



Epping Forest District Council

GOVERNANCE SELECT COMMITTEE **Tuesday, 23rd October, 2018**

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Governance Select Committee**, which will be held at:

Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping
on Tuesday, 23rd October, 2018
at 7.15 pm .

Derek Macnab
Acting Chief Executive

Democratic Services
Officer

S. Tautz
Tel: (01992) 564243
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Members:

Councillors G Chambers (Chairman), D Dorrell (Vice-Chairman), R Brookes, L Burrows, R Gadsby, L Hughes, S Jones, H Kauffman, M McEwen, M Sartin, J Share-Bernia, H Whitbread, J M Whitehouse, D Wixley

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

3. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 3 - 6)

To agree the notes of the meeting of the Select Committee held on 3 July 2018.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To declare interests in any items on the agenda.

In considering whether to declare a pecuniary or a non-pecuniary interest under the Code of Conduct, members are asked pay particular attention to paragraph 9 of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements. This requires the declaration of a non-pecuniary interest in any matter before an overview and scrutiny committee which relates to a decision of or action by another Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council, a Joint Committee or Joint Sub-Committee in which the Council is involved and of which the Councillor is also a member.

Paragraph 9 does not refer to Cabinet decisions or attendance at an overview and scrutiny meeting purely for the purpose of answering questions or providing information on such a matter.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE & WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 7 - 12)

(Chairman/Lead Officer) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has agreed the terms of reference of the Select Committee for the current municipal year. These are attached as an appendix to this agenda, along with the ongoing work programme for the Committee and Members are requested to review the terms of reference and progress towards the achievement of the work programme.

6. REVIEW OF LOCAL ELECTIONS 2018 & ASSOCIATED MATTERS (Pages 13 - 18)

To consider the attached report.

7. PETITION SCHEME - REVIEW (Pages 19 - 30)

To consider the attached report.

8. EQUALITY OBJECTIVES 2018-2022 - QUARTERLY MONITORING (Pages 31 - 38)

To consider the attached report.

9. EQUALITY INFORMATION REPORT 2018 (Pages 39 - 56)

To consider the attached report.

10. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT (Pages 57 - 60)

To receive feedback from the meeting of the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Area Plans Sub-Committees and the District Development Management Committee, held on 17 September 2018.

11. REPORTS TO BE MADE TO THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To identify any matters to be reported to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF GOVERNANCE SELECT COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY, 3 JULY 2018
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.15 - 7.30 PM**

Members Present:	G Chambers (Chairman), R Brookes, L Burrows, L Hughes, S Jones, M Sartin, J Share-Bernia, J M Whitehouse, D Wixley and K Chana
Other members present:	J Philip and A Lion
Apologies for Absence:	D Dorrell, R Gadsby (Vice-Chairman of Council), H Kauffman, M McEwen and H Whitbread
Officers Present	N Richardson (Assistant Director (Development Management)), J Leither (Democratic Services Officer) and M Chwiedz (Performance Improvement Officer)

1. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

The Select Committee noted that Councillor K Chana was substituting for Councillor M McEwen.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

In the absence of the Vice-Chairman, who had tendered his apologies, the Chairman nominated Councillor J Share-Bernia to be Vice Chairman which was seconded by Councillor M Sartin.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor J Share-Bernia be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Governance Select Committee for the duration of the meeting.

3. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the Select Committee meeting held on 27 March 2018 be agreed as a correct record subject to Councillor Philip and Councillor Lion being in attendance but omitted as attending from the notes.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Select Committee noted their terms of reference and work programme.

6. TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME - PROJECT DOSSIER - GOVERNANCE

The Performance Improvement Officer introduced a report reviewing the updated Project Dossier for the Transformation programme for the Governance Directorate, on behalf of the Head of Transformation. She advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had requested the progress of projects and programmes within the Transformation Programme, known as the Project Dossier, be reported to regular meetings of the Select Committee for review.

The Select Committee considered and noted the list of active High and Medium complexity projects, known formally as the Project Dossier.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee noted the updated Project Dossier for the Transformation Programme affecting the Governance Directorate.

7. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2017/18 - QUARTER 4 (OUTTURN) PERFORMANCE

The Select Committee received a report from the Assistant Director of Governance (Development Management) regarding the Key Performance Indicators 2017/18 – Quarter 4 (Outturn) Performance Report.

The Local Government Act 1999 required that the Council made arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions and services were exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

As part of the duty to secure continuous improvement, a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) relevant to the Council's services and key objectives, were adopted each year by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee. Performance against the KPIs was monitored on a quarterly basis by the Management Board and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to drive improvement in performance and ensure corrective action was taken where necessary.

All indicators – The overall position for all 32 KPIs at the end of the year was as follows:

- (a) 21 (66%) indicators achieved the cumulative end of year target;
- (b) 11 (34%) indicators did not achieve target; although
- (c) 5 (16 %) of these KPIs performed within the agreed tolerance for the indicator.

Governance Select Committee indicators – Five (5) of the Key Performance Indicators fell within the Governance Select Committee's areas of responsibility. The overall position with regard to the achievement of target performance at the end of the year for these indicators, was as follows:

- (a) 3 (60%) indicators achieved target;
- (b) 1 (20%) indicators did not achieve target; and
- (c) 1 (20%) indicator performed within its tolerated amber margin.

The 'amber' performance status used in KPI reports identified indicators that had missed the agreed target for the quarter, but where performance was within an

agreed tolerance or range (+/-). The KPI tolerances were agreed by Management Board when targets for the KPIs were set in March 2017.

The Select Committee was requested to review performance at the end of the year in relation to the KPIs for 2017/18 within its areas of responsibility.

RESOLVED:

That the Key Performance Indicators 2017/18 – Quarter 4 (Outturn) Performance report be noted.

8. CORPORATE PLAN KEY ACTION PLAN 2017/18 - QUARTER 4 (OUTTURN) POSITION

The Performance Improvement Officer introduced the quarter 4 outturn report on the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan for 2017/18. The Corporate Plan was the Council's key strategic planning document, setting out its priorities over the five-year period from 2015/16 to 2019/20. The priorities or Corporate Aims were supported by Key Objectives, which provided a clear statement of the Council's overall intentions for these five years.

The Key Objectives were delivered by an annual action plan, with each year building upon the progress against the achievement of the Key Objectives for previous years.

All indicators - There were fifty (50) actions in the Key Action Plan 2017/18. At the end of the year:

- (a) 28 (56%) of the individual deliverables or actions supporting the key objectives had been achieved;
- (b) 15 (30%) of the deliverables were under control and expected to be achieved within the next six months;
- (c) 6 (12%) of the deliverables or actions were not completed by year-end albeit significant progress had been made. Details of the progress made were set out in the comments against the individual deliverables or actions; and
- (d) 1 (2%) action was pending and could not currently be fully completed.

Governance indicators - Eight (8) actions fell within the areas of responsibility of the Governance Select Committee. At the end of the year:

- 5 (63%) of these actions had been achieved at year end;
- 1 (12%) of the deliverables or actions were not completed by year-end albeit significant progress had been made. Details of the progress made were set out in the comments against the individual deliverables or actions;
- 2 (25%) of these actions were behind schedule.

RESOLVED:

That the Select Committee noted the outturn position of the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan for 2017/18 – Quarter 4 outturn in relation to its areas of responsibility.

9. THE COUNCILS' PETITION SCHEME

The Chairman stated that at the Select Committee meeting in February 2018 there was a review of the Councils' Petition scheme. The Select Committee had made recommendations regarding the review and he asked what the current position was.

The Assistant Director of Governance (Development Management) advised he would speak to the Officer concerned and update the Select Committee when he had an answer.

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

The Select Committee agreed that there were no reports for recommendation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

11. FUTURE MEETINGS

The Select Committee noted the dates of their future meetings.

GOVERNANCE SELECT COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE 2018/19

Title: Governance Select Committee

Status: Select Committee

1. To undertake overview and scrutiny, utilising appropriate methods and techniques, of the services and functions of the Governance Directorate;
2. To develop a programme of work each year, informed by relevant service aims and member priorities, to ensure that the services and functions of the Governance Directorate are appropriate and responsive to the needs of residents, service users and others;
3. To consider any matter referred to the Select Committee by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet or a relevant Portfolio Holder, and to report and make recommendations directly to the Committee, the Cabinet or such Portfolio Holder as appropriate;
4. To consider the effect of Government actions or initiatives on the services and functions of the Governance Directorate and any implications for the Council's residents, service users and others, and to respond to consultation activities as appropriate;
5. To establish working groups as necessary to undertake any activity within these terms of reference;
6. To undertake pre-scrutiny through the review of specific proposals of the Council and its partner organisations or other local service providers, insofar as they relate to the services and functions of the Governance Directorate, to help develop appropriate policy;
7. To undertake performance monitoring in relation to the services and functions of the Governance Directorate, against adopted key performance indicators and identified areas of concern;
8. To identify any matters within the services and functions of the Governance Directorate that require in-depth scrutiny, for referral to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
9. To recommend the establishment of task and finish panels to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as necessary, in order to undertake any activity within these terms of reference; and
10. To review relevant projects and associated closure and benefits reports arising from initiatives undertaken as part of the Council's Transformation Programme.

Chairman: Councillor G Chambers

Governance Select Committee (Chairman – Councillor G Chambers)

Work Programme 2018/19

Item	Report Deadline/Priority	Progress/Comments	Programme of Meetings
(1) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2017/18 – Outturn	03 July 2018	Governance indicators only	03 July 2018; 23 October; 27 November; 05 February 2019; and 26 March.
(2) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2017/18 - Quarterly Performance Monitoring	Q1 – 23 October 2018 Q2 – 27 November 2018 Q3 – 05 February 2018	Governance indicators only	
(3) Development Management Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen’s Meetings	23 October 2018	Feedback from meeting of the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Area Plans Sub-Committees and the District Development Management Committee	
(4) Equality Objectives 2016-2020 / (2018-2023) - 6 monthly reporting	Q1 - 23 October 2018 Q3 - 26 March 2019	6 monthly reporting 6 monthly reporting	
(5) Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2016/17 – Outturn	03 July 2018	Governance actions only	
(6) Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2017/18- Quarterly reporting	Q1 – 23 October 2018 Q2 – 27 November 2018 Q3 – 05 February 2019	Governance actions only	

Governance Select Committee (Chairman – Councillor G Chambers)

Work Programme 2018/19

(7) Directorate Business Plan 2019/20	26 March 2019	All relevant Portfolio Holders to present highlights of the priorities and service challenges from the business plan for their portfolio for the next year, to the final meeting of the select committee in each municipal year.
(8) Transformation Projects relevant to this Committee	26 March 2019	Details of relevant new transformation projects to be submitted to the relevant SC for scrutiny
(9) Transformation Projects closure and benefits reports	26 March 2019	That any Directorate appropriate project closure and benefits realisation reports to be submitted to the Governance SC for information
(10) Review of Local Enforcement Plan	27 November 2018	J Godden / N Richardson to provide a report
(11) Review of Local Elections in May 2018	23 October 2018	Review of the processes for the District Council and Parish Council Elections. (S Hill)
(12) Transformation Programme – Project Dossier – Governance	03 July 2018	Updated Project Dossier for the Transformation Programme

Governance Select Committee (Chairman – Councillor G Chambers)

Work Programme 2018/19

(13) Review of the Petitions Scheme	23 October 2018	Further to the report that came to the Committee in February 2018 – final updates	
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Report to the Governance Select Committee

Date of meeting: 23 October 2018



Portfolio: Planning and Governance (Councillor J. Philip)

Subject: Review of Local Elections 2018 and Associated Matters

Officer Contact for further Information: S. Hill (01992 564249)

Democratic Services Officer: S. Tautz (01992 564180)

Recommendations:

- (1) To consider a review of the management of the local elections held on 3 May 2018 and proposals of the Returning Officer for future years;
- (2) To recommend to the Returning Officer any further changes to procedure for future elections;
- (3) To approve the time line and proposed scrutiny arrangements for the proposed Review of Polling Places and Stations during 2019;
- (4) To consider a request that the Select Committee seek approval of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to report directly to Council at its meeting in July 2019 on the final proposals resulting from a review of polling stations required by statute;
- (5) To note behavioural insights work undertaken to improve electoral canvass returns during this year's annual canvass; and
- (6) That the outcome of the Boundary Commission for England's review of parliamentary constituencies which have now been laid before parliament insofar as they effect the district, be noted

Introduction

Summary

1. This report discusses the planning processes and implementation of the elections held on 3 May 2018
2. The report outlines that, in the opinion of the Returning Officer, processes at the elections were very effective. The elections have been reviewed by the Elections Planning Group and any issues identified have been included within this report. Candidates and agents in the election have also been asked to comment and any such responses are contained within the report.

