

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF NEIGHBOURHOODS SELECT COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2017
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.30 - 8.50 PM**

Members Present: N Bedford (Chairman), H Brady (Vice-Chairman), N Avey, R Baldwin, L Hughes, J Jennings, S Neville, A Patel, C P Pond, B Rolfe, M Sartin, G Shiell, H Whitbread and J H Whitehouse

Other members present: W Breare-Hall, S Kane, J Lea and J Philip

Apologies for Absence: R Morgan and E Webster

Officers Present D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), A Blom-Cooper (Interim Assistant Director (Planning Policy)), K Durrani (Assistant Director (Technical Services)) and V Messenger (Democratic Services Officer)

14. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

It was noted that Councillor H Whitbread was substituting for Councillor E Webster.

15. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the last meeting of the Neighbourhoods Select Committee held on 27 June 2017 be agreed.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

17. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PROGRAMME

It was noted that the Terms of Reference were still relevant.

Regarding the review of the Work Programme, D Macnab said that the Neighbourhoods SC members could consider adding air quality to the work programme. The Council's Air Quality Officer, C Jaggard, gave a presentation on air quality in the District at the Local Councils' Liaison Committee on 11 September 2017, while Dr J Dagley, City of London Corporation, talked about the impact of local air quality on Epping Forest. C Jaggard would be happy to attend a future meeting of this SC in January 2018 and an officer from Public Health could also be invited.

Regarding monitoring of the Council's leisure contract with Places for People Leisure (PfP), the first meeting of the formal monitoring board would take place in October 2017, so this item could be brought forward and a follow-up report made afterwards. D Macnab asked members if they wanted to include this at the November meeting, to which Cllr J H Whitehouse replied this should be put into the programme.

Councillor S Neville commented that there were two items not in the work programme – land drainage officers and ECC passenger transport. D Macnab said that Councillor M Sartin had extended an invitation to Transport for London to O & S and this would include bus services in the south of the district.

Councillor A Patel asked about the Key Action Plan regarding PfP's contract and capital investment with the forthcoming works at Loughton Leisure Centre, as well as the complaints received from centre users. He was concerned whether the teething problems PfP had experienced since it had taken over the contract had been addressed, and asked about the service changes that had been made available to the public.

Agreed:

- (1) PfP Leisure – Report of the first formal monitoring board of the Council's leisure contract to be given at Neighbourhoods SC meeting on 21 November 2017.
- (2) Air Quality Officer, C Jaggard and a Public Health Officer to be invited to the Neighbourhoods SC meeting on 30 January 2018.
- (3) To invite Land Drainage officers within the Technical Services Directorate to a future meeting.

18. LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

The SC agreed to bring forward this item.

A Blom-Cooper said that this was an item where a regular progress report was made. The methodology for calculating housing need had been published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) – Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals, 2017 and could be downloaded at this link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/644955/Planning_for_Homes_consultation_document.pdf

The Forward Planning team had not had time to digest the report yet. A spreadsheet enclosed with the report indicated that for Epping Forest District Council there would be an increase in the number of houses from 514 to 923 a year, which equated to a 40 per cent increase. This was a huge concern that would need to be evaluated. The consultation started on 14 September 2017 and would run until 9 November 2017. The Council would be submitting a response, in addition to a joint response with neighbouring partner authorities, who were similarly affected. The Council had agreed to commission consultants to collate the feedback. Regarding the population and the adjustment to take account of the uplift ratio of house prices to earnings of people in the District, this must be based on salaries in the District, i.e. not London salaries even for those who worked in London. A Blom-Cooper said that she could only surmise that where salaries were higher than house prices, for example as at Oxford, these councils had received low increases. The Council needed to submit its Local Plan by 31 March 2018 and a report would be made to Cabinet at the meeting on 12 October 2017.

The good news was that the key focus for the pre-submission plan and the report detailing the findings of July 2017 were given on the website at: <http://www.efdclocalplan.org/> On site selection, the Forward Planning team was

looking at a mixture of 168 amended / new sites. The methodology and the sites being assessed were again on the website. Transport modelling of all sites was in the draft Local Plan, and included Highway measures and sustainability that needed to be put in place. The draft report on outdoor playing pitches was slightly behind but all these reports would feed into the infrastructure deliver plan.

There would be a workshop session with local councils, landowners and neighbouring authorities. All the work preparation of the Local Plan including if it was economically viable for developers and that the plan was viable were key pieces of evidence. On other work around employment, the final selection had not been done but four authorities had just been commissioned and this work would feed into the site selection list. Sustainability appraisal work would look at reasonable options and work was ongoing on this.

Habitat assessment was a key issue and the Forward Planning Team was preparing an action plan on how to mitigate this with Epping Forest, particularly air quality issues on future traffic levels and the flow of visitors to the Forest. The Council was leading the work to develop a joint strategy and an action plan, with other relevant local authorities, which would address potential adverse impacts on the integrity of Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC), as required under the Habitat Regulations Act.

