

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF STRONGER PLACE SELECT COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2019
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.00 - 7.26 PM**

Members Present:	D Sunger (Chairman), S Heather (Vice-Chairman), R Brookes, L Burrows, J Jennings, S Jones, H Kane, C McCredie, R Morgan, S Neville and D Stocker
Other members present:	N Bedford, S Kane, A Patel, J Philip and H Whitbread
Apologies for Absence:	I Hadley, H Kauffman, J McIvor and C Whitbread
Officers Present	S Jevans (Interim Strategic Director), J Houston (Strategic Partnership Specialist and Economic Lead), J Nolan (Service Director (Commercial & Regulatory Services)), V Messenger (Democratic Services Officer) and G Woodhall (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

12. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman made a short address to remind all present that the meeting would be broadcast on the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

13. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following substitutions were reported:

That Councillor D Stocker was substituting for Councillor I Hadley;

That Councillor H Kane was substituting for Councillor J McIvor; and

That Councillor R Brookes was substituting for Councillor H Kauffman.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- (a) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor C McCredie declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 8, St John's Road Development, by virtue of the being a member of Epping Town Council.

15. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the last meeting of the Stronger Place Select Committee held on 4 July 2019 be agreed subject to the following amendment to Terms of Reference and Work Programme (b) Work Programme (Min no 4), to read:

Councillor S Neville asked about progress the Council was making in withdrawing single-use plastics.

Councillor S Kane, Portfolio Holder (Customer Services), said that going forward, reusable flasks would be issued to all councillors as there would be a water fountain in the Members Room and another in the Chamber.

Councillor S Neville asked further about single use plastics generally and whether this was going to be reviewed by the Council since the loss of its Environmental Co-ordinator. The Chairman replied that this would be covered later in the meeting.

16. TERMS OF REFERENCE & WORK PROGRAMME

(a) Terms of Reference

The Select Committee noted the Terms of Reference.

(b) Work Programme

It was noted that item 6, Green agenda, would be updated and going to the Select Committee's next meeting on 9 December 2019.

17. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY CONSULTATION

J Houston, Specialist Manager (Strategic Partnerships) was in attendance.

'Nurturing Growth', the Economic Development Strategy consultation document had initially been consulted on with stakeholders in April / May 2019. As feedback from respondents for a further consultation had also been supported by Cabinet members, this had commenced in early September 2019.

A stakeholder consultation event on 13 November was being publicised and invitations were being sent to a wide range of stakeholders. If members knew of any interested parties such as local groups, individuals or organisations, they should let J Houston know. Elected members would be welcome to attend the event. The aim was to achieve a representative, cross-section of people both from within the District and from those whose work impacted on the District. This would help to go into depth on some of the key issues of the economic development strategy and gain as many responses as possible.

Following this event, a report outlining the key proposals arising from the event, as well as associated funding and resource implications, would be presented to Cabinet for consideration in December 2019.

RESOLVED:

That the Select Committee noted the new timeframe for further consultation on the Council's Economic Development Strategy.

18. ST JOHN'S ROAD DEVELOPMENT AND NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD MASTERPLAN

(a) St John's Road Development

Progress was ongoing and a number of meetings had been held since the last update. This was mainly around the alignment of the project brief with the Submission Version of the Local Plan and with the project management consultants, White, Young and Green. A planning meeting had also been held yesterday.

Negotiations had taken place with Epping Town Council and their portion of the site. A soft market testing exercise by property consultants Derek Wade Walters had been undertaken to validate the requirement of the development brief to incorporate a retail element.

To align with the Local Plan Submission Version, a survey of vehicle parking had been undertaken. There would be a reduction in parking provision as there was an excess of parking available within the vicinity of this site. On the advice of the project manager, a building condition survey was to be carried out on some of the existing buildings including the main school building.

A Cabinet member workshop for the St John's Road Development would be hosted by White Young and Green on 24 September 2019. Public consultation and key partner engagement sessions would follow to enable the development project to be reviewed by the Quality Review Panel on 4 October 2019. A report on the key decisions could then go to Cabinet on 5 December 2019.