3. The Council is required by law to undertake a review of its polling areas and places during 2019. In order to meet the review timescale and to complete the by the start the electoral canvass in summer 2019, authority is sought to report to this Select Committee and then directly to Full Council in July 2019. Approval of Areas and Polling Places is a matter reserved to full Council by law.
4. The Boundary Commission for England has now submitted its report containing final recommendations for new constituency boundaries to the Government. This report outlines the result of the review.

Commentary

5. This report covers a number of elements including a review of the local elections in May 2018, the upcoming review of polling districts, places and stations and the recently announced results of the review of parliamentary constituencies.

District Elections May 2018

6. The Returning Officer and a team of officers met regularly from the autumn of 2017 in order to plan effectively for the elections and to ensure that the processes were undertaken at the appropriate times. A project plan and risk register for the election was prepared, reviewed and updated on a regular basis. However, what had not been expected was that the Chief Executive and Returning Officer would leave the authority in the first part of 2018. A report was made to Council in February 2018 appointing S. (Assistant Director (Governance)) as Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer. The new Returning Officer attended additional courses during February and March to ensure a smooth transition.
7. However, as the group were working to a known project plan, all processes remained on track throughout the election period. A decision was taken by the Returning Officer to retain elections specialist Counsel to advise him should the need have arisen during the main elections period. There were difficulties with the Council's bankers who took a number of weeks to make the required alterations to the Returning Officer's Account.
8. May 2018 saw the first un-combined local elections for a number of years. There were 21 District Council seats up for election, a combination of seats that were due in the electoral cycle and 2 that occurred due to resignation of a sitting councillor. One seat, Moreton and Fyfield, was not contested.

Publicity

9. There was, again this year, a national campaign for the registration deadline which publicised the opportunity of registering online. The Public Relations Section undertook a sustained publicity campaign through registration deadlines and during the run-up to the election days encouraging registration and voting. The BBC complimented the work to provide a media pack for the press as 'exemplary'.

Pre-election Period

10. The Council's election staffing was undertaken this year using a new electronic system which enabled staffing offers to be sent and accepted online. This replaced a paper based system and worked well. Staffing for the elections was completed during February.
11. The nominations process worked well with officers able to undertake informal checks of forms before close of nominations. Two groups' nomination forms required alterations on checking by officers, one group failed to complete that process by the nominations deadline for some

nominations. Helpful advice was received from the Electoral Commission about a ward where two candidates had the same surname and on provisions of the Local Government Act 1974 on how to deal with wards where there was a mix of scheduled and casual vacancies.

12. As this year's May elections were for local councillors only, a local candidates evening was held. The purpose of the evening was to brief those standing on how the Returning Officer proposed to run the election. For the first time local media representatives were also invited. An email was sent to all candidates/agents and the evening was well attended. From an officers point of view this was a useful exercise.
13. All of the election papers for May were printed by the Council's Reprographics Section which again provided an excellent service bearing in mind the tight timescale for printing. All books were hand checked. Ward names and ballot numbers were printed on the book cover so that Presiding Officers could easily check them when issuing, this worked well and no errors in issuing occurred.
14. In the run up to the election, the Returning Officer had good assistance from the Essex Police Service. The Returning Officer met with Divisional Commander Chief Inspector Basford in March to discuss the approach to the Elections and additional security measures that were drawn up and put in place for polling stations and the count centre following the General Election were followed and worked well. There was a very visible presence by the police and the Returning Officer records his thanks to Chief Inspector Basford and his officers for their help in maintaining security of the election process and at the count in the evening where uniformed officer presence was required and used.
15. Only minor issues were raised with the Returning Officer during the election period and no formal matters were pursued. Two related to stories within the local media where candidates were given prominence and one to social media retweeting. There seemed to be confusion about the application of rules relating to the pre-election "purduh" period.

Postal voting

16. Postal voting continued its popularity:
 - 7,503 postal packs were sent out for May on 19 April 2018 and this was completed in 2 hours 15 minutes with no subsequent issues; 3814 packs were returned and counted at the first opening session rising to 5,172 by 2 May, a return rate of 69%;
 - there were a low number of ballots rejected at scanning stage with no evidence of any fraudulent activity;
 - there were no technology issues during any opening session, 100% of identifiers were checked.

Staffing

17. The levels of staffing for polling stations, verification and counts were good. Briefing to staff stressed the need for customer care during the election
18. Officers from Democratic Services and other sections provided much needed support to Electoral Services Staff by helping with enquiries about voting and registration.
19. Assumptions made about the level of staff required for the issue and opening of postal votes proved correct as these procedures were all completed in good time. Directors were helpful in making officers available for all of the processes. Staff attended effective training sessions for each stage of the process in accordance with the project plan.

Polling Stations

20. On Election Day all polling stations opened on time and operated all day without problem and procedures planned for queues at close of poll were not required to be invoked. Turnout was at the level expected for local elections.
21. There were changes to polling stations:
 - the hall at St. John's Special School in Chigwell had structural issues. A decision was made to move the polling station to the dining room of the Domus Mariae Centre (part of Chigwell Convent) on the same site as the school, but access was not as good for less abled voters. This issue will be addressed as part of the polling station review later this year; and
 - the Returning Officer was informed that works were anticipated at the St Giles Hall in Nazeing making it unavailable for use as a polling station. The replacement station at Nazeing Congregational Church in Middle Street worked acceptably but did not have very good parking facilities. It is hoped that St Giles Hall will be available in May 2019.
20. No further observations regarding polling stations were received either on the day or during post-election consultations.

Verification and Count

21. Verification and counting of ballot papers took place at Debden Park High School. The school were again particularly helpful to staff. This larger hall was required for these elections to enable a greater number of count staff to be employed. It is the view of officers that where a single type election is concerned that this location is currently the best option. Again this year, officer's hired-in PA equipment as announcements had been previously identified as an issue for those attending.
22. Counting started as soon as the polling finished with postal votes. The process went smoothly using a 'mini count' system.
23. This year a bespoke spreadsheet was again used effectively to simplify procedures at the Count. Officers will continue to develop electronic processes for the count.
24. The Council's Public Relations and Marketing Officer supported by the Website Officer ensured that appropriate publicity was made available at all stages with links to the Council's website. Social media was also used to spread the message. The Council provided effective media facilities at the Count.
25. The Count was concluded by 1.05 am, just over three hours in duration.
26. It was disappointing to note that a number of count attendees (not staff employed by the Returning Officer) had chosen to drink alcohol before coming to the count. This was obvious to those employed at the count. One candidate was asked to leave the count due to this issue. The Returning Officer will amend the terms of attendance for the count for 2019 and any attendee showing signs of the effects of alcohol will not be admitted by security staff and there will be no drinking on site.

Post-Election Consultations/Comments

27. Every agent has been written to asking for comments in relation to the running of the elections. Members have also been asked to comment via the Council Bulletin. The following comments have been received from Councillor Murray:
- communications with the election staff before and during the election period was excellent;
 - staff dealt with any enquiries or concerns rapidly and in a helpful way (not something that unfortunately can be said for all EFDC departments);
 - election day in my ward (Loughton Roding Ward) ran smoothly;
 - Whitebridge School does need to return as a polling station asap;
 - the staff at the Senior Citizens Club Hall, Longcroft Rise , dealt with an early difficulty extremely well. As the key holder I opened up at 6.15am with the election staff to find the entire hall laid out for the normal toddler group session, when I returned at just before 7.00 am with the group's organiser we found that the staff had cleared everything away and had the polling station ready to go;
 - the count ran very smoothly, it was good to have the simple refreshments provided; and
 - I do strongly feel that there should be a public area at the count - the counting of votes and the announcing of the results should in my opinion allow for a presence from the public, however small it might be.
28. In response to the issue of public admittance to the Count Centre, the site at Debden provides the Council with the largest hall in the constituency. However, the need for a significant number of count staff and those attending the count by right means that there is no space for general public access.

Future Elections and Lessons Learned

29. It is the opinion of the Returning Officer and his staff that there were no material issues arising at the 2018 local elections. All practices were completed successfully.
30. In May 2019 there will be district and parish council elections. Lessons learnt will be fed back into the planning process for next year which begins shortly.
31. Members of the Committee are asked to provide feedback to the Returning Officer for future elections.

Review of Polling Places and Stations during 2019

32. The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places. The next compulsory review must now be started and completed between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020.
33. It is for Local Authorities to decide when to carry out the review within the specified 16 month period. To enable the completion of the annual canvass of electors it has been determined that the Epping Forest Review should commence in January 2019.
34. It would also be advantageous for the review to be considered by Council before the start of the annual canvass in 2019. This gives a window for January to July 2019 in which to complete the review. The final response to the review (and any changes) is a matter for full Council to approve. The normal route would be for this Select Committee (or successor body) to recommend the matter to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then to full Council.

35. Given the desirability of completing the review by July, officers are requesting the Select Committee to consider if a direct report to Council will enable the timescale to be met. A recommendation from this Committee to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would then be required to facilitate this reporting route.

Behavioural Insights Work

36. The Council, as part of its transformational work agreed by the Cabinet in December 2017 (Minute 97, 2017-18), funded work with a company looking at a number of ways of improving the response to a number of service related issues across the authority using behavioural insights to affect changes to response. The Electoral Registration Officer, as part of that work, met and scoped a potential project with consultants looking at how resources are employed across the annual canvass. Grant money from the Cabinet Office, given to support registration activities, was used to bring forward a project.
37. The Council continues to have one of the highest registration rates in the Country and many improvements have been made to the registration process over time. These have included better technology and availability of online services for residents. Registration is above 98%. However, the two part Individual Registration process is not well understood by new registrants and requires a lot of follow up correspondence by law which is costly and time consuming.
38. Using expert advice, officers have reviewed the suite of forms used during registration (much of it prescribed by law) to use persuasive messages to encourage early and accurate return of canvass forms. This has included the redesign of Household Enquiry Forms (HEFs) and individual Invitations to Register (ITRs). Additionally we have looked at leaflet enclosures and envelope wording. Initial findings from the canvass look promising and officers will be reviewing canvass response more fully at the end of the canvass period.

