



### NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETING

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the **EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL** to be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING** at 7.30 pm on **Tuesday, 3 November 2015** for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the agenda.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Glen Chipp'.

**Glen Chipp**  
Chief Executive

**Democratic Services  
Officer:**

Council Secretary: Simon Hill  
Tel: 01992 564249 Email:  
[democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

#### WEBCASTING/FILMING NOTICE

Please note: this meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site - at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed. The meeting may also be otherwise filmed by third parties with the Chairman's permission.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during this webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

Therefore by entering the Chamber and using the lower public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for web casting and/or training purposes. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured they should sit in the upper council chamber public gallery area or otherwise indicate to the Chairman before the start of the meeting.

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact Democratic Services on 01992 564249.

## **BUSINESS**

### **1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

1. This meeting is to be webcast. Members are reminded of the need to activate their microphones before speaking.

2. The Assistant Director of Governance and Performance Management will read the following announcement:

“I would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be broadcast live to the internet (or filmed) and will be capable of repeated viewing (or another use by such third parties).

If you are seated in the lower public seating area it is likely that the recording cameras will capture your image and this will result in the possibility that your image will become part of the broadcast.

This may infringe your human and data protection rights and if you wish to avoid this you should move to the upper public gallery.”

### **2. MINUTES (Pages 7 - 14)**

To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2015 (attached)

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

(Chief Executive) To declare interests in any item on the agenda.

### **4. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(a) **Apologies for Absence**

(b) **Announcements**

(i) To consider any announcements by the Chairman of the Council.

### **5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)**

To answer questions asked after notice in accordance with the provisions contained in paragraph 11.3 of the Council Procedure Rules of the Constitution on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the District:

(a) to the Leader of the Council;

(b) to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; or

(c) to any Portfolio Holder.

Questions, if any, will follow if not received in time to be incorporated into the agenda.

### **6. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER NOTICE**

To answer questions asked after notice in accordance with the provisions contained in paragraph 12.3 of the Council Procedure Rules of the Constitution on any matter in

relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the District:

- (a) to the Chairman of the Council;
- (b) to the Leader of the Council;
- (c) to any Member of the Cabinet; or
- (d) the Chairman of any Committee or Sub-Committee.

Council Procedure rule 12.4 provides that answers to questions under notice may take the form of:

- (a) direct oral answer;
- (b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
- (c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner.

Answers to questions falling within (a) and (b) above will be made available to the member asking the question one hour before the meeting. Answers to questions falling within (c) above will be circulated to all councillors.

Questions, if any, will follow if not received in time to be incorporated into the agenda.

**7. REPORTS FROM THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET (Pages 15 - 42)**

To receive reports or announcements from the Leader and members of the Cabinet on matters falling within their area of responsibility:

- (a) Report of the Leader;
- (b) Report of the Assets and Economic Development Portfolio Holder; (attached)
- (c) Report of the Environment Portfolio Holder; (attached)
- (d) Report of the Finance Portfolio Holder; (attached)
- (e) Report of the Governance and Development Management Portfolio Holder; (attached)
- (f) Report of the Housing Portfolio Holder; (attached)
- (g) Report of the Leisure and Community Services Portfolio Holder; (attached)
- (h) Report of the Planning Policy Portfolio Holder; (attached)
- (i) Report of the Safer, Greener and Transport Portfolio Holder; (attached) and
- (j) Report of the Technology and Support Services Portfolio Holder (attached).

## **8. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS WITHOUT NOTICE**

Council Procedure Rule 12.6 provides for questions by any member of the Council to the Leader or any Portfolio Holder, without notice on:

- (i) reports under item 7 above; or
- (ii) any other matter of a non operational character in relation to the powers and duties of the Council or which affects all or part of the District or some or all of its inhabitants.

Council Procedure Rule 12.7 provides that answers to questions without notice may take the form of:

- (a) direct oral answer from the Leader or, at the request of the Leader, from another member of the Cabinet;
- (b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication;
- (c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner; or
- (d) where the question relates to an operational matter, the Leader or a member of the Cabinet will request that a response be given direct to the questioner by the relevant Chief Officer.

In accordance with the Council Procedure Rule 12.8, a time limit of thirty minutes is set for questions. Any question not dealt with within the time available will receive a written reply. The Chairman may extend this period by up to a further 10 minutes at their discretion.

## **9. MOTIONS**

To consider any motions, notice of which has been given under Council Procedure Rule 13.

Motions, if any, will follow if not received in time to be incorporated into the agenda.

### **Reports of the Cabinet**

## **10. CORPORATE PLAN KEY ACTION PLAN 2016/17 (Pages 43 - 52)**

(Leader) To consider the attached report.

## **11. WATER AND POLLUTION CONTROL OFFICER (Pages 53 - 54)**

(Environment Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report.

## **12. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (Pages 55 - 56)**

To receive the report of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to answer any questions without notice asked in accordance with Council procedure rule 12.7(b) and 12.9 (a).

**13. JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

- (a) To receive from Council representatives the reports (attached - if any) on the business of joint arrangements and external organisations and to receive answers to any questions on those bodies which may be put without notice;
- (b) To request written reports from representatives on joint arrangements and external organisations for future meetings; and
- (c) To note that written reports from the representatives of the Police Crime Panel and Stansted Airport Community Trust would be presented at the next Council meeting on 15 December 2015.

**14. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**Exclusion:** 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):

<b>Agenda Item No</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Exempt Information Paragraph Number</b>
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.

## EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COUNCIL MINUTES

- Committee:** Council **Date:** 29 September 2015
- Place:** Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.30 - 8.40 pm
- Members Present:** Councillors E Webster (Chairman), J Lea (Vice-Chairman), K Angold-Stephens, N Avey, N Bedford, A Boyce, H Brady, W Breare-Hall, G Chambers, K Chana, T Church, D Dorrell, R Gadsby, A Grigg, J Hart, L Hughes, R Jennings, H Kane, S Kane, H Kauffman, P Keska, J Knapman, M McEwen, L Mead, A Mitchell MBE, G Mohindra, R Morgan, S Murray, S Neville, A Patel, J Philip, C P Pond, C C Pond, M Sartin, G Shiell, D Stallan, S Stavrou, B Surtees, L Wagland, G Waller, S Watson, C Whitbread, J H Whitehouse, J M Whitehouse, D Wixley and N Wright
- Apologies:** Councillors R Bassett, R Butler, L Girling, S Jones, A Lion, H Mann, C Roberts, B Rolfe, T Thomas and S Weston
- Officers Present:** G Chipp (Chief Executive), D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), C O'Boyle (Director of Governance), R Palmer (Director of Resources), S G Hill (Assistant Director (Governance & Performance Management)), S Mitchell (PR Website Editor), R Perrin (Democratic Services Officer), A Hendry (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and J Leither (Democratic Services Officer)

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### 42. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Assistant Director of Governance and Performance Management reminded everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

### 43. MINUTES

#### RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Council meetings held on 28 July 2015 and the Extraordinary Council held on 10 September 2015 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### 44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

### 45. ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### (a) Announcements by the Chairman of the Council

#### (i) Events

The Chairman advised that she had hosted the Civic Lunch at Gilwell Park, attended the Costmonger's Harvest Festival at Guildhall Yard, London, the opening of a

memorial plaque for former Councillor Penny Smith at the Grange Farm Trust and taken part in Explorer Conservation Project with the Scout's.

**(ii) Flowers**

The Chairman advised that she intended the flowers from tonight's meeting to be sent to Jubilee Court, Waltham Abbey.

**(b) Announcement by the Portfolio Holder for Housing**

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Councillor D Stallan updated Members of the Council on the request for assistance for Syrian Refugees. He advised that the Council would assist up to 6 refugees each year for the next four years with non secure tenancies and accommodation consisting of a 1 bed and a 2 bed flat.

**46. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)**

The Council noted that there were no public questions for this meeting.

**47. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER NOTICE**

The Council noted that there were no Members questions made with notice for this meeting.

**48. REPORTS FROM THE LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET**

The Council received written reports from Members of the Cabinet.

The Chairman invited the Leader to provide an oral report and other Members of the Cabinet to give an oral update.

**(a) The Leader of the Council**

The Leader of the Council advised that he had attended a number of forums since the last meeting on 28 July 2015. He updated the Council on work of the Greater Essex group that had undertaken to explore the potential benefits and risks of the devolution deal for Essex. A high-level submission had been made to Central Government on the 4 September 2015, confirming in principle that the Great Essex Partnership would like to continue their interest. The Leader confirmed that a report would be presented to Cabinet on the 8 October 2015, which would provide much more detail on the devolution with any final decisions being taken by this Council.

The Leader also advised that he had attended the South East Local Economic Partnership (SELEP) Board on 25 September 2015. It had been considered that an Enterprise Partnership solely for Essex would be more effective in delivering better economic benefits and crucial infrastructure; although the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Greg Clark had announced that he would not be approving any changes to boundaries and therefore SELEP would be moving forward in its current composition.

**(b) Governance and Development Management Portfolio Holder**

The Governance and Development Management Portfolio Holder, Councillor J Philip advised that outstanding households required to register for electoral registration had reduced to just over 9,000 households and was significantly better position than other authorities.



**49. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS WITHOUT NOTICE****(a) Syrian Refugees**

Councillor S Murray asked the Housing Portfolio Holder whether he would agree that;

- (i) residents in district would have very mixed views on the issue;
- (ii) a minority or majority would be happy that the Council had decided to help; and
- (iii) the response had not fallen on all of the districts residents but on those which were on the housing waiting list, in Council housing and therefore that the response was unfair?

Councillor D Stallan agreed that there would be mixed views from residents across the district in offering housing assistance to the Government's request for help with Syrian Refugees. He advised that some residents would feel that the burden had fallen upon them, if they were on the housing waiting list, although he had to balance the needs of the Government request with the needs of the district's residents and took into consideration the local demand for housing and the request made to the authority.

**(b) Syrian Refugees - Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme**

Councillor S Watson asked the Housing Portfolio Holder whether he could confirm if the Council would be housing Syrian Refugees under the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme and that the relevant security checks would be undertaken before they were placed in the community.

Councillor D Stallan confirmed that it was the intention to assist Syrian Refugees under the Vulnerable Persons Scheme and prior to relocation in local authorities, the refugees on their arrival to UK would be initially housed in Government accommodation and go through the relevant checks.

