

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Asset Management and Economic Development Cabinet Committee **Date:** Thursday, 19 July 2018

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.30 - 7.55 pm

Members Present: Councillors A Grigg (Chairman), N Avey, H Kane, S Kane and J Philip

Other Councillors: Councillor J M Whitehouse

Apologies: G Mohindra

Officers Present: D Macnab (Acting Chief Executive), M Warr (Economic Development Officer), J Leither (Democratic Services Officer) and S Kits (Social Media and Customer Services Officer)

1. 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.

2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Cabinet Committee noted that Councillor J Philip substituted for Councillor G Mohindra.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(a) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor N Avey declared a personal interest in agenda item 7, St John's Road Development by virtue of being the Chairman of Epping Town Council. The Councillor had determined that his interest was non-pecuniary but would leave the meeting if the discussion became too detailed and required a pecuniary interest to be declared.

(b) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor J M Whitehouse declared a personal interest in agenda item 7, St John's Road Development by virtue of being an Epping Town Councillor and a resident of St John's Road, Epping. The Councillor had determined that his interest was non-pecuniary but would leave the meeting if the discussion became too detailed and required a pecuniary interest to be declared.

4. MINUTES

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2018 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

5. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - PROGRESS REPORT

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

6. Digital Innovation Programme

At the last meeting of the Cabinet Committee held on the 4 April 2018, at the request of the Chairman, the EDO agreed to give a presentation to the Cabinet Committee regarding the background of the Digital Innovation Programme. The EDO advised that with the Digital Innovation Strategy now due to be launched in September 2018 rather than July 2018 a more substantial presentation would now come to the next meeting of the Cabinet Committee on the 18 October 2018.

A team led by Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) on behalf of the DIZ Board and in conjunction with Princess Alexandra Hospital, West Essex CCG and Essex Partnership University Trust had been successful in gaining a place on the LGA / The Design Council programme 'Design in the Public Sector' and had been examining options to use digital approaches to reduce A&E attendance amongst the Over-75s. The training programme had now concluded but the work continued and the Economic Development Team were currently prototyping laptop technology for ambulance crews to improve the flow of patient information. The LGA had approached EFDC to feature the project in 'first' magazine and the article would be published in the edition at the end of July 2018.

7. Superfast Broadband

The Rural Challenge Project had now been completed. The Project had seen in excess of 4,000 properties connected to the fibre broadband network installed by Gigaclear.

Following agreement by the Cabinet to contribute a further £350,000 of Council funding towards further broadband infrastructure, Phase 4 could begin and would bring a further 2,188 properties able to be connected to the fibre broadband network. Phase 4 would be delivered by the end of 2019 and would bring the superfast broadband coverage in the district up to 99.67%.

Resolved:

- (1) That the current progress and work programme of the Council's Economic Development Section were noted; and
- (2) That the EDO would give a presentation to the next meeting of the Cabinet Committee regarding the Digital Innovation Zone.

Reasons for Decision:

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

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

None, as this was a monitoring report for information, not action.

6. ASSET MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS - PROGRESS REPORT

The Director of Neighbourhoods presented a report to the Cabinet Committee and updated Members on further developments to the report since it had been published.

(1) Epping Forest Shopping Park

The remaining three units had now been secured. Mountain Warehouse were actively trading and reported that trade was proving popular with customers. Home Bargains were in the process of fitting out their unit and the unit acquired by Boots was in the hands of Solicitors and should be concluded by the end of August 2018. All aspects of the construction of the park have been completed and the Council were now in the default notice period.

There had been an issue to the roof of one of the units, Smyths Toys, which had a leak. The contractors had been back on site to fix the leak and the Council were confident that this had now been remedied.

The Shopping Park was approaching its first anniversary and the feedback from the traders was very positive.

(2) Oakwood Hill Depot

The Depot had been open for approximately 2 years and was constructed in order for the Council to relocate services the Fleet and Grounds Maintenance Service from Langston Road. As part of the St John's Road redevelopment and as part of the Council's rationalisation it was intended to move the Housing Repair Service to some surplus capacity at Oakwood Hill. It had been ascertained that before the Housing Repairs Service could move to the Depot a requirement for more car parking was needed. A feasibility study had been completed and a planning application to provide the extra car parking to facilitate the Housing Repairs Service had now been submitted.

