prestigious 'Step Up to Serve' campaign for her community and volunteering work. She also sat on the Essex Police and Crime Commissioner Youth Forum and had taken part in County consultations to address the issues raised by young people.

They had hoped that they had shown that the 21 Youth Councillors have developed strong links with schools and youth groups and had connected with many thousands of their peers on behalf of the council.

They thanked the Committee for letting them give this presentation and invited members to come and attend any of the monthly Youth Council meetings that they hold to see what they did.

The meeting was then opened out to questions from the members present to the Youth Council.

Councillor Murray complimented the Youth Council on the good quality of their presentation. He would like more details on how they fed back to schools and the communities and how they received information back in return. He was told that they were all members of their School Council and they informed them of the projects taking place. There was also a variety of ways that they could inform the various groups including Twitter and Facebook which had recently doubled their following. They also used school assemblies and received feedback partly through meetings and through the school suggestion boxes that could be used for anonymous comments and suggestions.

Councillor Sartin was also impressed with the quality of the presentation and wondered what other areas, apart from the youth voluntary programme, were to be covered in the coming year. She was told that their manifesto showed what their main areas of interest were. They would tailor events and projects based on this.

Councillor Surtees said that there was good interaction between the Youth Council and the Ongar Youth Plus Group. How did they address the equalities issues, especially in groups that miss out on normal elections processes and means of contact? He was told that the Youth Council would get further involved in this type of involvement in the future. At present they engaged with young people not in main stream education and also had youth councillor on their council who was home schooled. They also undertook visits to various youth projects.

Councillor Chambers said that he had gained a lot from their presentation and asked if they would consider going into primary schools to give them talks and presentations. He was told that was a good idea, they had not been as yet but they would like to do so in the future.

Councillor Murray said that he now had a more positive image of young people and he would like the minutes to reflect that:

- The Committee would like to thank the Youth Council for their presentation and the work they have done so far;
- The Committee were impressed with the depth of work they were carrying out; and
- The importance that the Committee attaches to the Youth Council.

The Chairman thanked the Youth Council for their impressive presentation and also thanked Gill Wallis and Diane Butler for the work they had done with the Youth Council.

48. KEY OBJECTIVES 2014/15 - QUARTER 2 UPDATE

The Director of Neighbourhoods, Derek Macnab introduced the report on the Cabinet key Objectives, quarter 2 progress. The key objectives were designed to provide a clear statement of the Council's overall intentions for each year and were supported by a range of actions and deliverables designed to achieve specific outcomes.

This report presented six months progress from 1 April to 30 September 2014 against the key objectives for 2014/15.

It was noted that at the end of the second quarter of the year:

- (a) 44 (81.5%) of the individual deliverables or actions supporting the key objectives had either been completed or achieved, or are anticipated to be completed/achieved in accordance with in-year targets;
- (b) 4 (7.5%) may not be completed or achieved by year-end; and
- (c) 6 (11%) are currently on-hold as a result of external factors.

Councillor Angold-Stephens queried the fourth objective, to promote cultural change, items (a) and (b) (i). The target date said end of December and said that it was on target. Should it say it's behind target? Mr Macnab replied that this was reporting progress only up to the end of September. But he would take it back and have a look at it.

Councillor Angold-Stephens also queried 4 (c) (i) where it mentions a poster campaign for November. Had this begun as yet? Mr Macnab said that the Chief Executive would be launching that campaign at the next Staff Briefing. He agreed that there had been some slippage on this.

Councillor Wixley noted that 4(f) (i) spoke about breaking down silo working. It would be difficult to change attitudes; but was there some sort of induction course that explained the working of the Council. Mr Macnab said that they did have corporate induction process. Also with the recent restructure there were fewer directorates now. They were pursuing a number of actions on a number of fronts, but cultural change took time.

Councillor Surtees wanted to know if the Local Development Scheme preferred options were still on schedule for May 2015. Mr Macnab replied that the LDS as published had a target date of mid-May but there was likely to be some slippage.

