

EPHING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES

Committee:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date:	Monday, 29 October 2018
Place:	Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping	Time:	7.30 - 10.11 pm
Members Present:	Councillors M Sartin (Chairman) R Jennings (Vice-Chairman) R Baldwin, N Bedford, P Bolton, L Burrows, D Dorrell, S Heather, J Lea, A Mitchell, S Murray, S Neville, A Patel, P Stalker, H Whitbread, J H Whitehouse and D Wixley		
Other Councillors:	Councillors N Avey, G Chambers, K Chana, A Grigg, A Lion, G Mohindra, D Stocker and C Whitbread		
Officers Present:	D Macnab (Acting Chief Executive), S Tautz (Democratic Services Manager), G. Nicholas (Senior Project Improvement Officer), T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer), R Perrin (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and A Rose (Marketing & Digital Content Officer)		
By Invitation:	Manchester Airport Group Officer Alistair Andrew (Planning Manager), Jonathan Oates (Corporate Affairs Director) and Marcella M'Raberty (Corporate Social Responsibility Manager)		

31. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman reminded everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

32. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that there were no substitute members for the meeting.

33. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the committee meeting held on 24 July 2018 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor G. Mohindra declared a pecuniary interest in the following item of the agenda item 6 – Stansted Airport – Scrutiny of External Organisation by virtue of his role as a Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Economic Development owing to a current live planning application for Stansted Airport. He advised that he did not expect to speak on the item.

35. STANSTED AIRPORT - SCRUTINY OF EXTERNAL ORGANISATION

The Chairman welcomed the three officers from the Manchester Airport Group (MAG), Alistair Andrew (Planning Manager), Jonathan Oates (Corporate Affairs Director) and Marcella M'Raberty (Corporate Social Responsibility Manager) who

were in attendance to talk about the provision of local airport services at Stansted Airport. The committee had raised specific issues that included:

- (a) the planned expansion of the airport and associated infrastructure requirements;
- (b) future capacity and infrastructure requirements arising from likely significant housing development across Essex and the south east;
- (c) the handling of increased passenger numbers in the short-term;
- (d) the provision of employment opportunities for local residents;
- (e) opportunities for partnership working with local further education facilities (particularly Epping Forest College);
- (f) improvements to the existing railway infrastructure serving the airport; and
- (g) the apparent high cost of the taxi services at the airport, compared with other local private hire services.

The Planning Manager advised that following MAG's acquisition of Stansted Airport in 2013, a Sustainable Development Plan had been published in 2015. This set out the short to medium term ambitions for the airport and making best use of the single runway and existing airport. Currently, the airport had received planning permission for a new arrivals facility that would begin in January 2019, creating separate arrivals and departures facilities for the future. The airports intentions were to expand passenger numbers by 8 million, although not through the intensification of aircrafts landing and taking off at the airport or increasing the noise footprint.

He stated that the airport had 50% of passengers accessing the airport through public transport and the live planning application had included mitigation proposals for access at the M11, junction 8 and improvements to the bus station and car parks onsite. It also took into account Uttlesford Local Plan and housing needs until 2033.

The Corporate Affairs Director advised that £150 million had been invested since MAG's takeover, resulting in trebled the number of airlines, numerous new facilities and 40 new destinations being available which had led to the increase of 10 million passengers per annual. The airport benefited from an increased number of check-in desks, more retails units and seating in the departure lounges and it was the fastest growing major airport in UK. There had been a number of issues in 2018 that had effect performance although they were largely out of the airports control including weather, delays relating to air traffic control staff, congestion in air space. Furthermore, the largest airline had undergone a retendering of their baggage handling operation which included significant investment, increase in staff and equipment, to make the operation more efficient and resilience.

The Corporate Social Responsibility Manager advised that the airport was the biggest employer in east of England, employing 12,000 people, of those 200, were within the Epping Forest District. The airport had a dedicated employment skills facility which was opened every day, providing free training programmes to job seekers and existing staff and there were currently 377 vacancies. Furthermore 250 children from the district had visited the facility for educational purposes.