**(c) Syrian Refugees - Housing Policy**

Councillor N Bedford asked the Housing Portfolio Holder, whether in light of the Syrian Crisis, would any changes be required to the Housing Policy.

Councillor D Stallan advised that officers had advised that no alterations to the Housing Policy would be required because the refugees would be treated in the same way as a homeless applicant. Therefore the five year residents rule would not be applied and they would only be offered non secure tenancy, which would prevent the Right to Buy.

**(d) Syrian Refugees – Housing Availability Calculations**

Councillor L Wagland asked the Housing Portfolio Holder, how the calculation had been made with regards to the availability of housing for Syrian Refugees?

Councillor D Stallan advised that the number of void properties of an average year had been taken into account, alongside the type of property whilst balancing the needs of the housing waiting list. Furthermore, if the Government asked the Council to take refugees tomorrow they would be able to accommodate them with what they had offered.

(e) Syrian Refugees – ECC Support

Councillor K Angold-Stephens asked the Housing Portfolio Holder whether the Council was liaising with Essex County Council (ECC) for the additional support services that would be required for the refugees.

Councillor Stallan advised that the Council would be working with ECC and at the next Locality Board further information about the services ECC would be providing would be advised.

(f) Syrian Refugees – External Agency Help

Councillor B Surtees asked the Housing Portfolio Holder whether he was aware of the Bishops of Chelmsford call to all Christian and church people within the diocese, to respond as positively as possible to the Syrian crisis; that the Bishop had made sure that there was church property available to offer in appropriate circumstances and; that he had called upon the Christian community for skills and training to support refugees when they arrived?

Councillor D Stallan welcomed the response and advised that the crisis should not just fall upon local authorities but that all community and external agencies could offer their support and could contact the Council for further guidance and advice.

(g) Green Belt Review Visit

Councillor J Knapman asked the Planning Policy Portfolio Holder if he could honour his promise to visit Chigwell Parish Council with regards to the Green Belt Review.

The Leader advised that in absence of the Planning Policy Holder, that he would ask Councillor R Bassett to visit Chigwell Parish Council.

(h) Devolution

Councillor C C Pond asked the Leader of the Council whether he was aware of a briefing the Leader of the ECC had given to group leaders regarding local authorities in the County that were beyond the metropolitan green belt and wanted to accept more of the housing growth than other green belt authorities, who were not keen?

Councillor C Whitbread advised that EFDC had raised this issue because of the devolution deal and the aspirations for growth that this would create. He advised that residents in the district had told the Council that they wanted the green belt protected and not to build more houses than were required locally. For this to be achieved, a Essex SHARM would be required to spread the development, which had yet to be put into legislation and so he would only sign up to what was best for the residents and Council, when the details were available.

(i) Parkguard

Councillor D Wixley asked the Safer, Greener and Transport Portfolio Holder whether Parkguard had been patrolling because of reductions in the Police service; whether they were regulated; and what the costs were involved for the Council?

Councillor G Waller advised that a meeting had been held with Chigwell Parish Council, Members of the District Council and the Police which concluded that some additional support was required alongside the Police. The agency Parkguard specialised and added value to the work being carried out in the Limes Farm area.

The money being spent was being monitored with contributions from the pubs that agreed to this way forward bearing some of the costs, although an exact figure was not yet known.

(j) House Building Programme –Carbon Emissions

Councillor S Neville asked the Housing Portfolio Holder that with the Government cancelling the introduction of 0% carbon home standards by 2016 and the negative impact that this could have on households in risk of fuel poverty in new housing. Would he meet with him to discuss increasing the Council housebuilding standard from code 4 to code 6?

Councillor G Waller advised that in the interests of making the Council as green as possible, he had proposed that the new Council homes should be built to code 4, which had only resulted in an additional cost of £1500 per dwelling and was worthwhile for the Council and future tenants. He believed that no other authorities had gone above code level 4 and to go beyond this level would be difficult. Councillor G Waller advised that code levels were being phased out and replaced with building regulations to ensure the maximum efficiencies were achieved and that the Council would like to build homes to the maximum efficiency possible.

(k) Local Plan

Councillor J M Whitehouse asked the Planning Policy Portfolio Holder about the engagement of consultants looking at recreation plots of land outside the green belt and within urban areas, and the lack of information and updates provided to Members and when would Members get a full briefing about this?

Councillor Whitbread advised that Councillor R Bassett would provide a written answer to his question and hoped that the process had been open and transparent.

(l) Parking Permits

Councillor J H Whitehouse asked the Safer, Cleaner and Transport Portfolio Holder whether only parking permits for 24 hours could be purchased and not the 2 and 4 hours permits that had been formally available, as this meant that residents who had two or more visits per day, were having to hand out permits that cost £1.30 instead of 40p; Had he attended the meeting where this was decided or was it an officers decision; Could something be done to reinstate the permits; Was there a carers permit available and; if so could details be given and publicised?

Councillor G Waller advised that there was a meeting in October 2015 and he would raise the matter for discussion and report back.

(m) National Planning Policy

Councillor L Wagland asked the Governance and Performance Management Portfolio Holder how he interpreted the national planning policy statement on Green Belt protection and the intentional unauthorised development issued by Steve Quartermain, Chief Planner of Department for Communities and Local Government (DLCG), which states that intentional unauthorised development would be a material consideration that could be weighed in the determination of planning applications and appeals. Although there was a concern of who had to prove the intentional unauthorised development?

Councillor J Philip acknowledged that the policy was a positive step forward and the changes would be a good thing for the Council. He advised that the planning department would be investigating it.

(n) Broadway Parking Review

Councillor C C Pond asked the Safer, Cleaner and Transport Portfolio Holder when the Broadway Parking Review would start.

Councillor G Waller advised that a date for the Broadway Parking Review would take place shortly and would include relevant officers, Wards Members and himself.

(o) Waste and Recycling Collections

Councillor B Surtees asked the Environment Portfolio Holder when the Waste and recycling Collection service would normalise because he had received reports from residents regarding vehicles driving over the curbs and damaging the pavements in Ongar.

Councillor W Breare-Hall advised that some agency staff were still being used until the service level increased to a satisfactory level and further training and development had taken place. Regarding the issues with vehicles driving over curbs, Councillor W Breare-Hall asked that details were passed on to him for further investigation.

(p) AECOM

Councillor J Knapman asked the Leader what was the role of AECOM in relation to the Council because Chigwell Parish Council were unable to procure their services?

Councillor Whitbread indicated he would find out and come back to Councillor J Knapman.

(q) Lyndsey House, Epping

Councillor J H Whitehouse asked the Portfolio Holder for Asset and Economic Development whether the sale of Lyndsay House in Epping could be sped up because of residents concerns about the deterioration of the building.

Councillor A Grigg advised that Lyndsay House was still in the ownership of EFDC and the sale to ECC was being held up by the submission for State Aid to the Secretary of State and once she had further information it would be published in the Members Bulletin.

**50. MOTIONS**

The Chairman reported that there were no motions to be considered at this meeting.

**51. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS IN 2015/16**

**Mover: Councillor D Stallan, Portfolio Holder for Housing.**

Councillor D Stallan submitted a report requesting a supplementary capital estimate for Disabled Facilities Grants for 2015/16.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

**RESOLVED:**

That a supplementary capital estimate in the sum of £120,000 for 2015/16 to supplement the existing agreed budget of £380,000 for Disabled Facilities Grants be approved.

**52. STATUTORY STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2014/15**

**Mover: Councillor J Knapman, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee.**

Councillor J Knapman submitted a report regarding the Statutory Statement of Accounts for 2014/15.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Statutory Statement of Accounts for 2014/15 be adopted.

**53. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

**(a) Report of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Council received a written report from Councillor Morgan, the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He advised that the Neighbourhoods and Community Select Panel would be holding a special meeting on 17 December 2015, to review the problems with regards to the new Waste Contract, which would open to the public and webcast. He also advised that the Principal of Epping Forest College would be giving a presentation at the next meeting on 20 October 2015.

**54. JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

**(a) Royal Gunpowder Mills**

Councillor H Kane advised that the report for the Royal Gunpowder Mills related to two meetings on 15 August 2015 and 12 September 2015.

**(b) Grange Farm Trust**

Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor R Gadsby declared a pecuniary interest on this item and the Grange Farm trust and left the meeting for the remainder of the discussion on this item.

Councillor M McEwen advised that Colebrook Royals Football Club had negotiated the use of the Grange Farm Centre facilities and the Trust had applied for planning

permission for an extension to increase the general usage of the centre, which had been endorsed by the Football Foundation who had determined that it would enhance the suitability of the site for the Football Club. It was hoped that the extension would go ahead as soon as the funds were available.

Councillor M Sartin advised that the financial report and final accounts for the year ended April 2015 would be presented to the Trustees in November 2015. In 2014/15 the Trustees had agreed 21 grant awards totalling £71,792, of which five were awarded to organisations within Epping Forest District and included North Weald Mums, Chigwell Men's Club, Loughton Grassroots Football Academy, Loughton Youth Project and Theydon Bois Village Green. In the current financial year, six grants had been agreed so far with one going to Chigwell Lawn Tennis Club to enable the resurfacing of two courts.

Councillor M Sartin advised that grants were available to any group providing or assisting in the provision of recreational facilities or for leisure occupations which would benefit residents in the area of Epping Forest District Council and the Metropolitan Police area. The Metropolitan Police area covered all the London Boroughs and it appeared that organisations in the District had been quite successful in their applications.

Events at the Trust which had taken place recently were opening of the new children's playground and the unveiling of the memorial plaque in tribute to former District Councillor Penny Smith, for the work which she had completed as one of the District Council's representatives on the Grange Farm Trust.

The Grange Farm Centre's website had recently been updated and gave more details on the various activities which were taking place at the site.

There was also a suggestion that Members might like to visit the site to see how the sports fields, the pavilion and Chigwell Meadows had developed and a suitable time and date could be arranged for Members to visit.

(c) Stansted Airport Community Trust Fund

Councillor R Morgan advised that he would be submitting a written report to the next Council meeting regarding the Stansted Trust.