The Council would liaise with Natural England on a housing implication strategy about the proposed growth from Gilston on land that could be used for sites in and around Harlow. The Council had not delivered 514 houses a year consistently since 2011. Therefore, because of this 'lower' delivery level, the Council would have to be able to show how it could make up this shortfall and demonstrate it had a 5-year housing plan. There would be meetings on this with other councils and a progress report would go to the Cabinet meeting on 12 October.

Development forum meetings had been held in June and September when updates were given on the Local Plan and Harlow – Gilston Garden Town project. Officers were also liaising with relevant landowners and ECC regarding transport infrastructure that was a key issue. At a Garden Town meeting on 18 September, a member board had been established with monthly meetings to follow. Consultants would also be appointed through the Garden Town, a key aim of which was to try and move people onto other forms of transport. A Garden Town officer had been appointed and would be based at the Civic Offices in Epping but would work across the District and with other authorities.

Councillor N Bedford asked if 11 hectares of employment areas were required, was the North Weald Police helicopter base in this allocation. A Blom-Cooper replied that this use would not be categorised as 'employment' in terms of the Local Plan.

Councillor J H Whitehouse asked if schools would be needed. A Blom-Cooper replied that only general discussions had been held with ECC on land infrastructure.

Councillor A Patel queried the Council's lack of housing stock. Councillor J Philip replied that since 2011 the Council had not been building an adequate quota and this would need to be recovered in the Local Plan providing the Council could show the availability of housing land and reasonably deliver housing stock.

Councillor M Sartin said that she had attended an exhibition on the future Garden Town and that as it comprised seven garden villages, she could not visualise how these would come together as a Garden Town. Councillor J Philip replied that the

garden villages would be developed within a garden town structure and the whole area would be assessed as an entity. This would include looking at what improvements could be made – i.e. shopping area requirements / locations and sustainable transport, to make it a good area to live. The logical idea was to continue the Garden Town into the green spaces around Harlow. Councillor M Sartin suggested two more crossings of the A414, such as another junction. Councillor J Philip said he would not speculate until the preliminary work had been done.

19. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2017/18 - QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE

D Macnab reported that 12 KPIs fell within the responsibility of this SC. Of these 3 were not meeting targets – NE1001 (How much non-recycled waste was collected for every household in the district?), NE1003 (What percentage of our district had unacceptable levels of litter?) and NE1013 (What percentage of all household waste was sent to be recycled or reuse?).

Councillor J H Whitehouse asked why NE1003 had not been achieved. Councillor S Neville remarked that there were unacceptable levels of litter in his ward and that bins were regularly overflowing so they had not been monitored sufficiently. Councillor W Breare-Hall was sorry to hear about this and wanted to know which bins were affected. He was disappointed with this figure and would take it up with Biffa.

Councillor N Bedford asked how this was measured. Q Durrani replied that random samples were taken by different officers and that the District was divided up. Litter bins in busier areas such as in high streets were emptied on a weekly or daily basis. He commented that when you looked at other districts, the level of litter was much lower in this District, which had to meet a very aggressive target. Biffa had achieved much but the situation should not be like this as there was an urban mix. Councillor M Sartin commended the Council for its work.

Councillor J Lea asked if this was affected by the problem that happened at amenity centres where car occupants dropped rubbish in bins. Q Durrani replied that ECC had not found a link between the increase in fly-tipping and the District, and this kind of fly-tipping would have been residual waste. D Macnab said that it was very difficult to accept as the trend on fly-tipping was already increasing, so had not changed. Councillor H Whitbread asked to what extent the Council worked with Macdonalds and other food takeaway outlets on litter. Q Durrani commented that there were new initiatives and this was a challenge with takeaways and those with a drive thru. Councillor H Brady asked if building waste / rubble was coming out of London, had London boroughs done the same as ECC by not allowing builders' waste at amenity sites. Also, regarding unscrupulous developers / builders, Nazeing and Roydon had been badly affected by fly-tippers and waste had even included asbestos. She struggled to accept that this was residential. If small builders were doing this then were all counties doing the same as ECC. Q Durrani said that waste should be disposed of responsibly. G Shiell asked if it was worth talking to Macdonalds at Hastingwood. Councillor N Bedford commented that North Weald Parish Council did have a team but it was the vehicle occupants using the drive thru that chucked the rubbish out of the window. Councillor S Neville said that every part of the waste should be biodegradable.

RESOLVED:

That the Select Committee reviewed and noted Quarter 1 Performance in relation to the key performance indicators within its areas of responsibility.

20. CORPORATE PLAN KEY ACTION PLAN 2017/18 - QUARTER 1 POSITION

D Macnab said the vast majority were on target or had been achieved. The St John's Road site was 99 per cent of the way through negotiations, the delay being related to the community benefits of the project, i.e. the cinema, which Frontier States had assured it would take up with the contractor.

Councillor N Avey commented that a delay had been caused by access to the site, whether via the High Street or St John's Road, which Epping Town Council had yet to see. D Macnab said a design and developer's brief had been produced to which interested parties had given feedback on the benefits to partners but the site access had never been specified. N Avey said he would leave Epping Town Council to respond but the original issue was around access through the Copped Hall site.