The Planning Manager advised that MAG intended to increase the use of public transport using national rail and the Stansted Express, matching up the quieter periods at the airport with quieter periods on public transport and the use of 12 car trains. He advised that the airport had no influence over the taxi fares charged to and from the airport and MAG had not procured an independent taxi service.

The Planning Manager advised that data was tracked regarding noise complaints with no more 1% of complaints being received from the Epping Forest District within

4 years. The key noise issues were related to night noise and aircraft arrival traffic in Sheering, Epping Green and Sawbridgeworth.

Councillor M. Sartin stated that with the next generation of quieter aircrafts, noise complaints may not increase, although did MAG have any control over the larger cargo planes. The Planning Manager advised that the cargo planes had longer leases and were therefore older and noisier than the more modern aircrafts which was a world wide issue. MAG were encouraging the use of quieter aircrafts and included plans to reduce them from accessing to the airport overtime.

Councillors N. Bedford had concerns about the increased capacity of the airport because of previous issues he had experienced regarding the waiting times for baggage. The Corporate Affairs Director advised that with the intensification of the airport over 5000 jobs would be created. In addition, the largest baggage handler has been overhauled which included a £12 million investment, built in resilience, changes to the baggage policy and the airport monitoring the situation.

Councillor S. Neville asked whether MAG was aware of the noise pollution guidelines from the World Health Organisation and how it would be monitored. The Planning Manager advised that they were aware of the guidelines, although they were not UK policy or set by the Government, which was what the airport followed. Live noise monitoring was available on the web track system published on the Stansted Airport website and there were several fixed monitoring points. The general air quality was monitored by airport and data was drawn from the local district councils, although this tended to focus on highways pollution because the aircraft pollution was dispersed over a larger area.

Councillor J. Lea asked how the passenger number could increase by 8 million, if the number of aircrafts had not and whether the congestion outside the airport reduced. The Planning Manager advised that the figures had included the increased aircraft interior providing an 10 extra seats per aircraft and that the average aircraft capacity would increase. The Corporate Affairs Director advised that £1 million had been spent improving the entrance of the terminal which included reconfiguring road lines, encouraging better flow through this area and the recruitment of additional marshals. The drop off charge ensured that gridlock was prevented and that passengers had a better experience. The airport provided a free drop off point in the mid-stay car park and many passengers were using public transport.

Councillor A. Mitchell asked how the disabled facilities would be improved. The Planning Manager advised that Passenger of Reduced Mobility were able to advise the airport beforehand and would be provided with a staff member if required, from the moment they arrived through to departure.

Councillor R. Baldwin advised that he had concerns over the particle emissions and how efficient the aircraft actual were. The Planning Manager advised that air quality issues had been considered thoroughly in the current planning application. The next generation of aircraft were significantly more economic in the amount of fuel they consumed and how they dealt with the emissions. The assessment carried out for the planning application provided monitoring that compared to an industry model and demonstrated no breaches in air quality standards, which would continue to be observed.

Councillor H. Whitbread asked what promotion was being undertaken for employment opportunities, in particular apprenticeship schemes for young people. The Corporate Social Responsibility Manager advised that the Stansted Employment and Skills Academy was built onsite and any one interested, could walk in. MAG

worked closely with the local schools, Job Centre Plus, the Princess Trust and other organisations. Both primary and secondary schools requests were welcome and relevant speakers would be organised. Epping Forest Primary schools that were due to visit included Coopersale & Theydon Garnon C.E, Theydon Bois and a Loughton primary school had registered an interest.

Councillor D. Wixley asked whether they anticipated any effects of Brexit. The Corporate Affairs Director advised that MAG needed to maintain consumer confidence in air travel pre and post the Brexit world. He remained confident that a deal in aviation would be reached and MAG were supportive of the Government communications and were pressing for further details if a no deal scenario occurred.