Boundary Commission for England - 2018 Review revised proposals for the Eastern Region

39. On 10 September 2017 the Boundary Commission for England submitted its final recommendations on the revised Parliamentary constituencies to the government. In doing so, the Commission fulfilled its statutory responsibility, and submission of the report ends the Commission's involvement in the 2018 Boundary Review. There are no changes to that proposed under the second consultation and sees no changes recommended to be made to the Epping Forest constituency boundaries but the changes reflected in the second consultation to the Harlow and Brentwood and Ongar constituencies have now been formally made to the government.
40. The Government must now make arrangements for the Commission's recommendations to be voted on by both Houses of Parliament. It is for the Government to decide when to do so. The final recommendations can be viewed on the BCE interactive website, at www.bce2018.org.uk.
41. No timescale has been set for when the Government will decide on the implementation of the proposals. The next scheduled General Election is 2022.



Report to Governance Select Committee

Date of meeting: 23 October 2018

Portfolio: Planning and Governance (Councillor J. Philip)

Subject: Petition Scheme

Officer contact for further information: S. Tautz (01992 564180)

Democratic Services Officer: S. Tautz (01992 564180)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the Select Committee agree the revised version of the Council's Petition Scheme; and**
- (2) That, subject to the views of the Constitution Working Group, the Council be requested to agree the revised version of the Petition Scheme for inclusion within the Constitution.**

1. At its meeting on 6 February 2018, the Select Committee undertook a review of the operation of the Council's current Petitions Scheme.
2. At that time, members requested that those local authorities from which comparative information had been obtained with regard to the signature thresholds for petitions as part of the review be requested to provide details of the number of petitions received in the last municipal year, in order to assess whether signature threshold requirements were resulting in the submission of low numbers of petitions.
3. The information received from those authorities that responded to the Council's request in this regard, is as follows:
 - (a) Broxbourne Borough Council**
4. Broxbourne Borough Council has advised that it receives very few petitions. Currently, provided a petition has 50 or more signatures from residents of the borough, together with the names and addresses of the petitioners (although this is not applicable for e-petitions), it can be presented to the Council. However, the petition needs to be accompanied by a request for it to be presented in person to the Council. During 2017/18, no requests were received by a petitioner to present a petition to the full Council.
5. Broxbourne record all petitions received irrespective of the number of signatories and these are reported to each meeting of the Cabinet in the form of a schedule outlining the number of signatories and the matter on which the Council is being petitioned. These petitions are also held on a register that members can inspect should they wish to see the full details. As part of the Council's procedure, anyone that submits a petition

receives an acknowledgement and a subsequent response to the petition by an officer (often in consultation with the Cabinet member, if appropriate).

6. The exception to this procedure is in relation to petitions submitted in connection with a planning application. Broxbourne's petition scheme does not permit such petitions to be presented to the Council and it is not part of the schedule submitted to the Cabinet, as these petition would be reported at the time of the determination of a planning application. This is the same approach that this Council takes to the handling of petitions concerning planning or licensing decisions, which do not fall within the scope of the current Petitions Scheme.

(b) Chelmsford City Council

7. Chelmsford City Council has a threshold of 50 signatures in relation to 'ordinary' petitions. A petition above the threshold of 2000 signatures triggers debate at a meeting of the full Council, if requested (or referral to the Cabinet for executive matters). Petitions below the 50 signature threshold are referred to the appropriate service for a response
8. Chelmsford City Council has also advised that it receives very few petitions. Those petitions that it receives tend to relate to matters outside of its petition scheme, such as those relating to planning and licensing issues which are dealt with as representations as part of the statutory processes for those matters. This is the same approach that this Council takes to the handling of petitions concerning planning or licensing decisions, which do not fall within the scope of the current Petitions Scheme.
9. During 2017/18 Chelmsford City Council received no petitions that required a debate at full Council. In the previous year the Council received was one petition of over 2000 signatures which, whilst not requesting debate at Council, was referred to the Council in view of the significant level of representation. Two petitions each of over 50 signatures about executive functions were referred to the relevant Cabinet Member for consideration and were resolved at that point without needing to be passed to the Cabinet.

(c) Harlow District Council

10. Harlow District Council has a threshold for petitions containing more than 650 signatories (or which cover subject matters reserved to the full Council) to be debated by the full Council. Petitions with at least 50 signatories or 650 or less are considered by Cabinet or the appropriate Committee.
11. During 2017/18, Harlow District Council received four petitions, three of which contained between 50 and 100 signatures and were referred to the Council's Licensing Committee, as they concerned licensing policy. The fourth petition contained less than 50 signatures and was dealt with at officer level.

(d) Uttlesford District Council

12. Uttlesford District Council has a threshold for petitions containing 50 or more signatures to be included on the agenda for the next available meeting of the committee or other body considered the most appropriate by the Chief Executive.
13. During 2017/18, Uttlesford District Council received only one petition that contained 195 signatures, which was considered by Cabinet.

Petition Scheme

14. The Select Committee will recall from its initial review of the Petitions Scheme that none of the petitions received during the period from September 2012 to December 2017 met the threshold for debate by either the Cabinet or the Council. Whilst members might therefore consider that the thresholds set by the existing scheme might be discouraging the submission of petitions and could choose to reduce the current signature thresholds for petitions, this approach could greatly increase the number of valid petitions received.
15. The comparative information obtained from neighbouring authorities with regard to the handling of petitions in terms of signature thresholds, appears to suggest that low numbers of petitions are received across the board. Only one valid petition was received by the Council during the 2017/18 municipal year.
16. In accordance with the wishes of the Select Committee, a review of the existing guidance for the Council's Petitions Scheme has been undertaken, to ensure that this is clear and consistent. The revised Petition Scheme is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
17. The revised scheme now incorporates previous separate guidance issued in regard to the creation of e-petitions, alongside matters agreed by the Committee earlier this year.
18. A number of the petitions received since the last review of the Petitions Scheme did not meet some of the acceptance criteria specified by the Scheme. In the main, such petitions related to services provided by other authorities, including highway maintenance (Essex County Council) and parking enforcement (North Essex Parking Partnership). The revised scheme therefore also sets out the main functions of the Council to ensure that, as far as possible, petitions are directed to the most appropriate organisation.
19. Once agreed, the revised Petition Scheme will be publicised appropriately on the Council's website and in the Council Bulletin, to increase member and officer awareness of the Petitions Scheme and the Council's procedures, as it often the case that petitions are submitted directly to ward councillors or officers outside Governance and Member Services, which currently administers the Petitions Scheme. The location of the Petition Scheme pages on the Council's website will also be reviewed, as part of the development of the new website structure.
20. The Petition Scheme forms part of the Council's Constitution (Part 4 – Council Rules) and should therefore be agreed by the Council. It is recommended that, subject to the views of the Constitution Working Group, the Council be requested to agree the revised version of the Petition Scheme for inclusion within the Constitution.

Resource Implications:

The recommendations of this report seek to enable the Council's Petitions Scheme to more effectively meet current requirements.

Legal and Governance Implications:

None. The duty for local authorities to operate a formal petition scheme was abolished by the Localism Act 2011.

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:

There are no implications arising from the recommendations of this report in respect of the Council's commitment to the Climate Local Agreement, the corporate Safer, Cleaner, Greener initiative, or any crime and disorder issues within the district.

Consultation Undertaken:

An initial review of the operation of the Petition Scheme was undertaken by the Select Committee in February 2018. The views of members with regard to the operation of the Council's current Petition Scheme were also sought through the Council Bulletin in December 2017, although no feedback was received with regard to the current or future operation of the Scheme.

Background Papers:

None

Impact Assessments:***Risk Management***

There are no risk management implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

Equality:

There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

Key Decision Y/N

No

Petition Scheme – Epping Forest District Council

1. Definition

1.1 For the purpose of this procedure a petition is a request to the Council made either in writing; or through the Council's e-petitions system on its website.

1.2 The petitions page of the Council's website is available at:

<https://rds.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/mgePetitionListDisplay.aspx>

2. Scope of Scheme

2.1 The Council will accept paper-based petitions, e-petitions (but only those submitted on through its own petitions system) or a mix of paper and e-petitions. The proper officer for petitions is the Service Director (Governance and Member Services).

3. Acknowledgement

3.1 The Council will treat something as a petition if it is identified as being a petition, or if it seems to the Council that it is intended to be a petition.

3.2 All petitions sent or presented to the Council will be acknowledged within seven days of receipt. This acknowledgement will set out what the Council plan to do with the petition.

4. Exceptions to Petitions

4.1 The following petitions do not fall within the scope of this petitions scheme:

- (a) Emailed petitions, as email systems are not secure. Petitioners must use either paper or the Council's E-petitions system. The Council will not monitor third party petitions systems;
- (b) Petitions which are considered to be vexatious, abusive, anonymous or otherwise inappropriate will not be accepted. In the period immediately before an election or referendum the Council may need to deal with a petition differently – if this is the case the Council will explain the reasons with the petitioner and discuss the revised timescale which will apply;
- (c) Petitions relating to a planning decision; (as the Planning application process deals with objections to applications), including those about a development plan document or the community infrastructure levy;
- (d) Petitions relating to a licensing decision; (as the Licensing scheme deals with objections to applications);
- (e) Petitions relating to an individual or entity in respect of which that individual or entity has a right of recourse to a review or right of appeal;

- (f) Any matter for which the Standards Committee has powers for determining complaints received under the Local Assessment process;
- (g) Any complaint made against an employee of the District Council;
- (h) Any matter which is substantially the same as a petition submitted in the previous 12 months;
- (i) Where the subject matter is subject to ongoing legal proceedings; or
- (j) Petitions made during formal Council consultations related to the subject matter of the consultations (these will be formally referred to that process as appropriate).

4.2 Where a petition submitted relates to one of the categories set out above the Council will write to the lead petitioner and explain why the matter is not covered by the authority's Petitions Scheme. In appropriate circumstances, the Council may advise how the public views can be considered via alternative means.

5. Submission guidelines/Signatory Requirements

5.1 Petitions submitted to the Council must include:

- (a) A clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition. It should state what action the petitioners wish the council to take;
- (b) The name and address and signature of any person supporting the petition; and
- (c) Contact details, including an address (and a valid email address if submitted electronically), for the petition organiser

5.2 If the lead petitioner wishes to start an e-petition, the Council and the lead petitioner will agree the period over which signatures will be collected and the final wording of the petition. The petition will then be available to sign 'electronically' for the agreed period on the Council's website. On the expiration of that time, the Council will respond in accordance with Section 7 below.

5.3 Anyone who lives, works or studies in Epping Forest District is entitled to sign to support a petition. The supporters name, address, a valid email address and/or postcode are required to sign an e-petition on the Council's website. For paper petitions signatories must provide their, name, address and signature.

5.4 A paper petition template can be downloaded from the Council's website.

5.5 E-petitions will run on the Council website for a maximum of 3 months, but the Council and the lead petitioner can choose a shorter timeframe up to the maximum period.

6. The procedure when the Council receives a petition

6.1 The Council will send the lead petitioner an acknowledgement of the petition within seven working days. Local ward councillors will be informed of the receipt of a petition.