Councillor M Sartin asked about the shopping park highway works. D Macnab said these had almost been completed to allow the opening of the shopping park, but would finally be completed in mid-October. Reports from the stores that had opened was that they were trading well – TK Maxx, Hobbycraft (slightly behind but highest spend / per head of any store) and was generally encouraging.

RESOLVED:

That the progress of the first Quarter of the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan for 2017/18, in relation to its areas of responsibility was reviewed and noted by the Select Committee.

21. CORPORATE PLAN 2018 - 2023

D Macnab said the head of Transformation was D Bailey. The Corporate Plan, the Council's highest level strategic document, which would cover the period 2018 to 2023, was being reviewed and updated. The draft had been shaped from input from the Management Board, Leadership Team and Cabinet. The draft was an attempt this time to be illustrated in a diagrammatic fashion and a headline summary was given in Appendix 1. The purpose was to create a stronger council, fit for purpose and would move forward to give stronger communities. The draft vision, purpose, corporate aims and objectives were grouped under three themes: People, Place and Council. Appendix 2 (read from right to left) showed the strategic drivers, corporate aims and objectives, benefits and performance measures, and the action required for 2018–19 to enable delivery of the first year of the plan. It was anticipated that the Corporate Plan would be adopted by full Council later in the year.

Councillor G Shiell thought it was complicated and not very simple to follow. Councillor S Neville said the diagrammatic flowcharts helped to put the draft in simplistic terms. D Macnab said the Resources and Governance SCs had liked it and it was an attempt to make the plan more accessible.

Councillor J H Whitehouse asked where was the plan on how the Council was going to achieve these aims and objectives. D Macnab said that there would be an accompanying narrative. The business plans and service plans would be on the website so you could see how they were practically delivered.

Councillor A Patel said that regarding stronger communities, the Council would need a caption for mental health. He said he had represented the Council at the District Health Forum and every authority had incorporated key strategies and therefore mental health should be promoted in 1.1.2 (Promote mental and emotional

well-being). D Macnab said that within stronger communities, this could be more specific as it was implicit but not drawn out specifically and the word 'health' added into 'mental health'.

Councillor H Brady said there were no strings on the orange boxes in the flowchart, to which S Neville said that was because these were key benefits. D Macnab said the jargon was flexible and responsive to any changes in circumstance. Councillor J Philip said that the operational objectives could be measured.

Councillor J Lea asked about 1.2.1 (Redesign the Council's sheltered housing accommodation) under Stronger communities, and why the Council had allowed there to be eleven empty rooms at Abbey View in Waltham Abbey. As vacancies had not been advertised, the elderly people that lived there were worried the Council was going to shut the home. D Macnab said the Council had no intention of shutting the home but struggled to let a studio, which was not a popular size. The Council was combining studios into one bedroom flats, which were a more popular choice. Councillor J Lea asked if she could go and have a look. Councillor J Philip advised her to speak to Councillor S Stavrou, the Housing Portfolio Holder, while D Macnab also encouraged a visit to one of the Council's sheltered housing schemes.

22. CORPORATE GREEN WORKING PARTY

D Macnab said this was a standard report. Councillor S Neville said that Councillor S Kane would come onto the Corporate Green Working Party (CGWP) as the new Safer, Greener and Transport Portfolio Holder. He asked if there was any further news on the award, to which D Macnab replied the Council had no further update on the level of the award.

Councillor J H Whitehouse said the CGWP's minutes were not very informative, to which D Macnab said that in future he would ask for a proper report from officers.

Councillor S Neville queried the Green Infrastructure Board with the Council's operations, to which D Macnab replied, yes with regard to promotional activities and getting our work in order.

Councillor M Sartin asked further about the Leisure Centre emissions that were excluded from this year's report. D Macnab said yes, and that the new leisure centre building at Hillhouse, Waltham Abbey, would be more efficient from the equipment replacements being installed. The results from this refurbishment would feed through quite quickly. Loughton Leisure Centre should also have improvements made to the building.

Agreed:

Officers to provide reports for future agendas, instead of supplying the Corporate Green Working Party minutes.

23. REPORTS TO BE MADE TO THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no reports made for the next O & S Committee meeting.

However, Q Durrani advised that the Council's formal response on drinking water regulations and drought management plan would be published in the Council Bulletin, no 39 on 6 October 2017.

For further information see:

Defra Consultation on Drinking Water Legislation – Private and Public Supplies 2017, 22 September 2017. The consultation documents can be found on the below link:
<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/water-quality/drinking-water-regulations-2017/>

Affinity Water Drought Management Plan – Consultation 2018 - 2023

The consultation presents plans for dealing with low, moderate and extreme drought scenarios. The document can be found online at:

<https://stakeholder.affinitywater.co.uk/docs/Drought-Management-Plan-Non-Technical-Summary-August-2018.pdf>

24. FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the future meetings of the Neighbourhoods SC in this municipal year would be at 7.30pm on the following dates:

- 21 November 2017;
- 30 January 2018; and
- 20 March 2018.