Councillor S. Heather asked whether there was a short cut through the airport for passengers of restricted mobility. The Corporate Affairs Director advised that there was not, although the airport provided a pre-registered escorted service through the airport. The airport had a Disability Forum which brought together staff, businesses and disability campaigners.

Councillor N. Bedford asked whether any lessons had been learnt from the recent fire at the airport. The Corporate Affairs Director advised that the incident was still under investigation, although the airports response was governed by Civil Aviation Authority and Department for Transport. The first response ensured the safety of passengers, although this resulted in the requirement of all passengers having to go through security again.

Councillor G. Mohindra asked the Corporate Affairs Director to comment on Boarder Force. He advised that the current targets that were adhered to were not meeting the customer's needs and masked poor performance. Their Service Level Agreement required a performance of clearing passenger within 25 minutes for EU travellers and 45 minutes for non-EU travellers, which was not acceptable. The MAG were pushing for a long term strategy on resources and staffing from Boarder Force.

36. PUBLIC QUESTIONS & REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

It was noted that there were no public questions or requests to address the committee.

37. CORPORATE PLAN KEY ACTION PLAN 2018/19 - QUARTER 1 PROGRESS

The Leader of the Council, Councillor C. Whitbread presented a mid-year report on the achievement of the authority's corporate priorities and plans for the next five years.

He advised that following the prudent financial planning over the last decade, the Council had effectively managed to resource and maximised assets, enabling it to be in a stronger financial position. The Cabinet had set an ambitious savings target to achieve £2.5m over the next three years, in order to protect front line services, keep Council Tax low and cease the reliance on government grants by the end of 2023. In order to achieve this, the Council had determined three overarching aims that included the People Strategy, the Accommodation Strategy and the ICT Strategy. The Cabinet remained committed to the re-development of the condor building, as set out in the Local Plan and the use of smarter and flexible working. The new common operating model had been implemented, which focused on the customer and a drive of efficiencies that brought together business functions across the Council.

Furthermore, the Local Plan was back on track following the Judicial Review and had been submitted with the examination in public expected in March/April 2019. Regarding economic development, the shopping park was trading well and the council was now in the position to take forward the St John's road site, Epping, to potentially develop a new leisure centre. In addition to this, the Leisure Management Contract had delivered £12m of investment, including the new leisure centre and swimming pool in Waltham Abbey and the Council House Building Programme had started to provide good quality homes, to local people. Furthermore, the community policing funded by the Council had made an impact on the fear of crime and was working well with Park Guard.

The Financial Issues paper and budget process had begun, with positive bids being brought forward through the Invest to Save scheme and all members were welcomed to engage in the budget process, especially the joint meeting of Finance Performance Management Cabinet Committee 24 January 2019.

After the Leaders report, the Interim Transformation Manager, G. Nicholas advised that the Corporate Plan 2018-2023 was the authority's key strategic planning document and laid out the journey the council would take to transform the organisation to be 'Ready for the Future'. The plan linked the key external drivers influencing council services, with a set of corporate aims and objectives, grouped under three corporate ambitions.

A Corporate Specification for each year (previously called the Key Action Plan) detailed how the Corporate Plan was being delivered through operational objectives, with these in turn linked to annual service business plans. The success of the Corporate Plan was assessed through the achievement of a set of benefits, each measured through one or more performance indicator, focussed on what the Council achieved for the customers. Management Board, Cabinet and the select committees had overview and scrutiny roles, to drive improvement in performance and ensure corrective action was taken where necessary.

The Interim Transformation Manager highlighted the performance indicators that had not achieved their quarterly targets and the reasons for this, as follows;

- M2.1 – Number of safeguarding concerns – The target had now been met in quarter 2.
- M2.2 - Number of days to process benefits claims – The target had not been met in quarter 2, although processes were being adapted to make the required improvements and there had been a number of long term sickness absences.
- M3.1 - Number of community Champions and volunteers – The target had now been met in quarter 2.
- M4.3 - Number of new residential properties built or acquired by the Council – It remained static because of delays in the service provisions, design issues and performance problems with the employee agent, which were all being monitored.
- M10.2 - Annual Council tax collection – The target had been marginally missed and again in quarter 2.

