



CABINET
Monday, 1st December, 2014

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Cabinet**, which will be held at:

Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping
on Monday, 1st December, 2014
at 7.00 pm .

Glen Chipp
Chief Executive

Democratic Services
Officer

Gary Woodhall
The Directorate of Governance
Tel: 01992 564470
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Members:

Councillors C Whitbread (Leader of the Council) (Chairman), Ms S Stavrou (Deputy Leader and Finance Portfolio Holder) (Vice-Chairman), R Bassett, W Breare-Hall, Mrs A Grigg, D Stallan, G Waller, Ms H Kane, A Lion and J Philip

<p>PLEASE NOTE THE START TIME OF THE MEETING</p>

1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

- (a) This meeting is to be webcast;
- (b) Members are reminded of the need to activate their microphones before speaking; and
- (c) the Chairman will read the following announcement:

"I would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be broadcast live to the Internet and will be capable of subsequent repeated viewing, with copies of the recording being made available for those that request it.

By being present at this meeting, it is likely that the recording cameras will capture your image and this will result in your image becoming part of the broadcast.

You should be aware that this may infringe your human and data protection rights. If you have any concerns then please speak to the Webcasting Officer.

Please could I also remind Members to activate their microphones before speaking.”

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Director of Governance) To be announced at the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Director of Governance) To declare interests in any item on this agenda.

4. MINUTES

To confirm the minutes of the last meeting of the Cabinet held on 3 November 2014 (previously circulated).

5. REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

To receive oral reports from Portfolio Holders on current issues concerning their Portfolios, which are not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

To answer questions asked by members of the public after notice in accordance with the motion passed by the Council at its meeting on 19 February 2013 (minute 105(iii) refers) on any matter in relation to which the Cabinet has powers or duties or which affects the District.

7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

(a) To consider any matters of concern to the Cabinet arising from the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function.

(b) To consider any matters that the Cabinet would like the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function to examine as part of their work programme.

8. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2015/16 (Pages 5 - 12)

(Finance Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C-044-2014/15).

9. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2014/15 - 2018/19 (Pages 13 - 28)

(Finance Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C-047-2014/15).

10. CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR CIVIC OFFICE CLOSURE (Pages 29 - 60)

(Technology & Support Services Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C-042-2014/15).

11. RESTRUCTURE OF THE BENEFITS DIVISION (Pages 61 - 68)

(Finance Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C043-2014/15).

12. RESTRUCTURE OF THE INTERNAL AUDIT UNIT AND CREATION OF A CORPORATE FRAUD TEAM (Pages 69 - 78)

(Governance & Development Management Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C-052-2014/15).

13. PRIVATE PILOT'S LICENCE TRAINING - NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD (Pages 79 - 82)

(Asset Management & Economic Development Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C-045-2014/15).

14. CORPORATE PLAN KEY OBJECTIVES 2014/15 - QUARTER II PROGRESS (Pages 83 - 98)

(Leader of the Council) To consider the attached report (C-046-2014/15).

15. LONDON STANSTED CAMBRIDGE CONSORTIUM SUBSCRIPTION (Pages 99 - 104)

(Leader of the Council) To consider the attached report (C-050-2014/15).

16. GET ACTIVE EPPING FOREST (Pages 105 - 110)

(Leisure & Community Services Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C-048-2014/15).

17. TOWN CENTRES FUND (Pages 111 - 116)

(Asset Management & Economic Development Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C-049-2014/15).

18. CALENDAR OF COUNCIL MEETINGS 2015/16 (Pages 117 - 124)

(Technology & Support Services Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C-051-2014/15).

19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, together with paragraphs (6) and (24) of the Council Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution require that the permission of the Chairman be obtained, after prior notice to the Chief Executive, before urgent business not specified in the agenda (including a supplementary agenda of which the statutory period of notice has been given) may be transacted.

In accordance with Operational Standing Order 6 (non-executive bodies), any item raised by a non-member shall require the support of a member of the Committee concerned and the Chairman of that Committee. Two weeks' notice of non-urgent items is required.

20. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESSExclusion

To consider whether, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press should be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below on grounds that they will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the following paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) or are confidential under Section 100(A)(2):

Agenda Item No	Subject	Exempt Information Paragraph Number
Nil	Nil	Nil

The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, which came into effect on 1 March 2006, requires the Council to consider whether maintaining the exemption listed above outweighs the potential public interest in disclosing the information. Any member who considers that this test should be applied to any currently exempted matter on this agenda should contact the proper officer at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Confidential Items Commencement

Paragraph 9 of the Council Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution require:

- (1) All business of the Council requiring to be transacted in the presence of the press and public to be completed by 10.00 p.m. at the latest.
- (2) At the time appointed under (1) above, the Chairman shall permit the completion of debate on any item still under consideration, and at his or her discretion, any other remaining business whereupon the Council shall proceed to exclude the public and press.
- (3) Any public business remaining to be dealt with shall be deferred until after the completion of the private part of the meeting, including items submitted for report rather than decision.

Background Papers

Paragraph 8 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Constitution define background papers as being documents relating to the subject matter of the report which in the Proper Officer's opinion:

- (a) disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based; and
- (b) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report and does not include published works or those which disclose exempt or confidential information (as defined in Rule 10) and in respect of executive reports, the advice of any political advisor.

Inspection of background papers may be arranged by contacting the officer responsible for the item.

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-044-2014/15
Date of meeting: 1 December 2014



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Finance
Subject: Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2015/16
Responsible Officer: Janet Twinn (01992 564215).
Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the Cabinet note the responses to the consultation on the scheme for 2015/16; and
- (2) That in view of the consultation responses and the experience of the first two years of the scheme, no changes be made to the scheme for 2015/16, other than the annual uprating of premiums, allowances, non-dependant deductions and any changes to the national pension age scheme that need to be reflected in the Council's scheme.

Executive Summary:

As part of the major changes to the Welfare Benefits system, from 31 March 2013 Council Tax Benefit ended and was replaced by a new scheme called Local Council Tax Support (LCTS). A key principle of the scheme was the protection of people who are of an age where they can claim Pension Credit. The Government introduced Regulations to ensure that pensioners who previously received Council Tax Benefit have continued to receive the same level of assistance they had prior to LCTS being introduced.

The Pan Essex LCTS project group, comprising of all the billing authorities and the unitary authorities in Essex, was created in January 2012 to devise a modular approach upon which all Essex authorities could base their local schemes according to local needs. The precepting authorities of Essex County Council, Essex Fire Authority and Essex Police have been involved from the beginning of the project. The project is managed by the Benefit Managers under guidance from the Essex Finance Officers Association.

Council approved the Epping Forest LCTS scheme for 2013/14 in December 2012, and, following consultation during 2013/14, Council approved an unchanged scheme 2014/15. On 21 July 2014, Cabinet approved the general principle that the Local Council Tax Support scheme for 2015/16 should aim to be cost neutral for the Council and that public consultation should be undertaken on certain elements of the scheme. Consultation on the 2015/16 scheme was undertaken from 29 August 2014 to 19 October 2014. Following the consultation period Members now need to approve the scheme for 2015/16 and decide whether the scheme should remain in its current form for 2015/16 or whether any amendments should be made.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

If any changes are to be made to the current scheme either for financial or other reasons, full Council needs to approve the final scheme on 16 December 2014.

Other Options for Action:

If the Council does not approve any amendments to the scheme by 31 January 2015, the existing scheme will have to continue.

Report:

Proposed Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2015/16

1. In 2013/14, the Government funded LCTS with a specific grant, but after that initial year, the funding has been rolled into the Council's overall funding position made up of Revenue Support Grant and locally retained business rates. The specific allocation for LCTS funding is therefore not identifiable, but the overall package has been reduced in 2014/15 and will reduce again in 2015/16. The Department for Communities and Local Government have stated that Members will need to decide on the value of the funding to be used for LCTS.

2. It is proposed that the Epping Forest LCTS scheme for people of working age continues for 2015/16 with the same scheme as for 2014/15 other than the annual uprating of premiums, allowances, non-dependant deductions and any changes to the national pension age scheme that need to be reflected in the Epping Forest scheme.

3. After operating the same scheme for two years, if the current scheme is retained for 2015/16, it will bring some stability for current recipients of LCTS as they will know approximately how much LCTS they will receive and how much Council Tax they will have to pay. There were relatively few queries and complaints in April 2014 when people received their Council Tax demands because people were already familiar with the Council's scheme.

4. The Pan Essex LCTS project group has been looking at how schemes can be changed to both simplify the administration of the schemes and to make further cuts in expenditure on the schemes. However, there are several issues that need to be considered if schemes were changed significantly from the current means testing schemes. The future is uncertain for the benefits provision within Local Government and, whilst local authorities still have Housing Benefit and a specified means testing scheme for people of pensionable age, it is not appropriate to significantly change how LCTS is administered and calculated. In addition, the Department for Communities and Local Government have undertaken to carry out a review of LCTS during 2015/16 and there is also a lack of clarity about long term funding of the scheme and political uncertainties arising from a general election in May 2015.

5. Consultation was undertaken to specifically look at proposals to reduce expenditure on the current working age scheme. The two specific issues were to either change the maximum percentage that people of working age can receive from the current 80%, and/or the inclusion of Child Benefit in the calculation of LCTS entitlement. Child Benefit always used to be included in the calculation of Council Tax Benefit until the previous Government decided that it should be disregarded. It is however an income into a household which may not be available to other households who have to pay the same amount of Council Tax.

6. Currently, the total expenditure on LCTS is £7,009,000, which is made up of £3,913,000 for elderly recipients and £3,096,000 for working age recipients. It was anticipated that expenditure on the current scheme would total £7,500,000 for 2014/15 and therefore there is an underspend which is primarily due to a decrease in the caseload. The total number of recipients of LCTS has fallen from 8417 in April 2013, to 8132 in March 2014 and, in September 2014, the caseload has reduced further to 7819. If this trend of a reduction in the caseload continues, there will be a reduction in LCTS expenditure without having to make changes to the current scheme to reduce expenditure. Based on the current caseload, if the scheme was not changed, the expenditure will be in the region of £6,800,000.

7. If the scheme is changed to achieve further savings, a change to the maximum percentage of 80% for working age recipients would achieve approximately £40,800 savings per 1%. The inclusion of Child Benefit in the calculation without changing the maximum percentage would achieve savings of £199,000, whilst the inclusion of child benefit and a

change to the maximum percentage, would achieve savings of approximately £199,000 plus £40,000 per 1%.

8. As the major impact of any further reduction in LCTS will be on low income working age families, there is a risk of a reduction in the collection rate should this group be asked to pay considerably more towards their Council Tax. With the Government Welfare Reform initiative that is ongoing, it is this same group who are most affected by the social sector under occupancy rule and benefit 'capping'. If there is a significant reduction in the amount of support, there will become a time where people who were paying their Council Tax, albeit that it was difficult for them, will not pay at all because the total amount is impossible for them. The savings outlined above can only be achieved if those sums can be collected.

9. The draft scheme for 2015/16 is shown in appendix 1. The scheme cannot be finalised until the uprating of allowances and premiums by the Department for Work and Pensions, and the Prescribed Requirements Regulations from the Department for Communities and Local Government, are laid before Parliament. These are expected to be late in November / early December.

Consultation

10. If Members wish to make any changes to the current scheme, we must consult on those changes with the major preceptors (County Council, Police & Fire Authorities) and the public. This includes any changes to make the scheme more beneficial to certain groups as this may have a negative impact on other groups, including taxpayers that do not receive any LCTS. Essex County Council finance officers have attended the majority of the Pan Essex LCTS project group meetings and the Police and the Fire Authority are invited and receive minutes of all the meetings. The Pan Essex Benefit Managers report to the Essex Finance Officers Association where representatives of all the major preceptors are usually in attendance. The Essex Finance Officers Association in turn reports to the Essex Strategic Leaders Forum. The major precepting authorities have therefore been consulted and have indicated that provided the schemes aim to be cost neutral, they will not object to the schemes.

11. Consultation with the public was carried out from 29 August 2014 to 19 October 2014. The consultation was asking for views specifically on retaining the current scheme for 2015/16 and whether the maximum percentage should be changed and/or child benefit included.

12. Some Essex Authorities have already decided that they will not be changing their LCTS scheme for 2015/16 and have therefore not undertaken any consultation. The other Essex Authorities have been undertaking their own consultations during a similar period. The consultation process was the same as in the previous two years where each Authority has published information on their proposals on their website with a link for responses to Essex County Council who have co-ordinated the responses. People who do not have access to the internet or who wished to give a more detailed response were able to do so directly to the Council.

13. A total of 58 responses were received to the consultation which, although disappointing, is in keeping with the response levels of the other Essex Authorities (and is higher than the 41 responses which were received last year). The results of the consultation are shown in Appendix 2. Respondents were also able to give any additional comments which varied from comments that LCTS needed to be increased, not reduced, that the Council can find savings from elsewhere without penalising the poor, all income should be included so that there is an even playing field for a means tested benefit and that people of pension age should not be protected. Overall the responses to the consultation that were received did not highlight any issues that would give cause to make major changes to the scheme.

14. The Epping Forest Citizens Advice Bureau submitted a more detailed response and it was felt to be appropriate to meet with the Area Manager to discuss points raised in their

consultation response and to advise them of what the Council has already been doing. They had suggested that savings could be made by reducing Council Tax discounts on empty properties and second homes, but both of these have already been reduced, effective from April 2013. They also suggested that more flexible payment arrangements could be introduced, that there could be early intervention for non-payers and more time before a summons is sent. As part of a business case to the major preceptors, funding was secured from April 2013 for dedicated Officers to deal specifically with recipients of LCTS, and this has proved very successful with the Council Tax collection rate being higher than anticipated. We do have a dedicated Vulnerable Person Officer who works with people who are struggling to pay their Council Tax and we do set up payment arrangements that are flexible to suit individual taxpayers. We have also had special Court dates for LCTS recipients to enable the Council Tax Officers to deal specifically with people who have been unable to pay. Another suggestion of the Citizens Advice Bureau was to increase the non-dependant deductions for working age claimants. However, the current level of deduction that is applied can be as high as £11.25 per week. We have not consulted on an increase in the non-dependant deductions and therefore we could not implement this for 2015/16, but it is considered that it would be unreasonable to ask non-dependants to pay significantly more than this amount each week to help to pay the home owners Council Tax liability. Where a person is also a tenant, the current non-dependant deductions can be as much as £102.40 per week that a non-dependant is expected to contribute towards just the rent and Council Tax each week, without any other expenses such as food and fuel. The current non-dependant deductions have caused rifts within families and therefore this is not an option that is reasonable to pursue.

Resource Implications:

LCTS scheme for 2015/16:

From 2014/15 the funding has been rolled into the Council's overall funding position made up of Revenue Support Grant and locally retained business rates. The actual amount of funding for LCTS is therefore not identifiable within the settlement figures, although the overall package has been reduced. In view of the decrease in the caseload, a level of savings can be achieved just by keeping the scheme the same and cost neutrality should still be achieved.

The LCTS scheme needs to be designed to ensure, as far as possible, stability and sustainability in the Council's finances. LCTS is not a benefit and it is treated as a discount within the Council Tax calculations. This means that the Council's taxbase will reduce (as will the taxbase for all other preceptors) but the funding from the Government should cover the lost Council Tax income.

Exceptional Hardship Fund: In 2013/14 and 2014/15 there has been a small hardship fund to assist households which have been experiencing exceptional hardship. It is anticipated that the current year's budget for this fund will be adequate. The County, Fire and Police are all contributing towards this fund and they have agreed that they will continue with those contributions for 2015/16.

Legal and Governance Implications:

There is a legal requirement to make a LCTS scheme under the Local Government Finance Act 2012

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

There are no specific implications.

Consultation Undertaken:

Consultation has been undertaken with **Page 8** the Police and Fire authorities and the public.

The results are detailed in this report.

Background Papers:

Council report 17 December 2013

Cabinet report 21 July 2014 and 8 September 2014

Risk Management:

There are a number of financial risks associated with the LCTS scheme. Monitoring against the taxbase and collection is continuing but no major problems have been identified to date. LCTS expenditure in 2013/14 showed an underspend with regard to anticipated expenditure and an underspend is also anticipated for 2014/15. The caseload is continuing to reduce and providing that this trend is not reversed, LCTS expenditure will be reduced in 2015/16.

Consultation: Consultation on LCTS has been undertaken as outlined in the Welfare Reform Act 2012.

Demand Risk: The Government grant in 2015/16 is not clearly identifiable and there is a possibility that demand and eligibility for financial support under the LCTS for 2015/16 may be greater than in 2014/15, particularly if economic conditions worsen. The cost of additional discounts would be borne in proportion by the major precepting authorities (ECC, Police, Fire, EFDC). Conversely if demand falls (e.g. if economic conditions improve), the additional saving would be realised by the same authorities.

Inflation Risk: Council Tax freezes by Epping Forest District Council have operated in the last four years although the other preceptors did increase their Council Tax in 2014/15. Any increase in the Council Tax by County, Police, Fire, District or parishes, will result in the cost of the LCTS scheme increasing.

Due Regard Record

This page shows **which groups of people are affected** by the subject of this report. It sets out **how they are affected** and how any **discrimination** they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how **access to the service(s)** subject to this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to **understand each other better** as a result of the subject of this report.

Local Council Tax Support Scheme

Background: The Local Council Tax Support Scheme is designed to help those of working age on a low income. If any changes are to be made to the Council's existing scheme, consultation must first be undertaken.

Report:

Any reduction in the amount of Local Council Tax Support payable is likely to impact on families with children of school age or disabled people who are more likely to have a fixed or lower income, and claimants from ethnic minorities whose families tend to be larger

If the level of Council Tax liability increases above affordable levels, there is a risk that people may have to leave their homes and move to cheaper properties, which may be some distance away. For children of school age this may mean they have to change schools which may cause disruption to their education; for disabled people this may mean that they are separated from their friends and families who may provide support and assistance to their daily lives; and for people from ethnic minorities who may also may be separated from their extended families. Some recipients may get into debt.

There are just under 4000 people of working age who would be affected by changes to the current scheme. These include families with school age children, people with disabilities and people from ethnic minorities.

A number of measures are being taken to mitigate the potentially negative impacts of the scheme:

- Consultation has not been restricted to certain groups. Anyone was able to respond, including local taxpayers who are not LCTS recipients, and any organisation who provides support to vulnerable people.
- Additional resources have been directed towards people affected by providing them with information about alternative housing and help with financial management, as well as help and advice with payment plans to pay their Council tax liability.
- The scheme spreads the changes as widely as possible to reduce inequalities;
- The Exceptional Hardship Fund will assist people with the most exceptional circumstances.

Equality of opportunity is built into the system via The Exceptional Hardship Fund. Premiums for children and disabled persons are included in the calculation of entitlement, which provide some additional support to these groups.

1: Should the Council make any changes to the existing Local Council Tax Support scheme?		
	Response Total	Response Percentage
Yes	25	44%
No	25	44%
Don't know	7	12%
	Total Respondents	57

2: If the Council has a reduction in the Government funding for Local Council Tax Support, how should the Council fund the shortfall?			
	Yes	No	Response Total
Change the scheme to reduce the amount of LCTS paid?	29.41% (15)	70.59% (36)	51
Increase the Council Tax	16.33% (8)	83.67% (41)	49
Cut services provided by the County, District, Town & Parish Councils	32% (16)	68% (34)	50
	Total Respondents		57

3: Currently the maximum Local Council Tax Support that can be paid to people of working age is 80% of their Council Tax liability. If the Council has to make changes to the scheme, should the maximum percentage be reduced to fund the shortfall?		
	Response Total	Response Percentage
Yes	13	23%
No	43	75%
Don't know	1	2%
	Total Respondents	57

4: Currently Child Benefit is not counted as income for Local Council Tax Support yet it is income that is actually received. Should Child Benefit be included as income for Local Council Tax Support?		
	Response Total	Response Percentage
Yes	19	33%
No	36	63%
Don't know	2	4%
	Total Respondents	57

5: In 2013/14 there is a small Exceptional Hardship Fund to help people to pay their Council Tax where they are experiencing severe hardship. Should this fund be continued in 2014/15?		
	Response Total	Response Percentage
Yes	38	67%
No	12	21%
Don't know	7	12%
	Total Respondents	57

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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-047-2014/15.

Date of meeting: 1 December 2014.



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Finance

Subject: Capital Review 2014/15 – 2018/19

Responsible Officer: Teresa Brown (01992–564604).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992–564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the latest five-year forecast of capital receipts be noted;**
- (2) That the level of usable capital receipts currently predicted to be £4,715,000 at 31 March 2019 be noted;**
- (3) That the following amendments to the Capital Programme be approved or, where relevant, recommended to Council to approve:**
 - (a) carry forwards totaling £2,051,000 from 2014/15 to 2015/16 in respect of General Fund capital schemes as outlined in the report;**
 - (b) an additional allocation of £12,000 to purchase a franking machine for the business administration team;**
 - (c) an overspend of £49,000 in respect of fees on the purchase of the lease at Torrington Drive;**
 - (d) a carry forward of £473,000 from 2014/15 to 2015/16 and 2016/17 in respect of the Open Market Shared Ownership initiative and a reduction of £292,000 for private sector housing loans in 2014/15;**
 - (e) re-phasing the Disabled Facility Grant budget as outlined in the report and an additional allocation of £9,000 to complete the programme of non-repayable private sector housing grants;**
 - (f) virements within the Housing Revenue Account in respect of the categories of work identified in the report; and**
 - (g) re-phasing of the housebuilding programme, planned maintenance programme and off street parking initiative financed within the Housing Revenue Account as identified in the report.**

Executive Summary:

This report sets out the Council's Capital Programme for the five year period 2014/15 to 2018/19. It includes the forecast capital investment in Council owned assets; estimates of capital loans to be made for private housing initiatives; and projected levels of revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute. The capital programme has been prepared by updating the programme approved in February 2014, amended for any slippage and re-phasing approved in June 2014, as well as new schemes and allocations approved by Cabinet since then.

Each scheme within the capital programme has been reviewed and spending control officers have reassessed estimated final costs and the phasing of expenditure profiles for each scheme as part of the capital review. Recommendations have been made to make amendments as appropriate.

The Council's overall programme of capital expenditure is summarised for each Directorate in Appendix 1 and shows a commitment to invest £108,518,000 in Council-owned assets over the five year period under consideration. Of this amount £95,781,000 (nearly 90%) will be spent on improving or increasing the Council's housing stock. Details of individual schemes or groups of projects are shown at Appendix 2 for the General Fund capital programme and an analysis of works into specific categories is shown at Appendix 3 for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme. Appendix 1 also shows the Council's commitment to finance capital loans up to a maximum of £2,113,000 and planned expenditure of £2,613,000 which is classified as revenue expenditure but which can be financed from capital resources, over the five year period. Analyses of these figures are given in Appendices 4 and 5 respectively.

With regard to funding the capital programme, the report sets out proposed sources of finance over the five-year period from 2014/15 to 2018/19 in the lower section of Appendix 1, based on maximising the funding available to finance each scheme. The report identifies estimated external funding from grants and private sources of £5,412,000, and it proposes that capital receipts of an estimated £23,062,000 and revenue contributions of an estimated £84,770,000 be applied to finance the capital programme over the next five years. The estimated level of capital resources available now and in the future are given in Appendix 6. In summary, the balance of capital receipts is expected to fall from £17,467,000 as at 1 April 2014 to £4,715,000 by 31 March 2019 and the Major Repairs Fund balance is expected to decrease from £11,359,000 to £1,927,000 by the end of the period.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The capital programme presented in the appendices is based on decisions already approved by the Cabinet or decisions that the Cabinet is soon to consider. The expenditure profiles suggested are based on Member agreed timescales and practical considerations. The decisions proposed are intended to make the best use of the capital resources currently available and forecast to become available for capital schemes to 2018/19.

Other Options for Action:

The level of capital receipt resources is predicted to fall to £4,715,000 by 31 March 2019, based on the assumption that the generation of usable capital receipts will be limited to the sale of council houses. The revenue consequence of reducing the level of capital receipts over the next five years is to reduce investment income. Members may choose to reconsider the inclusion of some new schemes or re-assess the inclusion of some existing schemes.

With regard to financing the HRA capital programme, RCCO (Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay) contributions could be reduced by increasing the use of usable capital receipts, beyond that which is required. This option has been rejected in the past because the RCCO levels suggested in this report are affordable within the HRA, according to current predictions, and any use of usable capital receipts for HRA purposes would have the effect of reducing capital resources available for the General Fund.

Report:

Resources

1. The five year Planned Maintenance Programme is reviewed periodically to ensure that the Council's operational and commercial property assets are properly maintained and improved to meet Health and Safety requirements, statutory regulations, contractual obligations, customer demands and the long term protection and value of the authority's assets. The capital allocations included in appendix 2 were approved in October 2013. The largest schemes are planned for the civic office buildings including: a significant programme of extending and upgrading air handling and air conditioning units; two more phases of the window replacement programme; the installation of the solar panels and associated roofing works; an on-going upgrade of electrical and lighting works to promote greater energy efficiency; completion of the toilet refurbishment programme; new heating controls to improve energy efficiency; and new electrical equipment to comply with health and safety requirements. The Planned Maintenance Programme also covers large scale improvement works to Council-owned shops, leisure centres and North Weald Airfield buildings. A review of the programme is due to be carried out in 2015 when the allocation for 2018/19 will be set along with any other amendments approved.

2. With regard to the projects planned for this financial year, most of the projects are expected to be completed by 31 March 2015. However, three of the schemes planned at the civic offices which will slip into 2015/16: the replacement of the concrete seating area at the front of the building; one of the energy efficiency schemes; and the large scale replacement of rain water goods on the roof. In addition, the planned resurfacing of the car parks at Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool and Epping sports centre have been put on hold pending the completion of the Leisure Strategy. Feasibility works on replacing the flat roofing at Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool have also been withheld for the same reason. Members are requested to approve carry forwards of £98,000 and £10,000 from 2014/15 to 2015/16 for the five schemes identified within the Planned Maintenance Programme above and the Waltham Abbey Swimming pool roof respectively.

3. The ICT capital programme for 2014/15 was approved in October 2013 and an additional project was approved in September 2014 for the installation of new software to allow integration and other enabling work for the new Waste Management contract; a virement of £23,000 was made from the waste management equipment capital budget to cover this. All the ICT projects are progressing well this year. The telephony upgrade project is now complete with just minor snagging issues outstanding. The tender for the host servers has been completed and the new servers are due to be delivered on site during November, this will release older hardware to facilitate the progress of the disaster recovery project. The back office integration project has been completed with the purchase of the ESRI GIS mapping system; this has now been installed and Council staff are configuring and developing the use of the application. Phase 1 of the mobile working project has progressed well with more staff now having the technical capability of working outside of the office environment. All ICT projects planned for 2014/15 are expected to be completed by the year end except for the disaster recovery project which is expected to experience minor slippage; a carry forward of £20,000 to 2015/16 is requested to allow for this.

4. A report was submitted to Cabinet in September which detailed several ICT capital projects scheduled for 2015/16. A sum of £200,000 was approved for specific projects and a further £75,000 was approved as a contingency sum for the corporate flexible working roll out.

5. A new category has been included in the capital programme this year for two pieces of equipment needed in the Resources Directorate. A sum of £40,000 was recently approved for the purchase of an enveloping machine for the Council's reprographics section, which has recently been delivered. A new franking machine is also required by the business administration team to replace the current machine purchased in 2006, which is now obsolete and increasingly expensive to maintain. The proposed franking machine will be much more

technologically advanced and will be able to calculate VAT automatically, provide useful reports and more importantly will enable changes to the postal processes to be implemented which will result in revenue savings to the Council. An allocation of £12,000 is requested to purchase the new machine in 2015/16..

Governance

6. An allocation of £654,000 was included in the capital programme in 2014/15 for the acquisition of the lease of the second floor of Bridgeman House, Waltham Abbey. Although the original plans were abandoned, negotiations are still taking place with the head lease owners to acquire part if not all of the area. If successful, completion is likely to take place in the autumn of 2015 and Members are asked to approve a carry forward of the full budget.

7. The acquisition of the lease at Torrington Drive was finalised in April this year but the budget was overspent by £49,000 due to higher than expected capital fees. Members are requested to approve a retrospective overspend to cover the increased fees.

8. Commencement of the roofing works planned to upgrade of the industrial units at Oakwood Hill continue to be delayed pending the outcome of ongoing negotiations with the tenants occupying the units on the estate. No works will be carried out in this financial year but some legal expenses are expected to be incurred; a carry forward of £296,000 is requested.

9. An allocation of £248,000 has been set aside within the capital programme for initial works to promote capital investment in new developments within the District. With regard to the Epping Forest Shopping Park at Langston Road, the Council is now looking to finalise the Development Agreement with Polofind and discharge planning conditions. The new depot at Oakwood Hill has received planning approval and a progress report will be presented to Cabinet in late 2014 or early 2015, which will outline budget requirements for the development. Progress continues to be made on the site of the former Sir Winston Churchill public house. The Council has entered into a 150-year lease with the developer and the Development Agreement has also been entered into. However, a variation to the agreement has been proposed by the developer, which will be put to Members in a future Cabinet Report. Planning permission has been granted for the construction of 64 private flats, the Sir Winston Churchill Public House has been demolished and construction works have now commenced. A budget of £75,000 was approved to cover external legal fees, which is expected to be fully utilised in 2014/15. Any further investment, which may be required for additional consultancy fees to progress new or existing developments to extend the Council's Economic Development Strategy, will be the subject of future reports to Cabinet.

10. A budget for the new IT system to manage the Council's commercial properties was originally approved in 2013/14 but implementation has been delayed due to the specific nature of the requirements. However, a suitable supplier has now been found and the new system is expected to be installed before the beginning of the next financial year. No budget changes are therefore required.