**CHAIRMAN**

## ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 3 November 2015

**Subject:** Asset & Economic Development

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor A Grigg

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### **Recommending:**

**That the report of the Asset & Economic Development Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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### Business Support / One Business Briefing

We have recently published the Autumn edition of our One Business Briefing magazine for businesses. This built on the developments from the previous edition and again sought to engage with a wide range of organisations to ensure the magazine is both informative and useful to businesses whether they are just starting out or established and looking to grow. It included contributions from 14 external sources and the working relationship developed with these organisations also enabled us to both widen the scope of the distribution for the magazine and increase awareness through encouraging them to feature the briefing on their social media outlets. This has seen, in addition to the almost 700 direct recipients of the magazine, over 800 additional downloads of the magazine from the council's website at the present time.

### Partner and Stakeholder Engagement

The Economic Development Team held a District Town Centre Teams meeting on 13 October. These quarterly update meetings are a valuable opportunity to discuss partner activities in each of our centres and to discuss projects within the Town and Villages Opportunities Fund. At the October meeting we were fortunate to also welcome a fabulous guest speaker on behalf of Braintree Town Team (one of Government's 27 Portas Pilots) who shared valuable experience and has hopefully provided inspiration. The Team is also having discussions with equivalents across West Essex with regard to the strengthening of EFDC business contacts and a system to better manage and interrogate details going forward. A meeting has been held between key Officers and Members at EFDC and ECC regarding economic development matters.

### Superfast Broadband

A more detailed breakdown of the current position has been included within the Technology & Support Services Portfolio Holder's report. The key development has been the commencement of community engagement events with the first of these held at Moreton Village Hall on 15<sup>th</sup> October for the Moreton, Bobbingworth and Bovingher area.

### St John's Road, Epping

We are still awaiting the necessary State Aid Approval in respect of this site. The contract has now largely been agreed and the only remaining point of negotiation with the sale is that Essex County Council have asked for a clause to protect themselves should the St John's

Road redevelopment change substantially from the mixed use scheme.

#### North Weald Airfield

The Council has over time commissioned a number of studies in relation to the future of North Weald Airfield. As a result of the most recent review, undertaken by Deloittes in July 2013, Cabinet resolved that the preferred option was that the Council pursue a mixed aviation/development option, subject to the outcome of the Local Plan. As part of the consideration of the future of North Weald Airfield, Members also requested that pro-active steps be taken to maximise aviation activity on the site. Cabinet agreed to seek an operational partner to promote aviation and associated uses, and Officers were asked to appoint marketing arrangements. Two days of well attended Airfield site visits were held in order to provide the opportunity for potential bidders to understand in greater detail, the condition of the site, how it is currently managed and the current mix of tenants and uses.

Three Expressions of Interest were received and these parties were asked to provide details of their Company Structure, their Skills and Experience, their Financial Standing and their Vision for the Airfield. These proposals have been analysed and each party has been interviewed by our Consultants and Officers in order to seek clarification and a greater level of understanding of their submissions.

Although the marketing exercise is not a formal procurement process the proposals contain information that is commercially sensitive and contain details of business planning and financial modelling that each party would not wish to be shared in public. This is particularly true as they have expressed a desire, to be included in any future formal procurement process.

Following a presentation by our Consultants on the three Expressions of Interest, the Asset Management and Economic Cabinet Committee considered a number of Key Considerations and the outcome of this evaluation and recommendations will be reported to Cabinet on 5<sup>th</sup> November.

#### Epping Forest Shopping Park

It has been agreed that the Asset Management Cabinet Committee will take on the more detailed monitoring role in respect of the Epping Forest Shopping Park and Monitoring reports will be received from the lead consultants. Cabinet will continue to receive on an ongoing basis the regular high level reports and these can be supplemented by input from the Cabinet Committee.

#### Ongar Academy

The new secondary school opened for the first intake of 126 Year Seven Pupils at the beginning of September. Temporary classroom facilities have been provided on the redundant tennis courts to the rear of the Leisure Centre under Licence from the Council. Pre application discussions have commenced on the new permanent school. Heads of Terms have been agreed for the sale of the playing fields to accommodate the new school, subject to planning approval.

#### Pyrles Lane Nursery

A revised application has been submitted for planning approval on the site which seeks to address the previous grounds for refusal. Following the necessary period of consultation, it is anticipated that the matter will be considered by the District Development Management Committee in December 2015.



## ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 3 November 2015

**Subject:** Environment

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor W Breare-Hall

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### **Recommending:**

**That the report of the Environment Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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### **Waste Management**

The performance of the Council's waste and recycling contractor, Biffa Municipal, has now significantly improved, with the number of missed collections returning to the historically low level our residents expect. I continue to work with Biffa's senior management to ensure these improvements are fully embedded, and that the service resumes delivery of a uniformly high standard across the district.

Members will be aware that a number of residents requested financial compensation for their missed refuse collections. Cabinet decided that compensation payments would not be made so all such claims have been refused and residents were advised of their right to make a submission to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) if they wanted to pursue their claim for compensation.

The first such complaint has now been determined, and the LGO decided not to investigate it. Accordingly, the LGO made no recommendation for compensation to be paid. The outcome of this 'test case' will be significant in determining the outcome of other similar claims.

### **Grounds Maintenance**

As the season's mowing operations draw to a close, the Grounds Maintenance team are busy preparing their winter works programme. As well as the cyclic bed maintenance, hedge trimming and shrub pruning, this work will also incorporate the planting of many thousands of spring flowering bulbs, numerous hardy shrubs and a wide variety of new trees.

Following a successful recruitment process, a new tree officer joined the Grounds team this month. Their key role is to help manage the tree maintenance contracts and ensure that proper care is given to the many thousands of Council owned trees on streets and in woodlands that help make up the district's special landscape.

### **Noise nuisance**

On 8<sup>th</sup> October 2015, Christopher Piper, of 38 Marlescroft Way, Loughton, was prosecuted by the Council for breaching a Noise Abatement Notice served on him on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2015, which required him to maintain the volume of music and amplified sound emanating from his property at a level that would not cause a statutory nuisance to the occupiers of noise sensitive premises. The breach occurred on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

Mr Piper failed to attend a hearing in Chelmsford Magistrates Court and the Magistrates found him guilty of the offence in his absence. They imposed a fine of £120. He was also ordered to pay a contribution towards the Council's prosecution costs of £200, the new Criminal Court charge of £520 and a Victim surcharge of £20.

I can also report that Essex Police obtained a Closure Order in respect of the property on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2015, and the Council obtained a forthwith possession order in Edmonton County Court on 6<sup>th</sup> October. An eviction date is currently awaited from the County Court bailiff.

### **Flooding and Water**

As the Lead Local Flood Authority for the county, Essex County Council (ECC) have recently launched two tranches of funding that are available for residents, landowners, and organisations, such as town and parish councils, who are looking to address issues relating to flooding. The first is known as Property Level Protection (PLP) and makes funding of up to £5k available to residents who have been affected by flooding, to help them purchase and install physical measures to protect their homes. The scheme is being administered by a private company on behalf of ECC and the money is distributed on a first come, first served basis. The overall budget available is £100k, so residents are being encouraged to register their interest promptly.

The second funding stream, known as the Flood Programme Grant, totals £400k and is intended to contribute towards the delivery of bespoke flood prevention schemes that are primarily aimed at protecting residential properties. Sources of flooding can include Ordinary Watercourses, ground water and surface water flooding. Flooding from rivers is excluded as this is principally the responsibility of the Environment Agency.

More information can be found on ECC's website. Officers from the Council's own Engineering Drainage & Water Team would be happy to discuss and advise potential applicants and look for synergies with Epping Forest's own flood risk reduction proposals and aspirations.

### **Private Water Supplies**

On the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2015, Cabinet approved the creation of a new permanent post to help deal with the sub-standard private water supplies and drainage systems found on most of the horticultural nursery sites within the district. The work is complex, time consuming and difficult to effectively deliver. Officers have met with a representative from the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI), where the problems being found on these sites were discussed, and a DWI Principal Inspector has accompanied officers on visits to a range of premises with private water supplies. Officers hoped that this would assist the DWI in understanding the very unique challenges this Council is faced with.

### **Fly tipping**

I'm pleased to report that problems experienced in Q1 as a result of Biffa's difficulties were rectified in Q2. Figures for the period 01/07/15 to 30/09/15 show that 211 out of 232 fly tipping incidents were cleared within the target. This equates to 90.95%.

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee: Cabinet**

**Date: 3 November 2015**

**Subject: Finance**

**Portfolio Holder: Councillor S Stavrou**

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## **Recommending:**

**That the report of the Finance Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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## **Accountancy**

At Cabinet on the 8<sup>th</sup> October I was asked about the implications of the announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the future of local authority financing and I thought Members who had not been at Cabinet would also be interested in this. To provide background here I will quote from the press notice issued by HM Treasury on 5<sup>th</sup> October entitled "Chancellor unveils devolution revolution"

"By the end of the Parliament, local government will be able to retain 100 per cent of local taxes – including all £26 billion of revenue from business rates – to spend on local government services. The government will also abolish the Uniform Business Rate and give local authorities the power to cut business rates to boost enterprise and economic activity in their areas. At the same time, the core grant from Whitehall will be phased out, and local government will take on new responsibilities. These new powers must come with new responsibilities, as well as phasing out the main grant from Whitehall, to ensure the reforms are fiscally neutral. Local government will of course also need to contribute to fiscal consolidation over this Parliament, and the Government will set out further details in the Spending Review."

So whilst the announcement can be welcomed in principal it will only be once we have the full detail that an accurate assessment can be made. Of the £34 million of business rates we currently collect we only keep £3.5 million. The Treasury takes £17 million for its own purposes and a further £10.2 million goes as "tariff" to support authorities who do not collect sufficient business rates in their own areas. The remainder of the money is not retained in the district but in the county as Essex County Council get £3 million and Essex Fire Authority get £0.3 million. The new system will still require some form of equalisation mechanism, to protect authorities with low levels of business rate income, and will probably see much larger amounts going to Essex County Council and Essex Fire Authority. There is no chance at all of the full £34 million being within our direct control.

It is clear that any new funding will be at least matched by new responsibilities and local authorities will continue having to play a leading role in deficit reduction. Over the life of this Parliament the Department for Communities and Local Government is likely to see a 40% reduction in its funding and so a very similar reduction is likely to be seen by local authorities. Given this overall funding reduction our ability to reduce business rates is likely to be limited, but we will see what we can do when we have the full picture.

