

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Asset Management and Economic Development Cabinet Committee **Date:** Thursday, 12 February 2015

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 6.00 - 6.55 pm

Members Present: Councillors Mrs A Grigg (Chairman), W Breare-Hall (Vice-Chairman), Ms H Kane, Ms S Stavrou and C Whitbread

Other Councillors: Councillors D Stallan, Mrs J H Whitehouse and J M Whitehouse

Apologies:

Officers Present: D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), C Pasterfield (Assistant Director (Asset Management and Economic Development)), M Warr (Economic Development Officer), Q Buller (Tourism Development Manager), S Tautz (Democratic Services Manager) and S Mitchell (PR Website Editor)

35. 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.

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(a) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor H Kane declared a personal interest in agenda item 5, Economic Development Report, item 2, Waltham Abbey studies and agenda item 7, Asset Management Co-Ordination Group Report, item 10, Town Mead Depot by virtue of being a member of Waltham Abbey Town Council. The Councillor had determined that her interest was non-pecuniary and would remain in the meeting for the consideration of the issue.

(b) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor W Breare-Hall declared a personal interest in agenda item 7, Asset Management Co-Ordination Group Report, item 4, St John's Road by virtue of being a member of Epping Town Council and a resident of Epping. The Councillor had determined that his interest was non-pecuniary and would remain in the meeting for the consideration of the issue.

(c) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor J M Whitehouse declared a personal interest in agenda item 7, Asset Management Co-ordination Group Report, item 4, St John's Road by virtue of being a member of Epping Town Council and a resident of St John's Road, Epping. The Councillor had determined that his interest was non-pecuniary but would leave the meeting if the discussion became too detailed.

37. MINUTES

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2014 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

38. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TEAM PROGRESS REPORT

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

(1) **Staffing** – The recruitment campaign had now begun for two Assistant Asset Management and Economic Development Officers. The positions had been advertised and the process should be completed by the end of March 2015 and the successful applicants in post shortly thereafter.

(2) **Waltham Abbey studies** – Final draft reports had now been received from each of the Consultants that had been commissioned to carry out work on various themes throughout Waltham Abbey. The focus was now on:

a. Collating the information from the reports to tell a coherent story of Waltham Abbey, what the town faces and what might be needed to develop the town in the future; and

b. To determine how well the approach used for Waltham Abbey would fit other towns in the district and whether a different approach would be adopted in other towns in the district.

(3) **Essex Superfast Broadband** – Considerable work had been undertaken to push forward the Superfast Essex broadband project in so far as it impacts on the Epping Forest District. The rural eastern part of the Epping Forest District has been chosen as the location for the Superfast Essex Phase 2 rural challenge project, EFDC had been working closely with Essex County Council to take this forward.

There was a £2m public investment coming into the Epping Forest District to provide up to 95% coverage of the district with Superfast Broadband and there would be broadband speeds of up to 24mb per second which would be accessible to all service providers.

(4) **Tourism development** – The new tourism development manager Quentin Buller was present tonight to talk about Tourism in the District.

(5) **The Lea Valley Food Taskforce** – Following initial groundwork by the Taskforce the development of an NVQ aimed towards the glass house Industry was being funded by Essex County Council and developed by Epping Forest College.

(6) **Business support** – Regarding the proposals for a growth hub for Essex a formal grant offer for this development was still awaited from the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills. We hope to be in a better position to report back at the next meeting.

(7) **Working with Essex County Council** – A meeting between Senior Economic Development Officers within Essex County Council and Epping Forest

District Council to discuss economic development matters had been postponed and would be rescheduled in the near future.

(8) **Partner Liaison** – There was nothing further to report.

Resolved:

That the progress and work programme of the Council's Economic Development Section be noted.

Reasons for Decision:

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

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

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

39. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The Chairman introduced the new Tourism Development Manager for Visit Epping Forest, Quentin Buller and welcomed him to the meeting.

The Tourism Development Manager advised the Cabinet Committee that he had been in the post since November 2014 and had a few projects underway.

(1) **Database**

Mr Buller advised that he had put a database together, in order to scope the kind of businesses in the district which were tourism and visitor related. There were approximately 150 businesses on the database and all of their email addresses had been captured in order to build up a communication channel and keep them updated as to what was going on in the District.

(2) **Tourism Conference**

A Tourism Conference had been organised for the 20 March 2015 which would be hosted by the Marriott Hotel in Waltham Abbey. The idea behind the conference was to get as many businesses together from the district and advise them of events that were happening in the district and to get networking going with each other and the various guest speakers that would be attending.

(3) **Jazz Festival**

The National Jazz Archives were held in the Library in Loughton and we were looking into the possibility of holding a Jazz Festival in the district at the end of this year. Looking at other Jazz Festivals that took place in the country, there was nothing held near to the Epping Forest District. This was an exciting prospect and it was hoped that it would grow in the future.

(4) **Food Fayre**

The Marriott Hotel, Waltham Abbey have been in contact and advised that they would like to hold a Food Fair in July 2015, to promote local foods in the District.