11. Three new budgets have been included in appendix 2 for the Governance Directorate. A supplementary capital estimate of £1,000,000 was approved by Cabinet in October 2014 for the acquisition of Essex County's land holding in the St John's Road development site in Epping. An allocation of £84,000 was approved in September 2014 as a contribution towards the provision of superfast broadband in the District and an allocation of £25,000 has been included to purchase a scanner for the planning section approved originally within the revenue budget and consequently to be financed from revenue contributions.

Neighbourhoods

12. An annual allocation of £30,000 was agreed for waste management equipment to provide the resources for the Council to purchase replacement refuse bins and recycling containers under the new waste management contract. A larger allocation of £130,000 was

set aside in 2014/15 primarily to renew any waste and recycling containers prior to the commencement of the new contract in November 2014 to ensure sufficient levels of stock. Demand on this allocation has been lower than anticipated and approval was granted to vire £23,000 to the ICT Capital budget for essential IT system integration software and other enabling work. It is unlikely that all the remaining sum of £107,000 will be needed in this financial year and it is recommended that £23,000 be carried forward to 2015/16 pending a re-assessment of the annual allocation once the new contract is underway.

13. Over the past few years the Council has invested in three major parking reviews. The Epping parking review was completed last year and the formal public consultation for the Buckhurst Hill parking review is in progress with the works expected to be completed by the end of the financial year. The final scheme in Loughton Broadway will follow once the Buckhurst Hill scheme is completed. Members are requested to approve a carry forward of £190,000 2015/16 in respect of this scheme.

14. A budget of £90,000 was included in the capital programme for the purchase and installation of new pay and display machines across all Council owned car parks in 2014/15. This project is expected to be completed this year.

15. The flood alleviation scheme currently has an approved budget of £97,000, which was set aside for the purchase of a vehicle and flood alleviation equipment to support the land drainage team. Most of the purchases have been made or are currently in hand. However, the full sum is unlikely to be required before the end of the financial year and therefore Members are asked to approve a carry forward of £39,000.

16. A schedule of capital works to be completed at North Weald Airfield is jointly agreed each year with the market operators. However, capital contributions have been suspended for a while due to economic circumstances and the Council has agreed to carry out essential work only for the time being. An unspent balance of £44,000 currently exists on the account, which has been allocated to 2014/15 and no further contributions have been included in the capital programme pending further developments.

17. An annual allowance of £30,000 is provided within the capital programme for the replacement of grounds maintenance vehicles. The allocation for 2014/15 is slightly higher due to some slippage from 2013/14. No changes are anticipated.

Communities

18. The capital programme includes provision for a major project to extend and redevelop the Council's museum. Heritage Lottery funding of £1,650,000 has been secured, of which £1,500,000 has been assigned to the capital project, and Members have agreed to commit a further sum of £250,000 towards this scheme. The start of the detailed design work had to be deferred due to a delay in acquiring the lease of the new premises, which finally took place in April 2014. However, clearance of the Museum building and much preliminary work was undertaken while waiting for the purchase completion. Most of the design work has now been completed and tenders have been sent out. The build phase of the project is due to begin in January 2015 and completion is planned for July 2015. This will be followed by the installation of the exhibitions and collections. If planned timescales are achieved, the Museum will reopen to the public in mid October 2015. Revised costings for the building works will be undertaken when the tenders are evaluated and a report will be presented to Cabinet.

19. An ongoing programme of providing off street parking facilities on Council Estates has been underway for several years. Work on Phase 5 sites has now started: Queens Road is almost complete; works to Ladyfields due to start shortly; the resident consultation on Park Square is underway; and consultation at Paley Gardens is due to commence soon. All these schemes are joint funded between the General Fund and the HRA depending on the split between sold properties and HRA tenanted properties. A carry forward of £716,000 from 2014/15 is requested in respect of the General Fund allocation to be re-phased in equal

proportions over the following two years.

20. The CCTV capital programme is progressing well. All works are now completed at Lower Queens Road, Buckhurst Hill and Loughton High Road and the Essex Police Force Control Room has access to images from both Epping High Street and Loughton High Road. Work will commence shortly on the CCTV refurbishment project at the Limes Farm shops and an operational requirement is being developed in respect of the CCTV system at North Weald Airfield. A small carry forward of £5,000 from 2014/15 to 2015/16 is requested.

21. The Limes Centre project is complete and the centre is now operating a full service. A sum of £6,000 remains from the approved budget which is expected to be used for some minor snagging works in this financial year. No amendments are requested.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

22. The new housebuilding and conversions programme is now underway. Conversion works at Marden Close and Faversham Hall started on site in October 2014 and the project is running to programme and budget. Completion is expected around November 2015. With regard to phase one of the new house building programme, tenders were received in July 2014 and evaluated by Pellings, the Employers Agent acting on behalf of East Thames, the Council's Development Agent. A report was presented to Cabinet in August 2014 and the contract was awarded to Broadway Construction Ltd for the tendered sum of £3,245,144. Work started on site on 27 October 2014 and the new homes are expected to be completed by the end of November 2015. With regard to phase 2 of the house-building programme, the planning application was submitted on 22 October 2014 after the site was appropriated for planning purposes. This phase will deliver 52 new affordable homes at an estimated cost of around £8,275,000 plus fees of approximately £717,000. This will be part funded from the £500,000 Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) Affordable Housing Grant recently awarded to the Council, subject to the Council achieving Development Partner Status with the HCA.

23. The latest timescales represent slippage on the original programme in respect of phase one of the new build. On the other hand plans are being drawn up to bring forward phases three to seven of the house building programme in order to accelerate the programme. New cash flows have been provided by East Thames and these have been used to re-profile costs over the five year period of the programme. Members are asked to endorse the new expenditure profile shown in Appendix 3.

24. The HRA capital programme has been updated to include provision for the purchase of a former Council house sold under the Right To Buy legislation. The Council had the opportunity to buy back a property by exercising its pre-exemption rights right under the Housing Act (Right of First Refusal) (England) Regulations 2005, due to its development potential. It is anticipated that completion will be achieved in 2014.

25. Capital works on the council's existing housing stock are progressing well and expenditure within the category including heating, rewiring and water tank replacements remains high this year mainly due to continued high demand for rewiring works as a consequence of the introduction of new rewiring regulations. The rewiring budget has already been enhanced to allow for the high level of demand. However, work on gas heating works was carried out ahead of schedule in 2013/14, which resulted in almost £100,000 of the 2014/15 allocation being re-profiled into 2013/14. In order to meet the demand in this financial year, Members are requested to approve bringing forward a sum of £120,000 from 2015/16.

26. The programme of works on windows and doors has been accelerated this year, particularly in respect of the front entrance door replacement programme, where catch up works are underway following the appointment of a new specialist contractor. All planned works are expected to be completed by the year end and no changes to the allocations are reported.

27. The three roofing contracts for flat roofs, tiled roofs and balcony resurfacing were all re-tendered in 2013/14 and, as a consequence delays were experienced before the contractors were appointed. A programme of catch up works is now underway and a re-assessment of workloads has identified a potential underspend this year. Members are requested to vire a sum of £400,000 to meet the increased demand on void upgrades.

28. The other planned maintenance category includes Norway House improvements, door entry system installations and energy efficiency works. The budget for energy efficiency works was increased this year to carry out two major programmes of work: an external wall insulation programme; and a cavity wall and loft insulation programme. Green Deal grant funding had been made available from Central Government for the external wall insulation works carried out by the end of September 2014. However, this funding has been withdrawn and the external wall insulation programme has been put on hold for the time being. It will recommence if grant funding becomes available again in the future. It is recommended that £200,000 be carried forward pending future developments. In addition, Members are asked to note that a small unspent budget of £3,000, which was originally set aside for communal TV upgrades, is no longer required and is recommended for re-allocation to another category.

29. The Council's structural repairs budget funds urgent major structural repairs, which are ad-hoc in nature as well as a planned programme of major remedial structural works. There has been little in the way of urgent structural repairs so far this year but it is considered prudent to hold contingent funds in place for emergencies. However, the planned programme is currently progressing well and it is recommended that savings from the drainage budget, within the environmental improvements category, be vired into the structural repairs budget to fund increasing demands. Members are requested to approve increases in this budget of £27,000 in 2014/15 and £100,000 annually thereafter as part of the Capital Review.

30. Expenditure on the void refurbishment programme has been increasing in recent years due to a rise in the number of properties going through the void process. This is partly due to a number of tenants downsizing as a result of the introduction of the benefit cap within the Welfare Reform Act and also due to the implementation of the Council's modern homes standard, which has increased the frequency that capital improvements are carried out on each property. Although, the volume and cost of capital work on void properties are difficult to predict, it is thought likely that extra funds will be required to refurbish void properties as quickly as possible to avoid loss of rental income. Members are asked to approve additional funds of £418,000 in the current financial year and £700,000 annually thereafter by means of virements from other categories of work within the HRA capital programme.

31. The kitchen and bathroom replacement budgets both allow for planned replacement programmes as well as ad hoc installations, which need to be carried out urgently. Within the planned replacement programmes approximately 5 kitchens and 3 bathrooms are currently being installed each week. Although there are still properties on hold pending clearance of tenant arrears and other matters, both programmes are progressing well and are expected to complete on time and within budget. No changes to the allocations are therefore required.

32. The programme for environmental improvements includes budgets for off street parking on housing estates, watercourse repairs, CCTV, environmental improvements to shops and fencing. The largest project in this category is off street parking and it is anticipated that the budget for the works will be under spent in the current financial year, it is therefore proposed that £743,000 be carried forward from 2014/15 to be re-phased in equal proportions over the following two years. The second largest project is the gas pipe-work replacement programme at the Ninefields Estate in Waltham Abbey and the Oakwood Hill estate in Loughton. Work on this programme will slip into 2015/16 and a carry forward of £251,000 is requested. The budget for drainage projects is no longer required due to a transfer of responsibility to the Water Authorities and it is recommended that the approved allocations of £27,000 in 2014/15 and £100,000 annually thereafter be vired to the structural repairs budget. Finally, a catch up programme is underway on environmental works but it is unlikely that the full 2014/15 allocation will be spent; a virement of £15,000 to other HRA

budgets is therefore requested.

33. The number of disabled adaptation requests received from Essex County Council occupational therapists increased significantly last year compared to previous years but no changes are requested to the approved capital programme at this point.

34. The other repairs and maintenance category includes feasibilities, asbestos removal and the contingency budget. The approved capital programme set aside a contingency sum of £700,000 each year from 2015/16 onwards, pending the identification of specific works. Given the large demand for void refurbishment works, Members are requested to approve the reallocation of this contingency to the voids programme.

35. The Capital Service Enhancements budget includes the front entrance fire door replacement programme on leasehold properties, the Oakwood Hill estate enhancement project, the refurbishment of communal kitchens in sheltered schemes, the provision of electric scooter stores at sheltered schemes, a contribution towards the provision of Wi-Fi at Norway House, and the online rents system & repairs maintenance software. Most of these projects are progressing well. However, it was recently agreed to start the Oakwood Hill estate enhancement project in the spring/summer of 2015 to coincide with Essex County Council Highways works. Members are asked to approve a carry forward of the £100,000 allocation originally assigned to 2014/15; the estimate for the total cost of the scheme remains £200,000.

36. No changes are requested in respect of the Housing DLO Vehicles budget at present.

Capital Loans

37. The planned programme for the provision of capital loans for private housing assistance from 2014/15 to 2018/19 is shown on Appendix 4 .

38. The Open Market Shared Ownership Scheme provides interest-free loans to B3Living (formerly Broxbourne Housing Association) to enable first time buyers to purchase properties on the open market. The scheme has been successful and is now in its second phase. However, uptake has reduced this year and it is recommended that the 2014/15 allocation be reduced to £120,000 to reflect the reduced activity. Members are asked to approve the balance being carried forward to 2015/16, pending a future report to assess possible future options on how to make the scheme more attractive.

39. With regard to other private sector housing assistance, a major change was introduced on 1 July 2012, when all discretionary financial assistance given by the Council became repayable upon the sale or transfer of property. Although uptake for these loans has been low to date, it is now increasing and it is estimated that loans totaling approximately £120,000 will be forwarded this financial year. It is suggested that the balance of £292,000 is taken out of the capital programme.

Revenue Expenditure Financed from Capital under Statute

40. The capital programme for revenue expenditure to be financed from capital resources is detailed on Appendix 5 for the period 2014/15 to 2018/19.

41. The number of referrals from occupational therapists, which initiate Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG), have been growing significantly since March 2013: 200 referrals are forecast for 2014/15 compared to 163 in 2013/14. As a consequence, it is anticipated that expenditure will exceed the approved budget in 2014/15 by approximately £17,000. This increase will be financed from the unallocated balance of DFG grant received from Central Government in 2013/14. Members are requested to approve a supplementary capital estimate to allow for the increase.

42. The budget for other private sector housing assistance covers private sector housing grants approved under the previous system of non-repayable grants for decent homes, small works and thermal comfort assistance. A new Housing Assistance policy came into effect from 1 July 2012, which involves loans being offered to private householders rather than grants. However, some grants are still being administered where approvals were sanctioned before the change came into effect. These payments continue to be paid as grants. It is estimated that the total value of grants payable in this financial year will be £15,000; an additional allocation of £11,000 is sought to cover this commitment.

43. Approximate figures have been included in the programme for works to be undertaken on HRA leasehold properties, resulting from sales of flats under the Right To Buy legislation.

HRA Self-Financing

44. From 1 April 2012 the HRA has operated under the new rules of Self-financing whereby the Council retains its own rents and the old Subsidy system was abandoned. This enables the Council to fund and manage the housing stock without Government intervention. A 30-year plan was drawn up by our housing consultant, which was presented to Cabinet on 12 March 2012, which indicated that surplus balances would be generated. Members decided to invest these surpluses in a construction programme to provide 120 new Council properties over a six year period.

45. The 30-year plan also forecasts the usable Capital Receipts likely to be available to the Council to finance capital expenditure. The rules regarding the amount of capital receipts which can be retained from right-to-buy sales changed under the self-financing rules. The Council now retains a sum of money based on the outstanding debt attributable to each house sold plus a further amount representing the 'Local Authority Share' of the capital receipt. These two elements can be used to fund any schemes within the capital programme or to offset debt. However, the third element retained by the Council can only be used for the provision of replacement housing. This element, often referred to as 1-4-1 funding, comes from any increase in right-to-buy sales over the numbers used in the self-financing settlement. This last element has to be used within three years of receipt and can only constitute a maximum 30% of the house-building programme. Appendix 6 forecasts the anticipated receipts the Council will retain over the next five years.

46. The Council's housing consultant monitors the position carefully and provides regular updates to the 30-year HRA plan in order to ensure that the Council achieves the best use of the resources available.

Capital Financing

47. Appendix 1 shows a summary of the capital programme along with the financing profile. The Council has approved estimates of capital expenditure under Prudential Code Indicator P (2) and also financing proposals for the years 2014/15 to 2016/17. Appendix 1 has applied the same principles with regard to funding although changes in the expenditure profile have been reflected in the financing requirements in each year.

48. The Council has maintained a consistent policy of prudence in forecasting available capital resources to ensure that any capital project included in the capital programme will be fundable. This means that only capital receipts received to date and projected receipts from the sale of council houses and mortgage receipts are taken into account; no recognition of any other potential receipts is made. Therefore, when predicting levels of available capital funding, receipts from future land sales are not taken into account.

49. Similarly a prudent view is taken of other sources of capital funding including funds receivable from Government Grants and private contributions. For instance, the availability of Section 106 monies to fund capital projects is based on payments received to date and not payments anticipated in the future. With regard to Section 106 monies, in the past these

sums were generally used for the provision of affordable housing via contributions to Housing Associations. However, from 2013/14 onwards it was agreed that Section 106 monies will be used to support the Council's own house-building programme.

50. As anticipated, the position regarding the generation of capital receipts has improved since the rise in the maximum allowable discount from £34,000 to £75,000 was introduced on 1 April 2012. The number of Council House sales rose to 53 sales last year from 13 the year before and, to date, 20 sales have completed this year. Future projections are notoriously difficult to make as there remain many uncertainties in the housing market, therefore a cautious and prudent approach has been adopted at this stage: 37 sales have been estimated for 2014/15 and 20 sales thereafter. The situation will continue to be monitored.

51. Appendix 6(a) shows the latest forecast of capital receipt generation, their application and hence the likely level of resources available to fund new projects. It takes into account the changes which have resulted from the HRA self-financing and capital pooling rules and shows that, based on current expenditure and projected receipts, usable capital receipts will be reduced to £4,715,000 by 31 March 2019 at the end of the programme period.

52. Appendix 6(b) shows anticipated balances on the Major Repairs Reserve with an estimated balance of £1,927,000 by 31 March 2019. However, the use of revenue contributions and capital receipts are indicative figures only and will be revised when the HRA forecast is updated within the 30-year plan. Any increases in the use of these sources of funding will result in a decrease in the use of funds held within the Major Repairs Fund and an increase in the balance at the end of the five year programme. Conversely, any reductions in the use of revenue contributions and capital receipts will have the opposite effect.

Resource Implications:

The budget provision is detailed in the report and appendices.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The legal and governance implications are taken into account within individual project reports.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

In considering individual capital schemes and the programme overall, the Council gives due consideration to safer, cleaner and greener issues.

Consultation Undertaken:

All Directors and spending control officers for individual schemes have been consulted.

Background Papers:

Reference has been made to previous Cabinet reports and minutes. The Local Government Act 2003 (for England and Wales) and the Regulations have also been complied with.

Risk Management:

There is a financial risk involved in reducing the balance of usable capital receipts over the next five years. This risk is covered by risk 4 in the Council's Corporate Risk Register and has the following potential consequences: loss of interest; loss of cover for contingencies; financial strategy becoming untenable in the long run; service reductions required; and large Council Tax increases required

Due Regard Record

Name of policy or activity:

What this record is for: By law the Council must, in the course of its service delivery and decision making, think about and see if it can eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. This active consideration is known as, ‘paying due regard’, and it must be recorded as evidence. We pay due regard by undertaking equality analysis and using what we learn through this analysis in our service delivery and decision making. The purpose of this form is as a log of evidence of due regard.

When do I use this record? Every time you complete equality analysis on a policy or activity this record must be updated. Due regard must be paid, and therefore equality analysis undertaken, at ‘formative stages’ of policies and activities including proposed changes to or withdrawal of services. This record must be included as an appendix to any report to decision making bodies. Agenda Planning Groups will not accept any report which does not include evidence of due regard being paid via completion of an Equality Analysis Report.

How do I use this record: When you next undertake equality analysis open a Due Regard Record. Use it to record a summary of your analysis, including the reason for the analysis, the evidence considered, what the evidence told you about the protected groups, and the key findings from the analysis. This will be key information from Steps 1-7 of the Equality Analysis process set out in the Toolkit, and your Equality Analysis Report. This Due Regard Record is Step 8 of that process.

Date / Name	Summary of equality analysis
30 October 2014	This report represents a financial summary of the sums approved within the Council’s Capital Programme from 2014/15 to 2018/19, in addition to the associated funding projections over this period of time.
Teresa Brown Principal Accountant	At this stage the aims of the public sector equality duty will already have been taken into account when the individual schemes were originally approved. As this report does not represent a formative stage in the approval of capital projects, an equality analysis is not considered relevant in respect of this report.

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**CAPITAL PROGRAMME
2014/15 to 2018/19 FORECAST**

	2014/15 Revised £000	2015/16 Forecast £000	2016/17 Forecast £000	2017/18 Forecast £000	2018/19 Forecast £000	5 Year Total £000
EXPENDITURE						
Resources	1,351	933	497	131	0	2,912
Governance	4,834	1,034	0	0	0	5,868
Neighbourhoods	466	312	60	60	60	958
Communities	2,038	403	398	80	80	2,999
Total General Fund	8,689	2,682	955	271	140	12,737
Total HRA	15,250	18,952	22,003	20,176	19,400	95,781
Total Capital Expenditure on Council Assets	23,939	21,634	22,958	20,447	19,540	108,518
Total Capital Loans	240	587	586	350	350	2,113
Total Revenue Expenditure Financed From Capital under Statute	493	530	530	530	530	2,613
TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME	24,672	22,751	24,074	21,327	20,420	113,244
FUNDING						
Government Grant for DFGs	372	380	380	343	310	1,785
Grants for New Housebuilding	90	537	0	0	0	627
Other Government Capital Grants	1,596	58	10	12	14	1,690
Private Funding	710	150	150	150	150	1,310
Total Grants	2,768	1,125	540	505	474	5,412
General Fund	7,039	2,670	955	271	140	11,075
HRA	479	1,488	2,996	2,554	2,251	9,768
REFCuS & Loans	239	587	586	387	420	2,219
Total Capital Receipts	7,757	4,745	4,537	3,212	2,811	23,062
GF - RCCO	65	12	0	0	0	77
HRA - RCCO	5,700	5,391	7,762	10,155	9,728	38,736
HRA - MRR	8,382	11,478	11,235	7,455	7,407	45,957
Total Revenue Contributions	14,147	16,881	18,997	17,610	17,135	84,770
TOTAL	24,672	22,751	24,074	21,327	20,420	113,244

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME
2014/15 to 2018/19 FORECAST**

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	5 Year
	Revised £000	Forecast £000	Forecast £000	Forecast £000	Forecast £000	Total £000
Resources						
Planned Maintenance Programme	778	626	497	131	0	2,032
General IT	533	295	0	0	0	828
Equipment	40	12	0	0	0	52
Total	1,351	933	497	131	0	2,912
Governance						
Purchase of Bridgeman House, W Abbey	0	654	0	0	0	654
Purchase of Lease re Torrington Drive	3,511	0	0	0	0	3,511
Upgrade of Industrial Units	15	296	0	0	0	311
New Developments	248	0	0	0	0	248
Property Management System	35	0	0	0	0	35
St John's Road Epping Development	1,000	0	0	0	0	1,000
Superfast Broadband Programme	0	84	0	0	0	84
Scanner	25	0	0	0	0	25
Total	4,834	1,034	0	0	0	5,868
Neighbourhoods						
Waste Management Equipment	84	53	30	30	30	227
Parking Schemes	155	190	0	0	0	345
Pay & Display Machines	90	0	0	0	0	90
Flood Alleviation Schemes	58	39	0	0	0	97
Grounds Maint Plant & Equipt	35	30	30	30	30	155
N W Airfield Market Improvements	44	0	0	0	0	44
Total	466	312	60	60	60	958
Communities						
Museum Development	1,750	0	0	0	0	1,750
Housing Estate Parking	175	358	358	40	40	971
CCTV Systems	107	45	40	40	40	272
Limes Farm Hall Development	6	0	0	0	0	6
Total	2,038	403	398	80	80	2,999
TOTAL GENERAL FUND	8,689	2,682	955	271	140	12,737

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME
2014/15 to 2018/19 FORECAST**

	2014/15 Revised £000	2015/16 Forecast £000	2016/17 Forecast £000	2017/18 Forecast £000	2018/19 Forecast £000	5 Year Total £000
Housing Revenue Account						
New House Building & Conversions	1,347	5,337	9,986	8,512	7,504	32,686
Property Acquisition	336	0	0	0	0	336
Heating/Rewiring/Water Tanks	2,831	2,525	2,469	2,253	2,525	12,603
Windows/Doors	1,323	1,091	1,177	1,074	1,041	5,706
Roofing	1,420	1,128	1,500	1,190	1,232	6,470
Other Planned Maintenance	621	594	408	386	371	2,380
Structural Schemes	494	400	400	400	400	2,094
Small Capital Repairs/Voids	1,962	1,556	1,138	1,138	1,138	6,932
Kitchen & Bathroom Replacements	3,285	4,031	4,088	4,352	4,412	20,168
Garages & Environmental Improvements	741	1,455	272	306	312	3,086
Disabled Adaptations	402	450	450	450	450	2,202
Other Repairs and Maintenance	221	115	115	115	115	681
Capital Service Enhancements	299	370	100	100	0	869
Housing DLO Vehicles	68	50	50	50	50	268
Less Work on Leasehold Properties	(100)	(150)	(150)	(150)	(150)	(700)
TOTAL HRA	15,250	18,952	22,003	20,176	19,400	95,781

Appendix 4

**CAPITAL LOANS FOR PRIVATE HOUSING ASSISTANCE
2014/15 to 2018/19 FORECAST**

	2014/15 Revised £000	2015/16 Forecast £000	2016/17 Forecast £000	2017/18 Forecast £000	2018/19 Forecast £000	5 Year Total £000
Capital Loans						
Open Market Shared Ownership Scheme	120	237	236	0	0	593
Private Sector Housing Loans	120	350	350	350	350	1,520
TOTAL CAPITAL LOANS	240	587	586	350	350	2,113

Appendix 5

**REVENUE EXPENDITURE FINANCED FROM CAPITAL UNDER STATUTE
2014/15 to 2018/19 FORECAST**

	2014/15 Revised £000	2015/16 Forecast £000	2016/17 Forecast £000	2017/18 Forecast £000	2018/19 Forecast £000	5 Year Total £000
REFCuS						
Disabled Facilities Grants	380	380	380	380	380	1,900
Other Private Sector Grants	13	0	0	0	0	13
HRA Leaseholders	100	150	150	150	150	700
TOTAL REFCuS	493	530	530	530	530	2,613

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME
2014/15 to 2018/19 FORECAST**

	2014/15 Revised £000	2015/16 Forecast £000	2016/17 Forecast £000	2017/18 Forecast £001	2018/19 Forecast £000	5 Year Total £000
Receipts Generation						
Housing Revenue Account	4,163	2,178	2,174	2,174	2,174	12,863
General Fund	898	0	0	0	0	898
Total Receipts	5,061	2,178	2,174	2,174	2,174	13,761
Receipts Analysis						
Usable Receipts	1,756	339	335	335	335	3,101
Available for Replacement Homes	2,331	1,220	1,220	1,220	1,220	7,210
Payment to Govt Pool	974	620	619	619	619	3,451
Total Receipts	5,061	2,178	2,174	2,174	2,174	13,761
Usable Capital Receipt Balances						
Opening Balance	17,467	13,797	10,610	7,628	5,971	17,467
Usable Receipts Arising	4,087	1,559	1,555	1,555	1,555	10,310
Use of Capital Receipts	(7,757)	(4,745)	(4,537)	(3,212)	(2,811)	(23,062)
Closing Balance	13,797	10,610	7,628	5,971	4,715	4,715

Appendix 6(b)

**MAJOR REPAIRS RESERVE
2014/15 to 2018/19 FORECAST**

	2014/15 Revised £000	2015/16 Forecast £000	2016/17 Forecast £000	2017/18 Forecast £001	2018/19 Forecast £000	5 Year Total £000
Opening Balance	11,359	10,022	5,599	1,635	1,653	11,359
Major Repairs Allowance	7,045	7,055	7,271	7,473	7,681	36,525
Use of MRR	(8,382)	(11,478)	(11,235)	(7,455)	(7,407)	(45,957)
Closing Balance	10,022	5,599	1,635	1,653	1,927	1,927

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-042-2014/15
Date of meeting: 1 December 2014



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Technology & Support Services
Subject: Christmas/New Year Civic Office Closure
Responsible Officer: Paula Maginnis (01992 564536).
Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) To consider the results of the public and member consultation exercises; and**
- (2) With regard to the exercises above, the Joint Consultative Committee recommends to Cabinet:**
 - (a) the continuation of the current Christmas/New Year arrangements; and**
 - (b) agree the arrangements for the next 3 years from 2015/16 to 2017/18.**

Executive Summary:

Consultation has taken place with staff and Management Board about access to services over the Christmas/New Year period. Both staff and Management Board were of the view that because of the lower demand for services over this period, the most efficient way to meet this demand is by signposting services rather than opening the whole office. All essential services are covered either by the out-of-hours contact centre or specific staff on call over the period.

Management Board also supported the continuation of the arrangements for the next five years. The Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) and Cabinet were not in favour of a five year arrangement and therefore the recommendation reflects a lesser period of time.

The detailed results of the staff and Management Board consultation were reported to the JCC in January 2014. The JCC also noted that there are a range of Council services that can be accessed by the public during this period, for both emergencies and normal day-to-day service delivery.

Subsequent to this JCC report Cabinet, in March, agreed to the closure of the Civic Offices for 2014/15. Also, that any closure arrangements for future years were to be considered by JCC before 1 November 2014 following consultation with residents and members. This further consultation exercise is now complete and full details of the responses can be found in appendices 1 and 2.

In summary 209 residents responded to the consultation and;

- 99% of these stated they had not been inconvenienced by the Civic Office closure
- 82% said they were aware of available services over the Christmas period

- 46% of respondents tended to use the Council's website to find out about services
- 45% would use the website to find out information about services over the Christmas period

Only three members responded to their consultation survey. One member indicated that they had received a complaint regarding the Civic Office closure (the comments did not indicate whether this was a recent or older complaint). All respondents were aware of available services during this period and 1 had been inconvenienced (again the comments did not indicate whether this was a recent issue).

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The results of the public consultation show that 99% of respondents said that they had not been inconvenienced by not being able to access a Council service between 24 December and 2 January.

To recognise the strong support of staff regarding the arrangements for the Christmas/New Year Period.

Other Options for Action:

Cabinet could substitute other arrangements.

Cabinet could decide not to continue with the current arrangements.

Report:

1. Cabinet is aware of when and how the Christmas/New Year arrangements were originally agreed and that staff use their own leave i.e. 2 statutory days to facilitate the closure.