Councillor N. Bedford enquired what a 'Tuck in pledge' was, in relation to M1.2 - Number of 'take-away' restaurants signed up to 'Tuck in pledge'. The Acting Chief Executive, D. Macnab advised that it was a health improvement initiative by Essex County Council to encourage healthy eating in conjunction with owners and operators in fast food premises in the district.

Councillor S. Neville asked what the processes and plans were, that had been put in place to prevent M2.2 - Number of days to process benefits claims, from missing the target again. The Acting Chief Executive, advised that process mapping had taken place across the authority with over 2500 process identified, with the intention to reduce and prevent duplications. The performance indicator M2.2 had been effected by long term sickness absence, which the Council had policies in place to reduce, although there were other issues such as ongoing challenges to retain staff due to the close proximity of the other London boroughs. Councillor S. Neville followed up by asking whether the Council was aware of good practise in other local authorities. The Acting Chief Executive advised the Council was part of a Benefits Managers Network and 'Shared Services' had been investigated. This was continually kept under review.

Councillor D. Dorrell asked for clarification on M2.1 - Number of safeguarding concerns. The Acting Chief Executive advised that the measure reflected the number of safe guarding concerns that had been raised and acted upon, rather than measuring the number reported.

Councillor A. Patel asked whether it was possible for the quarterly reports to include anticipated progress for the select committees when they reviewed a project which had been discussed at the last Resources Select Committee. The Interim Transformation Manager advised that the system could not provide anticipated progress, although target dates could be included. The Acting Chief Executive advised that suggestions put forward by the Resources Select Committee would be considered by Leadership Team.

Councillor A. Lion asked about M1.4 - Bed and Breakfast accommodation for homeless people appearing as a success, although it had not started, therefore should it be classified in a different way. The Interim Transformation Manager advised that it has been corrected and any future measures would have a question mark rather than a green status.

Councillor A Patel asked how M3.5 - Fear of Crime was measured. The Interim Transformation Manager advised that it was a yearly measure that had been provided as an annual survey by Essex Police. It had details at a district and ward level and he would report back on the level of details that could be provided.

Councillor D Wixley asked for clarification on the operational objective 4.2.2 - Develop accommodation for homeless people and whether it included rough sleepers. The Acting Chief Executive advised that it was an indicator of people who found themselves homeless. The council was aware of rough sleepers in the District and the housing staff had previously made offers of accommodation, which had been declined, although this indicator was for general homelessness.

Councillor A Patel advised that a number of the targets were annual and he wondered how the select committees could influence these throughout the year. The Acting Chief Executive advised unfortunately most of the annual indicators relied on third party data, which provided annual trends. Although, as some of the indicators were new and the data could be reviewed.

RESOLVED:

That the committee noted the outturn position for Quarter 1 2018/19, in relation to the achievement of the Corporate Plan for 2018-2023.

38. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS - CALL-IN

There had been no decisions called in for consideration at this meeting.

39. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS - REVIEW

The committee considered the Council's programme of Key Decisions for 2018/19.

Planning and Governance

Councillor S. Neville queried whether the District Electoral Review should be a decision for the Council. Councillor C. Whitbread advised that Council would have to look at its future democratic arrangements but this would not take place until the Local Plan had been agreed and the Council was aware of where the growth would take place in the District. The Electoral Review was a statutory process and although the Cabinet could trigger the process, it would ultimately be the Council's decision.

Finance

Councillor S. Murray asked whether the aim to review the Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2019/20, was to save money or whether there was another agenda. Councillor G. Mohindra advised that there was no hidden agenda.

Environment

Councillor S. Murray asked whether the Waste Management Review would be asking residents to either pay for the dry recycling bags or limit the number of bags they were allowed. Councillor N. Avey advised that the decision was not due until next year and he would report back to members when he had further discussions.

