



POLICY AND INFORMATION UPDATE

**Thursday, 27 October 2011
Issue 08 2011/12**

Performance Improvement Unit

Email: performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/local_democracy/Performance

1. POLICY AND INFORMATION UPDATE

The Policy and Information Update is published on a regular basis, to highlight announcements, publications and consultation documents issued by the Government and other relevant agencies and public bodies, which directly affect the work of the Council. The Update is designed to ensure that relevant matters, which often have corporate as well as service specific implications, are drawn to the attention of the appropriate Portfolio Holders, Service Directors and other members and officers.

The Policy and Information Update provides a brief summary of new and emerging issues, and contains links to the full versions of publications and consultation documents etc. The update also provides details of forthcoming events of relevance to the Council's activities. Whilst Members, Directors and managers may already be aware of issues specific to particular services, functions, responsibilities or interests, the Policy and Information Update is intended to raise corporate awareness of relevant matters and to ensure that nothing of importance to the Council is overlooked.

If members or officers wish to discuss any of the items published in the Policy and Information Update, or require further information or reports on specific issues, they should contact the relevant Service Director in the first instance. Comments or suggestions in respect of the format and content of the Update can be made to the Performance Improvement Unit at performance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk.

PART A - NEWS ITEMS

2. NEW FUNDING BOOST FOR HOMELESS HOSTELS (12 OCTOBER 2011)

Housing Minister Grant Shapps has announced a major cash boost to improve homeless hostels across the country.

Funding of £37.5m for the Homelessness Change Programme has been allocated to help 37 projects improve facilities for rough sleepers and provide almost 1,200 extra bed spaces, including over 320 extra beds in the London area, as well as helping people find employment. Speaking at the No Second Night Out Conference, Mr. Shapps said that in view of the high demand for the funding, a further £5million will be allocated to the Homelessness Change Programme, with further allocations to be announced very shortly. He added that this funding will be for councils, charities and housing associations to help transform the lives of people sleeping rough, helping them break the cycle of homelessness and get their lives back on track.

Of interest to:
Housing Portfolio Holder
Director of Housing

3. COMMUNITIES TO GET NEW PLANNING POWERS TO BRING JOBS AND HOMES TO THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD (13 OCTOBER 2011)

New planning powers giving communities the ability to shape the character of their neighbourhood, have been published for consultation by Decentralisation Minister Greg Clark.

Neighbourhood Planning will for the first time give communities a real voice in deciding the look and feel of development in their area. Local people will be able to have their say on the location of new homes, the design of buildings, the shops they want to see in the High Street, and the green spaces that should be protected. The new powers being introduced in the Localism Bill will also give local people the power to decide the types of development that can be granted automatic planning permission, through a Neighbourhood Development Order. The regulations being published for consultation make clear how a neighbourhood area will be defined, how to set up the forums that will propose plans, and will also outline the requirements for establishing a Neighbourhood Development Order. The closing date for response to the consultation is 5 January 2012.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/planningregulationsconsultation>

An easy to understand guide to Neighbourhood Planning has also been published, to make it easier for communities to use the new powers.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/introductionneighbourplanning>

Of interest to:
Planning and Technology Portfolio Holder Director of Planning and Economic Development All Members

4. JOINING FORCES TO FIGHT FRAUD (12 OCTOBER 2011)

Thirty-seven organisations have joined forces to launch 'Fighting Fraud Together', a new strategy that aims to reduce fraud, a crime estimated to cost the UK £38 billion every year.

It is the first time that government, industry, voluntary groups and law enforcement agencies have joined together on such a large scale to sign a joint commitment to tackle fraud. All thirty-seven partners that have signed up to Fighting Fraud Together will contribute to and be accountable for its success. Fighting Fraud Together and its accompanying action plan place strong emphasis on preventing fraud through greater fraud awareness and self protection, combined with stronger government and industry prevention systems and controls.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/agencies-public-bodies/nfa/fighting-fraud-tog/fighting-fraud-together>

Of interest to:

Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder Director of Finance and ICT All Members

5. COUNCILS TO HELP BUSINESSES TACKLE WASTE (19 OCTOBER 2011)

Helping small to medium sized businesses meet their waste management responsibilities and recycle more is the aim of a newly launched commitment.

The new voluntary Local Authority Business Recycling and Waste Collection Commitment has been developed by the Local Government Association in partnership with Defra and the Government's waste advisor, WRAP. It seeks to formalise the way councils work with local businesses, particularly small to medium sized enterprises, to outline the level of service that can be expected and to encourage good waste disposal practices. The commitment includes a pledge from local authorities to provide regular and reliable collections for businesses which require them. Councils will also be able to commit to offering advice on saving money by preventing waste, providing help donating unwanted items and buying second-hand goods and allowing access to certain household waste recycling centres. Businesses are responsible for disposing of their own waste and recycling. In most cases this involves paying the local authority or another waste service provider to collect and deal with their rubbish.

http://www.wrap.org.uk/local_authorities/business_recycling.html

Of interest to:

Environment Portfolio Holder Director of Environment and Street Scene
--

6. GOVERNMENT MOVES AHEAD WITH PLANS TO ABOLISH REGIONAL PLANS AND PROTECT THE GREEN BELT (20 OCTOBER 2011)

Pressure to build on the Green Belt is being removed with the revocation of Regional Plans according to environmental assessments recently published.