2. It has previously been reported to Cabinet that the results of the Employee Survey 2006 showed that 75% of staff who responded to the employee survey indicated that the use of special leave days and the 2 statutory days, (which enable a closure of the offices between Christmas and New Year) was the most valued benefit. As a result of this consultation the arrangements were extended to Christmas/New Year 2012/2013.

3. Members agreed a further 1 year extension to the arrangements for the Christmas/New Period 2013/14, and further consultation took place in February 2013. In summary 94% of staff who responded to this consultation wished the current arrangements to continue, regardless of faith. Staff were asked if they would agree to use further annual leave (in addition to Statutory Days) to facilitate the closure, 43% said they would 55% said they would not.

(a) Management Board were also consulted in December 2013 who agreed that the closure arrangements be supported on the following basis;

(b) Very strong support expressed in the staff survey;

(c) New arrangements with Mears for out of hours cover would allow the Council to continue to be contactable;

(d) Electronic services operated by the Council would be available, including on-line payments;

(e) Goodwill from staff to change would be maintained. In addition, staff have shown enormous goodwill when faced with exceptional circumstances, e.g. during 2013 when the Civic Offices suffered water damage to the building including the electrics, clearing staff car parks of snow to enable the building to open, assisting other authorities in emergency situations (i.e. Tendring's emergency centres during the flooding);

(f) Many private and public organisations are closed over the Christmas/New Year period; and

(g) Cover arrangements for monitoring social media enquiries and for updating the website remotely are being introduced.

4. Furthermore, Management Board recognised that as the Council adopts flexible working practices and maximises the use of technology (both for staff and the public), access to Council services will evolve over the coming years.

5. Cabinet are aware that there are a number of services available to the public during this period and the Mears Contact Centre is taking the out-of-hours calls on behalf of the Council, both for housing repairs calls and general calls to the switchboard number.

Consultation Exercises

6. Cabinet requested that a consultation exercise was undertaken to obtain the views of both the residents of the District and members. Both consultation exercises were carried out between 28 June and 17 August 2014.

Public Consultation

7. In summary 209 residents responded to the public consultation exercise:

- 99% of these stated they had not been inconvenienced by the Civic Office closure;
- 82% said they were aware of available services over the Christmas period;
- 46% of respondents tended to use the Council's website to find out about services; and
- 45% would use the website to find out information about services over the Christmas period.

8. A third of respondents thought they may require environmental services including roads/ street lighting etc. during this period which are managed by the County Council and a third may require waste and recycling services which are managed by the Council (see question 10). When asked what other services should be available, critical services and homelessness were mentioned, however the majority response to this question was none.

Member Consultation

9. In summary only 3 members responded to the consultation. All of the respondents were aware of the services that can be accessed during this period. One member indicated that they had received a complaint regarding the Civic Office closure (the comments did not indicate whether this was a recent or older complaint) and 1 had been inconvenienced by not being able to access a service during this period (again the comments did not indicate whether this was a recent issue).

10. Members were sympathetic to office closure for this period. However, they wished to know what the public thought.

11. Detailed responses to the consultation can be found at Appendices 1 and 2.

Resource Implications:

There are no resource implications to the Council.

Legal and Governance Implications:

None.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

N/A.

Consultation Undertaken:

Consultation has been undertaken with staff, Management Board, residents and members. The detailed consultation responses received from residents and members are attached to the report.

Background Papers:

None.

Risk Management:

The Council is not closed during this period and the public can still access a range of services, emergency or otherwise.

Due Regard Record:

This page shows **which groups of people are affected** by the subject of this report. It sets out **how they are affected** and how any **unlawful discrimination** they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how **access to the service(s)** subject to this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to **understand each other better** as a result of the subject of this report.

S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

The Council has closed the Civic Offices over the Christmas/New Year period since 2002.

Staff and members have been consulted at various times since 2002, with both parties agreeing to continue the arrangements up to this point.

During February 2013 staff were consulted on the arrangements via the Employee Survey which 58% of Council staff responded.

The following is a breakdown of Employee Survey respondents who wished the arrangements to continue;

- 91% of male respondents
- 96% of female respondents
- 94.5% of Christian respondents
- 100% of Hindu respondents
- 100% of Jewish respondents
- 80% of Muslim respondents
- 95% of atheists
- 100% of Sikh respondents

This shows that the benefit is uniformly supported by staff regardless of gender or race.

Overall, 94% of respondents wished to see the arrangements to continue.

Over the last 10 years, sickness absence in the UK is on average 27% higher during October to March than in April to September. (Office of National Statistics). At the Council over recent years there is only a 13% difference. It should be noted that there is approximately a 30% reduction of new sickness absence cases in Q4 compared to Q3. Many cases in Q4 are due to long term absence first recorded in Q3.

The following is a breakdown of the Public Survey respondents;

52% were female	10% 20 – 25 years old
38% were male	19% 36 – 45
50% were Christian	12% disabled
2% were Hindu	83% not disabled
3% were Jewish	
1% were Muslim	
26% stated no faith	

The Survey showed that religious belief was not a factor in whether or not respondents felt

inconvenienced by the Civic Office closure during the Christmas/New Year period. Two of those who indicated they had a disability (from 29 respondents) said that they had been inconvenienced by the closure of the Civic Offices.

The Council is not closed during this period and a number of services are providing a normal service in particular, the Careline service. Scheme Managers also make visits over this period. In addition, the Waste Management Officers provide a regular service on the non-Bank Holidays.

Out-of-hours calls to the main switchboard number are answered by Mears, with the majority of calls being for housing repairs. Arrangements are in place to call out Council staff and/or contractors to deal with issues if required.

Public Consultation

Customer Survey 2014 - Christmas Closure

Epping Forest District Council

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk



Contents

Section 1 - Introduction	3
Executive Summary	3
Section 2 - Respondent Profile	5
Section 3 - Findings	6
Contact levels	7
Reasons for contact	9
How we are contacted	10
Awareness of services	10
Access to information	11
Services over Christmas/New Year	12
Christmas closure	13
Communication method preferred	15
Section 4 - Appendices	
1 - Comments	16
2 - When the Council was contact and why	18
2 - Awareness of services over Christmas/New Year period/Age group	18
3 - Age and gender/number and percentage	19
3 - Services which may be required/disability	19
4 - Contact during the year by/Age group	20
4 - Contact during the year by/Male and Female	20
5 - Preferred method of contact/Age group	21
5 - Inconvenience/Religious belief	21
5 - Inconvenience/Disability	21

1) Executive Summary

Introduction

The Council wanted to seek the views from our residents and Members on future arrangements of opening Council buildings during the Christmas and New Year period between 24 December to 2 January.

Historically, the Council buildings have been closed in this period, although emergency services are available and officers are on standby.

A survey of staff opinion was carried out in Autumn 2013. The Cabinet and JCC reports of January 2014 and April 2014, and the Cabinet decision March 2014, wished officers to seek the views of residents and members on this matter.

Methodology

The questionnaire contained questions about how residents contact the Council, when and by what means they contact the Council and their preferred method of contact, eg, telephone, face to face, electronically or by letter. There were also questions about why they contact, eg, to report a repair, to pay a bill or to make a complaint etc.

The Council also wanted to find out the level of awareness of Council services and how to contact them either in an emergency or in the course of a normal working day. The Council also was looking into the methods used to deliver information to our residents and if it was sufficient to their needs, eg, the Council's website, social media, local newspapers and Councillors surgeries.

The public consultation was carried out between the 28 June and the 17 August 2014. The consultation was published on the front page of the Council's website with a link to an online questionnaire. A link to the questionnaire also appeared in The Forester, the Council's newsletter, which went out to every household in the District.

Some profile questions were asked eg, gender, age, ethnicity, disability and faith, which may help to determine if there were any difficulties with regard to access to services during this religious period.

A second questionnaire was sent to the 58 District Councillors via the Member's Bulletin.

The questionnaire contained questions about access to Council services, which services were needed at the time and which services, should be contactable between 24 December to 2 January. The questions asked if there were any complaints received or inconvenience caused relating to the Christmas/New Year closure period.

There were also questions on preferences for receiving information/communication from the Council at this time of year and the views of Members on the Civic Offices being open.

Copies of the questionnaires were also available at the Council's information desks and main Reception, Civic Offices and Human Resources.

The results are shown as a percentage and some figures may be + or - a percentage point due to rounding up.

1) Executive Summary

Summary

Key results

There were 209 respondents to the survey.

- Under half of respondents to the consultation (48%) said they have contacted the Council within the last year.
- Just under half contact the council by:
 1. telephone (46%),
 2. face to face (22%),
 3. online/electronically (22%), and
 4. 10% contact the Council by letter.

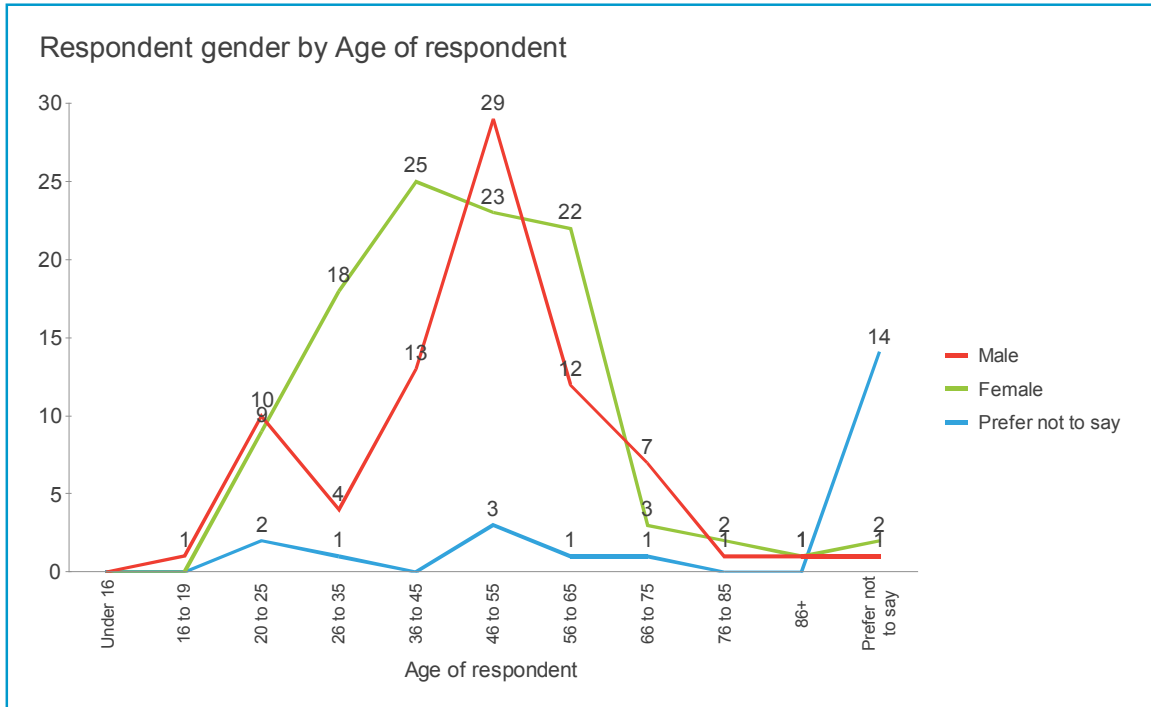
There were no 'other', methods of contact stated by respondents.

- 70% said it was their preferred method.
- June (12%) and March (11%) were the busiest months for respondents contacting the Council.
- The majority of respondents contacted the Council once in the last year (63%). In April 2014, 5 respondents contacted the Council more than 5 times.
- 41% of respondents enquired about a service, 19% to speak to an officer, 15% to collect recycling bags, 14% to pay a bill, 7% to ask for a repair to a property, and 4% to make a complaint.
- 82% said they are aware of available services over the Christmas period, 18% were not aware.
- The majority of respondents know how to contact the Council either in an emergency (86%), during the day (96%), using the Council's website (95%), Checking telephone messages for updates (64%).
- For those respondents who were not aware of how to contact the Council, checking phone messages for updates was the method that respondents were the least familiar with (36%).
- The Council's website was where respondents usually find out about Council services (46%). Others usually ring the main council number or ask the local library staff or Parish Council. The Forester (30%) was also where a third or respondents find this information.
- 45% said the Council's website, is the method that they would usually use to be informed of any issues over the period between 24 December to 2 January.
- Environmental Services including roads/street lighting etc, managed by Essex County Council (34%), and Waste and Recycling services managed by the Council (34%). Housing Repairs and Housing Options (20%), were services also thought to be required by respondents.
- Respondents were asked if they checked the Council's current information sites which are updated in this period, eg, the website, telephone messages, in person, via a Councillor Surgery or in the newspapers. Very few respondents answered this question (7), and most didn't check for updates (5).
- 99% of respondents said that they had not been inconvenienced by not being able to access a Council service between 24 December to 2 January.

2) Profile

Age and Gender

Profile - The total overall number of public responding to this consultation was 209.



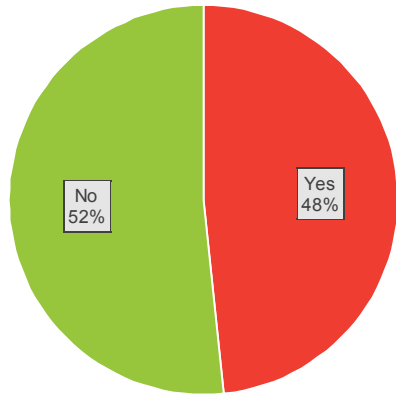
- Over half were female (52%), 38% Male.
- The majority were White British, Irish, Welsh, Scottish or other White origin (89%).
- The majority age range was 40 to 54 years (27%).
- 12% were disabled. For those with 'Other', disabilities (28%) were not age related disabilities.
- The majority were Christian (55%), with a number who said they have no faith (26%).

Key respondent's profile	
Gender	52% female, 38% male, 10% prefer not to say
Age	27% 40-54, 19% 36-45, 17% 55 to 65, 10% 20 to 25, 5% 66 to 75, 2% 76 and over, 8% Prefer not to say
Ethnicity	89% White, 6% Prefer not to say, 5% Asian/Black/Chinese/Mixed

Key respondent's profile	
Disability	12% disabled, 83% not disabled
Disability type	Physical (52%) Mental health (3%) Sensory, visual, hearing (14%) Learning (3%) Other (28%)
Faith	50% Christian, 26% No faith, 18% Prefer not to say, 1% Muslim, 2% Hindu, 3% Jewish,

3) Findings

Have you contacted the Council within the last year?



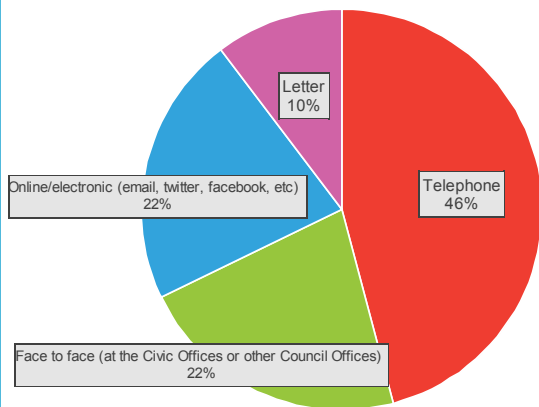
Base: 209 respondents

Contact with the Council (Q1)

Respondents were asked if they had contacted the Council within the last year, in order to get a an overall picture of the number of respondents contacting the Council.

- Over half (52%) said they have not contacted the Council within the last year?
- Those that said they had contacted the Council in the last year (48%), 50 were female, 42 male.
- Nearly half of females and under half of all male respondents contacted the Council in the last year, (see Appendix 4).

How did you contact the council?



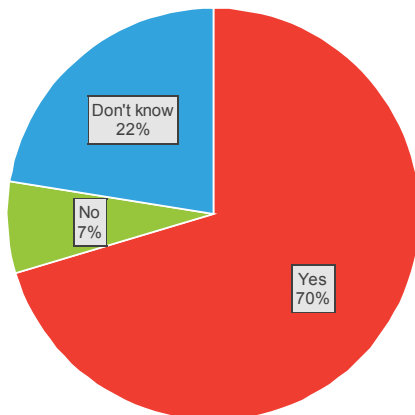
Base: 98 respondents

How did you contact the Council (Q2)

Respondents were asked how they had contacted the Council, in order to get a an overall picture of the methods respondents used to contact the Council.

- Just under half contact the council by telephone (46%).
- Face to face (22%) and online/electronically (22%).
- 10% contact the Council by letter.
- There were no 'other', methods of contact stated by respondents, (Q2a).
- For those with a physical disability, contact by telephone is also favoured by respondents. For those with a sensory disability, contact by letter is also preferred, (see page 11).

Is this how you would prefer to contact the Council?



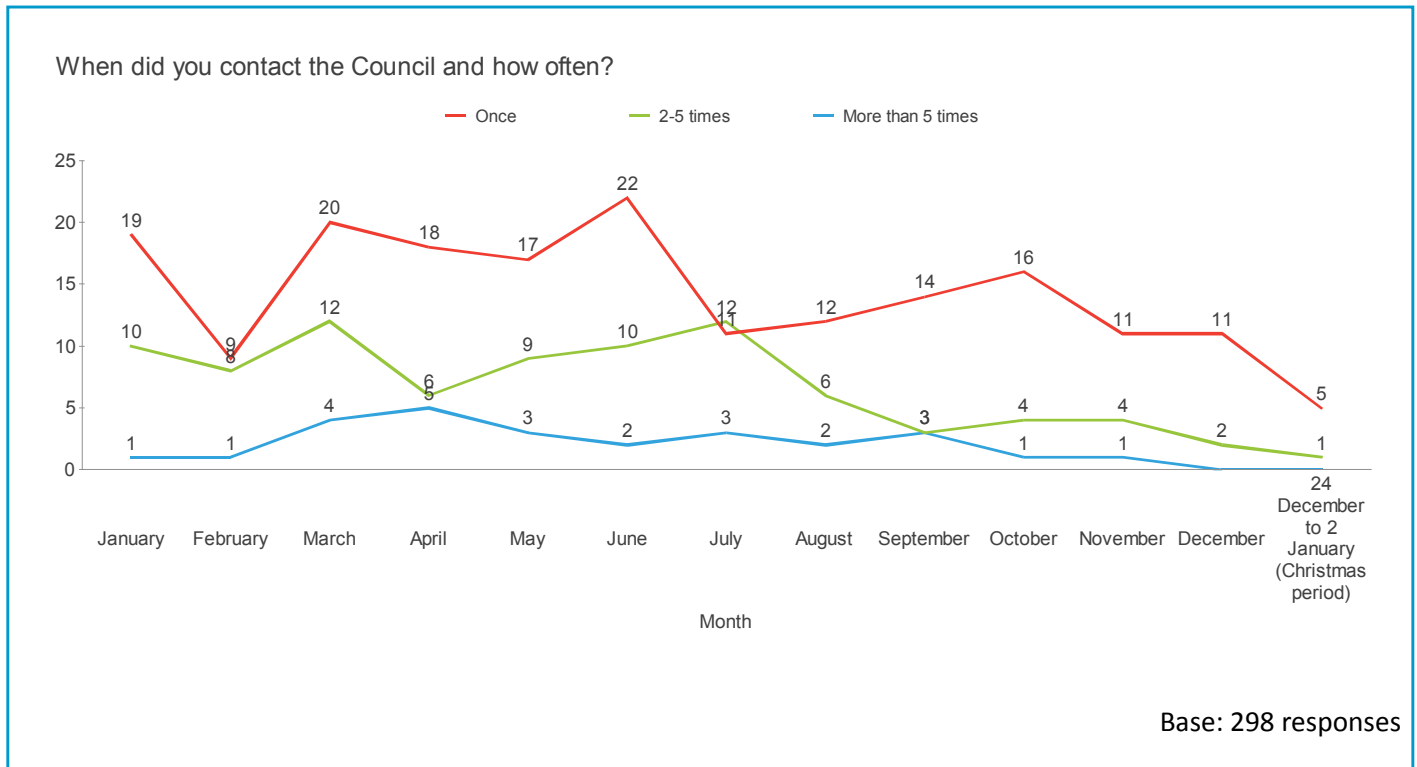
Base: 99 respondents

Preferred method of contact (Q3)

Respondents were asked how they would prefer to contact the Council, to find out if this was their usual method of contact.

- Most said it was their preferred method of contacting the Council (70%).
- The majority of respondents with a disability contact the Council by telephone or letter, (see ~Appendix 5).

When did you contact the Council? (Q4)

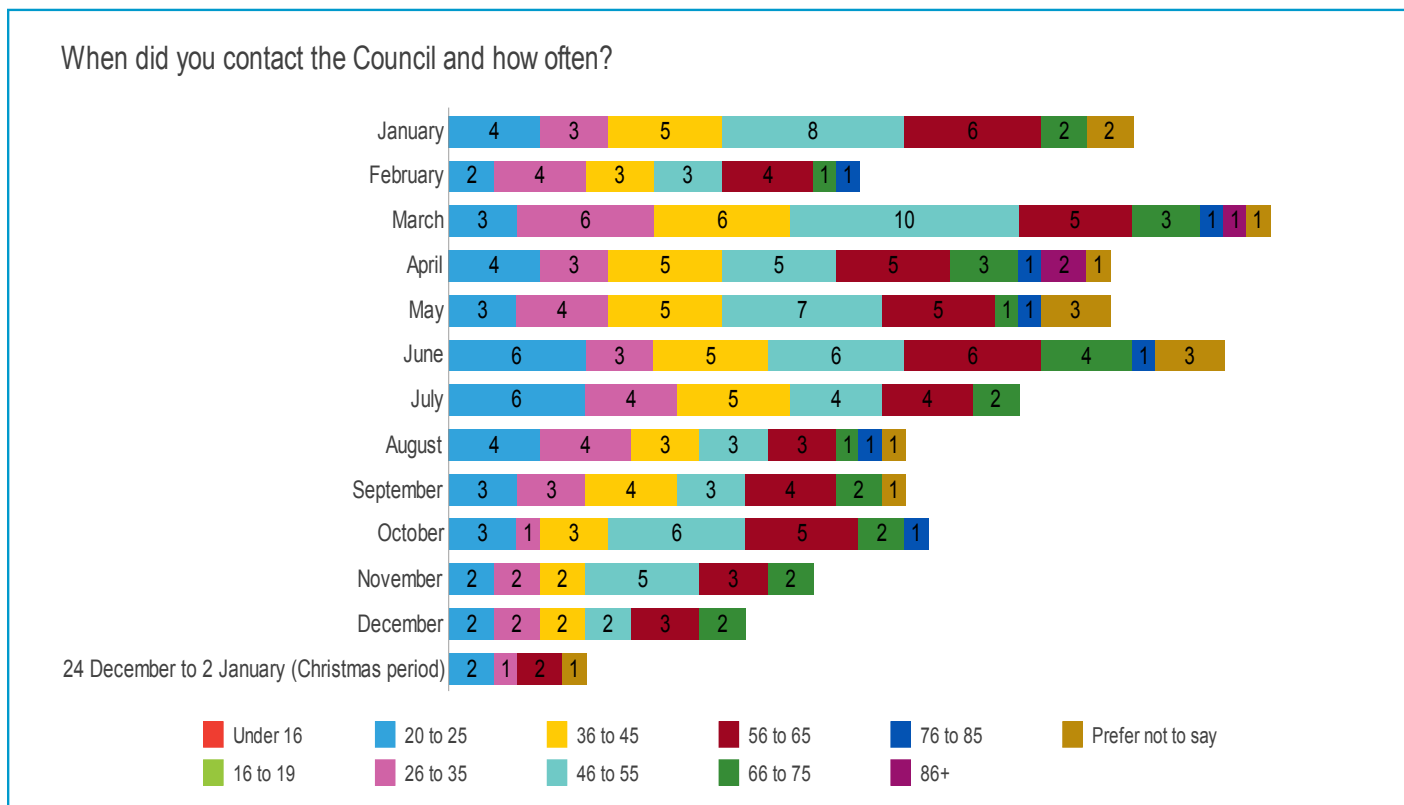


Counts Base % Respondents	Total			
		Once	2-5 times	More than 5 times
Base	298	185 62%	87 29%	26 9%
January	30 10%	19 6%	10 3%	1 0%
February	18 6%	9 3%	8 3%	1 0%
March	36 12%	20 7%	12 4%	4 1%
April	29 10%	18 6%	6 2%	5 2%
May	29 10%	17 6%	9 3%	3 1%
June	34 11%	22 7%	10 3%	2 1%
July	26 9%	11 4%	12 4%	3 1%
August	20 7%	12 4%	6 2%	2 1%
September	20 7%	14 5%	3 1%	3 1%
October	21 7%	16 5%	4 1%	1 0%
November	16 5%	11 4%	4 1%	1 0%
December	13 4%	11 4%	2 1%	-
24 December to 2 January (Christmas period)	6 2%	5 2%	1 0%	-

Respondents were asked when they contacted the Council and how often, to try to understand the amount of contact traffic in the 12 months of the year and the Christmas/New Year period) and the frequency of those contacts. The chart above shows the number of contacts made by respondents each month and their frequency. The table opposite shows the number and percentage of respondent contacts each month.

- March (12%) and June (11%) were the busiest months for respondents contacting the Council.
- Fewer respondents contacted the Council in November (5%) and December (4%).
- There are small increases in contact with the Council around every quarter of the calendar year eg, March, June, October.
- Very few respondents contact the Council between 24 December to 2 January (Christmas period) (2%)
- The majority of respondents contacted the Council once in the last year (62%).
- In April 2014, 2% respondents contacted the Council more than 5 times.
- Contact activity was constant throughout the year with peaks in the Spring, tailing off at the end of the year.

When did you contact the Council? by Age group (Q4)



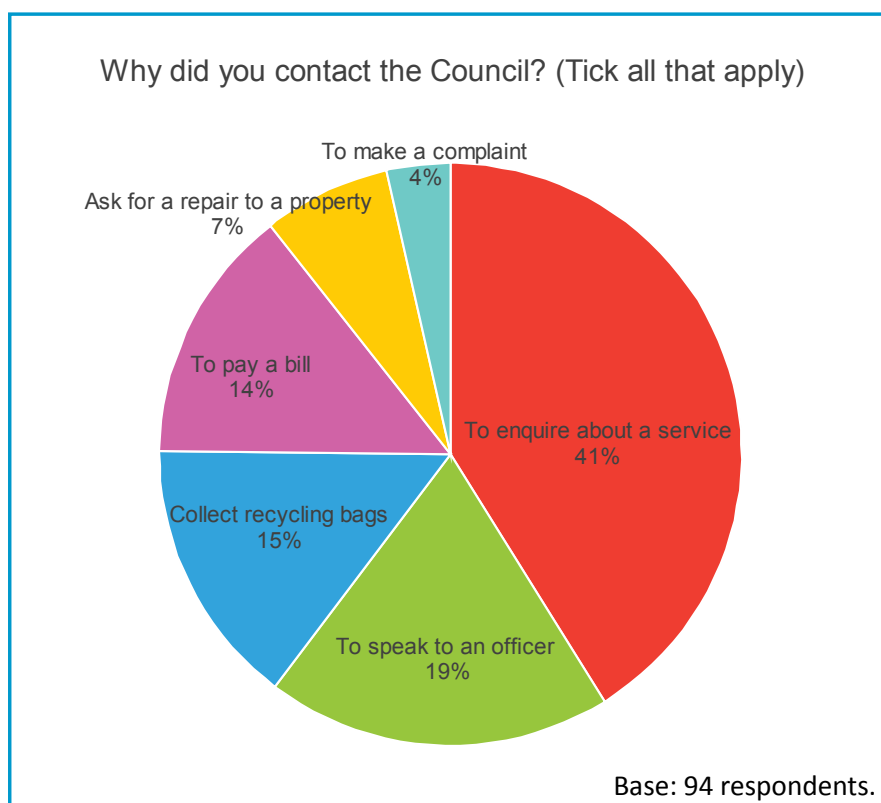
Respondents were asked when they contacted the Council and how often, to try to analyse the amount of contact traffic in the 12 months of the year and the Christmas/New Year period) and the frequency of those contacts for different age groups.

The chart above shows the number of contacts for each month by age group. The fourth quarter of the year shows a small decrease in contact and at the end of each quarter there is a slight increase in contact with the Council.

Most age groups contacted the Council throughout the year. The age groups 76 to 85 and 86+ tended not to contact during the winter months and started contact in the Spring. Further study may show a pattern with regard to this analysis, January, March, and June were the busiest months for respondents.

Other profiles eg, Ethnicity, Gender, disability, showed no particular pattern of behaviour linked to when or how often they contacted the Council.

Why did you contacted the Council? (Q5)



Respondents were asked why they contacted the Council, either to enquire about a service, ask for a repair to a property, to pay a bill, to make a complaint, to speak to an officer, to collect recycling bags or other reason.

- 41% of respondents enquired about a service,
- 19% to speak to an officer,
- 15% to collect recycling bags,
- 14% to pay a bill,
- 7% to ask for a repair to a property, and
- 4% to make a complaint.

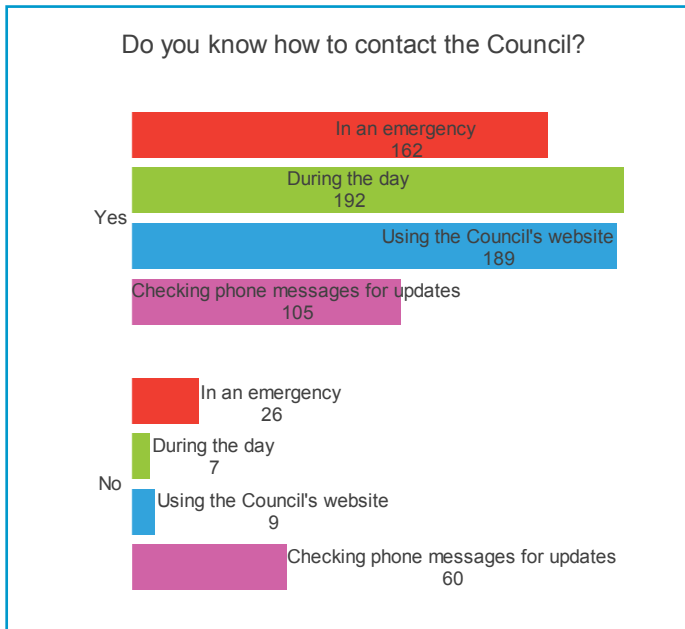
The chart above shows the percentage of respondents who contacted the Council in April and why they contacted the Council.