What we can take from the announcement that is positive is that we will be able to retain all growth locally. To achieve growth we will continue to actively develop our own assets and the wider business community through our initiatives on economic development.

### **Benefits**

The Benefits Service continues to perform well and should achieve the key performance indicator targets by the end of the year. The performance figures on processing new claims in the second quarter show an improvement on last year but are slightly behind the tougher target for this year. During the second quarter new claims were processed on average in 22.36 days, compared to a target of 22 days and compared to 22.55 days at the end of the second quarter last year.

Performance on processing changes of circumstance was also good, with the figure of 7.19 days being below the target of 10 days and showing an improvement on the second quarter figure for last year of 7.87 days.

### **Revenues**

The Revenues Service has also put in a strong performance in the second quarter. At the end of September in-year Council Tax collection was at 52.54% which is above the target of 53.04%. This is slightly up on the figure of 52.40% at this time last year. The collection of non-domestic rates is also above target at the end of September, with 53.54% achieved compared to the target of 53.04%.

Members may recall that a pool for business rates for Essex authorities was created for 2015/16. This was done as authorities within pools are able to retain a greater share of any growth in business rates in their areas. The latest modelling suggests we should still benefit from this arrangement. However, some authorities are concerned that reductions in their income could cause them to rely on the safety net funding mechanism in 2016/17 and so have withdrawn from the pool for next year. Conversely, two authorities that did not join the 2015/16 pool are now likely to join the 2016/17 pool. I will keep our position under review with the Director of Resources but as long as it appears financially advantageous to the authority we will continue as a member of the amended pool.

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 3 November 2015

**Subject:** Governance and Development Management

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor J Philip

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## **Recommending:**

**That the report of the Governance and Development Management Portfolio Holder be noted**

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### **1. Electoral Registration and IER progress update**

Work by the Council's Electoral Services team continues on the canvass. Work to ensure residents respond to the House Enquiry Form process has meant that 95% of households have responded. Over the last week or so, personal canvassers have been visiting properties yet to respond.

It is pleasing to note that the Council's adoption of online registration has meant that 43% of all respondents have used this method of registration. Of those an additional 2,500 residents have used this system to make the personal changes required to their individual registrations.

However there remains 260 people on the register that were carried over from last years transition as 'non-matched reds' meaning they could not be matched to DWP data or responded to letters last year (or indeed again this year) which will be removed from the register in December if they do not respond by the end of the canvass.

Individual registration remains problematical with many non-responders just about to receive their last reminders to register. It is hoped that the personal canvass will capture some of these people. It is also intended to repeat the successful 'write out' letters in the new year in a bid to capture additional changes that might be required. This process is not without cost and will be subject to funding being available.

In terms of the budget provision, with the early end to government support grant, the Council faces a significant challenge for 2016/17. It is apparent that the true costs of the new system is much higher than anticipated and officers are working with accountancy to ascertain the true expenditure picture in light of operational canvass experience.

### **2. Development Management**

#### **Building Control Income**

Building Control 2015/16 budget is £386 000 with the year to date income of £240 258, which comprises of 62% of the years projected budget income for a six month period.

As a result income is currently £20 000 over budget and indications from Building Control is that applications are continuing at a similar level to the corresponding period for the previous year.

Indications are that Building Control may well end the year between £475 000 and £500 000 which is a conservative estimate as there are six months left in the current financial year.

### **Development Control Income**

Development Control continues to show encouraging levels of income this year. Actual income during this period constitutes 71% for the first six months.

The current income of £420 000 (at 6 months) compares favourably with the overall yearly budget of £595 000.

Six months actual income plus six months budget are indications that DC should turnover at least £800 000 for the 2015/16 year. However, it is likely that at this rate, DC income will even exceed last years turnover of £813 000.

### **Income Summary**

Both DC and BC are showing strong signs of resilience with income above budget and planning/building control applications exceeding and/or matching like for like periods last year. Costs continue to be carefully monitored and workload remains at a high level, putting more strain on officers to achieve deadlines and cope with demand.

## **3. Webcasting**

Cabinet on 8 October saw the soft launch test of the new webcasting system cameras in the chamber. The new system of four, rather than three, HD webcast cameras allows high quality image capture.

Members may be interested to know that online viewing continues to rise year on year. In the last few days Epping Forest Council hosted a very successful youth conference. The afternoon session included a debate on the EU which has been viewed nearly 2,000 times.

In the year to 21 October 2015 viewing figure are at 64,000 for the year. This is up 12,000 viewers on the comparable period in 2013/14.

Officers are now in the process of testing our HD portable equipment and it is hoped that this equipment will be used for an external meeting this month.

## **4. Website links Improved**

The restructure within Public Relations is paying dividends in terms of the Council's website. It is just over three months since the appointment of Amy Rose as the Council's new Digital Content Officer.

Just two months into the job she received a large box of free doughnuts from Site Improve who measure various website parameters including the number of broken links and misspellings. Thanks to Amy, the Council eliminated every single broken link and misspelling from the website.

It is of course a never ending job but as of 19 October the Council website had 2,728 pages with no misspellings. And of the 16,005 links only 2 were broken. The news element of the website was entirely free of such errors. Needless to say the rest of the PR team has taken Amy, and the doughnuts, very much to their hearts.

# Report to the Council

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 3 November 2015

**Subject:** Housing

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor D Stallan

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**Recommending:**

**That the report of the Housing Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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## Housing provisions of the Housing and Planning Bill 2015

On 13<sup>th</sup> October 2015, the Housing and Planning Bill 2015 was published. As expected, the Bill contains a number of proposed housing provisions (as well as planning provisions). The main housing provisions are as follows:

### *Right to Buy for housing association tenants on a voluntary basis*

This proposal is based on a “deal” between the National Housing Federation (an organisation that represents housing associations) and the Government, whereby housing associations will be generally expected to give tenants the Right to Buy (RTB) their home, with similar discounts to those given to Council tenants, but can (in exceptional circumstances) give their tenants a grant (equivalent to the RTB discount that they would otherwise have to give to tenants) to buy another property elsewhere instead. The Bill proposes to give power to the Secretary of State to make grants to housing associations to meet the costs of the RTB discounts and requires the Homes & Communities Agency to monitor compliance.

### *Sale of high value council housing*

In order to fund the discounts to be given to housing association tenants under the voluntary Right to Buy arrangement referred to above, councils that keep a Housing Revenue Account will be under a duty to *consider* selling its interest in any “high value housing” that becomes vacant. It also gives power to the Secretary of State to require councils to make a payment to the Government each financial year, based on an estimate of the market value of the “high value housing” that is likely to become vacant during the year – less any costs or other deductions that may be determined by the Secretary of State.

Therefore, the provisions of the Bill suggest that the Secretary of State may simply set a tariff or levy based on the expected number of high value vacant properties that will arise in the following year, rather than compel a council to sell individual dwellings over specified values. This is a different approach than that previously suggested by the Government, which was based on requiring councils to sell all empty properties where the values were above specific value thresholds. The definition of high value housing is not set out in the Bill, but the Secretary of State must, by regulations, define “high value” for the purposes of the Act.

### *High income social tenants (“Pay to Stay”) Scheme*

The Bill will give the Secretary of State power by regulations to make provision about the level of rent that a council or housing association must charge a “high income” tenant of social housing. It gives powers to introduce a mandatory “Pay to Stay Scheme” and gives the Secretary of State powers to require the rent to be either a market rent, a proportion of the

market rent or a rent determined by reference to other factors. It can also provide for rents to be different for people with different incomes, or for social housing in different areas.

The Bill will also give councils and housing associations power to require a tenant to provide information and evidence as to their income - and confirms the power of HMRC to disclose information to councils and housing associations on tenants' income for this purpose. The additional income received by councils must be passed to the Government, but housing associations may keep the increased rental income, provided that they use it to build new affordable homes.

The DCLG has issued a Consultation Paper on "Pay to Stay", on which I give more detail below.

### *Starter homes*

The Bill will give the Secretary of State powers to introduce regulations providing that local planning authorities may only grant planning permission for a residential development of a "specified description" if the "starter homes requirement" is met. It is expected that the regulations will enable starter homes to be provided on private development sites instead of affordable rented housing and/or shared ownership as currently required.

Starter homes will be available to first-time buyers, under the 40 years of age - but the Secretary of State can change this criteria. The (reduced) price paid must be no more than £450,000 in London and £250,000 outside London (but the Secretary of State may change this criteria), and local planning authorities must keep reports of how it has approached the provision of starter homes. The Secretary of State may make a "compliance direction" setting out what a council must do to comply, if a local planning authority fails to carry out its functions in relation to starter homes - or has a policy in its Local Plan that is incompatible with those functions.

### *Rogue landlords & letting agents*

The Bill will enable the First-tier Tribunal, on application from a local authority, to issue a "banning order", banning a person from letting housing or engaging in letting agency or property management work. A "banning order offence" means an offence to be described by the Secretary of State in regulations, and if a person breaches a banning order, a financial penalty may be imposed by the local housing authority of up to £5,000.

Councils must maintain the content of a database of rogue landlords and letting agents established and operated by the Secretary of State, and must enter a person in the database if a banning order is made against the person. If, for example, a landlord commits an offence under the Bill, the First-tier tribunal has the power to make a "rent repayment order" requiring a landlord to repay an amount of rent paid by a tenant or pay a council the amount paid in Universal Credit.

### *Recovering abandoned premises in England*

The Bill will enable a private landlord to give a tenant notice bringing an assured shorthold tenancy to an end if: rent has been unpaid for 2-3 months; the landlord has given 2 notices to the tenant warning that the landlord believes the premises have been abandoned; and the tenant (or occupier) has not responded in writing to say that the premises are not abandoned.



### *Other housing provisions*

**Self-build and custom housebuilding** – Places a duty on councils to grant planning permission for enough sites to meet demand arising from Self Build Register.

**Licences for HMOS** -Technical changes only.

**Tenancy deposit information** - Requires scheme administrators to give councils information, possibly for a fee.

**Enforcement of estate agents legislation** – Enables the Secretary of State to designate a “lead agency”.

**Compulsory purchase** – Gives powers to enter land to undertake surveys

**Assessment of accommodation needs** - In addition to assessing other housing needs from time to time, requires councils to also consider the needs of people living in caravans / mobile homes / park homes and houseboats.