- 6.2 If the Council is able to do what the petition asks for, the acknowledgement may confirm that the Council have taken the action requested and the petition will be closed.
- 6.3 If the petition needs more investigation, the Council will advise the lead petitioner of the steps that it plans to take.
- 6.4 If the lead petitioner has created an e-petition, the Council will check that the content of the e-petition is suitable before it is made available for signature. This will take a maximum of ten working days. Any person wishing to submit an e-petition should ensure there are no existing petitions addressing the same issue before creating a new petition.
- 6.5 If the Council cannot publish an e-petition for some reason, the Council will contact the lead petitioner within ten working days to explain the reason for not publishing a petition based upon the exceptions in section 4 above.
- 6.6 A lead petitioner is able to change and resubmit their e-petition within ten working days, if they fail to do so within that time, a summary of the e-petition and the reason why it has not been accepted will be published under the 'rejected petitions' section of the website.
- 6.7 When an e-petition has closed for signature, it will automatically be submitted to the Council's Democratic Services Section. In the same way as for a paper petition, the lead petitioner will receive an acknowledgement within 10 working days.
- 6.8 All e-petitions currently available for signature will be available on the Council's website. Any person visiting the e-petition will be able to see the name of each signatory in the list of those persons that have signed the petition, but contact details will not be visible. All members of the Council will be advised of the submission of an e-petition, through the Council Bulletin.

7. How the Council considers petitions

Petition type	Response
Correspondence with fewer than 20 signatures	This will normally be dealt with by the appropriate Directorate as ordinary correspondence, unless the Service Director concerned is of the opinion that the subject matter is sufficiently important or contentious to warrant referring the matter to the appropriate Portfolio Holder.
Petitions with more than 20 but fewer than 1200 signatures	These will be considered and dealt with by the relevant portfolio holder who may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) take action if he or she has delegated powers to act alone; (b) prepare a report to the Cabinet or a Sub-Committee of the Cabinet for decision if appropriate.

REV: September 2018 (ST)

Petition type	Response
Petition containing at least 1200 signatures.	The relevant Portfolio Holder will prepare a report to the Cabinet for decision on the matter.
2400 signatures or more	These large petitions will be scheduled for a council debate.
E-petitions	When an e-petition has closed for signature, it will automatically be submitted to the relevant officer, portfolio holder or Council In the same way as a paper petition.

8. Decisions on petitions

8.1 The Council's response to a petition will depend on what a petition asks for and how many people have signed it, but may include one or more of the following:

- taking the action requested in the petition;
- considering the petition at a council meeting;
- holding an inquiry into the matter;
- undertaking research into the matter;
- holding a public meeting;
- holding a consultation;
- holding a meeting with petitioners;
- referring the petition for consideration by the Cabinet or a Cabinet Committee; and
- writing to the petition organiser setting out our views about the request in the petition.

8.2 In addition to these steps, the council will consider all the specific actions it can potentially take on the issues highlighted in a petition.

8.3 If a petition is about something over which the Council has no direct control, the responsible body (under section 7 above) will consider making representations on behalf of the community to the relevant body.

8.4 There is a two tier system of local government in Essex. Generally, Essex County Council is responsible for strategic functions and services such as education and social care and the district and borough councils provide more local services, although some functions are shared between the county and district councils. Details of the main functions of Essex County Council and Epping Forest District Council can be found in the Appendix to this Scheme. Some of the Council's functions and responsibilities have also been devolved to local town and parish councils.

8.5 In addition, many public services are delivered by other organisations, including the police (through the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner), health services (via the National Health Service), welfare benefits and employment services etc.

8.6 If the Council is not able to meet the petitioners' requests for any reason (for example if what the petition calls for conflicts with council policy), then the Council will set out the reasons for not taking the action requested in writing to the lead petitioner.

REV: September 2018 (ST)

- 8.7 Decisions made by a Portfolio Holder will be recorded in writing and notified to the public, the lead petitioner and all members of the Council.
- 8.8 All received petitions will be reported to Council via regular Portfolio Holder reports.

9. Petitions received after a decision is made

- 9.1 In cases where a petition is received after a decision has been made by the Council on any matter, the following steps will be taken by the relevant service director unless the petition meets the threshold for a Council debate:
- (a) a letter of acknowledgement shall be sent to the lead petitioner, including a statement of the action already taken by the Council;
 - (b) in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder, Committee or Sub-Committee Chairman a decision will be taken as to whether the petition raises new evidence requiring further consideration by the Portfolio Holder or Committee concerned;
 - (c) if it is decided that no new matters are raised by the petition, the lead petitioner shall be advised accordingly;
 - (d) if new matters are raised then the petition will be treated as 'new' under this scheme.

10. Full Council and Cabinet debates

- 10.1 If a petition contains more than 2400 signatures it will be debated by the full council at its next ordinary meeting.
- 10.2 If a petition contains more than 1200 signatures it will be subject to report and debate by the cabinet at its next available meeting.
- 10.3 The petition organiser will be given five minutes to present the petition at the meeting and the petition will then be discussed by councillors.
- 10.4 The Council or Cabinet will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting. The Council or Cabinet may:
- (a) decide to take the action the petition requests, and in the case of a Cabinet debate, report to Council if appropriate (see paragraph 11 below)
 - (b) not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate, or
 - (c) commission further investigation into the matter, for example by the Cabinet (if the matter was debated at Council) or a relevant Cabinet committee.

11. Council Referrals

- 11.1 Where the issue is one on which the council executive are required to make the final decision (i.e. within the financial and policy framework), the Council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision. The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of this decision. This confirmation will also be published on the Council's website.

12. Further Information

- 12.1 Further information about the Council's petitions scheme can be obtained by contacting:

democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Function	Tier
Arts and recreation	County/District
Births, deaths and marriage registration	County
Building regulations	District
Burials and cremations	District
Children's services	County
Community safety	District
Concessionary travel	County
Consumer protection	County
Council tax and business rates	District
Economic development	County/District
Education, including special educational needs, adult education, pre-school	County
Elections and electoral registration	District
Emergency planning	County/District
Environmental health	District
Highways (not trunk roads), street lighting and traffic management	County
Housing	District
Libraries	County
Licensing	District
Markets and fairs	District
Minerals and waste planning	County
Museums and galleries	County/District
Parking	County/District
Passenger transport (buses) and transport planning	County
Planning and development	County/District
Public conveniences	District
Public health	County
Social services, including care for the elderly and community care	County
Sports centres, parks, playing fields	District
Street cleaning	District
Tourism	County/District
Trading standards	County
Waste collection and recycling	District
Waste disposal	County

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Report to: Governance Select Committee

Date of meeting: 23 October 2018

Portfolio: Planning and Governance (Councillor J. Philip)

Subject: Equality Objectives 2018-2022

Officer contact for further information: M. Chwiedz (01992 562076)

Democratic Services Officer: S. Tautz (01992 564180)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Select Committee review the progress in relation to the Equality Objectives 2018-2022 and other work to ensure the Council's compliance with its equality duties.

Executive Summary:

The Equality Act 2010 placed a number of responsibilities on the Council, including a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to have due regard to equality in the exercise of its functions, to the need to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant characteristic and those who do not. Additionally the council has to adopt equality objectives to improve equality for service users and employees; to understand the impact of its activities on services users and; and to publish equality information.

In April 2018, the Cabinet agreed four equality objectives for the four years from 2018 to 2022, designed to help the Council meet the aims of the PSED. This report reflects progress against these objectives at the end of September 2018, and other work to ensure compliance with the council's equality duties.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

In view of the corporate importance of the achievement of these objectives, and ensuring compliance with the PSED, progress is reported to the Select Committee on a six monthly basis.

Other Options for Action:

None. Failure to monitor and review progress against the Equality Objectives and to take corrective action where necessary, could have negative implications for judgements made about the Council, and might mean that opportunities for improvement are lost.

Report:

1. The Equality Act 2010 places a number of obligations on the Council designed to integrate consideration of the advancement of equality into its day to day business. It

places a responsibility on bodies subject to the duty to consider how they can work to tackle systematic discrimination and disadvantage affecting people with particular characteristics. The benefits sought include better informed decision making and policy development, a clearer understanding of the needs of service users, and better quality services.

2. Progress against the Council's equality duties is reported to Management Board and the Governance Select Committee at 6 monthly intervals. This report provides progress at the 6 month position of the first year, and other work to deliver the Council's statutory equality duties.

Equality Objectives

3. Work has commenced to deliver the new equality objectives. The work is coordinated by the Corporate Equality Working Group which has prioritized and aligned delivery with other associated work, and emerging priorities. The action plan is a living plan and may be subject to changes during its 4 year lifetime to take account of developments and progress. Most actions in the plan have a number of milestones and therefore as such, the delivery of these milestones is dependent upon prior work and will not show progress until a later stage in the delivery of the action.
4. From January 2017 members of Cabinet and Council, and Portfolio Holders are provided with a full equality impact assessment to support their decision making rather than the due regard record containing a summary of the main findings of assessment.
5. A schedule detailing progress against individual actions is attached at Appendix 1 to this report. Progress reporting tends to be provided to the Transformation Team when the action is delivered rather than more frequent incremental reporting which explains the lack of information for some actions. However this may also be that the target date allows for commencement at a future date or that it has not been possible or expected that significant progress will be achieved in these first 6 months. That said, some additional progress has been made since 30 September, and which will be reflected in the next 6 monthly report.
6. In reporting progress against the objectives, the following 'status' indicators have been applied to individual actions as appropriate to reflect current position:

Achieved (Green) - specific deliverables or actions have been completed or achieved in accordance with targets;

On-Target (Green) - specific deliverables or actions will be completed or achieved in accordance with targets;

Under Control (Amber) - specific deliverables or actions have not been completed or achieved in accordance with targets, but completion/achievement will be secured by a revised target date (specified) or by March 2020;

Behind Schedule (Red) - specific deliverables or actions have not been completed or achieved in accordance with targets and completion/achievement may not be secured by March 2020; and

Pending (Grey) - specific deliverables or actions cannot currently be fully completed or achieved, as they rely on the prior completion of other actions or are dependent on external factors outside the Council's control.

Equality Analysis

7. Equality is an integral part of our work and we take into account the equality impacts on our emerging proposals and seek to mitigate any adverse impact where possible. For this reason, we incorporated Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) into Project

Initiation Document. Analysis is the process by which we gain an understanding of the impact of our policies and activities on people. This understanding is a requirement of the legislation. The Outturn position of the current programme will be reflected in the next report to the Committee.

Equality Information

8. Equality Information must be published annually, with the latest report being published in October 2018 after consideration by the Committee in October. As the committee was advised at the time, the report includes only some of the work which has benefits from an equality perspective, and seeks to provide a broad range of examples from across the council's services. A further report will be produced in summer 2019.

Equality policy and scheme

9. Whilst it is not a requirement of the legislation to produce an equality policy, it is felt that it is a good way to set out our approach to meeting our statutory responsibilities. Therefore we are planning to review and update the Equality Policy 2016 in December 2018 with a view to have a new policy agreed by the Cabinet in February 2019.
10. The Committee is requested to review the progress to date against the equality objectives 2018-2022, and other work to meet the Council's statutory equality duties.

Resource Implications: None for this report.

Legal and Governance Implications: This work complies with the Equality Act 2010 and recent case law relating to due regard.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications: None for this report.

Consultation Undertaken: Not applicable to this report.

Background Papers: Equality Objectives 2018-2022 / Equality Policy 2016

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management None for this report.

Equality

This report seeks to ensure the development and coordination of a corporate approach to the Council's statutory equality duties. Actions discussed in this report cover the full range of the Council's services, and its dual role of service provider and employer. Whilst no equality implications arise from this report, the appropriateness of actions to deliver the objectives, together with the successful achievement of the objectives, have the potential to impact on service users and employees across all the protected characteristics.