The Coalition Government is committed, through the Localism Bill now passing through Parliament, to abolish Regional Plans which imposed housing targets on local communities and put pressure on councils to cut the Green Belt in 30 towns across the country. The process of returning decision-making powers on housing and planning to local communities has moved up a gear with the publication of environmental assessments of the revocation of each Plan for consultation. The reports make it clear that revoking Regional Plans will mean there is less top down pressure on communities to review Green Belt. Subject to Royal Assent of the Bill

and the environmental assessments, the final abolition of each individual Regional Plan will be commenced after the assessment process has been completed.

Of interest to:

Planning and Technology Portfolio Holder Director of Planning and Economic Development

7. GRANT SHAPPS CALLS ON SOCIAL LANDLORDS TO HELP TENANTS REDUCE ENERGY BILLS (24 OCTOBER 2011)

Housing Minister Grant Shapps has called on councils and housing associations across the country to help their tenants during this time of high energy prices, by taking steps that could save each tenant up to £500 a year on energy bills and create thousands of jobs in local communities.

With the countdown to the Government's Green Deal initiative underway, the Minister urged social landlords to make a positive difference to their tenants' lives by using existing funding models to start their own 'Pay As You Save' scheme, making homes in their area warmer and more comfortable to live in, and at the same time cheaper to run. Mr. Shapps pointed to pioneer projects, similar to the Green Deal, which have already started and could be replicated elsewhere. In the largest scheme of its kind in Manchester, the Social Homes Ecofit scheme means improvements such as solid wall insulation and better heating systems are being made to up to 9,000 social homes to make them more energy efficient, at no upfront cost. The upgrades could save tenants up to £500 per year on energy bills, and at the same time create more than 1,800 jobs and bring a £100 million boost to businesses in Manchester carrying out the home improvements. Mr. Shapps now wants other social landlords to follow their lead, and use every opportunity to improve the lives of their tenants and at the same time bring a much needed economic boost to local economies.

Of interest to:

Housing Portfolio Holder Director of Housing

PART B - REPORTS & PUBLICATIONS

8. COMMUNITY BUDGETS PROSPECTUS (17 OCTOBER 2011)

This Department for Communities and Local Government prospectus invites local areas to apply to be new Community Budget pilots to test how they can better design local services.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/communitybudgetsprospectus>

Of interest to:

Leader
Acting Chief Executive

9. NEW CABINET MANUAL TO BE ULTIMATE USER'S GUIDE TO GOVERNMENT (24 OCTOBER 2011)

The ultimate user's guide to government, setting out how central Government works, has been published by the Prime Minister.

The Cabinet Manual will for the first time provide a guide to the laws, conventions and rules on the operation of Government. The Manual is designed primarily as a user's guide but has the potential to become a useful reference tool for all those with an interest in the workings of Government.

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/cabinet-manual>

Of interest to:

All Members
All Officers

PART C - CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

10. LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPITAL FINANCE SYSTEM - PROPOSED CHANGES (11 OCTOBER 2011)

This Department for Communities and Local Government consultation seeks views on the government's proposed amendments to the capital finance regulations and Minimum Revenue Provision guidance. The closing date for response to the consultation is 22 November 2011.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/capitalfinancechangescons>

Of interest to:

Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder
Director of Finance and ICT

11. RELAXATION OF LICENSING HOURS FOR THE QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE (12 OCTOBER 2011)

This Home Office consultation seeks views on the proposals to make a licensing hours order under Section 172 of the Licensing Act 2003 to mark the occasion of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in June 2012. The closing date for response to the consultation is 1 December 2011.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/about-us/consultations/jubilee-licensing/>

Of interest to:

Safer, Greener and Highways Portfolio Holder Director of Environment and Street Scene
--

PART D - CONFERENCES & EVENTS

12. LGA LICENSING CONFERENCE

Since the Licensing Act was introduced in 2003, councils have worked closely with businesses and communities to create prosperous night time economies and encourage safe entertainment for all.

The existing approach to both alcohol and entertainment licensing is due to change enormously. After strong lobbying from the Local Government Association (LGA), the Police and Social Responsibility Act brings the opportunity for councils to set local licence fees and sets them the challenge of becoming Responsible Authorities. The Government is also consulting on whether entertainment events with less than 5000 attendees can be deregulated.

The LGA Licensing Conference on 26 January 2012 in London, is a unique chance to understand what these changes will mean for councils. The event will comprise key speakers from local government, central government, industry and local communities, as well as provide an opportunity for attendees to learn from each other in workshop sessions. Key topics will include the Police and Social Responsibility Act, local licence fees, Responsible Authorities, Late Night Levy, Temporary Event Notices, licence conditions, deregulation of entertainment events and interesting developments on taxi licensing.

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/events/display-event.do?id=20409561>

Of interest to:

Safer, Greener and Highways Portfolio Holder Director of Corporate Support Services Director of Environment and Street Scene
--