### **DCLG Consultation on High Income Social Tenants “Pay to Stay”**

The Government has recently issued a Consultation Paper on the proposed operation of a mandatory “Pay to Stay” Scheme, to replace the discretionary scheme that councils and housing associations can currently operate.

The Consultation Paper sets out the proposals, which build on the framework within the Housing and Planning Bill referred to above and are as follows:

- The policy will be implemented from April 2017 onwards.
- The Government has now decided that social housing tenants with household taxable incomes of £40,000 and above in London and £30,000 and above in the rest of England (reduced from the households incomes in the current discretionary scheme of £60,000) will be required to pay an increased level of rent for their accommodation, if their rent is currently being subsidised below market rent levels.
- “Households” will mean tenants or joint tenants named on the Tenancy Agreement and any tenant’s spouse, civil partner or partner.
- Money raised by local authorities through increased rents will need to be returned to the Exchequer to contribute towards national deficit reduction, but housing associations will be able to use the additional income to invest in building new housing.
- The Government will consider additional powers to require the provision of information on income by tenants
- The detail of the policy will be set out in regulations

The Consultation Paper seeks views on how it can ensure the policy supports work incentives and how it can be designed to achieve this, whilst ensuring tenants pay a fair rent. It also asks if there should be a starting threshold in relation to eligibility to receive housing benefit. It suggests that it may be appropriate to have a gradual increase in rent for social tenants as their incomes rise, which it is suggested may be a fairer system and could be in the form of a simple taper.

The Consultation Paper also refers to administration costs - which are likely to be high, bearing in mind the need to collate information on incomes from all tenants, dealing with tenants' changing incomes and the necessity to increase and reduce rents accordingly. The proposal is that local authorities (but not housing associations) will be allowed to recover any reasonable costs from increased rents before they return the additional income to the Exchequer. The Consultation Paper asks local authorities what they consider their costs are likely to be.

The Housing Select Committee will be asked to consider the Council's response at its next meeting on 12 November 2015.

### **Request for assistance to Syrian refugees**

At the last Council meeting I explained that, in response to a letter received from the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) on behalf of the East of England Strategic Migration Partnership (SMP) regarding assistance for Syrian refugee resettlement to the UK, I had offered the provision of up to two Council flats each year to Syrian refugees on non-secure tenancies for up to four years (1 X 1 bed flat and 1 X 2 bed flat).

Since that time, Essex County Council has been seeking to undertake a co-ordinating role amongst its own services, other councils and other statutory and voluntary organisations across Essex. The Assistant Director (Housing Operations) attended a recent meeting convened by Essex CC, where the County Council explained: the current national and local position; what may be expected of different organisations; and the role the voluntary sector could play. It is understood that families from Syria are expected to start arriving in November/December 2015.

Although the national details regarding funding have yet to be finalised, the Government has said that it will meet the reasonable costs incurred by organisations through them providing assistance.

### **New Customer Relationship Officer post**

The Communities Directorate has recently appointed to its new Customer Relationship Officer post. This post was a recommended outcome from a review by the Tenant Scrutiny Panel of the way in which complaints are dealt with in the Housing Service and was created as part of the Phase 2 restructure for the Communities Directorate. The post was created primarily to improve the handling and co-ordination of Step 1 and Step 2 complaints, with a more customer-focussed approach. However, the post will also co-ordinate the provision of written responses to members of parliament and will deal with the provision of information under the Freedom of Information Act and data access requests under the Data Protection Act as well.

It is inevitable that a Directorate such as Communities - that provides customer-facing services and is the largest of the four Directorates - will receive a number of complaints. In 2014/15, the Communities Directorate received 117 Step 1 complaints, 13 complaints at Step 2 and 11 complaints at Step 3. In addition, there were 102 letters received from MPs requiring responses on various aspects of service. 269 compliments were also received over the same period.

Responding properly to complaints, in a comprehensive and customer-focussed way is often very time consuming, particularly as the more complex ones cover more than one service area and sometimes more than one Directorate. Having a single officer involved in all the Directorate's complaints saves officer time and provides a more consistent service.

The Customer Relationship Officer now liaises with, and provides information to, the Corporate Complaints Officer who still deals with all Step 3 complaints and Ombudsman appeals on the Council's behalf.

The early indications of this new way of working are extremely positive and it is hoped that by dealing with complaints much better at Step 1 it will reduce the number of Step 2 complaints and a significant amount of senior officer time at Assistant Director level.

### **Essex Landlord Accreditation Scheme (ELAS)**

The Essex Landlord Accreditation Scheme (ELAS) - a joint initiative between ourselves (through our Private Sector Housing (Technical) Team) and 6 other Essex Authorities, managed by the Chief Fire Officers Association - was launched in September 2014. The aim of the Scheme was to improve the standard of properties available for private letting by accrediting private landlords that provide homes that are properly maintained and managed. By identifying these landlords, tenants are less likely to fall foul of poor property conditions and unscrupulous practices. One of the Scheme's functions was to provide a web-site through which private landlords and tenants could access detailed information on matters associated with renting in the private sector.

However, uptake of the scheme was poor and, with regret, in May 2015 the Chief Fire Officers Association gave twelve months' notice that they no longer wanted to manage the scheme. Officers are currently considering how to take forward the best aspects of ELAS's work and I will be reporting to the Council in future with specific details on any approach that I consider we should take.

### **Tenant Satisfaction ('STAR') Survey**

We have just completed a Customer Satisfaction Survey of our Council tenants across the District, using an independent consultant called ARP Research. We conduct this survey every three years using the national 'STAR' system (Survey of Tenants And Residents). This anonymous postal survey was sent to a random sample of a third of our tenants, including both general needs and sheltered housing tenants, but not leaseholders.

We had a good overall response rate of 36%, which is in line with response rates achieved by many other councils and is well in excess of the STAR target. The results will be reported to the Housing Select Committee on 12 November 2015 and will be used to provide an up-to-date picture of residents' satisfaction with their homes and with housing services provided. The data will also allow us to compare our performance of the Council, over time and with other similar landlords, via the Housemark online benchmarking service.

### **Conversion Scheme - Marden Close and Faversham Hall, Chigwell Row**

The works at Marden Close, Chigwell Row to convert 20 bedsits into 10 self-contained flats, together with the conversion of the community hall on the ground floor of Faversham Hall into 2 new 1-bed flats is nearing completion. There have been some minor delays, mainly due to some additional works needed to the structure once it was exposed and also due to new mains connections.

### **Council Housebuilding Programme**

The four -sites that make up Phase 1 of the Council's Housebuilding Programme in Waltham Abbey are behind programme. Whilst the contract completion date is 13 November 2015, the contractor, Broadway Construction Ltd, is reporting that they will complete three of the sites on Roundhills by March 2016 and the site in Harveyfields in July 2016. No formal requests for an extension of time has been received.

Since obtaining planning permission for the provision of 51 new affordable rented homes at Burton Road, Loughton in September 2015, tenders are currently being sought based on a design and build contract. A Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee meeting has been scheduled for early January 2016 to consider the tenders received and to appoint a contractor.

Planning applications have also been submitted for the 9 sites that make up Phase 3 of the Housebuilding Programme, which centres on Epping, Coopersale and North Weald. At the time of writing, approval has been received for sites in Centre Avenue and London Road. Further planning applications for sites that the Cabinet Committee has determined should be pursued for development are currently in the process of being prepared for Phases 4 and 5 - in Loughton, Buckhurst Hill and Ongar.

## ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 3 November 2015

**Subject:** Leisure & Community Services

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor H Kane

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### **Recommending:**

**That the report of the Leisure and Community Services Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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### **Community Services**

#### Inclusion Project - Children and Young People

I would like to share with Members, a compliment received by staff from our Community, Health and Wellbeing team. The comment is from a family who participate in our Inclusion Project for children and young people with additional needs, which has been externally funded over the last 3 years, with £154,000 from Essex County Council.

“The support received from Olivia and her team is great. At each event I've taken the children to they've been well managed, the children have had great fun and it's all been safe and so child focused. Olivia seems to be able to work with a team that not only understands our children and their complex needs but is able to get the best out of them too. As a foster carer I am limited to who I feel comfortable leaving my children with - I have had no such problem leaving the children with the disability inclusion team. I have two children with additional and special needs, as a family we often have a change around of children or ask for children to be added at last minute - this is never met with any problem, and we are able to enjoy the clubs as a family and our family dynamics often change. My child with his additional needs could only talk about the camp - we had many things booked in the six weeks holidays, but the camp where he has independence from me for two nights is all that he could talk about, he had great fun from the moment I dropped him off until the minute I picked him up - it is well managed and there is so much going on.

When observing the many different children in the groups, I wonder if we could somehow clone Olivia and her team - they keep the children occupied, safe and most of all keep them enjoying themselves and having the most fun they can have - each child is included and each 'need' is taken in to account - no one is left out - children are also taught so many different things while in these clubs - something that often their teachers at school cannot do - while it is a small club at times, our children need everything that the disability inclusion group offers them. I don't think I'd be as comfortable letting my children attend anywhere else. I give huge thanks to Olivia and her team for a job well done and only hope that they're around for the foreseeable future - thank you so much”.

#### Youth Council and Young people

I am pleased to advise Council, that The Youth Council has been awarded a special “Crystal Award” and a cheque for £1,500 from the Jack Petchey Foundation. This is for special recognition of its work in representing the district's 12,000 teenagers. In particular, the Youth

Council's anti-bullying campaign received specific praise and this project also secured the High Sherriff's Award of £1000 earlier in the year.

**Youth Engagement Conference** - Any councillors who visited the Civic Offices on 9<sup>th</sup> October, will have seen how busy and vibrant the building was, with over 90 young people from schools across the district participating in a Youth Engagement Conference. The event was facilitated by our Youth Council and provided an opportunity for our young people to learn all about local democracy and attend a range of other educational workshops. The highlight of the day was a debate about whether the young people think we should remain in the EU or leave and after an hour-long debate, which was webcast live, young delegates voted on the topic electronically. The result was that 75% wish to remain in the EU and Eleanor Laing praised the quality of the conference event and took a particular interest in the outcome of the debate itself.