Councillor R Brookes explained that some Epping residents had contacted her regarding Epping Sports Centre. Since the Council had published the Local Plan Submission Version in December 2017, the Sports Consultancy had been commissioned and produced a report that had included approximately 120 car spaces. However, there now seemed to be a contradiction with the parking provision. J Nolan replied there were requirements to reduce parking spaces under the Submission Version of the Local Plan. Other changes had also been made as originally there was going to be a supermarket on the site but that had fallen through with the company. Therefore, a balance between the Local Plan Submission Version requirement to reduce parking spaces and the St John's Road development was trying to be achieved so there was no net gain of spaces, and the 'step' capacity was being assessed.

Councillor J Philip remarked about the mitigating impact on Epping Forest air quality in relation to the number of vehicle movements. An agreement had not been reached yet with Natural England on that mitigation. The Council was trying to keep an equivalent number of parking spaces and, with the use of the existing car parks, be creative so that there was a balancing effect because the more spaces there were, would lead to more car journeys and thus more air pollution. He would like to see more use of public transport and people walking to the sports centre as it was in a sustainable, central location in the town.

Councillor C McCredie asked about the main school building, whether it would be demolished or was sustainable, and where the negotiations were currently between the Council and Epping Town Council regarding Epping Hall. J Nolan replied that regarding conversion of the buildings, a building condition survey had been commissioned to look at building structures and an asbestos survey. Meetings with the Town Council were arranged as and when they were needed. The Town Council was seeking another meeting but he could not reveal further information about the current negotiations underway.

(b) North Weald Airfield Masterplan

The masterplan consultants, Turner and Townsend, had been appointed by the Chief Executive after a tender exercise had been completed. These consultants had carried out a runway survey of the North Weald Airfield around 2011. The first meeting would take place on 25 September. A further progress report would be made to the Stronger Place Select Committee in December 2019.

RESOLVED

That the report providing an update on progress with the Str John's Road Development and the North Weald Airfield Masterplan was noted.

19. LOCAL PLAN - UPDATE ON PROGRESS

Cabinet report (C-006-2019/20), Implementation of the Local Plan, provided an update on the progress that had been made in the following areas:

- Strategic Masterplans and Concept Frameworks;
- projects reviewed by the Quality Review Panel in 2018-19;
- Developer Contributions update on the Section 106 agreements completed in the financial year 2018-19; and the
- current position of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Councillor S Neville asked if it was appropriate that the masterplan sites for Jessel Green (Loughton) and Limes Farm Estate (Chigwell) were still listed in the Local Plan. The Planning Services Portfolio Holder, Councillor J Philip, said that the date of the report, 11 July 2019, was before the Council received the Inspector's letter and therefore, would not expect to see masterplans for those sites. Planning Policy had not finished processing the comments.

Councillor R Morgan asked when S106 agreements were paid? Councillor J Philip replied that it depended on the legal agreement. The ability of the developer to pay depended on when payments had been scheduled. There was always the possibility that a developer could go into administration if payments were made before the properties were sold. S106 agreements were legal agreements that needed to be discharged and were issued with planning permissions. The Council had a S106 Officer now to pursue monies owed, but there was always the possibility that a problem might arise, and with Local Plan viability it should make it easier.

Councillor S Neville asked about progress on the current negotiations with Natural England around the air quality mitigation strategy, as there had been hold-ups. How near to an agreed strategy was the Council? Councillor J Philip replied that Natural England had agreed with the Council but did not favour one or other of the viewpoints of the Habitats Regulations between the Council and Natural England. The guidance the Inspector had given in August 2019 was in her letter, which was to meet and agree, and this would happen. However, more work was required on a significant number of changes to the Habitat Regulations since the public examination of the Local Plan at the hearings. He had hoped it would have been resolved. All the indications received from Natural England leading up to the hearings was that Natural England had been in agreement with the Council's methodology, but at the hearings this had completely turned around and he could not say when it would be resolved but was trying to achieve this.

20. DATE OF FUTURE MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Select Committee would be held on 9 December 2019 at 7.00pm.