Councillor N. Bedford asked whether smaller fleet carriers could be purchased when the waste contracts were renewed, due to the amount of damaged kerbs that have arisen across the District. Councillor N. Avey advised that he would discuss the issues at the next Waste Management Board.

Housing

Councillor S. Murray asked for more detail on Sheltered Housing Assets. Councillor C. Whitbread advised that he required further details and he would report back.

Leisure & Community Services

Councillor M. Sartin enquired about the Gymnastics Centre – North Weald Airfield. Councillor C. Whitbread advised that a report was coming forward at the next Cabinet meeting on 10 November 2018.

Councillor N. Bedford advised that there were no turn-style entrance systems at Ongar Leisure Centre, which was reportedly enabling people to walk in and use the swimming pool facilities for free. Councillor C. Whitbread advised that he would look into this concern.

Assets & Economic Development

Councillor H Whitbread commented that she was happy to see the future of St John's School Site on the work programme.

Councillor S. Murray asked whether the report regarding Epping Forest Shopping Park had included reference to the traffic flows around this area and the pollution issues. Councillor A. Grigg advised that she had been made aware of the issues and would be looking into it. The economic impact study may cover this issue, although it may need to be looked at separately. There were issues with parking problems at the shopping park and they were investigating solutions in consultation with the tenants. Any issues outside the shop park would have to be reported to Essex County Council (ECC) as they were responsible for highways. Councillor S. Murray commented that he had received a large number of complaints about traffic on Rectory Lane and Oakwood Hill. Councillor G Mohindra advised that there were a significant number of road improvement works going on in the area, which had meant other roads were being used and ECC were aware of the issues and were looking into them.

Councillor D. Wixley raised concerns over pedestrians crossing the roads at Oakwood Hill and Chigwell Lane to access Langston Road. Councillor G. Mohindra strongly recommended that pedestrians used the pedestrian cross 40 meters down the road by Debden Station. Councillor A. Grigg advised that a conversation with ECC had taken place and they were aware of the issue, although they were satisfied that the scheme met the safety requirements necessary. The Council had looked into a pedestrian crossing although ECC had not been keen because of issues with respect to traffic flows.

40. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE FRAMEWORK - REVIEW

The Democratic Services Manager presented a report regarding a review of the overview & scrutiny select committee framework for 2019/20.

He advised that the Council's People Strategy, had now progressed and the two Strategic Directors and eight Service Directors had been appointed with the intention from the Leader, to realign the responsibilities of the Cabinet with this new structure. Furthermore, it was assumed appropriate to review the overview and scrutiny framework as well. Following a joint meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen held on 3 September 2018, the option favoured was for the establishment of two select committees as follows;

Communities & Neighbourhoods Select Committee

Covering the following service areas:

- Housing and Property Services;
- Community and Partnership Services;
- Contract and Technical Services; and
- Planning Services.

Governance & Resources Select Committee

Covering the following service areas:

- Governance and Member Services;
- Business Support Services;
- Customer Services; and
- Commercial and Regulatory Services.

It was proposed that the lead officer for each of these select committees would be one of the Council's new Strategic Directors and that a focused and achievable work programmes would be developed, drawing from the Portfolio Holder and service

delivery aims and objectives. There would be no increase in meetings or membership to the select committees and it would continue to appoint in accordance with the pro-rata provisions.

Furthermore, the adoption of the new overview and scrutiny framework was not a matter reserved to the Council, although any changes would need to be considered by the Constitution Working Group. The Government was currently preparing new statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny, to reflect the changing role of scrutiny and this was expected to be published in December 2018.

Councillor J.H. Whitehouse enquired whether any consultation had been completed with members and possible training requirements for overview and scrutiny. Councillor M. Sartin advised that the committee had decided to reconsider the framework of the select committee last year and training was provided at the start of each year. The Democratic Services Manager advised that overview and scrutiny training was provided each year following local elections.

