

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday 26 September 2023, 7.00 pm - 9.10 pm

Council Chamber - Civic Offices

Members Present:	Councillors A Patel (Chairman), J Lucas (Vice-Chairman), R Brookes, S Murray and R Sharif
Other Councillors:	Councillors R Balcombe, N Bedford, J Parsons, S Patel, J Philip, H Whitbread, J H Whitehouse and C Whitbread
Other Members (Virtually):	Mr Wyn Marshall
Apologies:	Councillor(s) J Jogia, C McCann, M Markham, Caroline Pond, S Yerrell and R Baldwin
Officers In Attendance:	Surjit Balu (Interim Director of Housing and Property), Rebecca Moreton (Corporate Communications Officer), Wendy Cockbill (Young Persons Assistant), Vanessa Gayton (Culture & Community Team Manager), Michelle Pickett (Community Engagement Officer), Gill Wallis (Community, Culture & Wellbeing Service Manager), John Taphouse (Interim Head of Asset Management) and Christopher Walsh (Service Manager (Housing Needs and Management))
Officers In Attendance (Virtually):	Vivienne Messenger (Democratic Services Officer)
Guests: Community Champions	Lorraine Page, Sue Sowerby, Dawn Stokes, Roxanne Smith, Julie Willis, Lynne Moir and Sue Smith

[A RECORDING OF THIS MEETING IS AVAILABLE FOR REPEATED VIEWING](#)

10 WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

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

11 SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute members present at the meeting.

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

13 NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Mr W Marshall raised concerns as he had not received notification of the previous meeting of the Committee. The administrative issue had been rectified and a response to his query would be requested.

Resolved:

That the notes of the previous meeting of the the Committee held on 27 June 2023 were agreed as a correct record

14 WORK PROGRAMME

The amended work programme was noted and agreed.

15 ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

The Community, Culture & Wellbeing Service Manager, G Wallace, highlighted that the Community underpinned the delivery of outcomes and objectives of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and that the Community Development and Wellbeing Team had adopted an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) methodology that enabled residents and the community to improve things locally. The Community Champions initiative was a tangible example of this approach and been successfully adopted and implemented by the Council to positive effect. The refreshed Estate Ambassadors initiative was another example of the ABCD methodology being implemented by the Council.

The Community Development Team, gave an overview of the Community Champions scheme, including how these important community representatives were recruited, their networks, support, and training. The Community Champions had volunteered 3360 hours over the year and raised over £21,000 of funding. A presentation detailing the work of the Community Champions projects was shown to the Committee.

Two of the Community Champions, Lynne Moir and Sue Smith, provided the Committee with details of their experiences, funding raised and projects they had been involved with and outlined the benefits for the community from these projects.

The Committee thanked officers and the Community Champions for their presentation.

Mr Marshall confirmed that the finalised name for the Estate Ambassadors would be confirmed in due course.

The Community Champions clarified they were pro-active in identifying projects in the community and this avoided duplication with other agencies. They worked collaboratively and would signpost members of the community to other agencies on a case-by-case basis. Community transport was identified as an area that could be improved especially if there was a change of venue for an event.

The officers confirmed that support for the Community Champions was contained with existing staffing resource.

Resolved:

The Committee commended the work of the Community Champions and valued their input, energy and effort in supporting and moving communities forward. The commitment and effort of EFDC officers were also commended.

16 LANDLORD COMPLIANCE POLICIES

The Committee were advised of the five compliance policies: electrical safety, fire safety, gas safety, lift safety and water hygiene. These policies had been prepared with the assistance of external consultants. Two amendments as suggested by The Tenant's and Leaseholders'

Panel had been incorporated into the fire safety policy. The Service was already working to the policy.

The Committee:

- received confirmation that the policies complied with legal requirements and conformed with good practise.
- acknowledged the importance of these compliance policies.

Mr Marshall suggested that when reintroduced Housing News could be used to inform of events and initiatives relating to the compliance policies.

Resolved:

The Committee commended the report and compliance policies to Cabinet for approval.

17 SOCIAL HOUSING ANNUAL LETTINGS REPORT 2022/23

The Committee were advised this report presented an annual position statement in line with irrelevant standards. The Service Manager (Housing Needs and Management), C Walsh presented the detailed content of the report.

A detailed response to questions from Cllr Murray was provided at the meeting. this was circulated to members of the Committee.

Resolved:

The Committee commended the report to Cabinet.

18 EFDC HOUSING ALLOCATION SCHEME - FIRST YEAR REVIEW

The Committee were advised by Service Manager (Housing Needs and Management), C Walsh that the report reviewed the main changes were made to the Housing Allocations Scheme in 2022. The recommendation of the report was that an end date of 25 September 2025 should be introduced for applicants with preserved rights to move from a flat to a house under the previous allocations scheme. There were no changes recommended for medical, homeless households, lacking one bedroom or sharing accommodation, or to bedroom sizes banding within the Housing Allocation Scheme 2022.

The Committee

- received confirmation that there had been issues with the turnaround of voids, but this had been rectified.
- were advised that there was a high probability that the 102 tenants with preserved rights would be able to move from a flat to a house
- were reminded that applicants tended have more complex needs than a single dimension such as age.
- reminded that change was made in September 2022 and that the recommended change was about bringing parity into the system.

Resolved:

The Committee provided comment on the draft cabinet report.

CHAIRMAN