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Objective 1: To apply robust equality requirements in commissioning, procurement and contract management

Ref	Equality Objective Actions (Measurable outcome/s)	Milestones	Responsibility	Target Date		Initiative Status	Initiative Progress
1.	<p>Review procurement rules to ensure small businesses are not discriminated against and are able to compete with larger organisations when bidding for the Council's contracts.</p> <p><i>(Procurement rules show fair and equal access for different size businesses to bid for the Council tender)</i></p>	Review procurement rules: to establish inclusion of the Council's Public sector equality duty	Resources/ Procurement	April 2019		On Target	Procurement Manager to discuss potential options for minimising potential for discrimination against small businesses bidding for Council contract opportunities. Likely to be considered at next review of Procurement Rules, which currently has no set date. Action is on track with a target date of April 2019.
2.	<p>Check details of each Contractor's approach to equality and diversity, to ensure that both the Contractor and the Council comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (we will do this by asking potential contractors relevant questions and include appropriate provisions in its contract documents relating to these matters.</p> <p><i>(Commitment to taking forward the Council's equality duty)</i></p>	Equalities related questionnaire produced for Contractors and included in a procurement checklist	Procurement/ Transformation	March 2019		On Target	Current Selection Questionnaire has no specific questions relating to Equalities. Procurement and transformation have drafted equality questions that can be asked of contractors, with a view to including in future procurement documents issued by the Council.
		Procurement checklist revised and updated to reflect equality duty	Resources/ Procurement	April 2019		On Target	Procurement checklist is to be revised and updated to reflect previously agreed changes.
		Agree on what contract documentation is required	Procurement/ Transformation	June 2019		On Target	A meeting with Legal is considered with regards to incorporating equality considerations into contract documentation.

Objective 2: We will recruit and retain a diverse workforce, developing our capacity so that our employees have the knowledge, Skills and confidence to deliver our plans

Ref	Equality Objective Actions (Measurable outcome/s)	Milestones	Responsibility	Target Date		Initiative Status	Initiative Progress
1.	Continue with Springboard Women's Development Programme (The Programme is promoted across the Council)	-	People's Team	December 2018		Achieved	This is now run by Vine HR. 5 Corporately funded places on the Springboard Women's Development Programme have been offered to the Council's female staff. Workshop Dates 2018/19: Tuesday 13 November Wednesday 12 December Wednesday 16 January Wednesday 13 February
2.	Agree how to support managers who have employees with mental health issues, including how to manage sickness (Guidance/communication for managers produced)	-	People's Team/ Directors	December 2018		Achieved	Mental health training is part of the normal programme i.e. resilience, mental health awareness etc. and consideration should be made to remove this objective
3.	Provide a communication to clarify the flexi working arrangements process (Communication on flexi working arrangements produced)	Review current documentation and make changes where necessary	People's Team/ Directors	December 2018		Achieved	Nothing has changed to the process and would have been done at its inception. The policy and guidance is on the intranet for all staff to access
4.	Promote what equality training is available for all employees (Officers are trained to meet Corporate requirements)	Promote via Intranet and District Lines	People's Team/ Directors	December 2018		Achieved	Diversity awareness and diversity for Managers as well as an introduction to equalities through e learning – all part of the regular training programme

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5.	Maintain accreditation to Mindful Employer for further 3 years (Commitment to supporting the mental health of employees)	-	People's Team/ Directors	December 2018		Achieved	The accreditation has been achieved and will be reviewed again in 2021.
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Objective 3: We will take into account the equality impacts of our emerging proposals and seek to mitigate any adverse impacts where possible

Ref	Equality Objective Actions (Measurable outcome/s)	Milestones	Responsibility	Target Date		Initiative Status	Initiative Progress
1.	Incorporate EqIA into PID and Cabinet Report (Improved due regard to equality in projects and reviews)	Integration of equality information into project management	Transformation	May 2018		Achieved	Equality impact assessment has been incorporated into project initiation document.
		Integration of equality information into Cabinet report					Equality impact assessment is submitted with reports requiring decisions.
2.	Promote use of the EqIA flow chart to ensure understanding on clarity on when to complete the EqIA (Essential equality information, documentation and guidance available to staff)	Equality Impact Assessment form user guide reviewed and updated	Transformation	May 2018		Achieved	EqIA user guide has been updated and published for staff on the intranet
		The EqIA flow chart made available to all staff					The EqIA flow chart has been made available to all staff via email and the intranet
3.	Organise internal online resource materials on equalities, diversity and social inclusion into one location on the Intranet, so that information is available with links to further material that may be helpful, and keep under review to ensure timeliness and relevance (Essential equality information, documentation and guidance available to staff to use when completing EqIA))	Forms and templates on the Intranet reviewed and updated	Transformation	March 2019		On target	This action is planned to be complete in March 2019
		Reorganisation and revision of online materials on equality and diversity		May 2019			This action is planned to be complete in May 2019

Objective 4: We will embed equalities in all we do and make it part of business as usual

Ref	Equality Objective Actions (Measurable outcome/s)	Milestones	Responsibility	Target Date		Initiative Status	Initiative Progress
1.	Produce and promote a process for accessing translation services	Process developed	Transformation	August 2018		Under Control	A process for accessing translation services has been drafted. The achievement of this action will be secured by a revised target date (30/11/18)
	(Improved access to translation services)	Promote via Intranet and District Lines		September 2018			
2.	Produce Equality Information Report 2018 showing an overview of our work over the last year and giving evidence that we are complying with our statutory duties	Collate evidence and statistical information from all Directorates	Transformation	May 2018		Achieved	Transformation liaised with all Directorates and collated all necessary information for the report
	(Equality Information Report 2017 produced and published)	Complete and publish the report		July 2018		Achieved	The report is complete and is due for submission to the Governance Select Committee in October and then published on the Council's website.
3.	Elected Members will continue to receive training around equality and diversity issues and support on scrutinising equality impact assessments for major decisions.	Review training materials for Members, identify and develop improvements where necessary	Transformation	May 2018		Achieved	Training materials have been reviewed and updated accordingly. The new EqIA form is now a part of the training.
	(Annual training delivered to Members)	Deliver training to Members		June 2018		Under Control	Training for Members is scheduled to take place in November 2018
	(Improved provision of relevant equality information to Members))						



Report to: Governance Select Committee

Date of meeting: 23 October 2018

Portfolio: Planning and Governance (Councillor J. Philip)

Subject: Annual Equality Information Report 2018

Officer contact for further information: M. Chwiedz (01992 562076)

Democratic Services Officer: S. Tautz (01992 564180)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Select Committee review the Equality Information Report for 2018.

Executive Summary:

The Equality Act 2010 requires that authorities subject to the public sector equality duty publish equality information annually to demonstrate compliance with the duty. The Council published its last equality information report in September 2017, and the 2018 report sets out the progress made since then to improve the Council's services and employment practices for people with protected characteristics.

The Council's progress against the public sector equality duty is monitored bi-annually by Management Board and overview and scrutiny to ensure compliance and drive improvement in performance.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The broad purpose of the public sector equality requires that the Council integrates a consideration of equality and good relations into its day-to-day business. It must consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and fairness, and reflect equality considerations into the design of policies and the delivery of services; and keep these issues under review.

The review and monitoring of performance against the equality duty helps the authority to comply with its legal requirement; and to provide services and employment practices which meet the diverse needs of its customers and employees.

Other Options for Action:

No other options are appropriate in this respect. Failure to monitor and review progress against the public sector equality duty and to consider corrective action where necessary, could mean that opportunities for improvement are lost.

Report:

1. The Equality Act 2010 requires that public bodies, including the Council, which are subject to the public sector equality duty, have due regard to the need to:
 - (a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between different groups, and
 - (c) foster good relations between different groups.
2. Having due regard for advancing equality involves:
 - (a) removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
 - (b) taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people; and
 - (c) encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
3. The equality duty covers: age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination also covers marriage and civil partnerships.
4. The broad purpose of the equality duty is to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the day-to-day business of public bodies. Understanding how services affect different groups makes it more likely that the services have the intended effect and this can lead to greater equality and better outcomes. Organisations which provide services which meet the needs of their customers and workforce are likely to carry out their core business more efficiently and have a more productive workforce.
5. Public bodies are also subject to a specific duty which requires that they publish information at least annually demonstrating compliance with the equality duty. The Council last published information in September 2017 and the Equality Information Report 2018, attached at Appendix 1, sets out the work it has undertaken in the last 12 months to improve equality for its customers and employees.
6. The annual Equality Report translates technical action plans for the year into an accessible outcome led report setting out how people have actually benefited from the work undertaken. The report will be published on the Council's website alongside other equality information.
7. Work to take forward the Council's equality duty is coordinated by the Corporate Equality working group and routinely monitored by Management Board and the Governance Select Committee bi-annually at quarters 2 and 4, with other specific reports as required. The Equality Information Report was reviewed by Management Board on 15 August 2018.
8. The Select Committee is requested to review the Equality Information Report for 2018.

Resource Implications:

Resource requirements for the production of the Equality Information Report 2018 have been met from existing resources within the Transformation Team.

Legal and Governance Implications:

There are no legal or governance implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Publishing this report will help the Council comply with the Equality Act 2010.

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:

There are no implications arising from the recommendations of this report in respect of the Council's commitment to the Climate Local Agreement, the corporate Safer, Cleaner, Greener initiative, or any crime and disorder issues within the district. Relevant implications arising from initiatives set out in this report will have been identified by the responsible service director.

Consultation Undertaken:

The Equality Information Report has been reviewed by Management Board on 15 August 2018. Consultation required in connection with any of the initiatives set out in this report will have been identified by the responsible director.

Background Papers:

Equality Information reports for, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 are available on the Council's website.

Impact Assessments:***Risk Management***

There are no risk management issues arising from the recommendations of this report. Relevant issues arising from specific activities set out in this report will have been identified by the responsible service director.

Equality:

The production and publication of this report helps people interested in the work of the authority to see the progress being made to improve equality in its services and employment practices. There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Relevant implications arising from activities set out in this report will have been identified by the responsible service director.

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Equality Information Report 2018



Contents

1. Introduction
2. Equality legislation and Council duties
3. Equality Objectives
4. Workforce Equality Profile
5. Equality initiatives and progress
6. An update on remaining equality objectives 2016-20 and going forward

If you would like this report in another format, for example large print or Braille, please email:

equality@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

More information:

For more information about this report or any aspect of the Council's equality work see www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk or email equality@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of our work over the last 12 months since July 2017, and builds upon previous [reports](#) and should be read in conjunction with them.

Together these reports enable others to assess how effective we are in meeting our responsibilities under equality legislation.

As an overview of our work, this report doesn't necessarily contain information about everything we do. As an organisation committed to equality, much of what we do is routine and part of our everyday experience. Many of our activities which deliver greater equality, are so integrated into our way of working that they do not stand out as being evidence of compliance with equality legislation. Equality should be embedded and be just the way we do things at the Council. Therefore this report sets out just some of the changes we have made or services we have delivered over the last year.