(3) Pyrles Lane Nursery

As previously reported it had been the intention to auction this site. The auctioneers had advised that the scale of the development was too large and they advised that the most appropriate means of disposing of the site would be to actively market it by the Council's Agents. The sale was being promoted within the property market on the basis of a private treaty expecting offers in excess of £3m. An option has been included in the sales particulars for any potential developer to build the affordable housing element of the scheme with a view to the Council purchasing the homes to form part of the Council's housing stock. To date there had been in excess of 40 expressions of interest which was very encouraging.

(4) St John's Road Redevelopment

Frontier Estates have signed the documents and they were now in the hands of the solicitors acting for Epping Town Council. Epping Town Council's solicitor has requested an email from EFDCs solicitor advising that the Council are satisfied with all the amendments which were a result of the Town Council and Frontier Estates.

A meeting was held in late June with Frontier Estates, Epping Town Council and the District Council to finalise the details. It was confirmed that Frontier Estates wished to proceed with the same mixed use scheme in accordance with their expression of interest and the agreed Design and Development Brief. Frontier Estates were being

encouraged to enter into a Planning Performance Agreement to assist them in bringing their planning application forward.

(5) North Weald Airfield

As highlighted at the last Cabinet Committee meeting, the lease with the National Police Air Service had been completed and work would commence shortly on the construction of their new facilities. In the first instance the new facilities would be temporary as they were keen to relocate from their current operational site as soon as possible. To reduce the risk, an option to relocate the model flying club to an alternative site on the old golf range, just outside the perimeter of the Airfield was being actively pursued. Negotiations were ongoing with operators who wish to increase flight training activity at the Airfield.

The Chairman enquired as to when the National Police Air Service (NPAS) would have permanent accommodation.

The Director of Neighbourhoods stated that the temporary accommodation would be in situ for approximately a year to 18 months and during this time temporary hangars would be put in place whilst a permanent construction was built on the site.

Councillor S Kane asked if the NPAS would be fully operation whilst the temporary accommodation was in situ.

The Director of Neighbourhoods stated that it would be fully operational during the temporary period.

Councillor S Kane asked if there had been any indication as to when Lippitts Hill would be cleared.

The Director of Neighbourhoods advised that they would vacate Lippitts Hill as soon as the temporary arrangement was in place but to date there had been no planning application or planning advice sought. The Director advised that he would take this on board and pursue an answer to report back to members.

(6) Landmark Building

The tenancy of all the retail units had now been secured. The occupancy of the retail units had been delayed by Higgins not releasing the units. The middle unit was a Mediterranean Restaurant and they had started fitting out the unit. It was reported that the Public House legal agreement would complete in approximately two weeks.

(7) Hillhouse Development

The new Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre was on track to open to the public in November 2018. All Members had been invited in advance to the public opening to view the progress and facilities that were on offer, this would take place in September 2018.

A meeting had taken place between the joint working group which involved officers from Essex County Council and Health regarding the Independent Living Scheme. The procurement process had been procured through Essex County Council and they had a developer/operator had been appointed. A full planning application was imminent.

The new Health Centre had changed by the NHS where they would provide the building but the GP practice was now self-funding. The Council were waiting for the GPs to come forward with their proposals.

The Chairman asked if there was an estimated time frame for the Health Centre.

The Director replied that he did not have any time frame details but he would enquire and report back to members.

Resolved:

(1) That the current progress on the Council's Asset Management and Development projects were noted; and

(2) That the Director of Neighbourhoods would pursue an enquiry as to when the National Police Air Service would be relocating from Lippitts Hill to North Weald Airfield.

Reasons for Decision:

To comply with the Cabinet Committee's previous request to monitor the development of the Council's Property Assets on a regular basis.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

None, as this was a monitoring report for information, not action.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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

8. 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