Q5a 'Other'.

Respondents were asked if there were any other reasons why they wanted to contact the Council. Their comments are shown below:

- To report flytipping,
- Housing arrears advice to help my mother in EFDC sheltered accommodation,
- To enquire about giving up my garage tenancy housing/garage rent arrears, Council Tax, trees consultation,
- Bags are collected from the library,
- To report missing lid stopper to recycling bin.

How to contact the Council? (Q6)

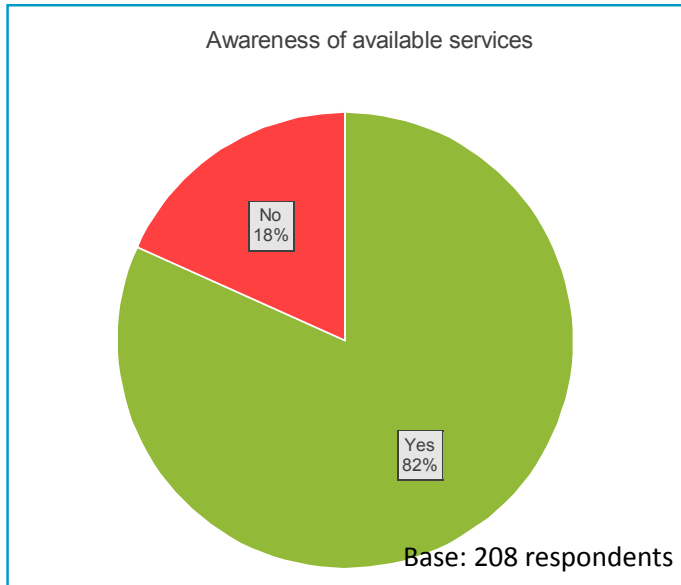


Respondents were asked if they knew how to contact the Council:

- In an emergency,
- During the day,
- Using the Council's website, and
- Checking phone messages for updates.

For those respondents who were not aware of how to contact the Council, checking phone messages for updates was the method that respondents were the least familiar with. The chart below shows contact with the Council in an emergency/Age group. The age group who are least familiar with contacting the Council in an emergency were the 66 to 75 and the 76 to 85's.

Counts Break % Respondents	Total	Age of respondent										
		Under 16	16 to 19	20 to 25	26 to 35	36 to 45	46 to 55	56 to 65	66 to 75	76 to 85	86+	Prefer not to say
Base	186	-	1	18	20	33	50	32	11	3	1	17
In an emergency												
Yes	160	-	1	16	18	26	44	28	8	2	1	16
	86%	-	100%	89%	90%	79%	88%	88%	73%	67%	100%	94%
No	26	-	-	2	2	7	6	4	3	1	-	1
	14%	-	-	11%	10%	21%	12%	13%	27%	33%	-	6%

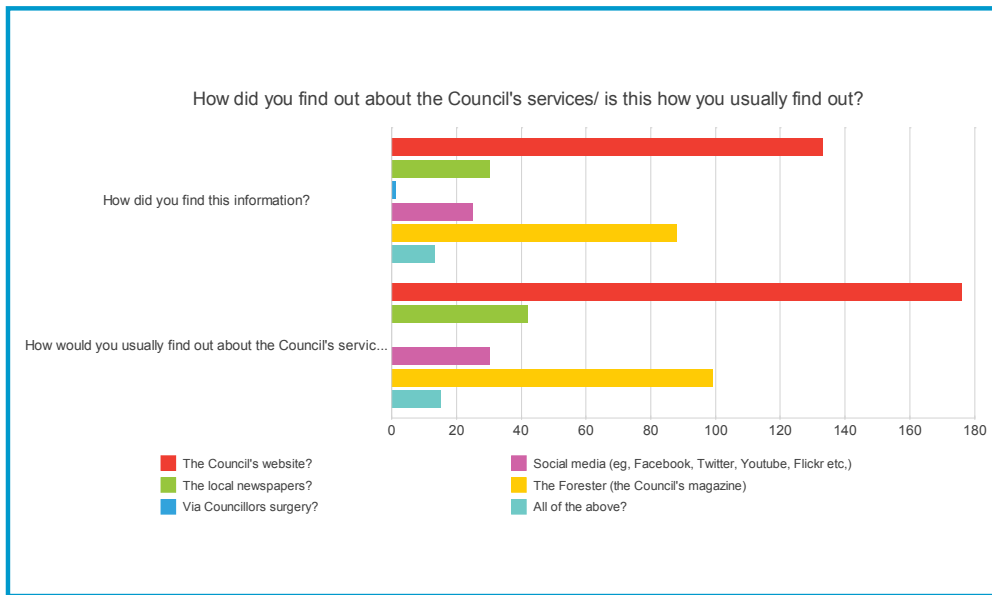


Awareness of services available (Q7)

The majority of respondents (82%), said they are aware of available services, 18% were not aware.

For those that were not aware of services available to them, 30% were in the age group 36 to 45, (see Appendix 2).

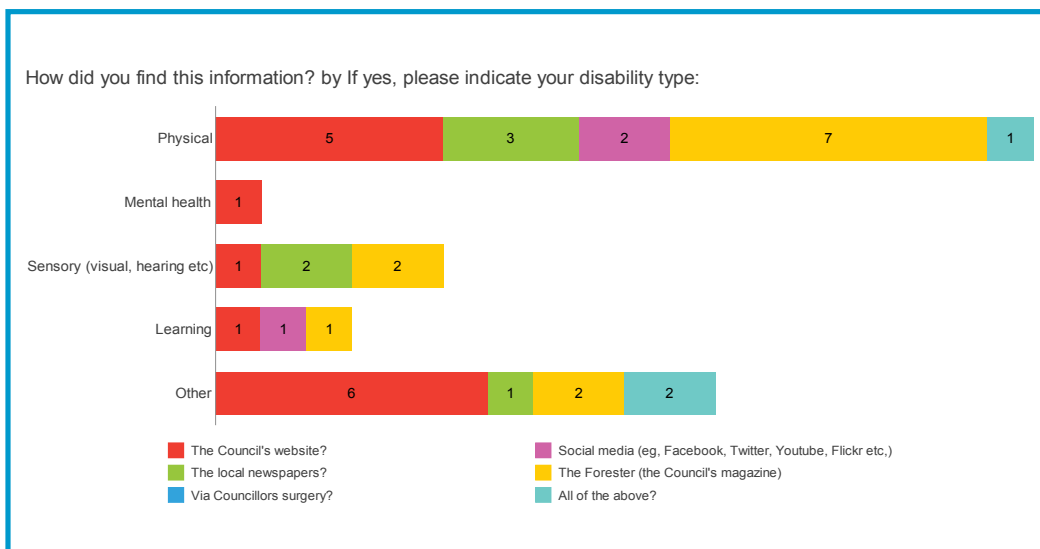
How did you find the information? (Q8) and How would you usually find out about Council services?



Respondents were asked how they found out about council services and which method would they usually use. The chart above shows the majority of respondents find information on the Council's website. This also tends to be how respondents usually find out about Council services (Q9). The chart below shows a breakdown by disability type.

- The Council's website (46%), and The Forester (the Council's magazine) (31%), were the two largest responses. Also favoured by respondents with a physical disability.
- Local newspapers (10%) and Social media (eg, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Flickr etc) (9%).
- All of these methods (5%) and Councillors surgeries (0%), were the two lowest responses.

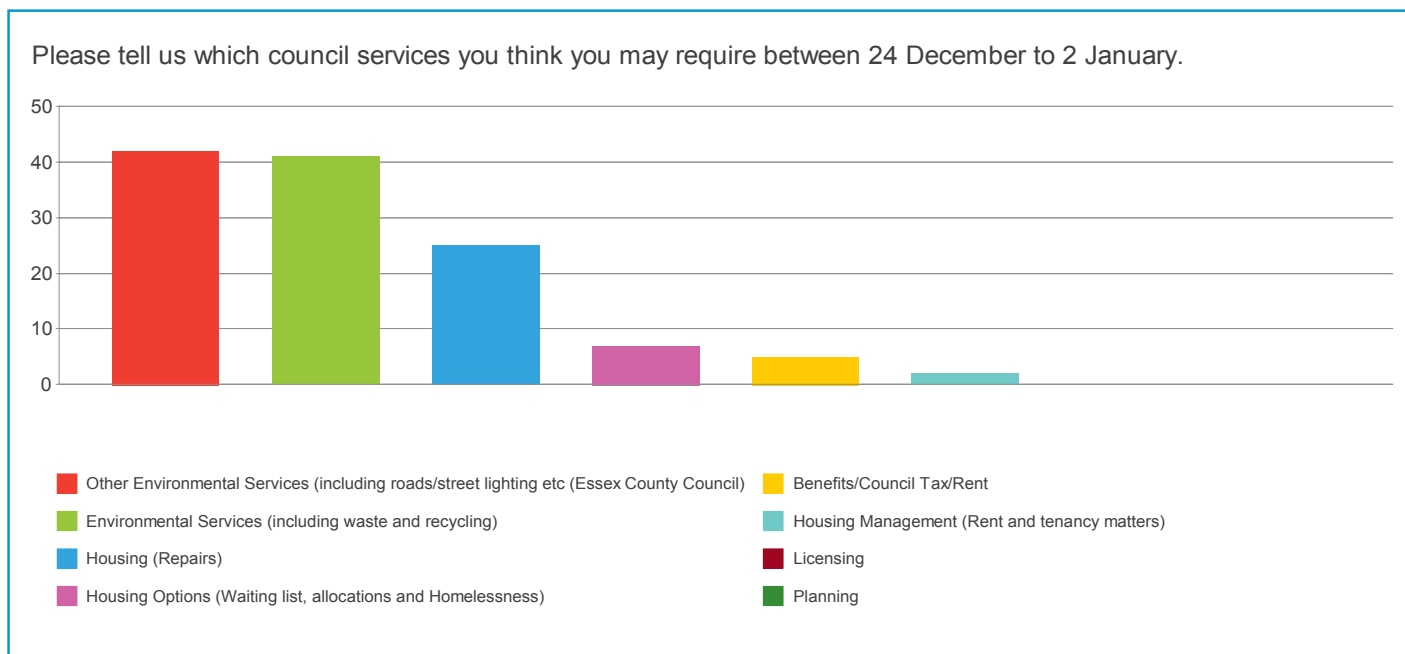
How would you usually find out about Council services?/Disability (Q9)



'Other', ways of finding out about the Council's services (Q9a)

Respondents were asked if there were other ways they could find out about Council services. Some said telephoning the Council on the main number, speaking to an officer concerned, going to the Council offices, going to Council meetings. It was also stated that the only service received by one person from the Council, was their bin collection, and another asked the local library or Parish Council for information.

Council services required over the Christmas/New Year period (Q10)



Respondents were asked which services they thought they may require between 24 December to 2 January. Of the 209 of the total survey response, 42% responded to this question, (see Appendix 3).

The chart above shows the following:

- Environmental Services including roads/street lighting etc, managed by Essex County Council (34%), and waste and recycling services managed by the Council (34%), were the two largest responses.
- Housing repairs (20%) and Housing Options, (eg, waiting list, allocations and homelessness) (6%).
- Environmental services and housing repairs were also thought to be required by those with a disability.
- Benefits/Council Tax/Rent (4%), and Housing Management (Rent and tenancy matters) (2%), were the two lowest responses.
- No requirement for Licensing or Planning were indicated.

Q10a 'Other services'

Respondents were asked if there were other council services required between 24 December to 2 January. There were 55 comments on this subject. The majority said 'No', or 'None' (see pages 16,17). Other comments were:

- *'I would only expect critical emergency services to be running (or access available to these) during this period. I feel it is reasonable to wait until the offices open for all non-urgent issues'.*
- *'Regarding housing options, only homelessness needs to be covered, not waiting lists or allocations'.*
- *'None of the above because it's festival season and have no need for services. I am busy with my family'.*
- *If a problem arose during the Christmas period, I would like to be able to contact the Council on working days'.*

Christmas closure inconvenience (Q11)



Counts Base % Respondents	Total	Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a heal...		
		No	Yes, limited a little	Yes, limited a lot
Base	208	179 86%	23 11%	6 3%
Have you ever been inconvenienced by not being able to ac...				
Yes	2 1%	-	1 0%	1 0%
No	206 99%	179 86%	22 11%	5 2%

Respondents were asked have they ever been inconvenienced by not being able to access a Council services between 24 December to 2 January. The majority of respondents said they had not been inconvenienced (99%).

As Christmas is a religious holiday for Christians, analysis of the contact made by those with religious beliefs was undertaken, (please see Appendix 5). Religious belief was not however, a factor in whether or not respondents felt inconvenienced by the Council offices closure during the Christmas New/Year period.

For those with a disability however, although very few in number, access to information about services may be a possible factor in the inconvenience to these respondents. The 1% that were inconvenienced, one was between the ages of 66 to 75 and the other preferred not to say their age and both were not aware of the Council services provided over the Christmas/New Year period. Further study for improving access to information for those with a disability may also improve customer experience in this area.

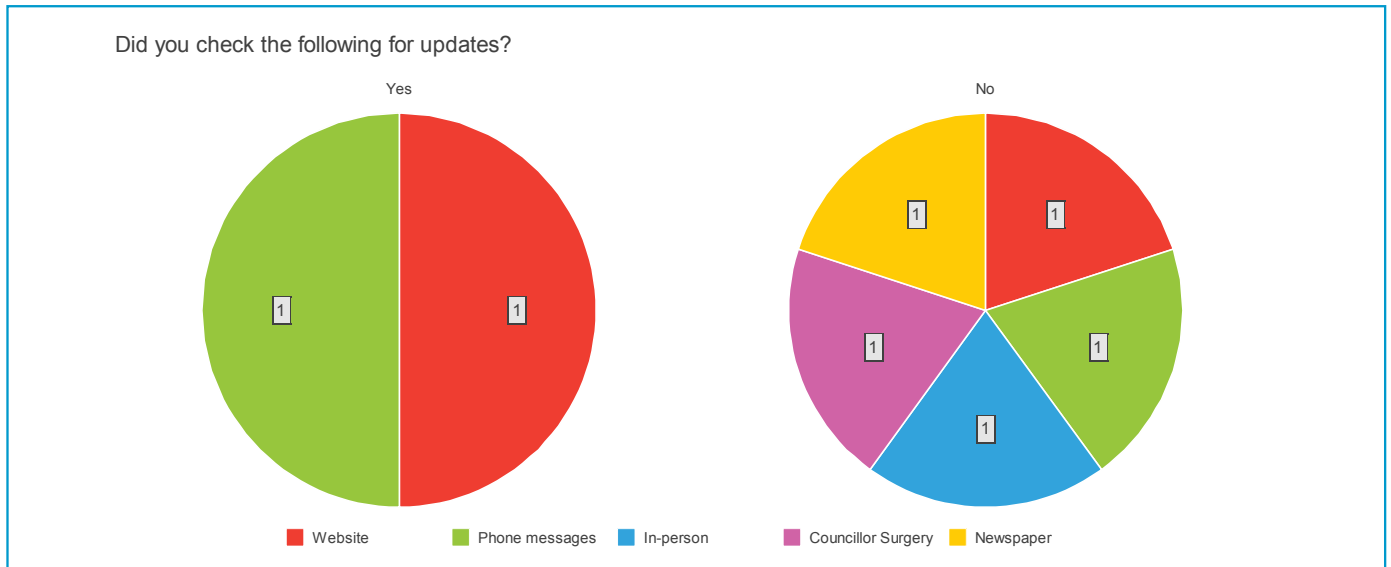
Q11a 'Other',

Respondents were asked to tell us about their inconvenience. There were 2 responses.

Their comments were:

1. *'Lack of refuse collection (scheduled). No one available to advise when collection could be expected. As I remember it was cancelled altogether that week.'*
2. *'Needed to report a planning enforcement issue.'*

Did you check the following for updates? (Q12)

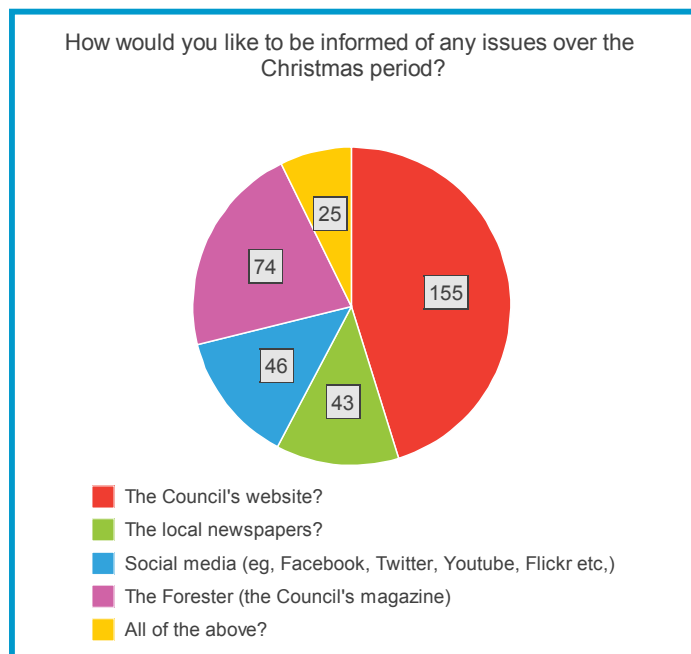


Respondents were asked if they checked the Council’s various methods for updated information either the website, telephone messages, in person via a Councillor Surgery or in the newspapers.

There were very few responses to this question (7). Most respondents were not familiar with checking for updates in any of the communication channels eg, website, phone messages, newspapers etc.(5)

Which services were needed at the time? (Q13)

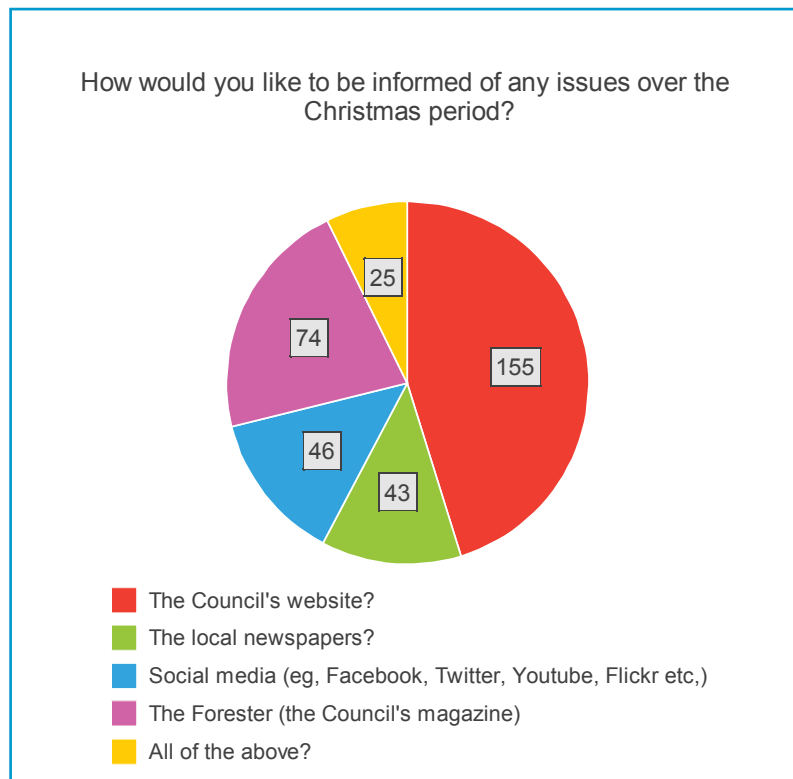
For those who were inconvenienced, respondents were asked which services they needed at the time. One respondent said Environment (including waste and recycling and one respondent said Planning.



Q13a

Respondents were asked to suggest ‘Other’, services here. There were no suggestions.

Preferred method of communication over Christmas period (Q14)



Respondents were asked how they would like to be informed of any issues over the period between 24 December to 2 January.

- The majority (155), said the Council's website, (45%).
- 74 said the Forester, (22%).
- 46 said Social media methods, (13%).
- 43 said local newspapers, (13%) and
- 25 said all of the above (7%).

Q2a Other, please state other method of communication.	
None	
Q5a Other, please tell us why you contacted the Council.	
1	To report flytipping
2	Housing Arrears Advice to help my mother in EFDC sheltered accommodation
3	To enquire about giving up my garage tenancy Housing/Garage Rent Arrears Council Tax
4	Trees consultation
5	Bags are collected from the library
6	To report missing lid stopper to recycling bin
Q9a Other, please state which method here.	
1	Phone
2	Council offices
3	Speaking to an officer concerned
4	Council meetings
5	I am an EFDC employee
6	Ring the main council number
7	The only service I receive from the Council is my bin collection
8	Ask local library or parish council
Q10a Other, please tell us which other council services you may require between 24 December to 2 January.	
1	None
2	None
3	None
4	None
5	None
6	None
7	None
8	None
9	None
10	None
11	None
12	None
13	None
14	None
15	None
16	None
17	None
18	None
19	None
20	None
21	None
22	None
23	None
24	None
25	None
26	None

27	None
28	None
29	None
30	None
31	None of the above
32	None of the above
33	None of the above
34	None of the above
35	None of the above
36	None of the above
37	None of the above
38	None of them
39	None at all
40	Zero
41	n/a
42	Hopefully none
43	None as I visit family in Scotland during this time
44	None as I am holiday in Spain
45	None of the above because it's festival season and see or have any need to do so. All busy with family.
46	None - Holiday period
47	None as I would not be using the council between this period, this period is for friends & family and not for using the councils services
48	I do not require the offices to be open over the Christmas period
49	None - Only a Repairs emergency if necessary, but not likely.
50	None as there are emergency lines and therefore can wait for a few days if not an emergency.
51	None - I would wait for them to open again
52	None everything is explained on website
53	None really, unless I was homeless maybe, anything else can wait
54	I hope I will not have need to use Council Services during this period but am reassured that services are available should they be required.
55	I don't feel I need any council services to be available between these dates. I would use website for info until the new year.
Q11a If you answered 'Yes', please tell us about it below.	
1	Lack of refuse collection (scheduled). No one available to advise when collection could be expected. As I remember it was cancelled altogether that week
2	Needed to report a planning enforcement issue
Q13a Please tell us which other council services you may require between 24 December to 2 January.	
	None
Q14a Other, please state which method here.	
1	Phone
2	Council offices
3	Speaking to an officer concerned
4	Council meetings
5	I am an EFDC employee
6	Ring the main council number
7	The only service I receive from the Council is my bin collection
8	Ask local library or parish council

When did you contact the Council/Why did you contact the Council?

Counts Base % Respondents	Total	Why did you contact the Council? (Tick all that apply)					
		To enquire about a service	Ask for a repair to a property	To pay a bill	To make a complaint	To speak to an officer	Collect recycling bags
Base	279	168 60%	38 14%	80 29%	23 8%	125 45%	84 30%
January	28 10%	18 6%	5 2%	7 3%	2 1%	13 5%	6 2%
February	18 6%	11 4%	4 1%	7 3%	1 0%	10 4%	7 3%
March	35 13%	20 7%	6 2%	11 4%	3 1%	15 5%	7 3%
April	27 10%	17 6%	5 2%	8 3%	2 1%	12 4%	10 4%
May	27 10%	13 5%	5 2%	5 2%	1 0%	13 5%	10 4%
June	30 11%	19 7%	3 1%	9 3%	2 1%	12 4%	6 2%
July	24 9%	14 5%	3 1%	5 2%	1 0%	8 3%	8 3%
August	20 7%	14 5%	1 0%	6 2%	2 1%	9 3%	6 2%
September	19 7%	13 5%	2 1%	7 3%	2 1%	8 3%	8 3%
October	18 6%	10 4%	- -	6 2%	2 1%	10 4%	5 2%
November	15 5%	8 3%	1 0%	3 1%	3 1%	8 3%	7 3%
December	12 4%	8 3%	3 1%	5 2%	1 0%	4 1%	2 1%
24 December to 2 January (Christmas period)	6 2%	3 1%	- -	1 0%	1 0%	3 1%	2 1%

Awareness of available services over the Christmas/New Year period/ Age group

Counts Break % Respondents	Total	Age of respondent										Prefer not to say
		Under 16	16 to 19	20 to 25	26 to 35	36 to 45	46 to 55	56 to 65	66 to 75	76 to 85	86+	
Base	204	-	1	21	23	37	55	34	11	3	2	17
Are you aware of which services are available over the Ch...												
Yes	168 82%	-	1 100%	17 81%	20 87%	26 70%	46 84%	30 88%	9 82%	3 100%	2 100%	14 82%
No	36 18%	-	-	4 19%	3 13%	11 30%	9 16%	4 12%	2 18%	-	-	3 18%

Age and gender/number and %

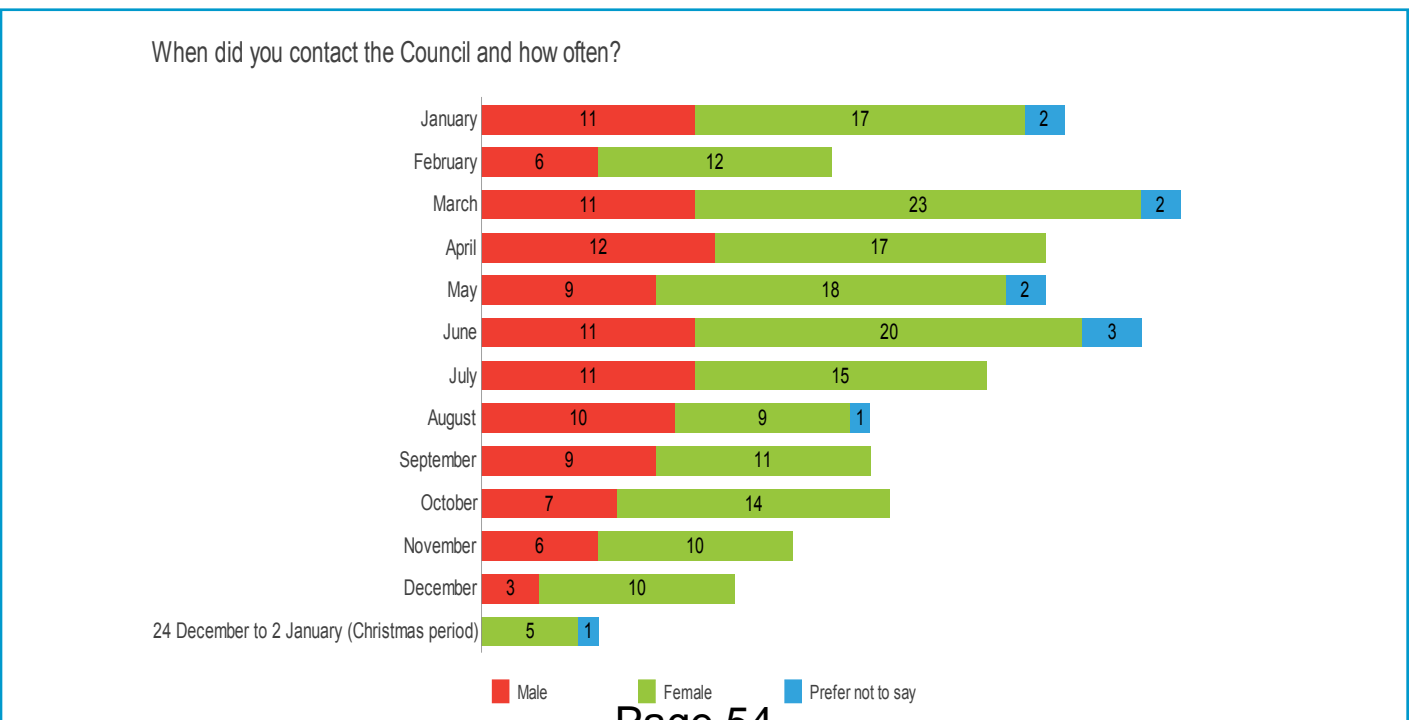
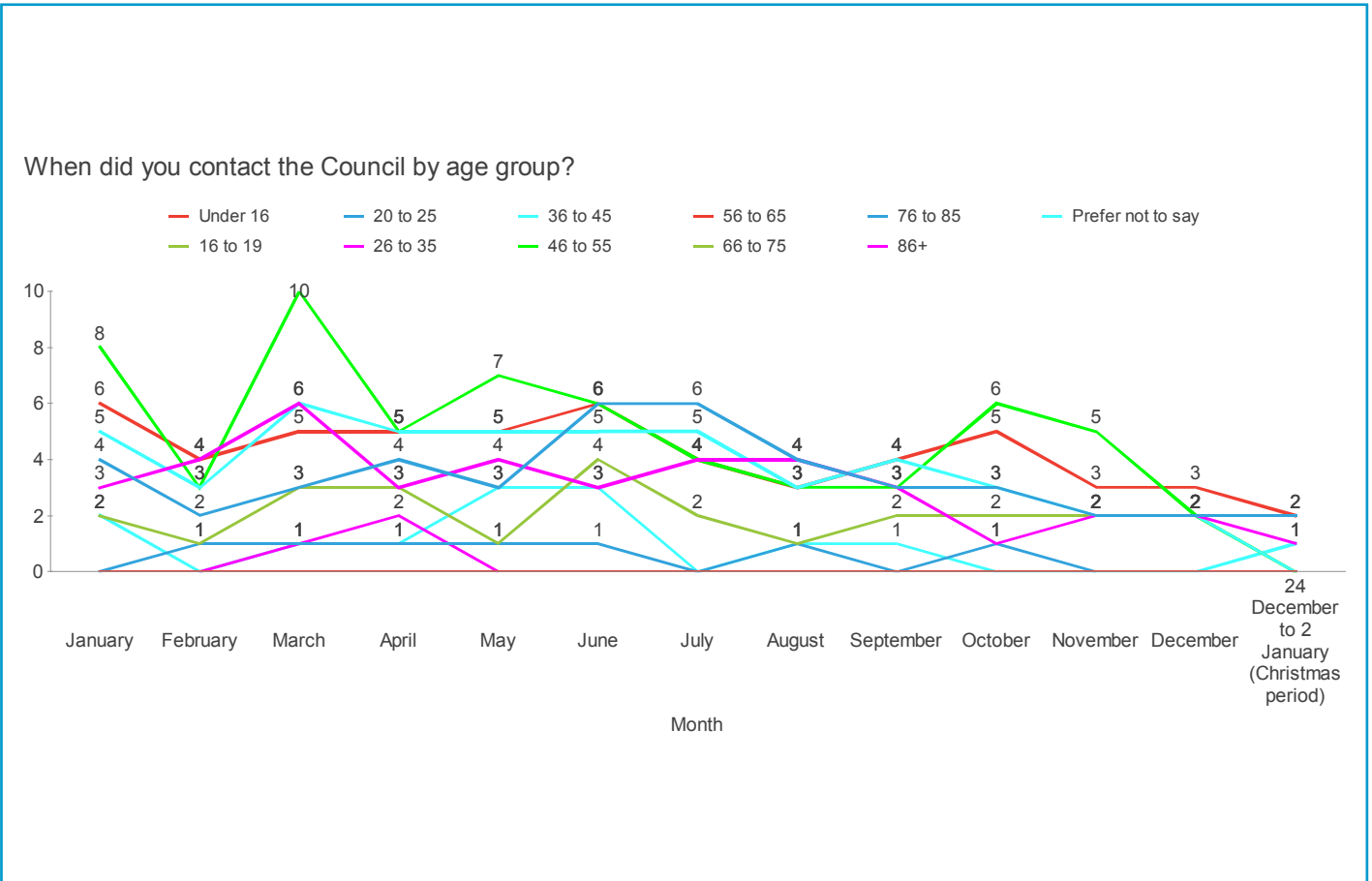
Counts Base % Respondents	Base	Respondent gender		
		Male	Female	Prefer not to say
Total	206	79 38%	105 51%	22 11%
Age of respondent				
Under 16	-	-	-	-
16 to 19	1 0%	1 0%	-	-
20 to 25	21 10%	10 5%	9 4%	2 1%
26 to 35	23 11%	4 2%	18 9%	1 0%
36 to 45	38 18%	13 6%	25 12%	-
46 to 55	55 27%	29 14%	23 11%	3 1%
56 to 65	35 17%	12 6%	22 11%	1 0%
66 to 75	11 5%	7 3%	3 1%	1 0%
76 to 85	3 1%	1 0%	2 1%	-
86+	2 1%	1 0%	1 0%	-
Prefer not to say	17 8%	1 0%	2 1%	14 7%