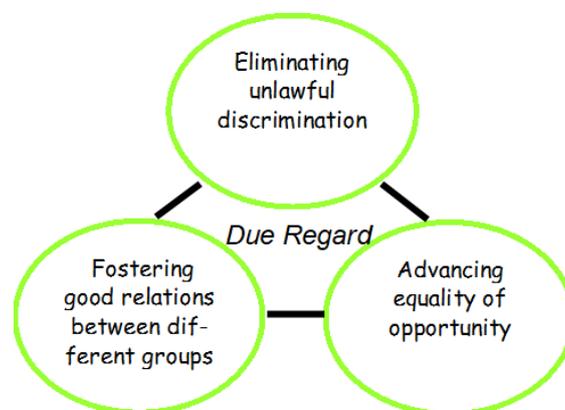
Statement of commitment to equality

Short Statement

Epping Forest District Council is committed to treating everyone equally and fairly according to their needs

Full Statement

- ✓ Epping Forest District Council is committed to ensuring that all individuals and groups are treated with respect and are valued equally
- ✓ We will endeavour to make our services accessible to everyone
- ✓ We will endeavour to eliminate unlawful discrimination through our services and employment opportunities
- ✓ We will consult and involve people from our community where appropriate in the design of our services
- ✓ We will collect information about our customers where necessary to ensure our services are accessible and that we are providing the right services
- ✓ We will endeavour to promote understanding and good relations between communities
- ✓ We will consider taking positive action to address under-representation and promote diversity in our workforce profile
- ✓ We will publish information about our equality work
- ✓ We will use our procurement opportunities to drive equality
- ✓ We will ensure appropriate resources are available to meet our statutory equality responsibilities
- ✓ We will make sure that appropriate equality and diversity training is provided for all elected members and staff of the Council



2. Equality legislation and Council duties

The aim of the general duty is to ensure that public authorities and those carrying out a public function consider how they can positively contribute to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in their day-to-day activities. The aim of the general duty is to ensure that equality considerations are built into the design of policies and the delivery of services and that they are kept under review.

The Legislation

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

The PSED was created by the Equality Act 2010 and places a duty on public bodies and others carrying out public functions. Its aim is to embed equality considerations into the day to day work of public authorities.

The Equality Act 2010 places a number of responsibilities and requirements on the Council. We have a general duty to have due regard to the need to:

- 1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation*
- 2. Advance equality of opportunity between different groups*
- 3. Foster good relations between different groups*

What does due regard mean?

It means consciously thinking about the three public sector equality duty aims as part of the process of our normal business and decision making, removing disadvantage and encouraging participation.

What does 'equality of opportunity mean?

Equality of opportunity means removing or minimising disadvantages, taking steps to meet different needs and encouraging participation when it is disproportionately low.

... and foster good relations?

It means promoting understanding between different groups of people

The Act sets an expectation that public services treat everyone with dignity and respect.

Equality Objectives & Equality Information

In addition to the public sector equality duty we also have two specific duties:

1. Equality Objectives - we have to set equality objectives at least every four years that will help us to further the aims of the public sector equality duty - see the following page for more information on our equality objectives.
2. We must publish equality information annually to show the progress we are making to deliver the general duty.

3. Equality Objectives

Equality legislation requires that we set equality objectives at least every four years, that will help us to further the aims of the public sector equality duty.

In April 2016 we adopted a set of equality objectives to focus and direct our work taking into account local as well as national priorities and the priorities of our residents and our partners. These objectives were:

2016 - 2020

- 1. To integrate the Council's public sector equality duty into our partnership working**
- 2. To apply robust equality requirements in commissioning, procurement and contract management**
- 3. To develop our capacity so that our employees have the knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver our plans**
- 4. To improve and develop equality into our business activities**

The objectives were supported by an Action Plan with actions designed to secure the achievement of each of the objectives. The set of equality objectives was reviewed by the Equality Working Group (EWG) that met in July 2017. The Group recognised that the actions to deliver these objectives were largely achieved and decided to update and replace these objectives. We could continue with the existing Equality Objectives Plan, however we would be missing the opportunity to enhance the content and adapt the best approach to Equality, particularly in light of the adoption of the new Corporate Plan 2018-2023.

The new set of equality objectives and actions to deliver them was proposed to the Cabinet for adoption in April 2018. We want the Council to be high-performing and deliver top-quality and cost effective services, ensuring that the views and priorities of our service users are integral to all that we do. The new set of objectives take the Council forward until 2020. These objectives are:

2018 - 2022

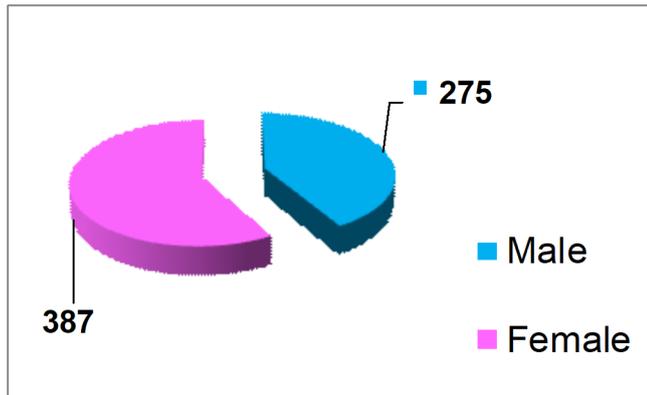
- 1. To apply robust equality requirements in commissioning, procurement and contract management**
- 2. We will recruit and retain a diverse workforce, developing our capacity so that our employees have the knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver our plans**
- 3. We will take into account the equality impacts of our emerging proposals and seek to mitigate any adverse impacts where possible**
- 4. We will embed equalities in all we do and make it part of business as usual**

An action plan has again been developed to deliver these objectives. The Council's elected members will monitor progress on a six-monthly basis and our progress will be published on the Council's website.

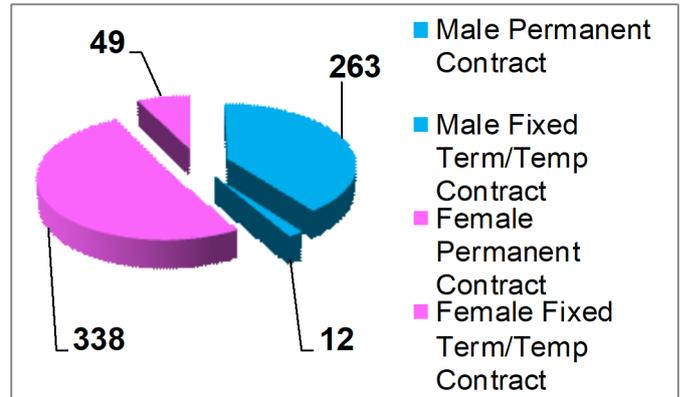
4. Workforce Equality Profile (as at 31 March 2018)

Number of Core* Staff in the Workforce: 662 (*Figures do not include casual workers)

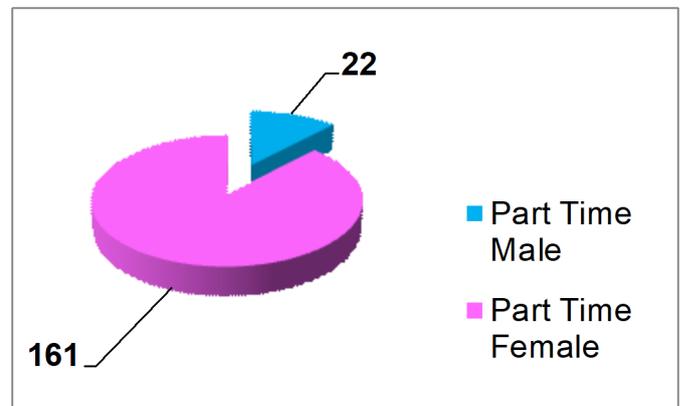
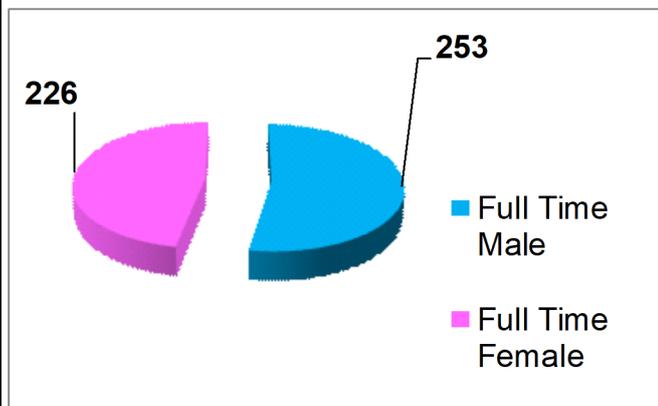
Gender breakdown