**Reality Roadshow** - This excellent programme has commenced delivery at secondary schools in the district, starting with West Hatch School in Chigwell and Debden Park in Loughton. Since September, over 450 young people of 14 years old have participated in the project, which now includes a scenario relating to gang crime, which is gradually becoming a concern in Essex. Additional emphasis is also being placed on the risks of young people falling prey to Child Sexual Exploitation, with specific reference to the safe use of social media, along with the risks relating to 'Legal Highs'. The programme will be rolled out to other secondary schools in 2016.

#### **Big Draw 2015 - Underwater Drawing Project**

As part of the National Big Draw event 2015, our Museum, Heritage and Culture (MHC) team worked with Davenant School pupils in their school pool and Epping Forest College students at Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool in a series of underwater workshops that were recorded by film and photography. Other residents of the district were also able to get involved in the event, by taking part in a drop-in drawing event where they were able to draw underwater and be filmed and photographed in doing so. The resulting images are now in an exhibition at Loughton Arts Centre, running until 30 October. The exhibition will also be on display in 2016 at Epping Forest College, where college students will help to curate, publicise and document the show.

**Boys Day of Dance** - On 2 October, over 120 Year 7 boys at Roding Valley High School, Loughton, took part in a Day of Dance with the Council, where they experienced many different styles of dance including contemporary, street, stomp and breakdance. The event which focusses on a different school each year and aims to encourage positive activity by boys, culminated in a performance of each genre of dance at the end of the day and participants were also given the opportunity to a free trial at the Stadium Theatre Performing Arts School in Loughton the next day, which some of them willingly took up.

Headteacher James Luck said: "The students had a superb time and were really challenged in terms of their fitness levels and their concentration. The day was a great way to enrich their curricular experience. Hopefully many will take up the further opportunities in dance offered to them outside of school as a result."

#### Museum Youth Panel – Schools Out Exhibition

The Youth Panel that has been established at Lowewood Museum, curated and launched their own exhibition entitled 'Schools Out' in mid- October, which was attended by the Vice Chairman of Council. The aim of the Panel is to give young people the opportunity to learn new skills, meet new people and have a say in what the museum does. Their core role within the museum is to act as consultants on the museum's yearly programme; advising on the types of workshops and events Young People might like to attend and undertaking one project and associated event every year. the youth panel have received training on a variety

of different skills helping them to curate their first display, including collections care, marketing, graphic design, digital interactives, and text writing. There are plans for the scheme to be launched at the Epping Forest District Museum early in the New Year.

Older People

**Winter Warmer Events** - The Community, Health & Wellbeing Team is working in partnership with West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to facilitate a series of "Winter Warmer" events for older residents in the district. The events will be staged in Buckhurst Hill, Waltham Abbey and Epping and will include presentations from health partners, safety organisations and support groups, about how to stay warm and well during the winter months. There will also be a range of stalls providing information from other agencies and a seated exercise session. All participants will also receive a free lunch and refreshments. Members are asked to promote these excellent sessions to residents in their ward, as places must be booked in advance.

**'Home-grown' exhibition** – Our Museum, Heritage and Culture (MHC) team has been working with people living in the Council's Sheltered Housing in Loughton, as part of the national 'art@homes' initiative, providing a range of creative workshops for people of all abilities. The project was open to non-residents as well and at the end of the programme of work, which took place over several months, an exhibition was set up to showcase the many hidden talents of the participants including 'home-grown' crafts, and food produce from the Parsonage Court allotment.

#### EFDC Museum & Touring Exhibitions

Work by our main contractors Coniston Ltd, is still on going on the museum site and the building works are now entering their final phase. The works have recently been visited by the Leader of the Council and members to view progress. Currently we are anticipating the site being handed back to the Council on the 18<sup>th</sup> December and then following the installation of collections and new displays we are planning re-opening in late March. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> October a visit to site by Visit Essex and local news media will form part of the new marketing campaign.

As part of a two year touring exhibitions programme which has received £150,000 from Arts Council England and the Royal Opera House Bridges programme, MHC has produced a range of exhibitions which have now been booked by some 56 venues (2104-2018) across the East of England and beyond. These exhibitions are now being charged for to recipient venues bringing a useful income stream into the service

#### **Leisure Management**

On the 8 October 2015, the Cabinet agreed the Business Case and Procurement Strategy for the new Leisure Management Contract. The procurement will be undertaken by competitive dialogue and the Council will not only be seeking a significant reduction in management fees, but investment in new and improved facilities. We have decided to extend the current contract with SLM, for up to one year from the 3 January 2016, in order that the Council has sufficient time to appoint a new provider who can deliver the Corporate objectives outlined in the Council's Leisure and Cultural Strategy. The Portfolio Holder Advisory Group, that I have established, will continue to oversee the project. I will keep Council advised of progress.

***Members, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of the officers from Community Services on the excellent work they undertake on behalf of the Council.***

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# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 3 November 2015

**Subject:** Planning Policy

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor R Bassett

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**Recommending:**

**That the report of the Planning Policy Portfolio Holder be noted**

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## **1) Update on key evidence work**

### **Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Economic and Employment evidence:**

The work has now been completed on this key piece of technical evidence producing an update Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) in conjunction with the other authorities within our Housing Market Area: East Herts, Harlow and Uttlesford. The final SHMA was formally considered by the SHMA partners at the Cooperation for Sustainable Development Board meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> September and was then subsequently added as part of the Local Plan evidence base together with the related economic and employment evidence following consideration at the 8<sup>th</sup> October Cabinet meeting.

What the SHMA provides us with is figures for Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN) for Epping Forest District and the other three Districts named above. Whilst important to understand that the OAHN is not the housing target for the District, it does however represent an important milestone towards establishing our housing target. Having now established the housing need we now have to take account of any constraints such as green belt, flood plains which indicate that development should be restricted. Subsequent meetings of the Co-op Member Board will need to discuss how the objectively assessed need could be met by the wider SHMA area if the evidence indicates that our need cannot be met in Epping Forest District.

An Economic Evidence report for West Essex and East Herts commissioned jointly by EFDC and East Herts, Harlow and Uttlesford Councils has also now been finalised. Local Plan Inspectors pay particular attention to the need for jobs and housing requirements to be aligned. Therefore, this study was commissioned on the same basis as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, to cover the four authorities and to inform all four Local Plans across the 'Functional Economic Market Area'. A second more detailed report covering 'Economic and Employment Evidence to Support the Local Plan and Economic Development Strategy' has also been completed for EFDC alone. It provides a detailed analysis of the assessed economic need, in terms of employment floorspace and type to be provided through the EFDC Local Plan. This document provides the floorspace breakdown of what this need might be in order to inform the new Local Plan.

### **Green Belt Review:**

It is important to remember that the outcome of the Green Belt Review is only one, albeit an extremely important, piece of the evidence base that will inform the Council's future plan-making decisions. Following completion of stage 1 of the Green Belt Review for the District, external consultants have now been appointed and over the autumn will be undertaking a more detailed assessment of the broad locations identified in stage 1. It will confirm at a more detailed level:

- The areas where the Green Belt policy designation should remain;
- Any historic anomalies in the existing boundaries or locations where development has taken place, which may therefore suggest minor amendments to the Green Belt boundaries are required;
- Areas that may be least harmful in Green Belt terms for potential development purposes.

If a parcel or part of the parcel is appraised as part of the more detailed work this does not mean necessarily that the parcel should or will be allocated for development in the emerging Local Plan or that the Council would look favourably on a planning application. This work should be completed next February time and will, along with the raft of other evidence base work, be used to inform the Draft Plan- Preferred Approach upon which we will be consulting next summer.

### **Settlement Capacity Work**

We are undertaking a settlement capacity analysis of the 10 largest settlements in the District, namely Epping, Theydon Bois, Buckhurst Hill, Chigwell, Loughton/Debden, Waltham Abbey, North Weald Bassett, Chipping Ongar, Lower Nazeing and Roydon. The purpose of the work is to ensure that the District can address as much of its housing requirement as possible within our existing settlements, and so minimise the potential need to utilise Green Belt land for development.

This work is being undertaken by Fregonese Associates, who are utilising specialist urban analysis software to assess the number, suitability and capacity of potential brownfield sites. Like stage 2 of the Green Belt Review, the results of this work will be used to inform, and published alongside, the consultation Draft Plan Preferred Approach.

### **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment:**

An updated Stage1 SFRA has now been completed and added to the Local Plan evidence base. This work helped inform the sieve undertaken as part of the first phase of the Green Belt Review.

### **Transport**

Officers have also been involved in transport work being undertaken by the London Borough of Enfield, opposing reference to construction of a new access road in the North East Enfield Area Action Plan and keeping a watching brief on wider transport work being undertaken as part of Enfield's Northern Gateway Access Package.

I was recently invited to a public meeting called by the local MP for the area Rt Hon. Joan Ryan. At a well-attended meeting of concerned local residents living in the Bullsmoor Lane area of north East Enfield I was asked to explain EFDC's position and the reasons for this Council's continued objection to the construction of a new link road onto the M25 linking onto the A121. Whilst sympathetic to the congestion and associated problems this causes, I explained that construction of such a link road is highly unlikely to solve the problem but rather simply transfer the problems across the boundary into our District thereby exacerbating our existing traffic problems. I did however commit to continued working with Enfield Council and other partners to try to reach agreement on a package of transport measures acceptable to all parties.

### Member Briefings and Workshops

Dates during November have now been set and advertised for holding a series of all Member, (including Town and Parish Council representation), evening briefing and workshop sessions. The first of these on 2<sup>nd</sup> November will look at the Historic Environment, the Natural Environment

and Green Networks. The purpose of these workshops are to inform members of emerging key issues that the draft Local Plan will need to cover, and to ensure that Member views and concerns are aired at this formative stage so that they might be taken account of in the policy drafting.

As space is limited, and to enable officers to plan to ensure that these sessions are productive and run effectively, it is particularly important that all members indicate in advance whether they will be attending.

## **2) Duty to cooperate**

Officers (and Members) continue to meet regularly with the appropriate authorities to consider a wide range of cross boundary issues. In addition to the SHMA, Employment and Green Belt Review work reported above, the Lea Valley Food taskforce continues to develop a programme for growth around one of the District's historic and still key sectors.