Services which may be required/for those with a disability

Counts Analysis % Respondents	Total	If yes, please indicate your disability type:				
		Physical	Mental health	Sensory (visual, hearing etc)	Learning	Other
Base	10	5 50%	- -	1 10%	- -	4 40%
Please tell us which council services you think you may r...						
Housing (Repairs)	2	1 50%	-	-	-	1 50%
Housing Options (Waiting list, allocations and Homelessness)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Housing Management (Rent and tenancy matters)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Environmental Services (including waste and recycling)	5	3 60%	-	1 20%	-	1 20%
Other Environmental Services (including roads/street lighting etc (Essex County Council))	7	4 57%	-	-	-	3 43%
Licensing	-	-	-	-	-	-
Planning	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benefits/Council Tax/Rent	-	-	-	-	-	-

Contact during the year by/Age group/Male and Female

The chart below shows the number of contacts respondents said they made each month. This was broken down by the age groups of the respondents.



Preferred method of contact/Age group

Counts Base % Respondents	Base	Is this how you would prefer to contact the Council?		
		Yes	No	Don't know
Total	97	69 71%	7 7%	21 22%
Age of respondent				
Under 16	-	-	-	-
16 to 19	-	-	-	-
20 to 25	11 11%	7 7%	-	4 4%
26 to 35	9 9%	5 5%	-	4 4%
36 to 45	22 23%	17 18%	3 3%	2 2%
46 to 55	25 26%	16 16%	2 2%	7 7%
56 to 65	12 12%	8 8%	2 2%	2 2%
66 to 75	7 7%	6 6%	-	1 1%
76 to 85	2 2%	1 1%	-	1 1%
86+	2 2%	2 2%	-	-
Prefer not to say	7 7%	7 7%	-	-

Inconvenience/Religious belief

Counts Break % Respondents	Base	Have you contacted the Council within the last year?	
		Yes	No
Total	204	98 48%	106 52%
What is your religion, even if you are not practising?			
Christian (including all Christian denominations)	102	47 46%	55 54%
No religion	52	27 52%	25 48%
Prefer not to say	37	16 43%	21 57%
Jewish	5	3 60%	2 40%
Hindu	4	2 50%	2 50%
Any other religion	2	1 50%	1 50%
Buddhist	1	1 100%	-
Muslim	1	1 100%	-
Sikh	-	-	-

Inconvenience/Disability

Counts Respondents	Total	Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a heal...		
		No	Yes, limited a little	Yes, limited a lot
Base	208	179	23	6
Have you ever been inconvenienced by not being able to ac...				
Yes	2	-	1	1
No	206	179	22	5

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Member Consultation Customer Survey 2014 - Christmas Closure

Epping Forest District Council

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk



Introduction

The Council wanted to seek the views from Members on future arrangements of opening Council buildings during the Christmas and New Year period between 24 December to 2 January.

Historically, the Council buildings have been closed in this period, although emergency services are available and officers are on standby.

A survey of staff opinion was carried out in Autumn 2013. The Cabinet and JCC reports of January 2014 and April 2014, and the Cabinet decision March 2014, wished officers to seek the views of Members on this matter.

Methodology

An online/interactive questionnaire was sent to the 58 District Councillors via the Member's Bulletin.

The consultation was carried out between the 28 June and the 17 August 2014.

The questionnaire contained questions about access to Council services, eg, which services were needed at the time and which services, should be contactable between 24 December to 2 January. The questions asked if there were any complaints received or inconvenience caused relating to the Christmas/New Year closure period.

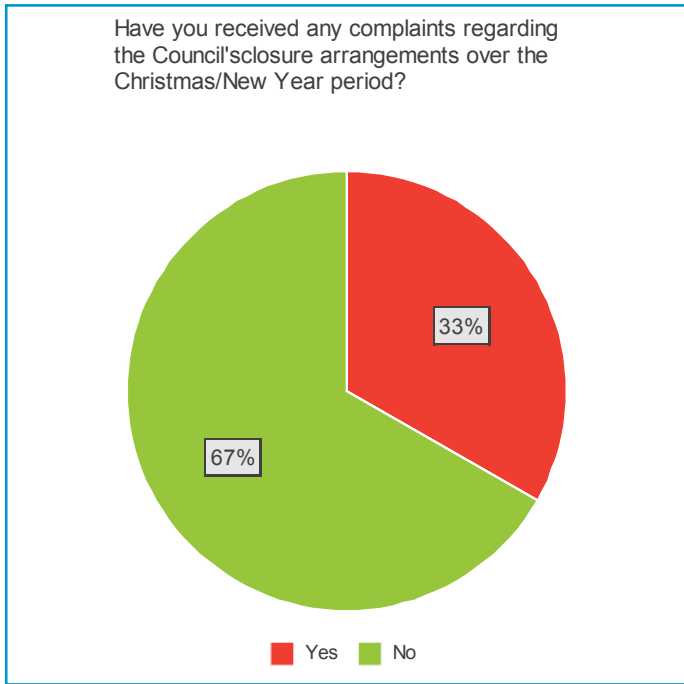
There were also questions on preferences for receiving information/communication from the Council at this time of year and the views of Members on the Civic Offices being open.

Copies of the questionnaires were also available at the Council's information desks and main Reception, Civic Offices and Human Resources.

Summary

The questions were:

- Have Members received any complaints regarding the Council's closure arrangements over the Christmas/New Year period?
 - 1 complaint received.
- Are Members aware of which services are available over the Christmas period?
 - 100% (3) said 'Yes', they were aware.
- Have Members ever been inconvenienced by not being able to access a Council service between 24 December to 2 January?
 - 1 said 'Yes'.
- Which services did Members need at the time?
 - Environmental Services (Waste and Recycling).
- Which Council services did Members think should be contactable over the Christmas period and why?
 - Housing (Repairs) (3), Housing Options, (3), Environmental services (including waste and recycling), (3), were chosen by all respondents.
- When asked to tell us why?
 - Members were sympathetic to office closure for this period and also wanted to know what the public thought about it and that it would depend on the service as to whether or not it should be accessible.
- How would Members like to be informed of any issues over this period?
 - The Council's website (3), Social media, (2), The Forester, (1), and Bulletin, (1), were the means by which Members wished to be informed.
- What are Member views of the closure over the Christmas period?
 - One Member thought a call-out system rather than have offices manned during the day., another thought it would depend on the service.



Summary

There were 3 respondents to this survey. One respondent received a complaint regarding the Council's closure arrangements over the Christmas/New year period two did not, (Q1).

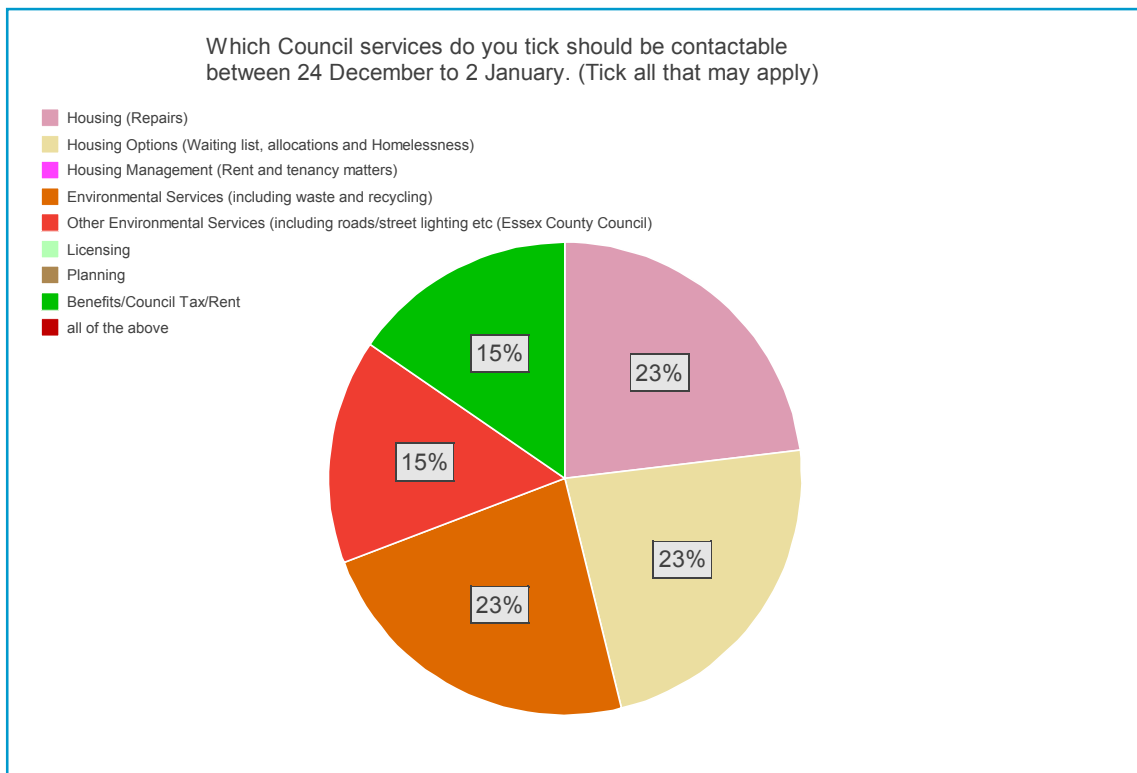
The complaint was: *'During periods of bad weather - inability to get answers on refuse collections etc.'* (Q2).

All respondents said they were aware of the availability of services over the Christmas period, (Q3).

One respondent was inconvenienced by not being able to access a Council service at this time, (Q4).

The inconvenience was: *'Minor issues such as picking up refuse sacks'*. (Q5).

The service needed at the time was Environmental Services including waste and recycling. (Q6)



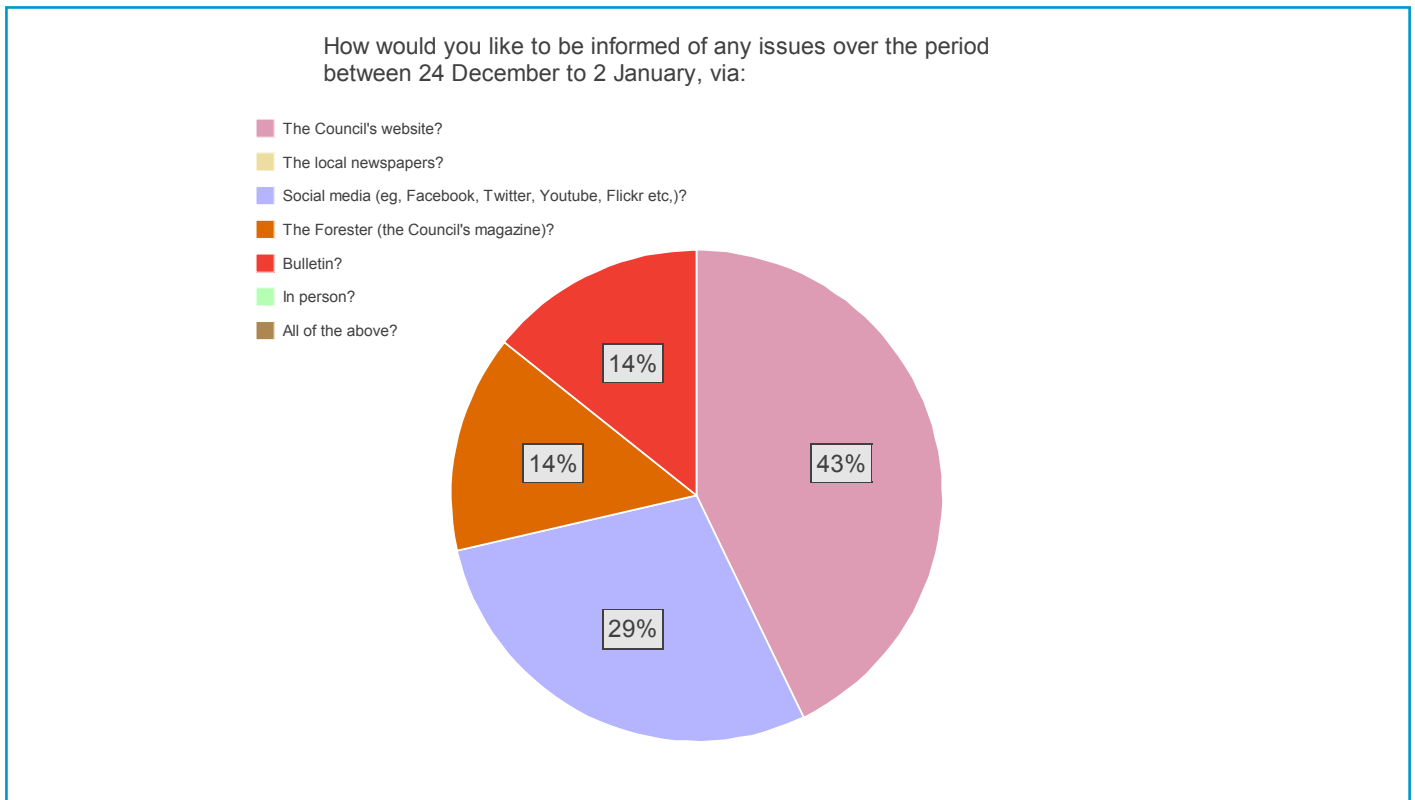
(Q7). The services which respondents felt should be contactable during this period were:

- Housing (Repairs) (3), Housing Options, (3), Environmental services (including waste and recycling), (3), Benefits/ Council Tax/Rent, (2), Other Environmental Services (including roads/street lighting etc (Essex County Council), (2).

(Q7a). Other responses were: *'Housing options Homelessness - waiting list and allocations less time critical'*.

(Q8). When asked to say why, comments were as follows:

- *'These in my view are the issues that could arise over the Christmas period, including homelessness issues.'*
- *'These are generally time-critical issues e.g. non-payment of benefits and homelessness have an immediate effect and require quick response.'*
- *'Housing repairs - urgent repairs only e.g. major water leak Housing Options - homelessness issues only Environmental services - environmental crises such as flooding.'*



(Q9). When asked, 'How would you like to be informed of any issues over the period between 24 December to 2 January', most respondents thought the Council's website was the way issues should be communicated to them during this period. Social media, The Forester and Bulletin were also chosen. The responses were as follows:

- The Council's website (3), Social media, (2), The Forester, (1), and Bulletin, (1), were the means by which Members wished to be informed.

(Q10). When asked for views of the closure over the Christmas period, one response was to, 'Keep the current closure arrangements the same'. (Q10a). Other responses were:

- *'I would like to see what public support there is for opening over this period.'*
- *'Depends on service - reduced cover over Christmas and New Year is accessible.'*
- *'Some services could remain available by a call-out system rather than have the offices manned during the day. Consideration should be given to whether staff have to take leave for part of this time as happens in most private companies.'*

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-043-2014/15

Date of meeting: 1 December 2014



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Finance

Subject: Restructure of the Benefits Division

Responsible Officer: Janet Twinn (01992 564215).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That Cabinet note the new national arrangements for investigating housing benefit fraud under the Single Fraud Investigation Service; and**
- (2) That Cabinet approve the revised structure for the Benefits Division set out in the report.**

Executive Summary:

As part of the Welfare Reform Act, the responsibility for Housing Benefit fraud investigation will be transferring from all local authorities to the Single Fraud Investigation Service within the DWP. Although it has taken four years since the original announcement, we now know that this function within Epping Forest District Council will transfer on 1 October 2015. However, it is only the Housing Benefit fraud investigation function that will be transferred. Responsibility for Local Council Tax Support fraud investigation will remain with the Council.

In addition to investigating Housing Benefit fraud and Local Council Tax Support fraud, the current Benefit Investigation team do also assist in non-benefit related corporate fraud investigations, working with both Internal Audit and the Housing Tenancy Fraud Officers. A dedicated Corporate Fraud team is now being set up and is the subject of a further report to Cabinet. The Corporate Fraud team will however be investigating Local Council Tax Support fraud.

With the transfer of Housing Benefit fraud investigation to SFIS, and the creation of the Corporate fraud team, this has necessitated a reorganisation of the current structure of the Benefits Division. The current Benefit Investigation team have all been put into scope to transfer to the Department for Work and Pensions from 1 October 2015 but the transfer of this function from the Council has also created a new liaison function which will need to be resourced. There will be the opportunity for at least some of the current Investigation Officers to either work in the Corporate Fraud team or to remain within the Benefits Division in a compliance or liaison role. The revised structure will achieve potential full year savings of £134,030 in the Benefits Division.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The main purpose of the Benefit Investigation team is to investigate Housing Benefit fraud and Local Council Tax Support fraud. As both of these functions are to be transferred to SFIS and Corporate Fraud, the structure of the Benefits Division needs to be reviewed.

Other Options for Action:

To do nothing. However, if the Benefits Division is not restructured, there will be a lack of a management structure for some of the Benefit staff, the Council could lose income from failing to protect the tax base, and there will be no resource available to assist SFIS with the investigation of Housing Benefit fraud, resulting in a loss to the public purse.

Report:

Current Structure

1. The current structure of the Benefits Division is shown in Appendix 1. There are 2 Managers who report to the Assistant Director - Benefits and they each manage teams with various benefit administration functions. The Benefits Manager post is responsible for benefit assessment, benefit IT issues, training, appeals and overpayment recovery. The Investigations & Interventions Manager is responsible for Housing Benefit fraud investigation, Local Council Tax Support fraud investigation and the intervention team, whose responsibility is to carry out checks on existing claims to ensure that entitlement is accurate and that there have been no unreported changes in circumstances. The Interventions team also deals with any data matching referrals from the Housing Benefit Matching Service (HBMS) where data matching shows that there is a mismatch between data held by the DWP and the local authority. HMRC have also recently begun to send data matching referrals to each local authority which is referred to as RTI. This is using data from their Real Time Information initiative where they have identified possible mismatches on earnings between information declared to HMRC by employers and information provided by claimants for benefit purposes. In a 4 week period, we have been sent 118 possible mismatches which the Interventions team are dealing with. This is, however, a new function for that team.
2. The Assistant Director – Benefits, the Benefits Manager and the Investigations & Interventions Manager work closely together and ensure that there is always a Senior Manager available should any issue arise, and that at least one of them is a representative at any meetings. The two Managers will deputise for the Assistant Director – Benefits in her absence.
3. The Investigation team which is in scope to transfer to the DWP comprises the Investigation & Interventions Manager, the Senior Investigation/Prosecution Officer and 3 Investigation Officers. With the loss of the Investigation team, it will leave the Interventions team without a Manager and it will also result in the loss of one of the key Managers involved in the management of the Benefits Division.

Proposed Structure

4. The proposed structure is shown in Appendix 2 and the new/changed posts will be subject to job evaluation. It is proposed to only make changes to the existing Investigations & Interventions team, and will be effective from 1 April 2015. Consideration has been given to the additional function that will need to be taken on by the Council for the liaison role with SFIS. It is clear from information already provided by the DWP and the experience of the pilot authorities for SFIS, that an Officer will need to be responsible for making referrals to SFIS and supplying all documents and information held by the Council that SFIS will need to carry out an investigation. This will also include any local knowledge as SFIS is a national organisation and the Investigating Officer is unlikely to have any knowledge of the District or the letting history or the landlords/agents that the Benefits Division has regular contact with. Referrals will also need to be made to the Corporate Fraud team, together with advice and information about the claim and the Local Council Tax Support scheme. That Officer will need to monitor progress of investigations by both SFIS and the Corporate Fraud team and to make decisions about Housing Benefit entitlement and Local Council Tax Support entitlement once the investigation is

concluded.

5. With regards to the various data matching exercises that are undertaken, this will still remain as a function for the Benefits Division and needs to be incorporated into the structure. Officers will need to look at the mismatches of data and carry out initial checking and then either correct claim data/entitlement or, where there has been an obvious untruth told by the claimant in order to obtain benefit to which they are not entitled, they will refer to either SFIS or the Corporate Fraud team (or both if both HB and LCTS are in payment) if it is considered to be serious enough to prosecute. It is proposed to create 2 Liaison Officer posts to ensure that there is always an Officer available to maintain liaison with SFIS and Corporate Fraud, and that any data matching work is also undertaken by these two Officers.

6. The current Appeals and Overpayments Officer post is vacant and this has provided the opportunity to reconsider this role. The Council has never received enough appeals or requests for reconsiderations for this post to be full-time dealing solely with appeal and reconsideration work. When the post was originally created, it was appropriate at that time to add the management of the Overpayment Officers to the duties, making it a full-time post. This has now been reconsidered and it is proposed to mix the appeal duties with compliance rather than overpayments. Whoever deals with appeals needs a very comprehensive and detailed knowledge of Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support, together with any case law relevant to the appeal. The new Appeals & Compliance Officer will consider appeals and reconsideration requests, provide appeal submissions to the relevant Appeal Tribunals, represent the Council at those Tribunals and manage the team of Compliance Officers. They will also deputise for the Benefit Compliance Manager in their absence. In the proposed structure, the current Overpayment Officers will report to the Senior Control & Training Officer.

7. Compliance is the checking and verification of information provided to support both Housing Benefit and Local Council Support applications. This is required not only upon the initial application, but also at regular intervals whilst claims remain in payment. There is a clear difference in the definition of compliance and fraud investigation and the compliance function which will remain the responsibility of the Resources Directorate, whilst the fraud investigation function will move to SFIS for Housing Benefit fraud and the Corporate Investigation team for Local Council Tax Support fraud investigation. In addition to checking Local Council Tax Support applications, the Compliance Officers will also be checking single resident discounts and empty homes discounts as part of protecting the council tax base. The Visiting Officers in the current structure do carry out compliance work so three of these will be retained in the new team as Compliance Officers. The fourth will take up one of the proposed liaison roles.

8. It is also proposed that there will be a Manager to replace the post of the Investigations & Interventions Manager and who will be able to support the Assistant Director and the Benefits Manager with the overall management of the Division and a representative of the Resources Directorate.

9. The Partnership working that the Essex Benefit Managers has been undertaking has secured the agreement of all Essex Section 151 Officers, Essex County Council, Essex Police and the Essex Fire Service to proceed with a business case to protect the Council Tax base. This was the subject of a separate report to Cabinet on 3 November 2014. Within the business case, it has been agreed for Epping Forest that there will be funding for two additional Compliance Officers whose role will be the checking of both Local Council Tax Support claims and Council Tax discounts, including single resident discounts and discounts on empty homes. It is proposed that these two posts will also be part of the new Compliance team but, as they will be 3 year fixed term contract posts, not permanent posts, they have not been shown in the proposed structure in Appendix 2.

10. With regard to the existing Investigation team, they will be transferred to SFIS from 1

October 2015, unless the Officers are appointed to a post either within the Corporate Fraud team or the revised structure for the Benefits Division. It has been agreed that they will remain within the Benefits Division until they are either transferred to SFIS or they take up other posts within the Council. These posts have also not been included in Appendix 2 as they will be deleted from the establishment from 1 October 2015.

Cost of the New Structure

11. Subject to Job evaluation, the cost of the new structure is set out below.

Current establishment		£1,038,555
Less Investigations staff		(£174,490)
Additional		
Grade 6	£29,630	
Grade 9	£45,760	
Less		
Appeals/overpayments	<u>(£34,930)</u>	
Grade 7	£40,460	
		<u>£40,460</u>
Proposed establishment		£904,525
Potential full year Savings		£134,030

12. Overall, the difference in posts between the current structure and the proposed structure is a reduction of:

- 1 x Grade 8
- 1 x Grade 7
- 2 x Grade 6

13. The full year savings will only be achieved once the Officers of the existing Benefit Investigation team are either appointed to the Corporate Fraud team, appointed to posts within the new benefit establishment, or are transferred to SFIS from 1 October 2015.

Conclusion

14. Whilst delivering savings to the Council, the proposed restructure of the Benefits Division will address the issues created by Housing Benefit fraud investigation moving to SFIS and Local Council Tax fraud investigation becoming the responsibility of the Corporate Fraud team. A restructure has also given the opportunity to look at protecting the Council Tax base by incorporating the compliance of Council Tax discounts into the duties of the Compliance Officers.

Resource Implications:

The proposed restructure of the Benefits Division will create potential full year savings of £134.030. There is also the potential through the Compliance work to increase the Council Tax base through the removal of discounts to which taxpayers are no longer entitled.

Legal and Governance Implications:

No specific implications.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

No specific implications.

Consultation Undertaken:

Director of Resources
Director of Governance
Chief Internal Auditor

Background Papers:

Cabinet report 1 December 2014 regarding the Restructure of the Internal Audit Unit and Creation of a Corporate Fraud team.

Cabinet Report 3 November 2014 regarding Council Tax and Local Council Tax Support Compliance.

Risk Management:

Without a restructure, there is the risk that once the Corporate Fraud team is established, and SFIS takes over Housing Benefit fraud investigation, the Benefits Division will have no effective management structure which could lead to poor performance. The proposed structure is focused on protecting the council tax base which will bring increased income to the Council, income that would not be achieved without the proposed restructure.