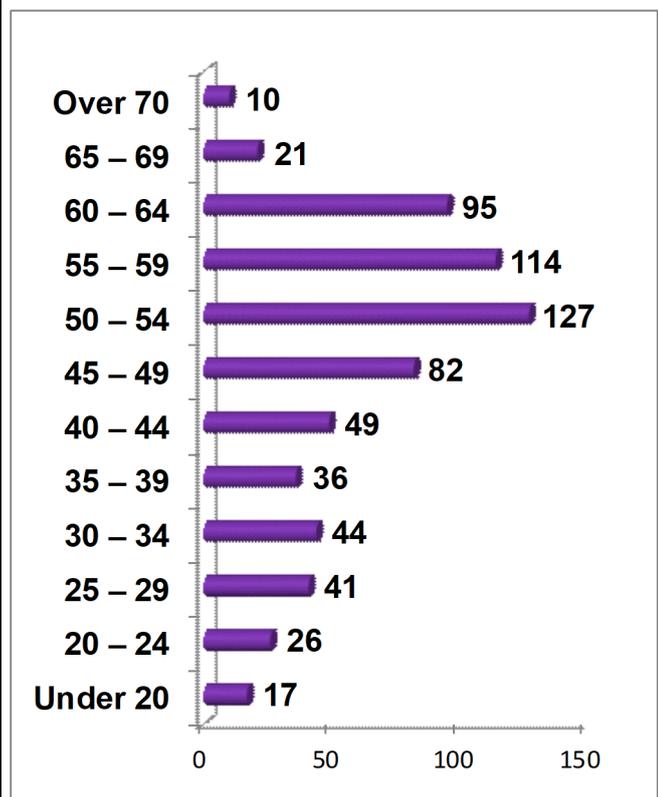
Working hour profile by gender



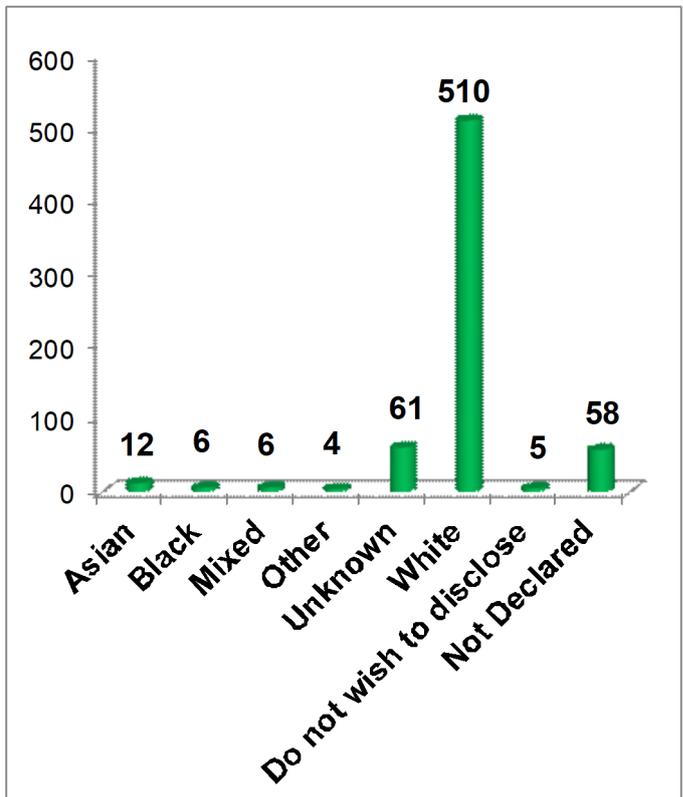
Working hour profile by gender



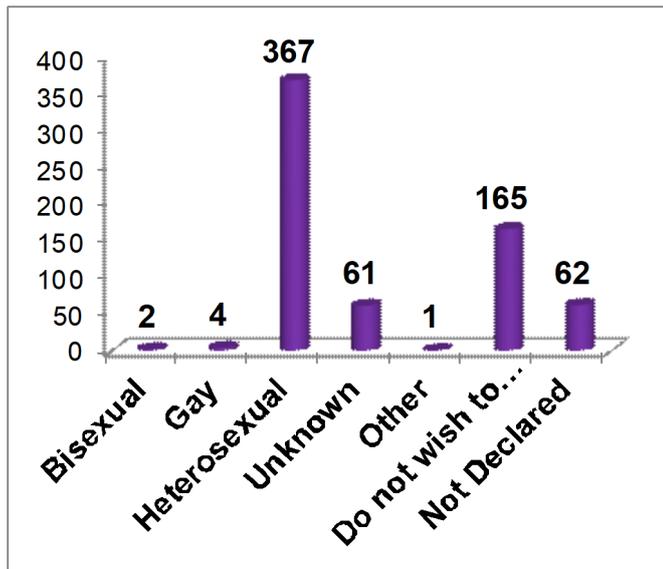
Age profile



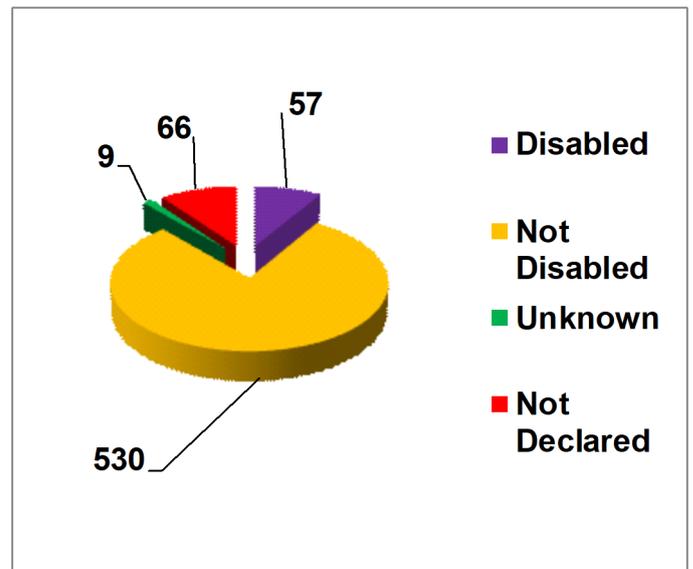
Ethnicity declarations



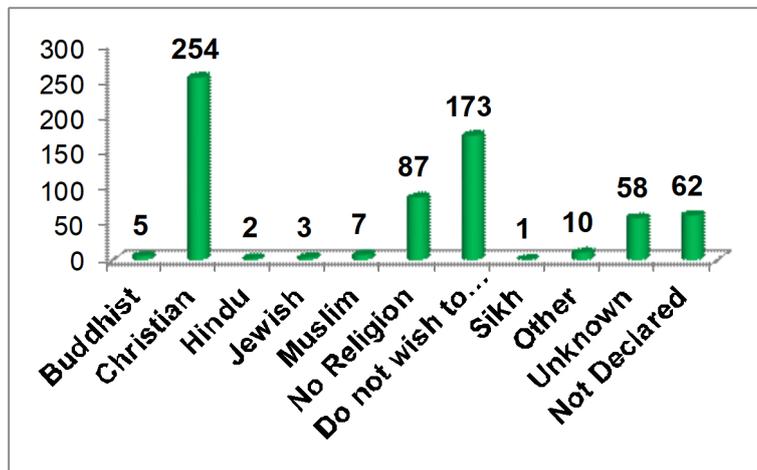
Sexuality declarations



Disability declarations



Religion/belief declarations



GENDER PAY GAP DATA

The mean gender pay gap is 16.14%

The median gender pay gap is 16.21%

The proportion of Males and Females who received bonus payments is 0%

The mean gender pay gap in bonus pay is 0%

The median gender pay gap in bonus pay is 0%

The percentage of male and female split into quartile figures are as follows:-

Band	Pay Quartile	Female	Male
A	Lower	65%	35%
B	Lower Middle	71%	29%
C	Upper Middle	49%	51%
D	Upper	41%	59%

5. Equality initiatives and progress

Apprentice scheme

Our Apprenticeship Programme is an integral part of our Council and one of our objectives is to help young people in the District to maximise their employment potential. Our apprentices are given the opportunity to work alongside experienced staff, giving them the chance to gain much needed work experience and qualifications at the same time. In 2017 we have taken on 15 apprentices; Corporate Cohort (9) plus 2 current construction staff, 3 Level 3 Business Admin, and 1 X Level 4 Project Management.

Mental health awareness week

For this year's Mental Health Awareness Week Epping Forest District Council's (EFDC's) apprentices focussed on raising awareness of stress in the workplace and creating a mentally healthy workplace where everyone feels valued and supported. The objective was to educate and inform others about mental health and a range of information, guidance and support on how to achieve this have been provided.

Mindful employer



EFDC is a member of Mindful Employer Plus. It provides employees with an independent and completely confidential Staff Helpline offering support, 24/7. Whether it is about workplace challenges or personal difficulties, support is available. Managers are also provided with support. It is for those that have a managerial or supervisory role and are dealing with conflicts at work, work-related stress, team issues or behavioural issues.

Work experience for graduates with disabilities

For the third year running, we are working with 'Change 100' which provides placements for graduates with a disability. This placement provides the Intern with a meaningful period of work experience and hopefully help them secure permanent work opportunities.

Youth Council Celebrate 10 years



This year Epping Forest Youth Council marked its 10 year anniversary. Over 80 Youth Councillors past and present have attended an evening reception at the House of Parliament where they were able to share their experiences. EFYC does not only give local young people a democratic voice to have their say on local issues, it also highlights the importance of building communities where young people are empowered to make a difference both to their own lives and to the area in which they live.

Improved due regard to equality in projects and reviews

In 2016 we launched a Transformation Programme to modernise our services and better equip ourselves to deliver Corporate Aims and Objectives. Equality is an integral part of our work and we take into account the equality impacts on our emerging proposals and seek to mitigate any adverse impact where possible. For this reason, we incorporated Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) into Project Initiation Document and Cabinet

We reviewed the Careline Alarm Monitoring Service



The service offers a twenty-four hour, 365 days per year, emergency alarm monitoring service to older and disabled people living within the District. The Service is also offered to other vulnerable groups including victims of domestic violence and younger people with disabilities. In November 2017, we outsourced the Careline Services to Tunstall Healthcare UK Ltd, a market leader in the alarm industry. This has resulted in improvements in customer experience and helped the Council to adhere to the new British standard, which requires two control operators on duty 24/7.

Helping people at risk of abuse



J9 is a Domestic Abuse Initiative and its core aim is to raise awareness of domestic abuse and to enable all staff to understand their role and responsibilities. We provide free training courses to staff, agencies and voluntary groups across Essex. The courses explore the dynamics of domestic abuse and the impact abuse has on those involved and how this can differ according to gender, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, faith, disability, or age. J9 now has a network of over 800 practitioners across Essex and is also expanding into neighbouring Hertfordshire.

A plan of action for Victims of domestic abuse

We continue to work in partnership providing Sanctuary Schemes for high risk victims of domestic abuse. Additional security measures are provided or a 'safe' room is created in the home to provide a sanctuary for people at risk.

Helping vulnerable victims of crime

We work with the police, the voluntary sector and landlords to provide crime prevention advice and assistance to vulnerable people. The Homesafe scheme can provide peace of mind to vulnerable residents by making their homes safer and more secure. Bespoke risk management plans are developed for people who are vulnerable through age, disability, race or their sexual orientation.

We are trained to respond

We continue to provide training and refresher training on safeguarding which enables us to help identify vulnerable adults and children. We have also organised a number of bespoke training courses on Modern Slavery and Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation. These training courses have been opened out to partners working across the District.

And to safeguard children and vulnerable adults

In 2017-18 our safeguarding team received 385 safeguarding reports concerning 325 children and 346 adults. Of these 146 were reported to Social Care, 19 to the Police, and 40 to other agencies. 152 cases were not referred due to not meeting the statutory thresholds for social care, however all concerns were recorded.

Epping Forest Dementia Action Alliance

In May 2016 we launched Epping Forest Dementia Action Alliance, which encourages and supports communities and organisations to take practical actions, enabling people to live well with dementia and build community resilience. To date 16 organisations have joined and produced their own key

DAA

Epping Forest District
Dementia Action Alliance

The DAA are currently working on a Dementia Friendly Business Sticker Scheme. The group have worked with local businesses and people living with dementia to develop a set of criteria that businesses can work towards to achieve a one star rating showing they are working to become dementia friendly. Once businesses have met the criteria they will be given a sticker to display in their business window. The aim of the project is for people living with dementia and their carers to know where they can find understanding and support and see what businesses have taken consideration of the adaptations needed for people living with dementia.

Dementia friends

We have created 416 'Dementia Friends' through delivery of awareness sessions. A Dementia Friend learns a little bit more about what it's like to live with dementia and then turns that understanding into action. Anyone of any age can be a Dementia Friend.

Grant Aid Scheme for Community & Voluntary Organisations

We give grant aid to voluntary and community groups involved in providing community, cultural or sports activities to support these organisations to provide successful services to residents of the Epping Forest district. In 2017-18 the Council awarded grants to a record number of 38 community based organisations from a range of groups from sports clubs to older people's services. Of these 38 organisations, 13 had not been in receipt of funding from EFDC before. In 2017-18 our grants have supported approximately 19,300 Epping Forest residents and over 1,000 volunteer roles.

Ensure taxi drivers are trained to be able to recognise signs of abuse

The Council has taken the decision to offer training for all our taxi drivers and operators on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). To date approximately 500 taxi drivers and operators attended and the remaining individuals will be required to complete the training in September 2018, as they are best placed to be able to identify issues, especially when carrying vulnerable people and children.

Buckhurst Hill Social Isolation Project

Local GP's in Buckhurst Hill felt that social isolation was a key issue and concern. In response, EFDC's Community, Health and Wellbeing team established a Social Isolation Action Group, tasked with conducting a task and finish piece of work in tackling social isolation and loneliness. In order to obtain a better understanding of Buckhurst Hill residents' personal experiences of social isolation, the group agreed to carry out a door knocking exercise to conduct short interviews. Six streets were identified to carrying out the exercise and a total of 67 interviews were conducted. A report is currently being put together following the analysis of the interviews along with an action plan that will be agreed by the group and implemented.

Walking Football



Walking Football

Walking football is a slow paced version of the beautiful game and is aimed at getting players back in to the sport.

Walking football is designed to help people keep an active lifestyle, as well as helping players recover from injuries!

The game is non-contact and any player who commits a foul whilst the ball is in play will concede a free kick.