The programme to review and assess new planning responses to the industry both within the district and the Lea Valley more generally was discussed at a specially convened workshop on 13 October at the Olympic White Water centre. The workshop, chaired by the Chairman of Vibrant partnerships, formerly Lee Valley Trust, was attended by planning officers from London, Hertfordshire and Essex, industry representatives and other local partners. A paper prepared by the taskforce, looking at issues and opportunities was discussed with partners agreeing to review the document in their own organisations and reconvene in a month to look at a potential joint approach.

Work is continuing on the new Glass house qualification as a part of the skills agenda. Led by Epping Forest College with funding from Essex County Council. Discussions are also ongoing around the possibility of establishing a skills academy based within the greenhouse industry.

The SELEP Rural Board discussed and agreed in principle a joint proposal from the taskforce and its partner organisation 'Produced in Kent' to develop a new horticulture strategy to provide greater direction and coordination in this sector. Partners have been asked to develop this to contract stage.

The Taskforce has been able to establish a consortium to fund the feasibility study into establishment of an Institute for food security, which will now also look at the potential links between the industry and public health England following the announcement of its transfer to a site in Harlow.

The London Stansted Cambridge Consortium (LSCC) has asked the Taskforce to help deliver a major Food Symposium in the next few months, with key academic and industry bodies concerned with research, development and production. It will review the Agritech Study the Taskforce commissioned on behalf of the consortium and look at opportunities across the corridor area.

## **3) Neighbourhood Plans:**

Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers have finalised their draft Plan which now goes forward to independent examination.

There are seven other Parish and Town Councils that have applied to designate neighbourhood planning areas for their areas which have been approved (Chigwell, Epping, Buckhurst Hill, Theydon Bois, Loughton, North Weald Bassett and Epping Upland). With the exception of North Weald Bassett and Epping Upland Parishes the areas approved cover the entire parish. Given the location of North Weald Bassett and Epping Upland Parishes, immediately adjacent to Harlow's administrative boundary, a number of important strategic cross boundary matters were identified that are not within the remit of a Neighbourhood Plan to address. The Council therefore decided

that the northern edges of these parishes bordering Harlow should be excluded from the Neighbourhood Area designation.

#### **4) Housing Bill**

The Housing & Planning Bill was published on the 13 October 2015. The Bill makes clear that the Government is serious about increasing housing and improving the housing regime in general. Measures have been included to streamline the planning process; to facilitate starter homes, self builds and building on brownfield land. It is proposed that more powers are given to the Secretary of State to take over plan making, decision taking and effectively impose financial penalties on local authorities with high-value vacant buildings.

Comprising of eight parts, the main planning changes included in part 6 of the Bill, include:

- Neighbourhood planning - concerned that the neighbourhood planning process is too slow, Government has introduced changes which it hopes will combat this delay.
- Local planning - changes to local planning are included to give the Secretary of State more power to intervene if local plans are not delivered effectively.
- Local registers of brownfield land and permission in principle – a key element of the Bill is the creation of a new "permission in principle" provision which provides that planning permission in principle may be granted for development of land in England.
- Planning permission - changes under this heading relate to the grant of planning permission by permitted development rights and by the Secretary of State when a local planning authority is deemed to be underperforming.
- Nationally significant infrastructure projects - as another means of boosting housing supply, the Bill provides the Secretary of State with a new power to grant development consent for housing which is linked to an application for a nationally significant infrastructure project.

Changes to the compulsory purchase regime are also included in part 7 of the Bill and are aimed at making compulsory purchase "clearer, fairer and faster".

The Bill will need to pass through three readings in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords and obtain Royal Assent before being enacted. This process is expected to take between 12 and 18 months. It seems likely that most of the planning provisions would subsequently require secondary legislation in the form of regulations to bring into effect.

## ***Report to the Council***

**Committee: Cabinet**

**Date: 3 November 2015**

**Subject: Safer, Greener and Transport**

**Portfolio Holder: Councillor G Waller**

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### **Recommending:**

**That the report of the Safer, Greener and Transport Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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### **Local Policing**

I am sure members are aware that the Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex and the Chief Constable recently announced new proposals for local policing across Essex. The planned changes are designed to address a range of challenges for Essex Police, including the changing landscape of crime, which has seen the escalation of crimes such as domestic abuse, cyber-crime and Child Sexual Exploitation. Added to this are the significant financial challenges with expected budget cuts of £63 million by 2019/20 from an annual budget of around £262 million.

At the meeting that I attended to learn of the proposals, we were advised that across the county there are 80 police buildings, mostly in a poor state of repair, which require around £30 million of maintenance work to bring them up to standard and £2 million per year just to maintain their current condition. Following careful analysis on usage viability, the police estate will therefore be reduced to 30 buildings strategically placed within Essex. In Epping Forest district, this will see the closure of Epping and Ongar police stations and the front desk of Loughton police station, although the latter will remain as an operational base. The nearest police station open to the public will be in Harlow. We were however informed that very few people actually call at police stations and that new technology will enable people to use secure online systems for reporting crime and tracking the progress of investigations.

Unfortunately such large scale financial cuts can only be met by reducing the largest police overhead - its workforce, with 83 per cent of the police budget spent on staff. At a local level, this means that the new Community Policing Team for Epping Forest and Brentwood will be made up of one local policing and partnership inspector, two sergeants, 10 constables, one dedicated youth officer and seven PCSOs. This is a significant reduction for the area, but we are advised that the team will be locally based and will prioritise protecting people from harm, preventing and reducing crime, bringing criminals to justice and engaging with the public. It has however been proposed, that what is described as 'low level ASB' will be dealt with by local authorities and Community Safety Partnerships within the existing resources available.

Other more serious issues such as organised crime, as well as crime involving gangs, drugs and violent/sexual assault, will be dealt with by special teams assigned on an ad hoc basis

to the district. The Council and Community Safety Partnership (CSP) will continue to operate in close cooperation with the local policing team, but we need to make decisions on the priority areas of work for the Community Safety team when the new arrangements come into effect.

It can not be denied that, with fewer local police resources to call on, the perception will be that the public can no longer expect the same level of service as in the past. We have held a meeting with the local police commander to assess how the Council and CSP can respond most effectively to the pending changes in order to mitigate their impact. We are working on a number of ideas and I shall keep members informed as they are developed.

### **Safeguarding**

The following safeguarding cases have been dealt with by our safeguarding team during September, but I am informed that although the statistics are lower for this period than for August, we have had several cases that required intensive staff time. These have included a case of hoarding and significant self-neglect which involved collaborative working across our Neighbourhoods and Community Safety team, Princess Alexandra Hospital and the Fire and Rescue service.

Total number of concerns received by the Safeguarding team for this period: ..	16
Number of children-only concerns (where children were victims): .....	6
Number of adult-only concerns (where adults were victims): .....	9
Number of concerns that involved both (adult and children were victims): .....	1
Total number of children involved:.....	11
Total number of adults involved: .....	10

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 3 November 2015

**Subject:** Technology and Support Services

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor A Lion

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## **Recommending:**

**That the report of the Technology and Support Services Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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## **Support Services**

Members may be interested to note that HR have carried out a number of consultation exercises with staff, over and since the summer. These exercises have included the on-line employee survey, employee engagement workshops and smarter working sessions.

The employee survey asked employees questions on a range of subjects from the culture of the organisation, to what they thought of their managers, to asking for ideas for using the money generated from leasing the roof space for the communications mast.

The employee engagement workshops were run by Gareth Nicholas the Council's National Graduate Trainee, following feedback from employees he has produced an Engagement Strategy and accompanying action plan to deliver this.

Lastly, consultation took place with employees regarding their thoughts, suggestions and concerns regarding different ways of working that the Council has or may wish to introduce.

The outcomes from all of these exercises will be reported to Members on the Joint Consultative Committee, the Resources Select Committee or Cabinet as appropriate, later in the year.

I am pleased to report that we had 26 applicants for the Head of Transformation position, from which 6 candidates were selected to attend an interview. David Bailey was the successful candidate and has been appointed as the new Head of Transformation. Subject to the normal HR checks, David will hopefully be starting with the Council in November. David has gained a wealth of knowledge throughout his career in transformation consultancy and was previously a service manager for the London Borough of Hillingdon.

## **Technology**

Recommendations were put forward to Cabinet on the 8 October for ICT projects which form a part of the Capital Programme for 2016/17.

The Council currently uses BACS (Banker Automated Clearing Service) to process electronic payments such as direct debts. However, the secure device used to authenticate these payments, will no longer be supported by our current supplier after December 2016. Therefore, a new system will be introduced making it easier to make payments to suppliers and residents.

An upgrade to the accountancy e-financial general ledger system is required, as the current version is unsupported and requires a chargeable upgrade to get the Council onto the latest

supported version. The new system offers greater functionality making it easier to access the ledger.

Additional storage is required for the public facing servers due to the increase in remote working and system integration with external partners. This project will add capacity and improve performance and resilience.

Other projects to be included in the Capital Programme relate to integration, additional storage on servers and enhancements to a number of security devices to protect the Council from external threats. There is a need to upgrade current systems to bring them in line with the latest supported version, making them more compatible with newer devices.

## **Facilities**

### **Civic Offices – Roof Repairs and Solar Panels**

Roof repairs have been completed to The 323 House and works are now well underway to the roofs of the main civic building and the conder building. The coating system is being applied to the front elevation of the civic roof and the old roof finish has been removed from the conder building and the new one is being installed. Once the roof works are complete the solar panels will be installed.

The electrical infrastructure has already been installed and cable routes have been prepared. All works are programmed to be complete in early November.

### **Civic Offices – Heating Control Improvements**

During the summer months, the heating pipework and controls have been split to provide better temperature control of the civic offices, as the initial design linked the second and ground floors on one circuit. The 323 House was also linked onto this same circuit and this has also been separated so that we can provide individual control here. The pipework modifications are at a testing stage and will be ready for the commencement of the heating season. We are currently working on the construction of a new control panel to provide full control and better energy efficiency whilst improving comfort conditions to all building users.

### **Superfast Broadband High Speed Internet**

Following the award of the Superfast Broadband Rural Challenge Project (RCP) Contract, high speed internet to rural communities in Epping Forest, by Essex County Council to Gigaclear, preparatory work has been taking place ahead of the commencement of the delivery phase and a detailed delivery plan is being prepared by Gigaclear. The building of the network will now begin in November 2015 and the first community engagement event was held on the evening of 15 October in Moreton Village Hall, to cover those who live and work in Moreton, Bobbingworth and Bovinger. These community events are intended to help everyone understand what they are doing, how they are doing it and what difference it will make to the community and Gigaclear will be hosting a series of similar community events throughout the district as the rollout progresses over the course of the next 12-18 months. Dates and times of these questions and answers community events will be released nearer the time and published using local advertising and postcards, as well as online on the Gigaclear / Superfast Essex events page.