Due Regard Record

Name of policy or activity:

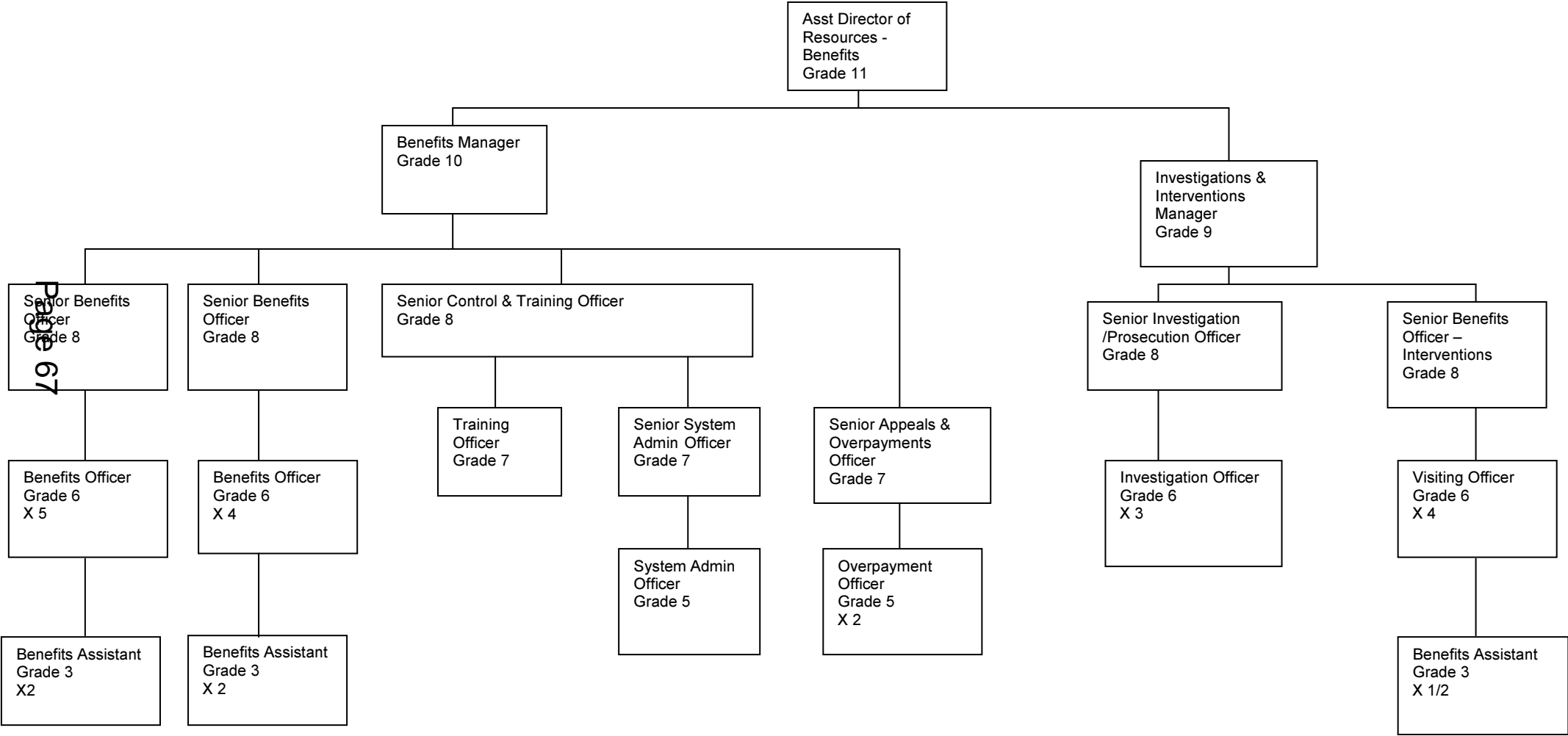
What this record is for: By law the Council must, in the course of its service delivery and decision making, think about and see if it can eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. This active consideration is known as, 'paying due regard', and it must be recorded as evidence. We pay due regard by undertaking equality analysis and using what we learn through this analysis in our service delivery and decision making. The purpose of this form is as a log of evidence of due regard.

When do I use this record? Every time you complete equality analysis on a policy or activity this record must be updated. Due regard must be paid, and therefore equality analysis undertaken, at 'formative stages' of policies and activities including proposed changes to or withdrawal of services. This record must be included as an appendix to any report to decision making bodies. Agenda Planning Groups will not accept any report which does not include evidence of due regard being paid via completion of an Equality Analysis Report.

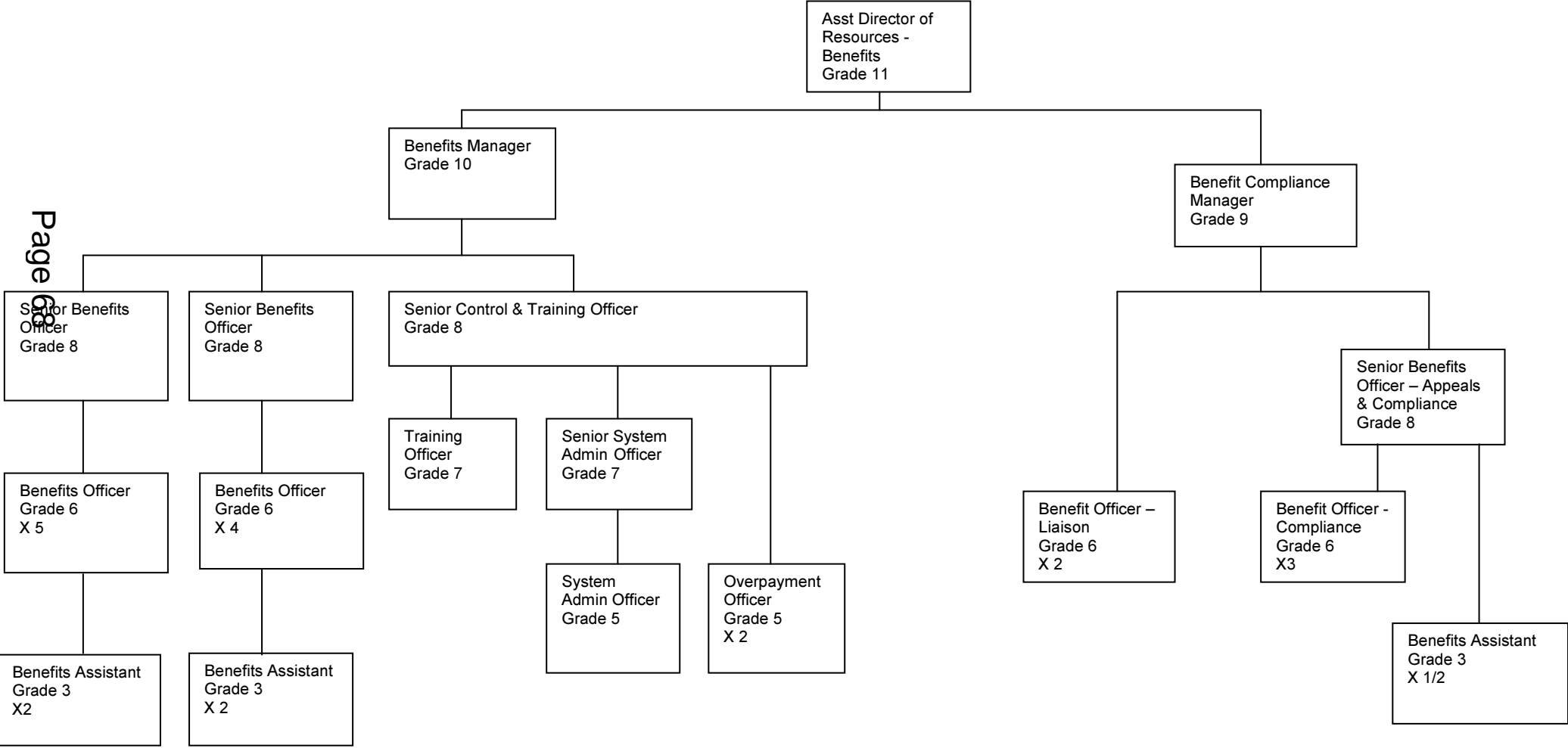
How do I use this record: When you next undertake equality analysis open a Due Regard Record. Use it to record a summary of your analysis, including the reason for the analysis, the evidence considered, what the evidence told you about the protected groups, and the key findings from the analysis. This will be key information from Steps 1-7 of the Equality Analysis process set out in the Toolkit, and your Equality Analysis Report. This Due Regard Record is Step 8 of that process.

Date / Name	Summary of equality analysis
3 November 2014 Janet Twinn	<p>The Council has approved the creation of a Corporate Fraud team to further develop and enhance fraud prevention and detection for the protection of the public purse.</p> <p>The recruitment of staff and the transfer of staff to SFIS will be in accordance with Council policies and procedures, together with the specific legislation recently enabled to allow the transfer of Local Authority staff to SFIS.</p>

EFDC - Benefit Division Establishment



EFDC - Benefit Division Establishment



Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-052-2014/15
Date of meeting: 1 December 2014



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Governance and Development Management

Subject: Restructure of the Internal Audit Unit and Creation of a Corporate Fraud Team

Responsible Officer: Brian Bassington (01992 564446).

Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the proposed structure for the Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud Investigation Unit with effect from 1 April 2015 as set out at Appendix 1 be approved;
- (2) That a new post of Senior Fraud Investigator be created, subject to job evaluation;
- (3) That three new posts of Fraud Investigator be created, subject to job evaluation;
- (4) That the post of Auditor (0.4FTE) be made full time;
- (5) That, in order to finance the General Fund costs of the above, a CSB Growth Bid in the sum of £58,075 for 2015/16 be added to the CSB Growth List for consideration;
- (6) That, subject to the CSB Growth Bid being agreed, the additional £41,265 required to be funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) be funded from the HRA's Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund;
- (7) That the existing Benefits Fraud staff continue to be located within the Resources Directorate, under the management of the Assistant Director (Benefits), until they are transferred to the Single Fraud Investigation Service from 1 October 2015; and
- (8) That it be noted that an annual saving of £134,030, arising partly in 2015/16 and partly in 2016/17, will occur following the transfer of Benefit Fraud staff to the Single Fraud Investigation Service and other consequent changes to the Benefits Division.

Executive Summary:

The National Fraud Authority, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Audit Commission have all published recommendations highlighting the importance of a corporate counter-fraud response within local authorities.

The introduction of the Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) will affect councils' priorities

in tackling fraud. Because SFIS will investigate benefit fraud, councils have an opportunity to focus more resources on other frauds that have a local impact, such as housing tenancy and right to buy fraud, procurement, business rate, council tax discounts and local council tax support fraud, grant fraud and internal fraud including such areas as payroll and expenses.

The creation of a Corporate Fraud Investigation Team working closely with the enhanced Internal Audit Unit will save the Council money and enable the Chief Internal Auditor to provide a more robust audit cover, which will give a higher level of assurance in the fraud prevention and detection work within the Council and strengthen the annual governance statement.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

A corporate fraud investigation team was included in the Directorate restructuring approved by Full Council on 17th December 2013.

Other Options for Action:

To do nothing. This would leave the Council vulnerable to financial loss due to fraudulent activity that may remain undetected.

Report:

Introduction

1. The most significant issues raised in the Audit Commission Publication “Protecting the Public Purse”, published annually, have included recommendations for the establishment of corporate counter-fraud teams. “Protecting the Public Purse 2014”, published in October 2014 states “Councils are stewards of public funds and have a duty to protect the public purse from fraud. Better performing councils acknowledge this responsibility and put in place the core components of an effective corporate counter-fraud approach”.

2. The National Fraud Authority publications “Fighting Fraud Together” (2011) and “Fighting Fraud Locally” (2012), the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) document “Local Government Fraud Strategy” and the Audit Commission Publication “Protecting the Public Purse 2013” further highlight the importance of a corporate counter-fraud response.

3. A corporate fraud investigation team was included in the Directorate restructuring approved by Full Council on 17th December 2013. This will enable the council’s already robust fraud response to be further developed and directed as best needed to protect public finances.

Current Developments

4. Benefit fraud is a substantial loss to the national public purse, but has less impact on council budgets. The introduction of the Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) will affect councils’ priorities in tackling fraud. Because SFIS will investigate benefit fraud, councils have an opportunity to focus more resources on other frauds that have a local impact, such as housing tenancy and right to buy fraud, procurement, specifically contract letting and bribery, business rate, council tax discounts and local council tax support fraud, grant fraud and internal fraud including such areas as payroll and expenses, which will include false sickness, job application fraud, over-claimed expenses, second job, Identity fraud, running a business from work and improper use of assets.

The implementation date for SFIS in relation to this council is 1 October 2015.

5. As part of the Directorate Restructuring a Corporate Fraud Investigation Team will be brought together under the Chief Internal Auditor as part of the Internal Audit and Fraud Investigation Unit within the Governance Directorate, with reporting lines direct to the Chief Executive.

6. The work of the team will be fraud specific, where fraud is suspected, has been referred to the team by the Directorates, through the fraud hotline or whistleblowing procedures and will not involve compliance work such as is being proposed for Council tax Discounts which will be subject to a separate report from the Assistant Director (Benefits).

7. Member reporting will be through the Corporate Governance Group to the Audit and Governance Committee who have as part of their Role and Responsibilities to:

“consider the effectiveness of the Council's Risk Management arrangements, the control environment and associated anti-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements.”

Other specific Member reporting lines will continue as present, such as for the Housing progress reports.

Current Staffing

8. The Council currently has strong anti-fraud teams within Benefits and Housing and limited anti-fraud resources within Internal Audit (one part time post of two days per week). These teams have worked in isolation within their respective Directorates although a greater level of joint working has been evident recently.

Benefits Fraud

Investigations & Interventions Manager Grade 9
Senior Investigation Officer Grade 8
Investigation Officer Grade 6 x3

9. With the implementation of SFIS in October 2015 these posts will transfer from the Council generating a saving of £174,490, less the cost of creating a Liaison Officer post within the Benefits office for managing the flow of information between the Council and SFIS. This will be subject to a separate report from the Assistant Director (Benefits).

10. Since these staff will be transferring to the SFIS just six months after the proposed Corporate Fraud Investigation Team has been formed, they will remain within the Resources Directorate, under the management of the Assistant Director (Benefits), until they are transferred.

Housing Fraud

Senior Housing Officer (Fraud) Grade 7
Housing Officer (Fraud) Grade 5

Internal Audit

Auditor Grade 7 (P/T 0.4 Full Time Equivalent (FTE))

11. Other fraud work is carried out within Internal Audit on minor investigations and the National Fraud Initiative. This work is carried out by Auditors with no specific or recent fraud training.

12. All of the Benefits Fraud staff are in scope for transfer to SFIS based on their current duties. The investigation of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, Corporate Fraud, and Tenancy Fraud etc. will remain with the Council. Housing fraud is a main area of concern due to the number of cases of fraud being identified by the two existing Housing Fraud Officers. It is a case of the more they look the more they find. In order to address these issues it is proposed to restructure Internal Audit and create a Corporate Fraud Team to form a single cohesive unit as follows.

Proposed Staffing – Corporate Fraud

(Please see attached chart – Appendix 1)

Senior Fraud Investigator, Grade subject to job evaluation

Fraud Investigator, Grade subject to job evaluation

Fraud Investigator, Grade subject to job evaluation

Fraud Investigator, Grade subject to job evaluation

13. On receipt of the job evaluation results any staff at risk will be identified. At risk employees will be subject to the Council's HR policies and procedures. There is a possible redundancy estimate of £1559 subject to the job evaluation results. Benefits Fraud staff may also be at risk subject to the final SFIS arrangements being known.

14. In the last two and a half years, since the appointment of the Housing Fraud Officers 36 properties have been recovered and Investigations into Right to Buy applications has resulted in the return of 7 more properties. It is not possible to put an exact value on this work, but it has resulted in around £0.5m in Right to Buy discounts not being given (currently a maximum of £77,000 per property). Investigations into private sector housing grants has resulted in a saving in the region of £25,000.

15. It is intended that further resources will be directed at Housing fraud to support the two existing Investigators and that they will maintain close working relationships with Communities Management as at present.

Proposed Staffing – Internal Audit

(Please see attached chart – Appendix 1)

Chief Internal Auditor, Grade 11

Senior Auditor, Grade 9

Auditor, Grade 7

Auditor, Grade 7

Auditor, Grade 7

16. The existing staffing within Audit to remain with the exception of the conversion of the Auditor (part time) to full time to enable audits currently that are not reviewed unless resources are available, due to the audit plan being risk based and high risk areas being concentrated upon by the existing staff.

17. The following areas are considered medium risk and are proposed for audit review on a two yearly cycle. To cover these additional areas the addition of 0.6 FTE to the audit establishment would enable higher level of audit assurance to be given and provide a level of resilience within the team to cover sickness or vacancy lost time:

- Local Plan
- Corporate Partnerships
- Corporate Grants and External Funding
- Homelessness prevention inc. B&B
- Economic Development
- Corporate fees & charges
- Grants to voluntary organisations
- FOI/ DPA
- Health & safety
- Training & Development
- Members allowances
- Legal Services
- Grounds maintenance
- Environmental health
- Electoral services
- Email internet & telephone usage
- Voids
- Community Safety
- Museum
- licences
- Local land charges
- Flexi Time

18. It is intended that the audit and fraud teams will work closely together particularly in the identification of improvements to the Council's systems to increase fraud prevention.

Additional Costing	GF	HRA	Total
Senior Fraud Investigator (new post)	£22,880	£22,880	£45,760
Fraud Investigator (new post)	£14,815	£14,815	£29,630
Fraud Investigator (existing post CNO/12)	0	£3,570	£3,570
Auditor (from 0.4 to 1.0FTE)	£20,380	0	£20,380
Full year effect	£58,075	£41,265	£99,340

(Note – The above costs are indicative only; the actual costs are dependent on the outcome of job evaluations).

19. As it is not possible at this time to allocate exactly how the resources will be split between the General Fund and the Housing Revenue fund, the additional Fraud Investigator posts have been allocated on a 50/50 basis. The intention is to use the current internal audit time recording system (Apace) to accurately record the split in investigatory work and charge accordingly.

20. It is proposed that the additional cost to the Housing Revenue Account is funded from the HRA's Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund, if the General Fund's CSB Growth Bid is agreed.

Conclusion

21. The creation of the Corporate Fraud Investigation Team under the Chief Internal Auditor will help address the recommendations of the National Fraud Authority and the Audit Commission while building on the work currently being carried out on a Directorate basis. The

Corporate fraud Investigation Team and enhanced Internal Audit will enable the Chief Internal Auditor to provide a higher level of assurance in the fraud prevention and detection work within the Council and strengthen the annual governance statement.

Resource Implications:

The creation of a Corporate fraud Investigation Team and enhanced Internal Audit will result in two new posts being created and a part time post (0.4 FTE) being made full time. The additional costs are £58,075 for the General Fund and £41,265 for the Housing Revenue Account, totalling £99,340.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The creation of a Corporate fraud Investigation Team and enhanced Internal Audit will enable the Chief Internal Auditor to provide a higher level of assurance in the fraud prevention and detection work within the Council and strengthen the annual governance statement.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

No specific implications.

Consultation Undertaken:

Portfolio Holder for Governance and Development Management.
Director of Governance.
Director of Communities.
Director of Resources.
Assistant Director of Resources (Benefits).

Background Papers:

Audit files and working papers, Committee minutes.

Risk Management:

Internal Audit has a primary objective to provide an independent and objective opinion on the adequacy of the Council's control environment, including its governance and risk management arrangements. The proposals within this report will enhance both the monitoring and actions taken to address the risk of fraud to the Council, for the protection of public money.

Due Regard Record

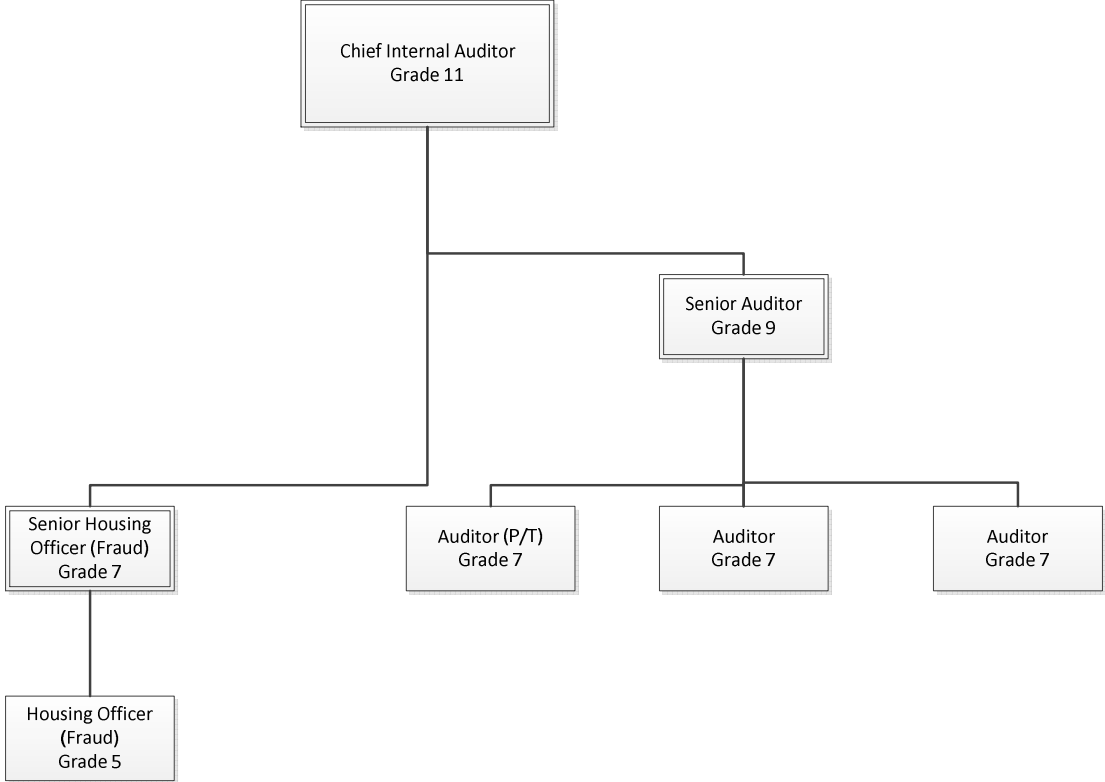
This page shows **which groups of people are affected** by the subject of this report. It sets out **how they are affected** and how any **unlawful discrimination** they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how **access to the service(s)** subject to this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to **understand each other better** as a result of the subject of this report.

S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

The Council has approved the creation of a Corporate Fraud Investigation Team to further develop and enhance fraud prevention and detection for the protection of the public purse.

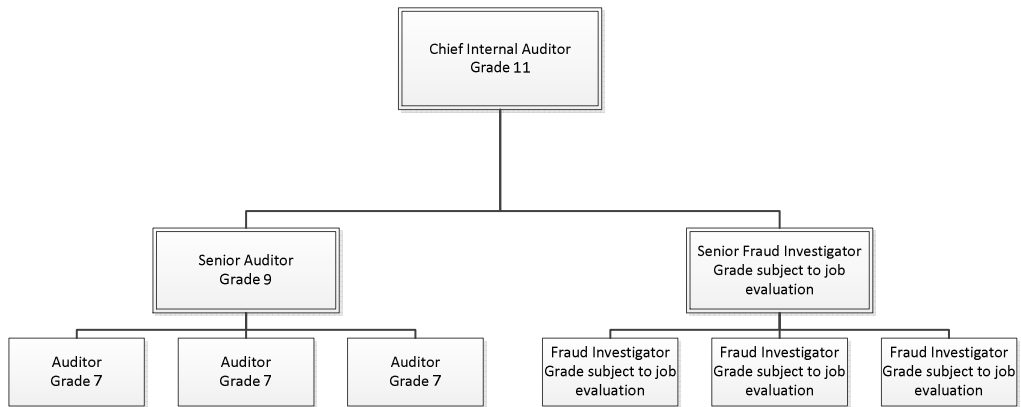
Recruitment of staff will be in accordance with Council policies and procedures.

Internal Audit Unit – Existing as at November 2014



Epping Forest District Council

Internal Audit and Corporate Fraud Investigation Unit



Proposed Staffing as at October 2014

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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-045-2014/15
Date of meeting: 1 December 2014



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Asset Management and Economic Development

Subject: The introduction of Private Pilot's Licence (PPL) training for fixed wing aircraft at North Weald Airfield

Responsible Officer: Darren Goodey (01992 564501)
Jim Nolan (01992 564083)

Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations:

- (1) To authorise officers to enter into a negotiated agreement with The North Weald Flying Group to allow them to commence Private Pilot's Licence (PPL) training for fixed wing aircraft at North Weald Airfield; and**
- (2) Following on from (1) above, to end the moratorium on the maximum term of the lease being which presently stands at four years, for this lease only.**

Executive Summary:

Until April 2010, the ability to learn to fly in a fixed wing or rotary wing aircraft was not possible from North Weald Airfield. This was due to an Air Navigation Order (ANO) that stated that a Private Pilot's Licence (PPL) training could only be undertaken at a licensed airfield. This Order has now been amended to allow such activity. North Weald Flying Group has requested permission to undertake PPL training from the airfield.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To increase the income from the airfield in accordance with Members stated aims.

Other Options for Action:

Not to allow the introduction of fixed wing PPL training.

To allow PPL training but with restrictions.

Report:

- As a result of an amendment of the Air Navigation Order (ANO) in April 2010, flight training for a PPL for aeroplanes with a Maximum Take Off Mass (MTOM) of 2730kg and helicopters and gyroplanes with a MTOM of 3175kg became permissible from unlicensed Airfields such as North Weald.
- This change to the ANO followed the Civil Aviation Authority's (CAA) consultation with the industry and after analysing the safety record of un-licensed aerodromes. The CAA

concluded that there was no justifiable safety case to restrict flight training in aeroplanes and helicopters under a specified weight, to licensed airfields.

3. There would still be a legal obligation on airfield operators and those conducting flight training to ensure that it has adequate facilities for the safe conduct of flight training such as an air to ground radio service, fire fighting & rescue services.

4. More recently, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and the European Union Aviation Agency (EUAA) have changed the requirements for PPL training which has resulted in allowing only organisations with the status of “Approved Training Organisation” (ATO) to conduct PPL training. This means that individual freelance instructors will no longer be able to carry out PPL training unless they operate under the aegis of an ATO.

5. An ATO is required to draw up a series of manuals regarding its operations. These manuals need to be approved by the CAA before training can commence. They cover Operations, Training, Safety Management and Compliance Monitoring. They are required to have personnel appointed to carry out specific functions such as Head of Training, Chief Flying Instructor, Compliance Monitoring Manager and Safety Manager. They are subject to regular audits and visits by CAA inspectors to ensure that standards are maintained.

Current Position

6. Since the relaxation of the ANO, a number of training providers have expressed an interest in operating from North Weald. The Airfield is attractive to training providers due to a number of factors including the type and length of the runway, the Airfield’s location, facilities and professional reputation within the aviation industry.

7. The only training provider who has applied to use the airfield and who also holds ATO status is the North Weald Flying Group (NWFG) and as such regular dialogue has been held with them rather than other providers.

8. The North Weald Flying Group has been operating from the Airfield for over ten years without major incident as an aircraft rental group. It operates a fleet of four Cessna C172s, a Cessna C150, and a Piper Archer PA28-181. It already carries out type conversion, basic instrument (IMC) training for pilots with PPLs and biennial check flights.

9. The Accountable Manager, Chief Flying Instructor and Chief Theoretical Knowledge Instructor has logged over 22,000 flying hours, including 7,000 hours as an instructor and examiner. Their Head of Training is another very experienced instructor. He is also the Compliance Monitoring Manager. The Safety Manager is a director and manager of The Squadron where NWFG makes use of the facilities for its ground-based training and briefings.

10. The Airfield management team have completed a risk assessment that examines the introduction of PPL training and the findings were such that it is felt that the current resources at North Weald such as staffing levels and fire cover are sufficient. This shows that the airfield could fulfil its legal obligation in providing adequate facilities for the safe conduct of flight training.

11. The major concern is the effect the introduction of PPL training would have on the local community. The introduction of PPL training would inevitably increase movements which in turn could see an increase in nuisance complaints from local residents, however, the Chief Flying Instructor from NWFG has made it clear that only 25% of a PPL training course involves circuit training and that to mitigate concerns they would also use other Airfields at Andrewsfield and Duxford with whom they already have arrangements in place.

12. Initially, NWFG are looking for 1000 movements per annum which equates to less than three per day. Any lease granted will reflect this limit and any excess movements will, in the first instance incur a financial penalty and trigger a review of the lease.

13. There is no intention to permit any type of Commercial Pilots Licence training.

14. Activities permitted by any lease granted as a result of this report would not extend beyond the current operating hours of the airfield.

15. In order to make this business opportunity as attractive as possible and if through negotiation the financial terms of the lease can be maximised by doing so, Members are asked to lift the moratorium on the length of leases (which presently stands at four years) for this lease only.

Resource Implications:

It is proposed that NWFG lease an area of land on the Airfield to position some of their aircraft so there would be an associated rental income.

They would also be granted a Runway License that would permit them to operate PPL training and include a maximum number of movements per annum. It has been suggested by NWFG that 1000 would be sufficient in the first instance but this could increase in the future. The charge per movement would form part of the agreement negotiations.

It is anticipated that the income associated with this activity would be in excess of £5000 per annum.

Legal and Governance Implications:

There would be a need for a contract for the use of the airfield and runway movements to be drawn up.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

None.

Consultation Undertaken:

None.

Background Papers:

Airfield risk assessment.

Risk Management:

A formal airfield risk assessment has been undertaken which indicates that there would be no significant risk should this proposal be implemented.

Due Regard Record

This page shows **which groups of people are affected** by the subject of this report. It sets out **how they are affected** and how any **unlawful discrimination** they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how **access to the service(s)** subject to this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to **understand each other better** as a result of the subject of this report.

S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

The Airfield has a wide variety of users and due regard must be given to the needs of those users and the general public living near the Airfield.

It is possible that the activity which is the subject of this report may give rise to increased nuisance or annoyance, however, it is felt that the existing statutory powers already available will mitigate any possible problems.

The statutory powers referred to are exercised with due regard to the needs of all the residents of the District.



Epping Forest District Council

Report to Cabinet

Report reference: C-046-2014/15

Date of meeting: 1 December 2014

Portfolio: Leader

Subject: Corporate Plan Key Objectives 2014/15 – Progress (Quarter 2)

Responsible Officer: Barbara Copson (01992 564042)

Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) That the Cabinet review progress in relation to the achievement of the key objectives for 2014/15, for the second quarter of the year.