Day
Saturdays
(first session 28/04/18)

Time
10:30–11:30 am

Location
Roding Valley Recreation Ground, Roding Road, Loughton, IG10 3BS

Price
£2.50

Epping Forest District Council
www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk

For more information please contact
Ezra Folan, Health & Wellbeing
Engagement Officer on 01992 594363
or efolan@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Walking Football is aimed at getting players back playing the sport they love. It is designed to help people have an active life whatever their age or ability. It is a very relaxed session based around socialising with like-minded football fans. The Community, Health and Wellbeing Team deliver walking football in Loughton and Waltham Abbey, with 10-14 people attending each session. A new session will be starting soon in Epping.

Disability Inclusion Project



The Epping Forest Inclusion project has secured funding of £37,600 from Action for Children to provide a wide range of sport, physical and leisure activities for children and young people with disabilities until October 2019. The funding will enable the co-ordination and delivery of a range of sessions and activities meaning we have been able to engage with children and young people with a wide range of interests. The project not only benefits the child with a disability but the whole family. The inclusion of siblings at our holiday activities has been crucial for parents. Many parents do not often have the choice or opportunity to send siblings to the same activity as their child with a disability. To date approximately 1,000 individual children and young people with disabilities have accessed the scheme.

miLife Project

miLife is a national award winning project commissioned by young people for young people, exploring how everyone can experience better emotional wellbeing and mental health.

Epping Forest Youth Council (EFYC) invited the Red Balloon Family Foundation, a local charity which supports a wide variety of children's, youth and families projects along with NELFT, the NHS emotional wellbeing and mental health service (EWMHS) provider in this part of Essex, to work with them to create the miLife roadshow to visit all seven secondary schools as well as producing a number of associated resources.

To date over 4,500 children have taken part in the scheme. Feedback from the project has been used to improve the scheme and this has led to 90% overall enjoying the MiLife intervention.

The Lime Farm FISH — Food in School Holidays



The Community Health and Wellbeing team at EFDC along with partners Barnardo's Children's Centre's and the Epping Forest Food Bank, provide a holiday club for invited residents that are in need of support during the school holidays particularly around food and nutrition, health and well-being and social interaction. The club runs for 2 hours, with the first hour consisting of games, arts and crafts and sports, with the second hour bringing together residents, volunteers and workers to share a meal.

Museums provide workshops, activities, lectures and exhibitions; Support for Individuals with Visual Impairment

Museum Heritage and Culture (MHC) worked with Support4sight and held a workshop on 2nd November 2017 devised to provide engagement opportunities for individuals with no or limited sight as part of our 'The Sounds of Rural life' exhibition. We have worked with Vocal Eyes a charity with a mission that blind and partially sighted people should have the best possible opportunities to experience and enjoy art and heritage. Vocal Eyes provided training support for MHC staff to help us devise services for blind and partially sighted people, which is one of the development areas we have identified for the service

Audience Survey data result findings

A survey of museum visitors undertaken by the Audience Agency and funded by Arts Council England found that the cultural offer at our District Museum was attracting a higher percentage of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and less culturally engaged groups than the average within the museum sector.

Out of the three museums (Epping Forest, Lowewood and Chelmsford), Epping Forest District Museum attracts the highest proportion of less engaged segments, with a quarter (24%) of visitors represented by the four groups. (Funded by Arts Council England)

Oral History



Museum Heritage and Culture (MHC) commissioned a number of oral recordings throughout the Epping Forest District and Broxbourne Borough Council. They focused on Black and Minority Ethnic residents (BAME) and those with disabilities (including visual and mental) to illustrate the social and economic changes of these groups and their experiences living in the area.

Older People's Dance workshops at EFDM

We have a range of new activities running in our activity space at the Museum including Museum Movers, which are fun, informal dance sessions, designed to promote health, well-being and freedom of movement for older people. People are welcome to do a seated version or can challenge themselves by performing the exercises standing. The sessions provide a range of visual arts, dance and fitness techniques, enabling local residents to express themselves through creativity, whilst developing strength and stamina, a sense of well-being and social interaction.

Motiv8



The Motiv8 Youth Dance Platform was once again held at Epping Forest College on 26 and 27 March for the ninth consecutive year. The show was themed 'Celebrating Different Cultures in Epping Forest' and the groups participating interpreted this creatively covering a diversity of cultures through dance and song.

An update on remaining equality objectives 2016-20

In our report to the Governance Select Committee in March 2018, we said that we communicated all remaining actions to responsible officers to ensure their completion. These actions have been covered in our daily work and remain an integral part of our everyday experience.

Going forward

We will publish more equality information in July 2019 and annually in July thereafter.



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EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Joint Meeting of Development Management Chairmen & Vice-Chairmen **Date:** Monday, 17 September 2018

Place: Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.00 - 8.05 pm

Members Present: Councillors B Sandler (Chairman), D Dorrell, P Keska, A Patel, J Philip, B Rolfe, D Sunger and E Webster

Other Councillors: Councillors

Apologies:

Officers Present: S Hill (Service Director (Governance & Member Services)), N Richardson (Service Director (Planning Services)) and A Hendry (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the previous meeting, held on 25 September 2017 be agreed as a true and accurate record.

2. Matters Arising

Minute 3: Matters Arising

The Service Director, Governance and Members Services reported that the Planning Code of Practice had gone to the November 2017 Council meeting for approval.

He also reported that the Planning Protocol training had been undertaken successfully.

Minute 5: Review of Planning Procedures

a) The meeting was informed that work had been paused on renewing the AV infrastructure in the Council Chamber because of the uncertainty of the building's status under Historical England. Officers were now looking at progressing the updating of the screens and other facilities in the Council Chamber, now that the listed parts of the building had been identified.

The meeting discussed various improvements, one being the installation of a better, up-to-date projector. Another problem connected to the old fashioned projector was the need to turn the lights up and down in order to make out what was projected on the screen.

b) Members also thought the sound system was not as good as it could be, especially for people with hearing aids. Mr Hill suggested that it could be that people

tended to fiddle with the control settings; he would have a word with facilities management about this. Councillor Webster said that there were certain areas where she just could not hear. Councillor Sander said that it also depended on the people speaking, they had to be clear and precise and project their voice.

c) Another item brought up by Councillor Patel was the bad wi-fi service in the Council Chamber and the poor quality of the officers equipment to connect to the service. At a recent meeting a Principal Planning Officer could not access historical records on an application and had to rely on members accessing the records on their tablets. S Hill commented that it was not necessarily the infrastructure that was at fault, but noted that there were connection problems in some spots within the building. Mr Richardson added that that application should have been deferred as the officer should not have relied on information from members.

Action:

S Hill to liaise with Facilities about Sound and Wi-Fi issues in the chamber.

3. Planning Process Review

The Service Director, Governance and Members Services informed the meeting a letter had been sent to all clerks of Town and Parish councils which explained the recent changes to the planning officer delegations and Parish council representations, a copy of which was tabled.

There had been some confusion on the term “non councillor resident” which he had addressed at the last Local Council Liaisons meeting. He had also confirmed that they could not have a blanket speaker registration and would have to register to speak on each individual item as usual. Also, on initial consideration of an application they should confirm in writing to the planning officer that they wished to speak. Planning officers could write to potential objectors and the parish council informing them how to register to speak at the relevant meeting. As always they should not just inform the planning officer but also Democratic Services.

Ward members should call-in an application in writing within four weeks of that application appearing on the list.

Mr Hill noted that we were in the early stages of this new system and would appreciate any help members could give in holding to these new procedures.

The letter also had an explanation on enforcement action. Members could ask for enforcement action to be taken when they had refused retrospective applications. If this action was not taken then the appropriate officer should come back to that committee and explain why they did not pursue it. Members then had the opportunity to question the officer. This was on trial for a year and would then be reviewed.

Members noted that these new procedures would not enable a local council to just object and have it go to a sub-committee automatically; if they thought it was that important they would have to follow it up and speak at the sub-committee meeting. This should happen regardless whether an objector had registered to speak; the local council should follow through their objections.

Mr Richardson advised that local councils should get used to looking at agendas and looking out for objections that they had made with no other objectors listed.

Councillor Philip made a plea that planning officers try and cluster parish council's applications together so it was not spread out over an agenda. Mr Richardson said that they could do this.

Councillor Sandler asked that the more important application were put to the front of the agenda so that they could be dealt with first.

Councillor Patel asked if a notification system could be set up for when an agenda comes out. Mr Hill replied that all they had to do was to contact Democratic Services who would arrange an email notification.

Councillor Sunger asked about a decision that had been made by planning officers before it went to Chigwell Parish Council. Mr Richardson said that once a decision had been issued then they could not rescind it – but he admitted that this should not have happened and it would not happen again.

Mr Hill noted that there would be a further review of the area sub-committees. This had been discussed at the Constitution Working Group; however, before they further consider any changes they will see how these new alterations have worked out. Councillor Dorrell agreed that it would be sensible to revisit it again after a year to see how it had worked.

4. Security at Planning Meetings

The Service Director, Governance and Members Services informed the meeting that the Portfolio Holder had financed a security guard for the planning meetings. He asked the meeting how they thought this was working.

Councillor Sandler liked the idea of a security guard in the public gallery. There had been no problems so far.

Councillor Patel recounted an incident recently where there was constant muttering coming from a couple in the public gallery- could the Chairman have asked them to leave? Mr Hill said that he had only to give one warning and after that if it still persisted he could ask them to leave. Councillor Patel also related another incident when a member of the public had come over to the planning officer and tried to intimidate him. Councillor Sandler wondered if the Security Guard should be stationed downstairs. If based downstairs he could be sent upstairs intermittently.

Action:

Mr Hill said to liaise with the Democratic Services Manager to arrange roving patrols by the security guard.

5. Review of Planning Procedures

Site Visits

The Service Director, Governance and Members Services asked the members present if they were happy with the way the agenda item on site visits was working.

Councillor Sandler noted that recent site visits were scheduled for weekday mornings which made it hard for members to attend. They used to be on Saturdays that was more appropriate.

Councillor Dorrell asked if members could have earlier notifications of any proposed site visits as at a recent meeting they had a lot of people there only to be told that the application had been deferred for a site visit. Mr Richardson said that if asked for earlier a visit could have been organised. Councillor Webster said that they only get the agenda a few days earlier and at the meeting we did apologise to the people there and they seemed relieved that they did not have to wait.

Mr Hill reminded the meeting that they should only have a site visit when there was a substantive benefit to the determination of the planning application.

Councillor Philip said that it was more satisfactory to have this at the beginning of the meeting and not have them sit there for three hours and then have an application deferred for a site visit.

Councillor Sandler said that he would like any problems brought up before the meeting and even if possible before an agenda went out. This would be something to put into the next training programme and explained then.

Local Plan

Mr Hill reported that Local Plan reports will now go to the Local Plan Cabinet Committee which would mean that there would be a separation of masterplanning and planning application determination processes.

Councillor Philip said that if they were looking at something that affected a member's ward then they would be invited to the Cabinet Committee meeting.

Mr Hill noted that a report would be going to the next Cabinet meeting in October on the governance issues around the Local Plan.

6. Any Other Business

Mr Richardson informed the meeting that there were now Quality Review Panels reviewing large scale applications on a design capacity. They were reviewing these applications at a public forum, with a record of the meeting being reported to the next meeting.

Councillor Dorrell asked how was it possible to stop the meeting being hijacked by one political group. He was told that it was down to the Chairman to control the meeting and deal with problems as they arose.

Mr Richardson noted that there had only been two meetings held so far where ward councillors could speak and ask questions.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The meeting noted that 18th March 2019 was the next scheduled meeting date.

CHAIRMAN