They would like to arrange the Food Fair in conjunction with the Tourism Group and use our contacts with local businesses to promote the Fair.

(5) **Website**

The Tourism website, visiteppingforest.org, was under constant development and the number of people visiting the website was growing. The most popular page on the website was the What's On page which was created in conjunction with the Waltham Abbey Tourist Information Centre. There had been many requests from people asking to list their events on our What's On page.

A member's part of the website had now been created where the gathered information would go out to the membership. Another job of the Tourism Conference was to widen the membership and acquire people and businesses to sign up to the group. The core groups were:

- Epping Ongar Railways
- Lea Valley Parks
- Royal Gunpowder Mills
- The Corporation of London
- Waltham Abbey

Visit Essex carried out a survey and the data, which was important to the local district, would be published on the website. We would be launching our own survey shortly to local businesses, this would be along the same lines as the Visit Essex survey.

(6) **Visit Essex**

A mapping exercise was being carried out of all the hotel rooms in the district to get a view of the available accommodation. It was noted that the district were strong on the day visitors but seemed to be weak on the overnight stays due to the lack of hotel accommodation in the district.

The Council need to build stronger links with outside organisations especially Visit Essex, we were members of Visit Essex and our district had a very high number of members of that organisation.

Today a tour of the District took place with Councillor Boyce, Chairman of Epping Forest District Council and George Kieffer, Chairman of Visit Essex. All of the major tour locations were visited and hopefully this had given Mr Kieffer a much better picture of what goes on in the Epping Forest District.

North Weald Airfield

Councillor Stallan stated that it was this Council's wish to retain aviation at North Weald and also increase revenue by holding events at the airfield. He asked Mr Buller if he was intending to promote North Weald and recruit organisations into holding events at the airfield.

Mr Buller advised that he had visited the airfield and thought it was an attractive destination with plenty of space to hold events. He stated North Weald would be a good destination to hold the Jazz Festival and he would contact the Airfield in the near future.

40. ASSET MANAGEMENT CO-ORDINATION GROUP REPORT

The Cabinet Committee noted a report from the Asset Management Co-ordination Group on the progress made with the development of the Council's property assets.

The Assistant Director, Asset Management & Economic Development reported orally on further progress which had been achieved since the matters had been considered by the Group.

(1) **Epping Forest Shopping Park** – An application for the release of reserve matters had now been submitted to the EFDC Development Control Department. The Section 278 improvement works to Chigwell Lane had been submitted for planning approval which was hoped to proceed smoothly. The Epping Forest Shopping Park was closely linked with our Oakwood Hill Depot as this was where most of the Langston Road services would be relocated.

(2) **Oakwood Hill Depot** – There were 20 conditions relating to the planning permissions and an application for release of those reserve matters have been recently made. The site had been cleared and building contractors would be appointed and be on site by June 2015.

(3) **Pyrls Lane Nursery** – There were a number of issues identified with regard to the access road to the Nursery. A solution had now been found and a planning application would be submitted in the near future.

(4) **St John's Road** – A draft contract has been issued to the prospective developer and details with regard to the land owned by ECC and involving Lyndsey house was progressing smoothly.

(5) **North Weald Airfield** – Savills have been appointed as consultants with regard to the business aviation side of the Airfield and they were producing a brochure which would result in a marketing exercise. Through this exercise we would be able to ascertain what level of interest there was out there, which was hoped would be strong, as this was a very specialised area.

(6) **Torrington Drive** – The Broadway Post Office was looking to relocate to another location in the Broadway. The unit would then become available to the Council and the possibility of opening up the side of the building and extending it could be explored. This would make the building a lot more attractive and further enhance the link between the Broadway and Debden tube station.

There had been no further progress to report regarding TFL and the redevelopment of the station car park.

(7) **Winston Churchill Public House** – The Deed of Variation was progressing with the Solicitors. The Council believed that this was the correct way to document the agreement and draft documents would be issued soon.

The Garages in Vere Road were ready to demolish, subject to making sure electrical installations on the site were safe.

(8) **Broadway Car Parks / Burton Road Depot** – A number of sites were being considered by the Communities Directorate and work to demolish the small jewellery shop to improve the access to the Burton Road car park was progressing.

(9) **Lindsey House Epping** – is now part of the St Johns development with ECC and is progressing.

(10) **Town Mead Depot** – The architects Pellings LLP had prepared a scheme for the raised part of the site only, as the adjoining fields were subject to flooding, which would be discussed with the other parties that were involved. The site was subject to flooding issues and Peter Brett Associates had been employed as consultants to consider the flooding issues.

(11) **Leader Lodge** – As reported at the last meeting the sale of this site has now been completed.

Resolved:

That the monitoring report on the development of the Council's property assets be noted.

Reasons for Decision:

To comply with the Cabinet Committee's request to monitor the development of the Council's property assets periodically.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

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

41. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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

42. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Cabinet Committee noted that there were no items of business on the agenda that necessitated the exclusion of the public and press from the meeting.

CHAIRMAN