Executive Summary:

The Corporate Plan is the Council's key strategic planning document, setting out its priorities over the four-year period from 2011/12 to 2014/15, with strategic themes reflecting those of the Community Strategy for the district. Updates to the Corporate Plan are published annually, to reflect the key objectives for each year of the plan period and progress against the achievement of objectives for previous years.

The annual identification of key objectives provides an opportunity for the Council to focus attention on how areas for improvement will be addressed, opportunities exploited and better outcomes delivered during the year. The key objectives are intended to provide a clear statement of the Council's overall intentions for each year, and are supported by a range of actions and deliverables designed to achieve specific outcomes.

A range of key objectives for 2014/15 was adopted by the Cabinet in April 2014. Progress in relation to individual actions and deliverables is reviewed by the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly and outturn basis.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

It is important that relevant performance management processes are in place to review progress against the key objectives, to ensure their continued achievability and relevance, and to identify proposals for appropriate corrective action in areas of slippage or under-performance. This report presents six-month (1 April to 30 September 2014) progress against the key objectives for 2014/15.

Other Options for Action:

No other options are appropriate in this respect. Failure to monitor and review performance against the key objectives and to consider corrective action where necessary, could have negative implications for the Council's reputation and judgements made about its progress, and might mean that opportunities for improvement were lost. The Council has previously agreed arrangements for the review of progress against the key objectives.

Report:

1. The Corporate Plan for 2011/12 to 2014/15 translates the vision for the district set out by the Community Strategy, into the Council's strategic direction, priorities and the most important outcomes that it wants to achieve. The Corporate Plan helps to prioritise resources to provide quality services and value for money.

2. The key objectives adopted for each year of the Corporate Plan represent the Council's high-level initiatives and over-arching goals for the year. The objectives are not intended to reflect everything that the Council does, but instead focus on national priorities set by the Government and local challenges arising from the social, economic and environmental context of the district.

3. The key objectives for 2014/15 were adopted by the Cabinet at its meeting on 7 April 2014. The achievement of the objectives is supported by a range of individual deliverables and actions, with target dates spread throughout the year (and beyond in some instances). Some of the deliverables can only be achieved incrementally or are dependent upon the completion of other actions, and are intended to be fluid to reflect changes in priorities and other influencing factors.

4. Progress against the key objectives was an area of focus in former corporate inspection processes, in order to assess the Council's success in improving the services that it delivers, and to identify and reflect plans to secure improvement. Whilst such external assessment processes have generally ceased, it remains important to review progress against the key objectives, and to take appropriate corrective action where necessary in areas of slippage or under-performance. Progress towards the achievement of individual deliverables and actions is therefore reviewed on a quarterly basis, in order to ensure the timely identification and implementation of appropriate corrective action.

5. A schedule detailing six-month progress against the individual deliverables and actions designed to support the achievement of each of the key objectives, is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. In reporting progress, the following 'status' indicators have been applied to the current cumulative position for each individual deliverable or action:

(a) **Achieved (Green)** - specific deliverables or actions have been completed or achieved in accordance with in-year targets;

(b) **On-Target (Green)** - specific deliverables or actions will be completed or achieved in accordance with in-year targets;

(c) **Under Control (Amber)** - specific deliverables or actions have not been completed or achieved in accordance with in-year targets, but completion/achievement will be secured by a revised target date (specified) or by year-end;

(d) **Behind Schedule (Red)** - specific deliverables or actions have not been completed or achieved in accordance with in-year targets and completion/achievement may not be secured by year-end; and

(e) **Pending (Grey)** - specific deliverables or actions cannot currently be fully completed or achieved, as they rely on the prior completion of other actions or are dependent on external factors outside the Council's control.

6. At the end of the second quarter of the year:

(a) 44 (81.5%) of the individual deliverables or actions supporting the key objectives had either been completed or achieved, or are anticipated to be completed/achieved in accordance with in-year targets;

(b) 4 (7.5%) may not be completed or achieved by year-end; and

(c) 6 (11%) are currently on-hold as a result of external factors.

7. The Cabinet is requested to review current progress against the key objectives for 2014/15. This report will also be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 January 2015.

Resource Implications:

Resource requirements for actions to achieve specific key objectives for 2014/15 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer and reflected in the budget for the year.

Legal and Governance Implications:

There are no legal or governance implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Relevant implications arising from actions to achieve specific key objectives for 2014/15 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer.

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:

There are no implications arising from the recommendations of this report in respect of the Council's commitment to the Climate Local Agreement, the corporate Safer, Cleaner, Greener initiative, or any crime and disorder issues within the district. Relevant implications arising from actions to achieve specific key objectives for 2014/15 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer.

Consultation Undertaken:

Progress against actions to achieve specific key objectives for 2014/15 as set out in this report, has been submitted by each responsible service director. Current progress in respect of each of the key objectives for 2014/15 has been reviewed by Management Board (29 October 2014) and will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 January 2015.

Background Papers:

Six-month progress submissions for the key objectives for 2014/15 and relevant supporting documentation held by responsible service directors/chief officers.

Risk Management:

There are no risk management issues arising from the recommendations of this report. Relevant issues arising from actions to achieve specific key objectives for 2014/15 will have been identified by the responsible service director/chief officer.

Due Regard Record

This page shows which groups of people (if any) are affected by the subject of this report. It sets out how they are affected and how any discrimination they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how access to the service(s) subject of this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to understand each other better as a result of the subject of this report.

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

Date/Officer	Summary of equality analysis
31 October 2014 B. Copson	<p>An overriding aim of the key objectives is to improve outcomes and circumstances for all sections of the community.</p> <p>There are no equality implications arising from the specific recommendations of this report. Relevant implications arising from individual deliverables or actions to achieve the key objectives for 2014/15 will be identified and considered by the responsible service director or chief officer.</p>

1. Proactively promote the policies and reputation of the Council internally and externally

Action	Lead Directorates	Target Date	Status	Progress
(a) - Communicate information about the waste contract	Director of Neighbourhoods	(not specified)	2. On Target	(Q1 2014/15) - The Council appointed its new Contractor, Biffa, in May 2014 who is in their mobilisation phase with handover planned first week in November. The new Contractor and the Council will be developing a communication plan to inform the public of the planned 4 day collection arrangements due to start in April 2015. (Q2 2014/15) - The Council's new Waste Management Contractor has been working closely with the Council during the mobilisation period up to the start of the contract on the 3rd November to ensure that a smooth transition is achieved. These arrangements have included joint work on communications to provide accessible and timely information about the revised 4- day collection arrangements due to start in April 2015.
(b) - Communicate information about the Local Plan	Director of Neighbourhoods	(not specified)	2. On Target	(Q1 2014/15) - The Local Development Scheme published in July 2013 is due to be updated and published in July 2014. (Q2 2014/15) - The updated Local Development Scheme was agreed by Cabinet at their meeting in July 2014 and has been published on the Council's Website.
(c) - Communicate information regarding welfare reforms	Director of Resources	(not specified)	2. On Target	(Q2 2014/15) - There have been no significant announcements to publicise in the first half of 2014/15.

2. Engage with communities to put them at the centre of the Council's policy development and service design

Action	Lead Directorates	Target Date	Status	Progress
(a) - Development programme for areas with identified health inequalities	Director of Communities	31-Mar-15	2. On Target	(Q1 2014/15) Community Services have undertaken a wide range of work to address community engagement in Super Output Areas during the first quarter. This has included consultation with user groups of all ages and abilities and delivery of a significant number of community wellbeing initiatives in the Limes Farm (Chigwell), Waltham Abbey, Shelley, and Oakwood Hill and Willingale Road (Loughton) areas. (Q2 2014/15) The work referred to under Q1 above is continuing

(b) - (i) Undertaking a consultation exercise on gypsy & traveller site licences	Director of Communities	31-Jul-14	1. Achieved	(Q1 2014/15) The Housing Portfolio Holder agreed draft site licence conditions in June 2014 (based on the previously-agreed conditions for permanent residential sites) for consultation. The consultation exercise is in progress and a report will be considered by the Cabinet in September 2014 on the proposed final version of the Conditions, following which new site licences will be issued. (Q2 2014/15) The Cabinet agreed the proposed new site licence conditions at its meeting in September 2014, and the Private Sector Housing Team are currently in the process of issuing the licences.
(b) - (ii) Introduction of gypsy & traveller site licences and licence conditions	Director of Communities	31-May-15	2. On Target	(Q1 & Q2 2014/15) See 2(b) (i) above.
(c) - (i) Undertaking a consultation exercise on proposed car park tariffs	Director of Neighbourhoods	31-Oct-14	2. On Target	(Q1 2014/15) The off-street parking survey has commenced and is due to finish at the end of July 2014. The survey has been targeted to obtain the views of shoppers, local businesses, residents and commuters. Results to be available to inform a Cabinet decision around tariffs planned for October 2014. (Q2 2014/15) The off-street car parking survey to seek the views of residents, businesses and commuters, has been completed and the results evaluated. The survey responses will inform the development of the new off-street parking policy and any resulting revised tariff proposals.
(c) - (ii) Adoption of off-street car parking strategy and parking tariffs by 31 March 2015	Director of Neighbourhoods	31-Mar-15	2. On Target	(Q1 2014/15) Consultation work on tariff review commenced. (Q2 2014/15) As above the survey has concluded. The generation of income from off-street car parking will be a key consideration as part of the 2015/16 budget proposals. It is time-tabled to consider the off-street parking policy and any revised tariff arrangements in December 2015.

3. Deliver a robust and resilient Local Plan that facilitates appropriate growth, whilst protecting the special character of the district

Action	Lead Directorates	Target Date	Status	Progress
(a) (i) - Publication of Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation	Director of Neighbourhoods	31-Oct-14	4. Behind Schedule	(Q1 2014/15) The proposed new Local Development Scheme subject to agreement in July 2014 predicts that the revised date for the preferred options consultation will take place from mid-May 2015. (Q2 2014/15) The Local Development Scheme agreed by Cabinet in July 2014, still indicates that the preferred options consultation will take place from mid-May 2015.

(a) (ii) - Publication of Local Plan	Director of Neighbourhoods	30-Sep-15		2. On Target	(Q1 2014/15) Following the preferred options consultation, the new draft Local Plan should be published in the autumn of 2015. (Q2 2014/2015) Incorporating the findings of the preferred options consultation, the new draft Local Plan should be published in the Autumn of 2015.
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4. Promote cultural change to breakdown silo working, and implement new, flexible ways of working

Action	Lead Directorates	Target Date	Status	Progress	
(a) - Develop overarching Organisational Development Plan	Chief Executive	31-Dec-14		2. On Target	(Q1 2014/15) Completion of Organisational Development Plan dependent on achievement of related actions. Completion scheduled for end of third quarter. (Q2 2014/15) Management Board away day considered different types of organisational structure to help inform the organisational development structure. The session scheduled to progress this to the next stage was substituted by a joint session with the cabinet to set strategic priorities.
(b) - (i) Agreement of Phase 2 organisational structure	All directors	30-Sep-14		5. Pending	(Q1 2014/15) Phase II reviews in progress and being conducted by each Assistant Director, although unlikely to have all been agreed by the end of September 2014. Restructure of ICT and Forward Planning completed, but outcome of the Debt Working Party awaited to inform resource requirements for review of Legal Services. (Q2 2014/15) Governance Directorate: Economic Development and Asset Management Phase 2 agreed at Council. Legal, Governance and Performance Management and Development Management ready for Management Board consideration and Internal Audit/Corporate Fraud – out for consultation with affected service areas. Phase II reviews still progressing with savings generated in some areas. Debt working party draft report ready.
(b) - (ii) Implementation of Phase 2 organisational structure	All directors	31-Mar-15		5. Pending	(Q1 & Q2 2014/15) See 4(b) (i) above. (Q2 2014/15) Governance Directorate: see above - coordination of reports to Members required as necessary.

(c) - (i) Development of action plan to embed values & behaviours	Chief Executive	31-Mar-14	3. Under Control	(Q1 2014/15) Draft designs for poster campaigns considered by Leadership Team. Roll-out anticipated in September 2014. (Q2 2014/15) Poster campaign now expected for November.
(c) - (ii) Assessment of performance against values & behaviours	Director of Resources	31-Dec-14	2. On Target	(Q2 2014/15) The analysis of the initial trial was presented to Management Board on 20 August and a session is planned with Leadership team for 5 November to take forward the rollout later in the year.
(d) - (i) Adoption of customer centric approach to service delivery	Chief Executive	30-Sep-14	4. Behind Schedule	(Q1 & Q2 2014/15) Potential service areas for pilot study considered by Leadership Team. Possible external partners for the development of a service review methodology to be investigated.
(d) - (ii) Generation of increased revenue by traded services	Chief Executive	31-Mar-15	2. On Target	(Q1 & Q2 2014/15) Parking review underway and report anticipated in October 2014. Presentation by East of England Local Government Association on commercialisation of local authority services to be made to Leadership Team in September 2014. Proposals for the commercialisation of the Council's MOT and vehicle servicing facilities via a controlled company able to generate profit, being investigated. Trade waste service to be provided as part of new Waste Management Contract.
(e) - Review of outsourced Out Of Hours Call Handling Service	Director of Communities	31-May15	1. Achieved	(Q1 2014/15) The new call handling service operated by Mears was successfully introduced in April 2014. Some teething problems have been identified which are being resolved and a formal review of the new arrangements will be undertaken later in the year. (Q2 2014/15) As Q1 above.
(f) - (i) Investigation of options for flexible working	Chief Executive	30-Sep-14	2. On Target	(Q1 & Q2 2014/15) ICT capability has been identified to enable flexible working opportunities and a bid for capital funding is to be made as part of budget process for 2015/16. The trialling of a number of options has taken place and appropriate service areas to pilot flexible working approaches are to be identified.
(f) - (ii) Adoption of flexible working strategies	Chief Executive	31-Mar-15	2. On Target	(Q1 & Q2 2014/15) See 4(f) (i) above.
(g) - Implementation of	Director of Resources	31-Jul-14	1. Achieved	(Q2 2014/15) - All major issues have been dealt with and there are only a few duplicate references still to be resolved.

National Land & Property Gazetteer				
(h) - (i) Review of Allocation Scheme and Tenancy Policy	Director of Communities	30-Dec-14	2. On Target	<p>(Q1 2014/15) Officers have identified a number of proposed changes to both the Housing Allocations Scheme and Tenancy Policy, following the introduction of the new Schemes in September 2013. Following informal discussion with Cabinet Members, the Housing Portfolio Holder will make a Portfolio Holder Decision on proposed changes in principle, which will be considered in detail by the Housing Scrutiny Panel in Oct. 2014.</p> <p>(Q2 2014/5) The Housing Portfolio Holder made a formal Portfolio Holder Decision in October 2014 on proposed changes that he would like the Housing Scrutiny Panel to consider. Officers have produced a report based on these principles, along with a number of more minor issues, for consideration at the Housing Scrutiny Panel meeting on 21st October 2014.</p>
(h) - (ii) Implementation of any changes required to Tenancy Policy	Director of Communities	31-Mar-15	2. On Target	<p>(Q1 2014/15) Following consideration of the proposed changes to the Housing Allocations Scheme and the Tenancy Policy by the Housing Scrutiny Panel in October 2014, and the subsequent required statutory consultation process, Cabinet will be asked to agree the proposed changes in January 2015, for implementation from 1st April 2015.</p> <p>(Q2 2014/15) As Q1 above.</p>
(i) Implementation of Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy	Director of Communities	31-Mar-15	2. On Target	<p>(Q1 2014/15) Following the appointment to the new posts of Safeguarding Officer and Safeguarding Administration Assistant, good progress is being made with delivering the identified actions within the action plan, produced following the safeguarding audit in 2013, in accordance with the Council's Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy. A full training programme commenced in April 2014 which has been provided to 80 staff and 25 Members. Work has commenced on a full review of the Council's Safeguarding Policy.</p> <p>(Q2 2014/15) Work on the review of the Council's Safeguarding Policy, and the implementation of the training programme, continues.</p>
(j) - Determination of the Council's Housing Strategy for 2013-2016	Director of Communities	31-Dec-14	4. Behind Schedule	<p>(Q1 2014/15) The Housing Portfolio Holder has previously agreed that the new Housing Strategy should be deferred until the production of the Preferred Options for the Local Plan, due to the inter-relationship between the two documents and the significant influence that the Local Plan will have on the Housing Strategy. Due to the extension of the timescale for production of the Preferred Options for the Local Plan being extended, the production of the new Housing Strategy has been similarly delayed.</p> <p>(Q2 2014/15) As Q1</p>
(k) - Development of Council's	Director of Governance	30-Sep-14	3. Under Control	<p>(Q1 2014/15) Progress in formulating a draft Economic Development Strategy has continued alongside work on economic development activities. The Waltham Abbey Town Centre Economic Development Plan has been</p>

Economic Development Strategy					presented to the Asset Management & Economic Development Cabinet Committee and further geographic and thematic plans are being formulated. However the target timescale for the development of the Council's Economic Development is unrealistic in light of current staffing resources available. (Q2 2014/15) New staffing structure agreed at Council on 30/9/14. Work on new JDs/person specs underway for job evaluation and advertisement via HR. The target date for this indicator has been revised to 31 March 2015.
(l) - Development of Council's Waste Strategy	Director of Neighbourhoods	31-Mar-15		3. Under Control	(Q1 2014/15) - The Council's new Waste Strategy will be influenced by the work that is currently underway with respect to the review of the Inter Authority Agreement at a County level. This may lead to some slippage. (Q2 2014/15) The work around the review of the Inter Authority Agreement at a County level is ongoing and will not conclude until early in the new year. It is hoped to report a more definite timescale at Q3.
(m) - Development of Council's Leisure, Culture and Community Strategy	Director of Communities Director of Neighbourhoods	31-Jul-14		3. Under Control	(Q1 2014/15) - Draft Strategy due to be considered by Portfolio Holder Advisory Group in September 2014, with final adoption by Cabinet in November 2014. (Q2 2014/15) - The new Leisure and Cultural Strategy for the District, to include the proposed procurement process for the next Leisure Management Contract was considered by the Cabinet on the 3 November, and will be considered by Council on 16 December.
(n) - Development of Council's Operational Property Strategy	Chief Executive	30-Sep-14		3. Under Control	(Q2 2014/15) Recent improvements in the Council's wireless capability will facilitate the development of the Operational Property Strategy. A review of potential partners to carry out a workspace review is to be undertaken.

5. Deliver key priorities within budget

Action	Lead Directorates	Target Date	Status	Progress	
(a) (i) - Achievement of target for all KPIs	All directors	31-Mar-15		3. Under Control	(Q1 2014/15) At the end of the first quarter of the year, 61% of the key performance indicators for 2014/15 had achieved target performance. (Q2 2014/15) At the end of the second quarter of the year, 69% of the key performance indicators for 2014/15 had achieved target performance.
(a) (ii) -	All directors	31-Mar-15		2. On	(Q1 2014/15) At the end of the first quarter of the year, 68% of the individual deliverables or actions

Achievement of specified deliverables for key objectives			Target	supporting the key objectives for 2014/15 had either already been achieved or were anticipated to be completed in accordance with in-year targets. (Q2 2014/15) At the end of the second quarter of the year, 81% of the individual deliverables or actions supporting the key objectives for 2014/15 had either already been achieved or were anticipated to be completed in accordance with in-year targets.
(b) - Consumption of resources within budget	Director of Resources	31-Mar-15	2. On Target	(Q2 2014/15) The financial monitoring reports for the end of Q2 are still being prepared. However, early indications suggest that overall expenditure will be contained within the budget.
(c) - Setting low District Council Tax & maintaining services	Director of Resources	31-Mar-15	2. On Target	(Q2 2014/15) The Medium-Term Financial Strategy has been updated and Members have confirmed they will continue with their policy of freezing the Council Tax.
(d) - (i) Review of sample processes	Chief Executive	30-Sep-14	3. Under Control	(Q2 2014/15) Several processes have been reviewed as part of the work of the Corporate Debt Working party. The reviews have been cross-cutting but have dealt with processes primarily in Communities, Governance and Resources. Now rescheduled after the Phase II restructuring is substantially complete.
(d) - (ii) Realignment of key performance indicator set	Chief Executive	30-Sep-14	3. Under Control	(Q1 2014/15) Realignment of indicator set to be considered in the second quarter of the year. (Q2 2014/15) Indicator set to be reconsidered in light of the cabinet's review of strategic priorities.

6. Prepare for changes arising from the transfer of public health responsibilities

Action	Lead Directorates	Target Date	Status	Progress
(a) - Provision of services to meet health and wellbeing needs	Director of Neighbourhoods	31-Jul-14	4. Behind Schedule	(Q1 2014/15) Draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy prepared and due to be finally considered by West Essex Health and Wellbeing Committee in October 2014, with adoption by the respective partner authorities in November 2014. (Q2 2014/15) The draft Strategy is still in development pending the finalisation of the Clinical Commissioning Group's new five year plan, and will not be ready for adoption until February 2015.

7. Maximise the potential of the Council's key development sites

Action	Lead Directorates	Target Date	Status	Progress
(a) - (i) Completion of a development agreement with the owner of the T11 site	Director of Governance	31-Mar-15	3. Under Control	<p>(Q1 2014/15) Negotiations between the Council and Polofind Ltd, and respective specialist legal and tax advisers in respect of the Langston Road (Epping Forest Shopping Park) site have led to a proposal for the optimum way of owning and managing the new shopping park. This will be reported to the Cabinet in October 2014. Marketing of the site to secure anchor tenants of quality is underway. Confidential oral updates of such commercially sensitive information will be given when available.</p> <p>(Q2 2014/15) The documentation continues to be negotiated between the parties whilst considering further options emerging as a result of those negotiations. The report in private session has therefore been rescheduled to the November Cabinet.</p>
(a) - (ii) Facilitation of a detailed planning application for the T11 site	Director of Governance	(not specified)	3. Under Control	<p>(Q1 2014/15) See 7(a) (i) above.</p> <p>(Q2 2014/15) The progress of a planning application is dependent upon the decisions of the November Cabinet.</p>
(a) - (iii) Commencement of development at the T11 site	Director of Governance	31-Mar-16	3. Under Control	<p>(Q1 2014/15) See 7(a) (i) above.</p> <p>(Q2 2014/15) The timetable for vacant possession and development of the site will be agreed between the parties via the Cabinet process.</p>
(b) - Preparation of development brief for North Weald Airfield	Director of Neighbourhoods	31-Mar-15	2. On Target	<p>(Q1 2014/15) The North Weald Bassett master-planning exercise is due for completion and consideration by Members, for incorporation into the Local Plan evidence base, in October 2014.</p> <p>(Q2 2014/15) The North Weald Bassett Masterplan was formally accepted into the Local Plan evidence base in October 2014.</p>
(c) - Development of plans for the disposal of all or part of the St. Johns Road site	Director of Governance	(not specified)	3. Under Control	<p>(Q1 2014/15) Heads of Terms for mixed use development have been agreed by the Council, not objected to by Epping Town Council and are being considered by Essex County Council. Relocation of the Housing Depot is a pre-requisite to the development. Potential sites are subject to the outcome of Member decisions on related sites.</p> <p>(Q2 2014/15) The relocation of the Housing depot is being actively considered following Members' agreement to downsize and relocate the Fleet Operation service to Oakwood Hill.</p>
(d) - Disposal of the Nursery Service	Director of Governance	30-Sep-15	5. Pending	<p>(Q1 2014/15) Work has continued with a view to the submission of a planning application in October 2014.</p>

from the Pyrls Lane site					(Q2 2014/15) Liaison with Highways at Essex CC and our own internal housing services continue to address the density and access issues raised by the sub committee. The aim is to resubmit the application having resolved those issues. This is likely to be November/December now – but is not on the critical path for the Langston Rd project.
(e) - Development of depot provision at Oakwood Hill	Director of Governance	(not specified)		(none)	This is the high-level action for key Strategic Sites action (a). See progress against the specific next level actions(e) (i), (e) (ii) and (e) (iii)
(e) - (i) Detailed planning application for depot provision	Director of Governance	30-Jun-14		5. Pending	(Q1 2014/15) The planning application has been referred to the District Development Control Committee and an outcome is awaited (NB. Application agreed at 13 August 2014 meeting). A Member decision in relation to the Fleet Operations relocation/future requirements will be taken into consideration in the design and development of the site. (Q2 2014/15) Planning consent was granted at the DDCC and the Members decided on 6/10/14 to relocate Fleet Operations to Oakwood Hill albeit on a smaller scale. This will inform the design and build contract.
(e) - (ii) Detailed design & development of the depot	Director of Governance	30-Oct-14		5. Pending	(Q1 2014/15) See 7(e) (i) above. (Q2 2014/15) See 7(e) (i) above.
(e) - (iii) Commencement of Oakwood Hill development	Director of Governance	31-Mar-15		5. Pending	(Q1 2014/15) See 7(e) (i) above. (Q2 2014/15) To relocate services from Langston Road it will be necessary to progress the construction and we remain on target for this.
(f) - (i) Start on site Phase 1 house building programme	Director of Communities	31-Aug-14		2. On Target	(Q1 2014/15) Tenders have been sought from five contractors from the East Thames Contractors Framework or from contractors registered on Constructionline in May 2014. These have been evaluated by the Council's Development Agent and the Council House-building Cabinet Committee will appoint the contractor in August 2014. Since it is a Design and Build Contract, the appointed Contractor will require a 3-month lead-in for design and mobilisation. Start on site will be around November 2014. (Q2 2014/15) Cabinet has appointed the contractor to undertake Phase 1 and work commenced in October 2014. The target date for this indicator has been revised to 31 October 2014.
(f) - (ii) Obtain investment partner	Director of Communities	31-Dec-14		2. On Target	(Q1 2014/15) The Council learnt in July 2014 that its bid for Affordable Housing Grant was approved by the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) and the next stage is to achieve Development Partner Status. Once

status for HCA funding				<p>details on how to achieve Investment Partner Status is available, East Thames will prepare and submit an application on behalf of the Council.</p> <p>(Q2 2014/15) The Council is still waiting for the HCA to publish its updated guidance on applying for Investment Partner status. The Director of Communities is due to meet with the HCA's Relationship Manager on 27th October, when he will raise this issue again.</p>
(f) - (iii) Start on site at Phase 2 house building programme	Director of Communities	31-Mar-15	2. On Target	<p>(Q1 2014/15) Following detailed consideration of three feasibility studies and consultation with ward members, the Council House building Cabinet Committee has agreed to seek the development of 56 affordable rented homes at the Burton Road, Loughton as Phase 2 of the house-building Programme. Following consultation by Pellings, the architects appointed by the Council's Development Agent, some changes to proposed layouts have had to be made to incorporate planning officers' comments in relation to overlooking issues. This has resulted in a slight reduction from 56 to 52 new homes. The planning application for Phase 2 is due to be submitted by the end of August 2014. Assuming planning approval is granted, Phase 2 will commence on site around May 2015.</p> <p>(Q2 2014/15) The detailed planning application has been prepared, and will be submitted by the end of October 2014.</p>
(g) - Conversion of difficult-to-let bedsits into self-contained flats	Director of Communities	30-Apr-15	2. On Target	<p>(Q1 2014/15) In July 2014 the Housing Portfolio Holder agreed the appointment of PA Finley Ltd to undertake the design and build contract for the conversion of 20 bedsits at Marden Close and the ground floor of Faversham Hall into 12 self-contained 1-bed flats. The contract is currently being drawn up and a date of possession is estimated to be around the beginning of September 2014 after the detailed design has been completed by the Contractor. Completion is estimated to be 12-months later around September 2015.</p> <p>(Q2 2014/15) Works commenced on site in September 2014 as planned.</p>
(h) - Extension and refurbishment of Epping Forest District Museum	Director of Communities	30-Apr-15	2. On Target	<p>(Q1 2014/15) Following a long period of time to agree the terms of the lease for the first floor over the library with Essex County Council, the lease was signed in April 2014. This enabled the opening up works to commence and in turn allow the architects and engineers to commence with the detailed design in consultation with the Listed Building Officer at ECC. In the meantime, the Pre-qualification Questionnaire has been issued to a long list of contractors with a view to agreeing a short list for inclusion on a tender list. Tenders are due to be issued and returned by October 2014 with works due to start on site around December 2014 and completing around June 2015. This will be followed by a short period of around 12-weeks for fitting out the Museum before reopening in September 2015.</p> <p>(Q2 2014/15) The PQQ process has been completed and the short-list of contractors agreed. Tenders are due to be issued by the end of October 2014 and to be reported to the Cabinet in December 2014.</p>
(i) - Undertake Environmental	Director of Communities	31-Mar-15	2. On Target	<p>(Q1 2014/15) The Cabinet has allocated £200,000 towards the Environmental Improvement Scheme, which has been match-funded by £200,000 from Essex County Council for footpath and highway works. An</p>

Estate Improvement Scheme at Oakwood Hill				<p>Oakwood Hill Environmental Task Force has been formed, chaired by the Housing Portfolio Holder and comprising local residents, which first met in July 2014 and suggested improvements for further consideration including footpath improvements, the creation of a public space, off-street parking, landscaping, CCTV, and cleaned/replaced fascias and soffits. The Council's total budget allocation of £200k for the improvements is spread equally between 2014/15 and 2015/16.</p> <p>(Q2 2014/15) The Task Force has now met on two occasions, which have proved very useful, and discussed potential works to be included within the Improvement Scheme.</p>
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8. Prepare and plan for the effects of welfare reforms in an effective and co-ordinated way

Action	Lead Directorates	Target Date	Status	Progress
(a) - Implementation of updated scheme of local support for Council Tax	Director of Resources	31-Dec-14	2. On Target	(Q2 2014/15) The annual consultation has now concluded and the responses are being evaluated. A proposal for the 2015/16 scheme will be going to Cabinet in December.
(b) - Retention of adequate resources to ensure the threat of fraud is effectively managed	Director of Resources	31-Dec-14	2. On Target	(Q2 2014/15) The Chief Internal Auditor and the Assistant Director of Resources (Benefits) are working on reports for future consideration by the Cabinet, which will set out the amended structures and resources required for both a Corporate Fraud Unit and the Benefits Service.
(c) - Retention of adequate resources to ensure the benefit function is effectively operated	Director of Resources	31-Dec-14	2. On Target	(Q2 2014/15) It remains unclear when Universal Credit will be implemented in the district and the role that this Council will have. At this point staff retention has not become a significant issue.