Councillor S. Neville had concerns over the suggested framework leading to less scrutiny; that the changes to the national scrutiny framework could impact on this; and asked whether external scrutiny would still take place. The Democratic Services Manager advised that the national changes would be unlikely to prescribe how the Council established its internal arrangements, but that they would probably be around giving scrutiny a wider remit. He advised that external scrutiny would continue. Councillor M. Sartin advised that some items were cyclical and did not always require a presentation to the committee but a members briefing or an item placed in the Members Bulletin would be more beneficial.

Councillor D. Wixley advised that he could see some benefits that would enable the appointed members on those committees a larger overview of the council. He asked whether this would be an opportunity for other members to take part in Task and Finish panels. Councillor M Sartin advised that Task and Finish Panel were open to all members and notification for these panels were normally promoted in the Members Bulletin.

Councillor D. Wixley commented that once the Council had been through the reorganisation, it may be a good opportunity for training and a presentation of how the Council had been restructured, which the Chairman concurred.

Councillor S. Murray asked what consultation took place with members and the established groups before the recommendations were made. The Democratic Services Manager advised that this formed part of the consultation and no other discussion had taken place. The recommendations presented before members had been developed from discussion with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny and the current select committees. Councillor S Murray advised that he had concerns over the recommendations. The Acting Chief Executive advised that the drive for the changes to the framework had been officer led to align with the new officer structure, service areas and Portfolio Holder responsibilities. He stated that the two select committees would have a membership of 15 and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would have the same, therefore 45 members would be involved in the scrutiny of the Council. There was a need to make a distinction between service briefings and the scrutiny of service which had not always occurred.

Members concurred, although it was thought that further consultation was required. The Democratic Services Manager advised that there was sufficient time to complete a consultation on the framework and that the committee could determine whether there was a need to establish a Task and Finish Panel following the consultation.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That all members be consulted on the proposed select committee framework arrangements through the Members Bulletin as soon as possible; and
- (2) That the results of such consultation be reported to the next meeting of the committee.

41. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES 2018/19 - REVIEW

The Democratic Services Manager updated members on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2018/19. There were several proposed deletions from both the programme and reserve programme, in favour of a member briefing. These included (9) Essex County Council – Passenger Transport, (2) Princess Alexander Hospital NHS Trust and (5) Essex County Council – Local Highways Services and Infrastructure.

Councillor S. Murray asked that both the Principal of the Epping Forest College and the Principal of New City College be invited with regards to Epping Forest College, to enable both the curriculum and the land and building issues to be considered.

Councillor S. Neville asked whether a date had been arranged for a member briefing regarding the (9) Essex County Council – Passenger Transport. The Chairman advised that officers had been unsuccessful in arranging this.

Select Committees**Communities Select Committee**

Councillor H. Whitbread advised that the committee had considered the Museum, Heritage & Cultural Local Government Association Peer Challenge, which had highlight how good the Council's services were and an extra meeting had been held to consider two consultation documents regarding a Social Housing Green Paper and Use of Receipts from Right to Buy Sales.

She advised that the next meeting on 13 November 2018, had the District Commander, Chief Inspector Lewis Basford attending, which was open to all members.

Governance Select Committee

Councillor G. Chambers advised that the committee had considered feedback from the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Area Plans Sub-Committee and District Development Management Committee, which had resulted in security guards being present at meetings. In addition to this, a review of local elections and the petition scheme had also been discussed.

Neighbourhoods Select Committee

Councillor N. Bedford advised that committee was on target.

Resources Select Committee

Councillor A. Patel advised that the committee had considered the ICT Strategy, Fees and Charges and the Financial Issues Paper. The next meeting would be considering the People Strategy in relation to value for money, how it would be realized and agency costs.

42. SCRUTINY OF EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

The committee noted their schedule of recent external scrutiny carried out since 2014.

Councillor N. Bedford requested that if an organisation had attended multiple times, this would be better if this was grouped together on the schedule. The Democratic Services Manager advised that the schedule would be updated to reflect this.

CHAIRMAN