

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL CABINET MEETING MINUTES

Monday 15 January 2024, 7.00 pm - 7.15 pm

Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Members Present:	Councillors C Whitbread (Chairman), N Bedford (Vice-Chairman), R Balcombe, S Patel, J Philip, H Whitbread and K Williamson
Other Councillors:	Councillor R Brookes
Other Councillors (Virtually):	Councillors E Gabbett, S Heap, C McCredie and D Wixley
Apologies:	None.
Officers In Attendance:	Surjit Balu (Interim Housing and Property Director), Natalie Cole (Corporate Communications Officer), Vivienne Messenger (Democratic Services Officer), Rebecca Moreton (Corporate Communications Officer), Andrew Small (Strategic Director, Corporate and Section 151 Officer) and James Warwick (Service Director (Contracts, Partnerships and Procurement))
Officers In Attendance (Virtually):	Georgina Blakemore (Chief Executive), Jennifer Gould (Strategic Director and Chief Operating Officer) and Therese Larsen (Democratic Services Officer)

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

85 WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Leader of Council made a short address to remind everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the internet, and would be capable of repeated viewing, which could infringe their human and data protection rights.

86 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

87 MINUTES

That the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 4 and 18 December 2023 be taken as read and signed by the Leader as a correct record.

88 REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

(a) Leader Portfolio

Councillor C Whitbread announced that Councillor S Kane for personal and health reasons had left the Cabinet with immediate effect. He thanked Councillor S Kane for all his work over the years as a Cabinet member recognising the work he had achieved and wished him well. The Leader continued that he would announce in due course when he had reorganised the

Customer and Corporate Support Services portfolio holder responsibilities within the existing Cabinet members.

(b) Regulatory Services Portfolio

Councillor K Williamson reported that as the Council had not received any responses against the Taxi Tariff consultation, the increase in tariffs would go ahead as planned but would be reviewed annually.

(c) Housing and Strategic Health Partnerships

Councillor H Whitbread advised that as a result of Government funding the Council was retrofitting some of the more rural Council housing stock.

(d) Contracts, Service Delivery and Improvement

Councillor R Balcombe was pleased to report the efficient refuse clear up after the Christmas break. Councillor C Whitbread also thanked the Waste Management team and Biffa for their work on this despite the inclement weather.

89 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE CABINET

The Cabinet noted that no public questions or requests to address the Cabinet had been received for consideration at the meeting.

90 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The Chairman of the Committee, Councillor D Wixley, reported that the agenda for the next meeting had been published and the Committee would be reviewing the 2023/24 Quarter 3 Corporate Performance Report, Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring Report 2023/24 and the Draft Budget 2024/25 at the meeting on 23 January 2024.

91 EMERGENCY ALARM UPGRADE

Councillor H Whitbread (Housing and Strategic Health Partnerships) advised the Council must upgrade the emergency alarm system in their independent living schemes that operated on the public switched telephone network (PSTN), as the analogue telephone lines were being discontinued by November 2025. The Council would then move to using a digital IP network. The Council had been working with the Telecare Services Association (TSA) to procure a new emergency alarm system. In addition, the current emergency alarm monitoring contract with Tunstall Response was due to expire in 2025, so the Council also had to undertake a tender exercise to procure a new monitoring provider for its emergency alarm systems.

Councillor R Brookes remarked that this had previously been done in-house and then the Council had switched to a telecare system that was Essex-wide. Councillor H Whitbread acknowledged this was the case. The Interim Housing Services Director, S Balu, continued that the TSA had recommended hard wired alarm upgrades for the Council's independent living schemes and the Council currently provided a dispersed alarm to older people living in the community. It was more cost effective to have an external provider in terms of upgrades and repairs and other people could sign up externally who were not in independent living.

The report set out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendation and the decision.

Decision:

- (1) That the Cabinet noted the Council was working with TSA (Telecare Services Association) the representative body for technology enabled care (TEC) services to procure a new emergency alarm system for the Council's independent living schemes, and designated dwellings for older people in the community following the termination of the contract with Doro & Everon in January 2023.
- (2) That the Cabinet noted the alarm monitoring contract with Tunstall Response was due for renewal in 2025, and that a tender exercise was underway to procure new emergency alarm systems and an alarm monitoring service for the Council's independent living schemes and designated dwellings for older people in the community, to ensure work was completed in readiness for the digital switchover in 2025.

92 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was noted that there was no other urgent business for consideration by the Cabinet.

93 PROCUREMENT OF WASTE FLEET VEHICLES

Councillor R Balcombe (Contracts, Service Delivery and Improvement Portfolio Holder) introduced the report. For EFDC to manage its statutory duties in relation to domestic and commercial waste collections from November 2024 after the current waste contract ended, the Council must procure a new fleet of vehicles. Contract hire was the preferred method of procurement, and the advantages (detailed in the report) included greater flexibility to change vehicles, ability to use greener, cleaner vehicles when affordable and the ability to include vehicle maintenance at the Operations Hub at North Weald Airfield. All environmentally friendly options had been considered.

Councillor J Philip (Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder) remarked that he was pleased the Council was heading down the leasing option. This was a sensible approach since waste vehicles typically only lasted for around 8 years. The Contracts, Partnerships and Procurement Service Director, J Warwick, added that 8 years was the right length of time for the contract from a financial point of view, as 8 years was better value for money. A thorough maintenance package was to be provided. Also, street cleaning vehicles would be swapped after 4 years.

The report set out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendation and the decision.

Decision:

- (1) That Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) award an 8-year contract hire and vehicle maintenance agreement to Specialist Fleet Services (SFS) to provide EFDC with vehicles and the maintenance of provided vehicles within the agreed financial cap which could be found in restricted Appendix A.
- (2) That officers and advisers were instructed to finalise negotiations with SFS with a view to placing an order by 1st February 2024 subject to Leader, Portfolio Holder, and Section 151 Officer approval.

94 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

That the Cabinet noted the exclusion of the Public and Press was not required during the consideration of the item on the Procurement of waste fleet vehicles, as Appendix A was not specifically questioned.

CHAIRMAN