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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-050-2009/10
Date of meeting: 1 December 2014



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Planning Policy
Asset and Economic Development

Subject: London Stansted Cambridge Consortium Subscription

Responsible Officer: Glen Chipp (01992 564080).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the Council subscribes to the London Stansted Cambridge Consortium for the period 2014 – 2015;**
- (2) That in order to finance the LSCC subscription a virement in the sum of £10,000 from Planning Policy to Economic development is recommended to Council for approval; and**
- (3) That in order to finance the LSCC subscription in 2015/16 a Continuing Services Budget growth bid in the sum of £10,000 is recommended for consideration in the budget setting process.**

Executive Summary:

The Council is currently a member of the London Stansted Cambridge Corridor Consortium (LSCC). The Consortium consists of a number of public and private sector members with a common interest in promoting economic growth and investment across a corridor stretching from London in the South to Cambridge in the North.

The Consortium works collaboratively to;

- Promote the growth of existing business and encourage new businesses into the area.
- Support diversification of the UK economy focussing on key sectors such as food production, bio-medical, logistics, leisure, IT, media and the growth of low carbon technology.
- Lobby for improved levels of investment, especially in transport, IT and social infrastructure.
- Support innovation and facilitate knowledge transfer to improve productivity.
- Raise skill levels to get more people into work, especially young people through apprenticeships and other work based training.

The Consortium provides a strong voice to lobby for investment in key enabling infrastructure which is critical to the Council's developing economic strategy.

The subscription for 2014-2015 is £10,000 which provides the Council with a seat for an EFDC representative on the LSCC Board.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To retain a seat on the LSCC Board and continue to influence the LSCC agenda in support of the Council's Economic Development Strategy. The LSCC currently lends gravitas to our key transport and technology infrastructure funding requests as well as working with our Higher Educational establishments to promote the development of skills which support people into work.

Other Options for Action:

To resign from the LSCC and allow others to set the LSCC agenda without input would risk key priorities for the council being downgraded or even dropped from the Consortium's agenda.

To lobby in isolation outside of the Consortium would reduce the influence we can bring to bear on potential sources of funding.

Report:

1. The principal objective of the Consortium is to drive economic development and enhance quality of life in the London – Stansted – Cambridge corridor. This involves driving job growth through productivity and investment but more importantly increasing economic activity by enabling local communities to access employment opportunities.

2. There are a number of work streams under way to support these core objectives:

- Advocacy: Supporting the area in Westminster and Whitehall;
- Rail: LSCC has led on ensuring investment into the West Anglia line;
- Stansted: Working with Manchester Airports Group to help the airport realise Stansted's full potential;
- Priority Infrastructure: Shared plan for major pieces of strategic infrastructure needed to drive economic development to form a platform to lobby for funds; and
- Skills: Working with colleagues and business to define the area's strategic skills and labour requirements.

3. Current membership of the consortium is set out in detail in the background papers but can be broadly split into the following groups:

- North London Chamber of Commerce, West Essex Alliance, Hertfordshire Chamber of commerce;
- London Boroughs of Enfield, Hackney, Haringey Islington, Redbridge and Waltham Forest;
- District Councils of Broxbourne, East Herts, Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford;
- Principal further education Colleges; and

- Lee Valley Regional Park.

4. The Council has been represented on the LSCC board by the Leader and has been successful in making the case for key enabling improvements to the M11 being included on the Consortium's priority infrastructure list.

5. To fund ongoing activities all members have been asked to subscribe £10,000 each for 2014-15. The subscription secures a seat on the LSCC Board. As this amount is not budgeted, a virement from the local plan budget is requested and a CSB growth bid for the 2015-16 budget is required.

6. Membership is renewable annually and continued membership will give the Council a voice in a body that undoubtedly carries more influence with central Government than any individual Council in the area could aspire to.

Resource Implications:

The membership subscription is set at £10,000 per annum. The decision to remain as a member is reviewable on an annual basis.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The prior approval of the Cabinet is required for any virement, of whatever amount, where it is proposed to vire between budgets of different accountable Portfolio Holders.

The objectives of the Consortium fit well with the Economic Development aspirations of the Council and the Consortium has no delegated powers to commit the Council to any expenditure or particular course of action.

Membership can be terminated by discontinuing subscription and notifying the Board.

The subscriptions from members will be held and administered by the London Borough of Haringey on behalf of the consortium.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

None identified.

Consultation Undertaken:

No consultation undertaken.

Background Papers:

Further information can be found on the Consortium's website <http://lsc.co>

1. Objectives of the LSCC
2. Members and LSCC protocol
3. Key Facts
 - People – Places Potential
 - Stansted Airport

- Enterprise Zones
 - Life Science
 - IT Digital and Media
4. Priority infrastructure

Risk Management:

There is minimal risk to the Council through membership of the LSCC. The policy position of the Consortium is set by the board and a seat on the board gives the Council a voice in setting policy. The other members are responsible bodies with a common interest in promoting the corridor. Membership is renewable annually.

Due Regard Record

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LSCC Subscription

Membership of the LSCC increases the Council's profile with potential funding sources by joining with other members of the Consortium sharing an interest in promoting appropriate economic growth in the corridor.

The Consortium reflects the views of its members and these views are consistent with the Council's emerging Local Plan and Economic Development Strategy for the District which promote development of skills and employment opportunities for all groups.

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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-048-2014/15
Date of meeting: 1 December 2014



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Leisure and Community Services
Subject: Get Active Epping Forest
Responsible Officer: James Warwick (01992 564350).
Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) To use £10,000 from the income share between SLM Ltd and the Council to fund a District Development Fund initiative to engage inactive people in physical activity in order to improve their health and wellbeing; and**
- (2) That the initiative will be monitored and evaluated to assess the impact of increasing participation of inactive people in the four super output areas of the District.**

Executive Summary:

This report proposes that Members approve the use of the unexpected income share of £10,000 from SLM Ltd to improve the health and well being of local residents. Epping Forest District Council were not anticipating this level of income share from SLM Ltd, but due to increase attendances at Loughton Leisure Centre the income share is higher than anticipated. The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Community Services recommends that £10,000 be re-invested by the Council to improve the health and well being of Epping Forest District residents. This would enable a new initiative called Get Active Epping Forest linked to the county wide initiative Get Active Essex launched in October by Active Essex.

This initiative would target inactive people to improve their health and well being through a series of activities and events. The activities will be delivered in the four super output areas of the district; Paternoster Ward, Waltham Abbey, Limes Farm Estate, Chigwell, Oakwood Hill, Debden and Shelley, Ongar. Community Services would be responsible for the implementation of the Get Active Epping Forest Initiative.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To improve health and well being of Epping Forest District residents through a Get Active Epping Forest Initiative. The Get Active Epping Forest Initiative will include free taster sessions, physical activity sessions and events to enable local communities to engage and become more physically active.

Other Options for Action:

The money is not used and remains in Epping Forest District Council's accounts.

Report:

1. SLM Ltd is required to provide Epping Forest District Council with a share of the income from the facilities that they manage on behalf of the Council as per the Leisure Management Contract. This year the income share is higher than predicted due to increased usage and attendances at Loughton Leisure Centre. This report proposes to re-invest the unexpected level of income into initiatives to get Epping Forest District residents more active.
2. The Get Active Epping Forest initiative aims to improve the health and well being of local residents through a series of physical activity sessions and events. The initiative will work with local communities to develop and deliver the initiative to ensure the initiative is successful.
3. Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) Sports and Health Development Team have a very successful track record of delivering a number of activities including inclusive sports and physical activity. EFDC work closely with a number of clubs and organisations to support directly or indirectly in the delivery of sport and physical activity. Sport England Research shows at local level that increases in adult participation in sport and active recreation have increased in Essex and Epping Forest. Epping Forest District showed an increase of 3.69% when 2012-14 was compared to 2005-2006, much higher in comparison to the whole of Essex. Epping Forest District also has a lower rate of none active adults and higher rates of adults participating in 1-11 days and 12 to 19 days of physical activity.
4. Despite the increased levels of participation, 63.1% of adults in Epping Forest are classified as overweight. (Department of Health 2012-13). Diabetes costs in Epping Forest are £471,654 per year, while Coronary heart disease costs in Epping Forest are £1,284.090 and per year (British Heart Foundation). 25.7% of adults in Epping Forest are physically inactive but 55.8% of adults in Epping Forest want to do more sport or physical activity. Therefore there is a demand for physical activity initiatives that are targeted appropriately and designed to meet the needs of local people.
5. The top five sports in Epping Forest are Gym, Swimming, Fitness and conditioning, Athletics and Cycling, therefore the Get Active Epping Forest initiative will incorporate these activities.

Get Active Epping Forest Initiative

6. The initiative will increase participation levels and improve health and well being of Epping Forest District residents through empowering local communities. Through listening to what local people want, creating local capacity through promotion and supporting volunteering by residents. By working with local communities we will make it last, and build a culture of sustainability and self help. This means putting community level interventions and programmes into place, investing in interventions and programmes that identify and build on strengths and weaknesses of individuals and communities. The key areas that the initiative will focus upon will be the four super output areas of the district; Paternoster Ward, Waltham Abbey, Limes Farm Estate, Chigwell, Oakwood Hill, Debden and Shelley, Ongar.
7. The initiative will focus on engaging with inactive people (people currently doing less than 30 minutes physical activity per week) to do a specific activity, marketing and communications will be tailored to target groups with an emphasis on physical activity rather than sport as many will immediately switch off with references to sport. Therefore a focus on body image and self-confidence. Social Marketing will be utilised to engage with local communities.
8. Initiatives will include extended Cycling for health programme to a year round

programme, increased promotion of lifewalks, new stroll 'n' roll projects (participants can walk, jog, run, roll or stroll on foot or by using a scooter, bike, wheelchair or buggy, this will enable all ages and abilities to take part), lunchtime sessions such as football at Townmead, Waltham Abbey targeting businesses from Brooker road industrial estate. Boot camp fitness sessions, circuits, running clubs, family fitness and family cycle rides.

9. Taster sessions will be used as research indicates that it makes it easier for people to get started. People feel comfortable knowing that they will not be the only beginner there. Participants will be offered a voucher which gets them a free session which they then assign value to the sessions and are more likely to keep coming. The Get Active Epping Forest Initiative will not rely on using indoor facilities in order to keep the costs down the initiative will programme activities utilising outdoor space such as Epping Forest, outdoor gyms, local open space and recreation grounds. Incentives will be given to encourage people to participate and continue their participation such as vouchers for local shops and businesses, in the communities that the activities are delivered.

10. The Get Active Epping Forest Initiative will use the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) to monitor the success of the initiative and assess participants' levels of physical activity. The purpose of the International Physical Activity Questionnaires (IPAQ) is to provide a set of well-developed instruments that can be used internationally to obtain comparable estimates of physical activity. The questionnaire is the most feasible instrument for measuring physical activity in large groups or populations.

Resource Implications:

£10,000 from unexpected level of income share between SLM Ltd and Epping Forest District Council. The activities below give an indication of the types of activities that have proved successful in getting people more active in the past. Research also supports this type of activities as being effective in getting people more active. Consultation will take place with communities to find out exactly what type of activities people would like to participate in but this gives an idea of what the programme might look like and cost.

Indicative costs (which in the main are Coaching/instructor costs, equipment costs, facility hire and incentives to encourage and sustain participation) :

Boot camps = £1,500

Lunchtime Football = £750

Cycling for Health = £1000

Family Cycle Rides = £1000

Circuits/Family Fitness = £1,250

Stroll 'n' Roll = £1,250

Jogging/running Clubs = £1,250

Marketing & Promotional Incentives (fliers, posters, t-shirts, water bottles, vouchers) = £2,000

The income that the Get Active Epping Forest Initiative generates will go directly to Epping Forest District Council and help to sustain the activities in the long term.

Legal and Governance Implications:

None.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

Initiative will utilise green open space, promoting the unique characteristics of the District and encouraging greater use of outdoor space. The Get Active Epping Forest Initiative will

provide positive activities for communities to engage in and improve the sense of community as well as health and well being within communities.

Consultation Undertaken:

Data from Love Limes Farm Community consultation and Love Ninefields Community Consultation has been used to inform ideas of what kind of activities residents in these areas would like.

Background Papers:

Epping Forest Local Sport Profile data from Sport England 2014.

Risk Management:

There is a risk that a low uptake of participants could make the initiative unsuccessful and unsustainable. This will be mitigated through providing activities that people want, at times and places that are accessible and affordable. A targeted marketing campaign will also be employed to reach as many participants as possible.

Due Regard Record

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The Get Active Epping Forest Initiative aims to improve the health and well being of residents of Epping Forest District. The initiative aims to provide greater opportunities for people to participate in physical activity. The sessions will provide an opportunity for people to mix with different groups of people and make new friends, as well as fostering a sense of community cohesion.

The Get Active Epping Forest Initiative will be open to people of all ages and abilities. There will be sessions targeting adults, families and young people. Disabled people will be enabled to participate through us making reasonable adjustments to the sessions. We will ensure that all instructors and coaches are experienced and qualified in order to tailor the sessions to suit individual needs.

The initiative will take place at locations throughout Epping Forest District to try and ensure as much as possible that the sessions and events are as accessible for as many people as possible. The timings of the sessions will be a mixture of daytimes, evenings and weekends to enable as many people as possible to participate in the sessions. The cost of the sessions will also be carefully considered so that the sessions are affordable whilst at the same time able to become sustainable in the long term.

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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-049-2014/15
Date of meeting: 1 December 2014



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Asset Management & Economic Development
Subject: District Centres Economic Development Fund
Responsible Officer: Mike Warr (01992 564593)
Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That a District Development Fund growth bid in the sum of £35,000 be agreed to establish a District Centres Economic Development Fund for 2015/2016;**

Executive Summary:

During 2013/14 the Council agreed to fund a £35,000 Town Centres Fund which enabled a wider set of Partners to undertake projects to support the local main High Streets. This fund was again made available during the 2014/15 financial year to enable town centre partnerships to make further project bids. It is proposed to continue the good work generated by this fund by making a further amount of £35,000 available for partnerships to bid for in 2015/16. However, it is also proposed to widen out the eligibility of the fund to enable smaller centres in the district to be included and to allow Council Economic Development Officers to propose projects. It is therefore proposed that the monies be allocated to a new District Centres Economic Development Fund for 2015/16.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

Making these funds available for the town centre partnerships to bid for, encourages them to think creatively about how they can sustainably promote their town centres and create initiatives that have a lasting impact on their town centre economy. By widening eligibility to take part in the scheme these benefits can be spread to the wider economy and have an impact on the economies of smaller centres throughout the district. By encouraging district-wide initiatives the impact of this investment can be further widened to benefit other local economies elsewhere in the district.

Other Options for Action:

To not make the funds available.

To make the funds available in some other format or via a revised scheme.

Report:

- During 2013/14 the Council agreed to fund a £35,000 Town Centres Fund which enabled town centre partnerships, including the chamber of commerce, to undertake projects to support the local main High Streets.

2. This fund was again made available during the 2014/15 financial year to enable those partnerships to make further project bids.

3. The partnerships are encouraged to propose creative local bids that can equally be applied on a district-wide basis. This can therefore create local impacts that have wider benefits as they are implemented or adopted elsewhere. They are also asked to consider the longer-term impact and sustainability of their proposals thereby using investment in the present to secure ongoing benefits for their town centres in the future. Finally the partnerships are also encouraged to put forward proposals which reflect the economic development priorities agreed by Cabinet at its meeting of 3 February 2014.

4. With the scheme having now run for two successful years it is suggested that the importance of district-wide and sustainable initiatives, plus the promotion of the Council's agreed economic development priorities be further emphasised to the partnerships for any proposals in 2015/16 and that they be actively encouraged to work collaboratively to achieve this.

5. In addition, it is proposed that the scheme be widened out into a District Centres Economic Development to also enable smaller 'village' centres to be included. This is in recognition that our smaller shopping centres, wherever they may be in the district have a crucial role to play in enhancing and developing the economy of the district. Whilst smaller than the town centres that have previously been able to bid, these centres will also have their own issues that they wish to address and will create a wider pool of ideas from which to develop potential district-wide, cross-centre initiatives.

6. It is further suggested that, as well as initiatives put forward by the partnerships and other organisations, in order to encourage district-wide projects, the scheme also be widened to allow Economic Development officers to put forward appropriate projects.

7. Projects supported in 2013/14 included:

(a) Buckhurst Hill TCP – Photography Exhibition/Fashion Show;

(b) Loughton Broadway – Christmas Shop Local, Mural Project and Debden Day 2014;

(c) Loughton High Road TCP – originally for the Loughton Summer of Fun but as that did not go ahead in summer this has been agreed for a similar project later in the year;

(d) Ongar Town Centre Forum – Multi-disciplined/faceted approach to tourism;

(e) Epping TCP – Epping Festival 2014;

(f) Epping Forest Chamber of Commerce – Marketing of One Shops Local;

(g) Golden Triangle (Buckhurst Hill, Chigwell, Loughton) – Golden Triangle "app"; and

(h) Waltham Abbey TCP - was for Cucumber Festival but now likely to be redirected towards Meridian Event.

8. The current year 2014/15 has seen further successful bids made for the following projects:

- (a) Buckhurst Hill TCP - Joining The Dots & Getting Us On the Map projects - producing promotional material for the town centre and linking up local businesses with a global research project being conducted by Manchester Metropolitan University;
- (b) Epping Forest Chamber of Commerce - project to enhance the One Shops Local website bringing closer links with the Chamber's own site;
- (c) Loughton Broadway - the Shop For Local campaign for 2014 and Debden Day 2015;
- (d) Loughton High Road TCP - funding towards the Milestones programme providing training to local businesses; and
- (e) Ongar TCP - Further funding towards the multi-disciplined tourism initiative including enhancing the Visit Ongar website and developing the town App.

9. All bidders to the scheme are asked to demonstrate how they will monitor the progress and success of their project and what the lasting effect on their centre will be. They are further asked to complete an End of Grant Report which sets out what the grant has achieved. The inclusion of these elements to measure impacts and outcomes in the bidding process and end of grant summary encourages the partnerships to consider this when designing and delivering their project.

10. By way of an example, the Ongar tourism initiative has seen increased numbers in shops and there are no empty shops in the town at present (other than for a brief period whilst they change hands). Accepting that the town's attractions themselves e.g. Epping-Ongar Railway will also have had a positive impact, the interactive map linking tourist attractions and the Business Directory directly funded by the Ongar Town Forum's bid have played their part too in driving increased footfall to the town. Loughton Broadway Partnership has stated that the funds provided towards Debden Day 2014 saw increased footfall and trade, a 95%+ positive feedback return from post-event surveys, a raised profile of the Broadway as a family shopping centre and increased levels of community cohesion.

11. We will again, as part of the 2015/16 Fund bidding process, stress the importance of being able, as far as is possible, to demonstrate the impact the projects have had and will carefully consider this element when assessing new bids and proposed projects.

12. After the first round of bids there was £13,175 left in the 2014/15 budget. The Town Centre Partnerships are currently submitting bids as part of the second round for this year (due to have been submitted by 28th November, 2014) and it is anticipated that the full budget will be taken up or allocated as a result

13. The District Centres Economic Development Fund is seen as an important means of encouraging locally driven economic development initiatives which are owned and therefore supported by the local business community. It is therefore suggested that the scheme be approved and that the same level of District Development Funding as in previous years is provided for 2015/2016.

Resource Implications:

An allocation of £35,000 will be required from the District Development Fund in 2015/16

Legal and Governance Implications:

It is not considered that any implications arise from this report. It should be noted that an agreed standard is required at application stage and a number of stages and procedures to acknowledge any funds awarded and account for any funds drawn down are imposed upon partnerships applying to the scheme. All bids are expected to further complete post-project assessments of their scheme.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

None.

Consultation Undertaken:

The partnerships have been involved at various stages in refining the application process.

Background Papers:

None.

Risk Management:

If the £35,000 funding is not secured there is a risk that appropriate district-wide and sustainable initiatives may not be able to access the vital seed funding they require to be put in place. In addition, the council may not be seen to have confidence in supporting the district's town centres and wider economy.

Due Regard Record

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Applications approved under the Economic Development Initiatives Fund provide much needed investment and the stimulation of the economy in town and village centres throughout the District.

Some of those centres are based in less affluent areas, with others located in more rural parts of the District. Consequently, local residents in those centres can sometimes experience the effects of deprivation, albeit for different reasons.

Funding through the scheme can mitigate those effects.

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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-051-2014/15
Date of meeting: 1 December 2014



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Technology & Support Services
Subject: Calendar of Council Meetings 2015/16
Responsible Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).
Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) That, as attached at Appendix 1, the draft Calendar of Council Meetings for 2015/16 be recommended to the Council for adoption.

Executive Summary:

The Cabinet considers the calendar of meetings each year prior to its final approval by the Council. The calendar has developed over time to meet the changing needs of the authority and, where possible, meetings of a Committee have been standardised on a particular night of the week. Within the current Democratic Services Business Plan, there is an item to review the Calendar of Council Meetings, and in particular the frequency of meetings. The only change proposed for the Calendar this year is the rescheduling of Executive meetings from Monday evenings to Thursday evenings.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

Item for action within the Democratic Services Business Plan for 2014/15.

Other Options for Action:

Individual frequencies of meetings could be varied. In practice additional meetings are added as and when issues dictate. Similarly, meetings can be cancelled if there is a lack of business.

Report:

1. Within the current Democratic Services Business Plan, there is an item in the Action Plan to review the Calendar of Council Meetings, and in particular the frequency of individual Committees. As a result, Democratic Services submit the draft Calendar of Council meetings each year to the Cabinet for consideration prior to its approval by the Council.

2. The draft Calendar at Appendix 1 is based upon the current year's calendar, with approximately the same number of meetings. It has been slightly amended in some places but wherever possible:

- (a) all Miscellaneous Committee meetings have been scheduled for a Monday evening;

(b) all Overview and Scrutiny Panels have been scheduled for a Tuesday evening;

(c) all Planning Sub-Committee meetings have been scheduled for a Wednesday evening; and

(d) all Cabinet and Cabinet Committees have been scheduled for a Thursday evening.

3. Friday evenings have continued to be kept free of meetings, and any encroachment into August has been kept to a bare minimum due to holidays. However, the Regulatory Committees have always continued to meet throughout August in the past and this practice has been continued.

The Executive

4. Regular Council meetings have remained on their traditional Tuesday night. With the elections returning to their traditional date of the first Thursday in May, the Annual Council is scheduled for Thursday 28 May. This is two days later than normal but this amendment will give extra time to complete the appointment process and prepare the papers for the meeting.

5. With two of the Cabinet Committees now meeting on a Thursday evening as this is more convenient for Officers and Members, the main change this year has been to schedule all meetings of the Cabinet or Cabinet Committees on a Thursday evening. As a consequence, the meetings of the Miscellaneous Committees that previously met on a Thursday evening have been rescheduled for Monday evenings.

6. The Cabinet continues to meet 9 times throughout the municipal year. An extra meeting was added for 2014/15 to assist the Cabinet in meeting its work programme, and this arrangement has been retained for 2015/16. It was noted last year that most Councils hold monthly Executive meetings.

7. In line with previous years, the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee has not been included on the Calendar as the advice from Officers is that it meets as and when evaluations for the different sites are received. Therefore, no purpose would be served in scheduling regular quarterly meetings.

Overview & Scrutiny

8. The requirement for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to meet a few days before each Cabinet meeting was removed last year and this has also been retained for 2015/16. In addition, an opportunity has been taken to revamp the organisation of Overview & Scrutiny for 2015/16. Following the initial meeting in June 2015, to confirm the membership and Chairmen of each Scrutiny Panel, there will be five Scrutiny cycles – each spread over two months and culminating in a meeting of the full Overview & Scrutiny Committee. One meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee has been scheduled for Tuesday 5 January 2016, as this is felt to be a better date than Tuesday 22 December 2015; but this will still be a week before the first Scrutiny Panel meeting of the new cycle.

9. The Council is currently undergoing a review of its Overview & Scrutiny function, including the composition of the standing Scrutiny Panels and this review is not due to report until March 2015. Consequently, 25 dates have been set aside for the new Scrutiny Panels to meet in 2015/16, and these can be allocated to the new Standing Panels before the start of the new municipal year.

Planning

10. The Calendar for 2011/12 changed the frequency of the Area Planning Sub-Committees from a three weekly cycle to a four weekly cycle. It is felt that this change has worked well, with minimal impact upon the relevant Key Performance Indicators, and this arrangement has again been retained for 2015/16. The week of the Annual Council meeting has been kept free of Planning meetings and this will enable training to take place for any new Members elected.

11. No Area Planning Sub-Committee has been scheduled for Wednesday 23 September 2015, as this would clash with the Jewish festival of Yom Kippur. This has necessitated a five week gap between Sub-Committees from September to October, but the usual four week gap has been reinstated for the meeting cycles for the remainder of the municipal year (with the exception of Christmas week). One of the scheduled dates for a Scrutiny Panel in September is on a Monday to avoid the Jewish Festival of Rosh Hashanah the previous week.

Licensing

12. Licensing Sub-Committee meetings have remained on a Tuesday morning, and no evening meetings for the Licensing function have been scheduled following the decision by Overview & Scrutiny to abolish them a year ago. Oftentimes, additional meetings of the Sub-Committee are arranged to hear cases concerning Premises (Alcohol) Licences, but these are scheduled as and when required. All members of Licensing continue to meet twice a year to consider policy and procedural matters.

Miscellaneous Committees

13. Both the Youth Council and the Local Highways Panel have not been included in this schedule as it is felt that they are meetings that sit outside the Council. The Youth Council have their own programme, and the Local Highways Panel involves the County and Local Councils.

14. As mentioned earlier in the report, the only change in this section is that those Committees which meet in the evening have had their meetings rescheduled from a Thursday evening to a Monday evening to accommodate the corresponding change for Cabinet and Cabinet Committee meetings.

15. Two meetings of the Appointments Panel have been scheduled for the two Thursdays following the Local Elections on 14 and 21 May 2015, prior to the Annual Council on 28 May. Two corresponding meetings have been scheduled for May 2016.

Conclusion

16. The Cabinet is requested to consider the draft Calendar of Council meetings for 2015/16, as attached at Appendix 1, and whether any further changes are required. However, it should be noted that the current Calendar is very congested and the organisation of any additional meetings should be given very careful consideration. Any changes requested by the Cabinet will be incorporated into the final version to be considered by the Council on 16 December 2014.

Resource Implications:

No identifiable savings as there are no significant changes planned for next year's Calendar.

Legal and Governance Implications:

None foreseen, as the proposed Calendar allows the Council to fulfil its obligations under the various different Local Government Acts.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

Any substantial increase in the number of Member meetings would hinder the Council in meeting its obligations under the Nottingham Declaration.

Consultation Undertaken:

No external consultation undertaken.

Background Papers:

None.

Risk Management:

That an insufficient number of meetings would be scheduled for a particular Committee to complete its business for the year; however, if this became apparent then additional meetings could be arranged as necessary.

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Wherever possible, meetings have not been scheduled to coincide with major religious festivals.

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Epping Forest District Council Calendar of Meetings 2015/16

		2015								2016				
Meeting		May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Executive														
Council		28th		28th		29th		3rd	15th	16th(18th)			26th	26th
Cabinet			11th	23rd		3rd	8th	5th	3rd		4th	3rd	7th	
FPM Cab Comm			18th	30th		17th		12th		21st		17th		
AM & ED Cab Comm				9th			15th		10th		11th		14th	
Local Plan Cab Comm				2nd			1st			14th			21st	
Scrutiny														
OS Committee			9th	21st			20th			5th	23rd		19th	
Scrutiny Panel I			16th			8th		10th		12th		8th		
Scrutiny Panel II				7th			6th		1st		2nd		5th	
Scrutiny Panel III			23rd			15th		17th		19th		15th		
Scrutiny Panel IV				14th			13th		8th		9th		12th	
Scrutiny Panel V			30th			22nd		24th		26th		22nd		
Planning														
District Development			10th		5th		7th		2nd		24th		20th	
Plans East		13th	17th	15th	12th	9th	14th	11th	9th	13th	10th	9th	6th	11th
Plans West		20th	24th	22nd	19th	16th	21st	18th	16th	20th	17th	16th	13th	18th
Plans South			3rd	1st-29th	26th	30th	28th	25th		6th	3rd	2nd-30th	27th	
Licensing														
Licensing Committee							14th						13th	
Licensing Sub-Comm			9th	7th	4th	8th	6th	10th	8th	12th	9th	8th	5th	
Miscellaneous														
Audit & Governance			29th			21st		30th			1st	28th		
Housing Appeals Panel			8th	6th	3rd	7th	5th	2nd	7th	11th	8th	7th	11th	
Joint Consultative Comm				20th			19th			18th			18th	
Local Councils Liaison				6th				16th				21st		
Appointments Panel		14th-21st												12th-19th
Standards Committee				13th			12th			25th			25th	
Webcast meeting:														
		<u>Easter 2016</u>			<u>Fri 25-Mar-16 - Mon 28-Mar-16</u>				<u>Local/PCC Election</u>			<u>Thu 5-May-16</u>		

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