RESOLVED:

That the progress in relation to the Key Objectives for 2014/15 for the second quarter of the year be noted.

49. WORK PROGRAMME MONITORING**Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Committee noted their work programme to date.

(a) They noted that they were to receive a presentation from the Mental Health Services and were asked if there was anything that they specifically wanted to be discussed.

Councillor Sartin said that the Youth Council had spoken about mental health issues for young people would this be an appropriate topic.

Councillor Wixley noted that at the last meeting to consider this topic a member of the public attended to ask some questions on local services and he would support having that same person attend the next meeting as well. Councillor Angold-Stephens said that he would support that suggestion. He had raised a number of issues at the time and had not got an adequate reply.

This suggestion was agreed by the Committee.

Councillor Murray asked for a more general approach to be taken and that we ask them to share a public spot analysis with us, where we could see any weaknesses, any opportunities and threats. He accepted that it would be a public analysis. Could we ask them to do this?

Councillor Surtees wanted to ask about how they integrated services with other bodies, especially people who present particular difficulties such as dual diagnosis and maybe criminality and care needs.

Councillor Whitbread noting that the Youth Council were interested in mental health, issues thought that we should ask them to attend this meeting.

(b) The Committee noted that the Cabinet at their meeting on 15 December 2014 had asked that the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) be invited to a meeting of the O&S Committee. The Committee considered how they would like to handle this request.

Councillor Sartin said that this committee would be the best suited to ask NEPP to attend as it was also webcast. Councillor Wixley supported this.

Councillor Whitbread said that NEPP were keen to come before this committee and answer questions and this was the best Committee to get full attendance.

Scrutiny Panels**Housing Scrutiny Panel**

The Chairman of the Housing Scrutiny Panel noted that they had a busy October meeting and noted that their item 7, review of the housing allocations scheme and tenancy policy, was now out for consultation. Important items coming up at their next meeting were the briefing on the proposed Council rent increase, the proposed housing service improvements and service enhancements and especially the possible operation of operating a "Sinking Fund" for new leaseholders in new or existing flat blocks where there are no existing leaseholders. Councillor Angold-Stephens suggested that this might be suitable for a Task and Finish Panel or a Working Group to be set up to consider. Councillor Murray replied that they had agreed the parameters that the report would cover; they would now see what the report had to say and may well take up his suggestion.

Constitution and Member Services Scrutiny Panel

The Chairman of the Panel, Councillor Sartin noted that they had started work on the Constitution at their last meeting; this would be a long process and they also now have an extra meeting programmed in.

Safer Cleaner Greener Scrutiny Panel

Councillor Lea, the Chairman of the Panel noted that they had an interesting meeting on CCTV in January and would be dealing with air pollution and flooding issues at their next meeting.

Planning Services Scrutiny Panel

The Chairman of the Panel, Councillor Chambers noted that the Panel had last met in on 9 December looking at the Local Plan.

He noted that over the Christmas period there had been a number of consultations; because of this they had agreed that the Panel members could be contacted by email to give their views and enable the consultations to be answered on time.

Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel

Councillor Church, the Chairman of the Panel noted that their next scheduled meeting (19 January) would be held with the Cabinet Finance Committee who would act as hosts for the Scrutiny Panel members. It was noted that all members' not just Scrutiny Panel members were welcome to attend this meeting. Councillor Whitbread said that the budget process had been going on since July yet very few members had bothered to turn up and engage in the discussion on the future budget.

At their last meeting the Panel had also considered the KPI's for commercial premises as a part two item.

Task and Finish Panels

Scrutiny Panels Review Task and Finish Panel

It was noted that this Panel was to hold its last meeting in a few days time; any recommendations would go to the next meeting of this Committee.

Grant Aid Task and Finish Panel

This Panel is to hold its first meeting on 14 January 2015.

50. REVIEW OF CABINET FORWARD PLAN

The Committee noted the Cabinet's Forward Plan for December 2014. They had no specific items that they wanted to consider.

CHAIRMAN