The Rural Challenge Project (Phase 2b) sits alongside the ongoing Phase 1 and Phase 2a elements of the Superfast Broadband project which, in partnership with BT, are aiming to deliver 95% superfast broadband to the whole of Essex. Delivery under these programmes



is continuing and residents and businesses outside of the RCP intervention area can also find out the latest on when these phases are likely to reach their locations by visiting the postcode checker map on the Superfast Essex website.

Articles detailing some of the progress of these projects as well as providing links to further information online was included in the recently published autumn edition of One Business Briefing, our magazine for businesses.

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## ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet **Date:** 3 November 2015

**Subject:** Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2016/17

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Chris Whitbread

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### **Recommending:**

**(1) That the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan for 2016/17 be adopted.**

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1. The Corporate Plan 2015-20 is the Council's highest level strategic document setting the strategic direction for the authority for the five year lifetime of the Plan. It focuses on a number of key areas that the Council needs to focus on during that time, and helps to prioritize resources to provide quality services and value for money. These key areas are known as the Corporate Aims and are supported by a set of Key Objectives which represent the Council's high-level initiatives and overarching goals to achieve the Corporate Aims. The Key Objectives are in turn, delivered via an annual Key Action Plan.

2. The adoption in March 2015 of the Corporate Plan, Aims and Key Objectives for the five years until 2019/20 brought with it a new approach to the delivery of the Key Objectives. Formerly the Key Objectives had a 12 month lifespan and were agreed annually alongside the budget setting process in February. The move to a five year lifespan for these objectives and an annual action plan to deliver them was not only more appropriate for the Council's highest level strategic objectives, but enabled a longer term view of the Council's priorities and earlier planning of activities to deliver them. The development of annual action plans was therefore brought forward in the fiscal year to better inform the budget setting process and to allow for earlier member involvement.

3. The Key Action Plans are populated with actions or deliverables designed to secure progress against each of the Key Objectives during that year. During the subsequent years in the lifetime of the Key Objectives, annual action plans will be developed which build on progress achieved during preceding years. The Key Action Plans inform the development of detailed annual directorate business plans and other service plans setting out service provision and informing the prioritization of resources. The annual action plans are working documents and are therefore subject to change and development to ensure that the actions remain relevant and appropriate, and to identify opportunities to secure further progress or improvement.

4. A draft Key Action Plan for 2016/17 has been developed, populated with actions or deliverables which build on work identified in the 2015/16 action plan, to take forward the Key Objectives during their second year. The draft action plan was subsequently considered by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2015, and comments and suggestions made have been incorporated. The Action Plan was further

considered by Management Board on 9 September 2015 and is attached at Appendix 1.

5. The Cabinet considered the proposed Corporate Plan Key Action Plan for 2016/17 at its meeting on 8 October and agreed to recommend its adoption to the Council. Progress against Key Action Plans is published on the Council's website.

6. We recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.

**Corporate Plan: 2015-2020**  
**KEY ACTION PLAN 2016-2017**

Action	Lead Directorate	Responsibility for Achievement	Target Date	Progress Report (as at end of Quarter X)
<p>Aim (i) To ensure that the Council has appropriate resources, on an ongoing basis, to fund its statutory duties and appropriate discretionary services whilst continuing to keep Council Tax low.</p>				
<p>(a) To ensure that the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy plans to meet the Council's financial and service requirements for any forward five year period, whilst minimising any reliance on Government funding.</p>				
<p>1) Deliver the savings identified for 2016/17 in the business cases approved by Members</p>	<p>Management Board</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>March 2017</p>	
<p>2) Progress preparations for delivering savings for 2017/18 within the MTFS</p>	<p>Management Board</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>March 2017</p>	
<p>3) Develop additional business cases, including the use of the invest to save fund, to address the need for net savings in subsequent years.</p>	<p>Management Board</p>	<p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>Sept. 2016</p>	
<p>4) Continue with the presentation of the Financial Issues Paper and MTFS update in July.</p>	<p>Resources</p>	<p>Director Resources</p>	<p>July 2016</p>	
<p>5) Review the future options for the HRA Financial Plan, in the light of the Government's requirement to reduce Council rents by 1% p/a for 4 years and to sell "high value" empty Council properties, following consultation with the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation and the Housing Select Committee.</p>	<p>Communities</p>	<p>Director Communities</p>	<p>Nov. 2016</p>	
<p>(b) To continue to review and develop the Council's own assets and landholdings for appropriate uses, in order to maximise revenue streams and capital receipts, and to deliver the following key projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The Epping Forest Shopping Park, Loughton</li> <li>■ St John's Redevelopment Scheme, Epping</li> <li>■ Council Housebuilding Programme</li> <li>■ North Weald Airfield</li> </ul>				

**Corporate Plan: 2015-2020**  
**KEY ACTION PLAN 2016-2017**

1) Complete Phase 1 of the Council Housebuilding Programme to provide 23 new affordable rented homes in Waltham Abbey.	Communities	Assistant Director. (Housing Property & Development)	July 2016	
2) Commence Phase 2 of the Council Housebuilding Programme to provide [ 51 ] new affordable rented homes at Burton Road, Loughton.	Communities	Assistant Director. (Housing Property & Development)	April 2016	
3) Relocate the Housing Repairs Service from the Epping Depot, together with the Housing Assets Team, to alternative suitable alternative premises in order to vacate the current Depot site to enable the planned St John's Redevelopment Scheme and to free-up office accommodation at the Civic Offices, Epping.	Communities	Assistant Director (Housing Property & Development)	April 2016	
4) To facilitate, by the purchase of Essex County Council's interest and subsequent disposal to the preferred developer, the St John's Road redevelopment scheme. This action to be taken to deliver the community and economic development benefits sought in the adopted Development Brief.	Neighbourhoods	Director Neighbourhoods	April 2016	
5) Work in partnership with Moat Housing to commence the proposed development of the Council garage site at Vere Road, Loughton to provide 15 affordable rented homes, together with up to 14 additional parking spaces to facilitate the development of the adjacent site of the former Sir Winston Churchill PH.	Communities	Director Communities	June 2016	
6) Following the response to the "Expressions of Interest" for North Weald Airfield marketing exercise, evaluate the submissions received in order for the Asset Management Cabinet Committee to recommend any preferred proposal to the Cabinet.	Neighbourhoods	Director of Neighbourhoods	Nov. 2016	

**Corporate Plan: 2015-2020**  
**KEY ACTION PLAN 2016-2017**

7) To progress the Epping Forest Shopping Park on a sole owner operator basis with the aim of achieving an opening for the Christmas period 2016.	Neighbourhoods	Director Neighbourhoods	October 2016	
8) Commence Phase 3 of the Council Housebuilding Programme to provide up to 35 new affordable rented homes in Epping, Coopersale, North Weald and Ongar.	Communities	Assistant Director. (Housing Property & Development)	June 2016	
9) Secure planning Phase 4 of the Council Housebuilding Programme to provide up to 50 new affordable rented homes at various small sites in Loughton and Buckhurst Hill.	Communities	Assistant Director (Housing Property & Development)	May 2016	
10) Subject to the receipt of planning permission, secure the provision of the affordable rented homes at the Council-owned site at Pyrles Lane, Loughton as part of any sale of the site to a private developer	Communities	Director Communities	June 2016	
(c) To explore appropriate opportunities to make savings and increase income through the shared delivery of services with other organisations, where such arrangements would provide improved and/or more cost effective outcomes.				
1) Ensure liaison with the Communities Directorate on Housing related / led projects is constructive and productive to retain Building Control project work in-house	Governance	Assistant Director (Development Management)	April 2016	
2) Include a clause as standard in new commercial leases, to require the use of the Building Control service.	Neighbourhoods	Assistant Director (Forward Planning & Economic Development)	April 2016	
3) Estates colleagues to include use of the in-house building control service in their standard negotiations.	Governance	Assistant Director (Forward Planning & Economic Development)	April 2016	

**Corporate Plan: 2015-2020**  
**KEY ACTION PLAN 2016-2017**

4) Include as standard in the specification for new contracts to upgrade Council facilities, a requirement to use the in-house Building Control service. For example: The Leisure Contract requires upgrades to sports centres.	Neighbourhoods / Resources	Assistant Directors (Forward Planning & Economic Development) / (ICT & Facilities Management)	April 2016	
5) For major development projects in which the Council has a sole or significant interest, ensure building regulations work is carried out by the in-house team. For example the Langston Road Shopping Park, and the St Johns Road redevelopment scheme.	Neighbourhoods	Director Neighbourhoods	April 2016	
6) Identify and undertake measures to raise the profile and successes of the in-house building control team.	Governance	Assistant Director (Development Management)	April 2016	
7) Participate in the renegotiations of the contracts for the provision of on-line library services.	Governance	Assistant Director (Legal Services)	March 2017	
8) Explore the possible expansion of the insurance service provided to Uttlesford. District Council.	Resources	Assistant Director (Accountancy)	Sept. 2016	
9) Implement an integrated HR/Payroll IT system jointly with at least one other authority.	Resources	Assistant Director (HR)	March 2017	
10) Evaluate possibility of shared service as part of Debt Working Party.	Resources	Assistant Director (Revenues)	Sept. 2016	
11) Provide HR/payroll services to at least one other authority.	Resources	Assistant Director (HR)	March 2017	



**Corporate Plan: 2015-2020**  
**KEY ACTION PLAN 2016-2017**

12) Evaluate possibility of shared service as part of Scanning Working Party.	Resources	Assistant Director (Benefits)	Sept. 2016		
13) Identify additional Council services that may benefit from a shared provision with other organisations (either provided by the Council or others), to reduce costs, create income and/or improve service delivery.	Management Board	Chief Executive	March 2017		
Aim (ii) To ensure that the Council has a sound and approved Local Plan and commences its subsequent delivery					
(a) To produce a sound Local Plan, following consultation with local residents and working with neighbouring councils, that meets the needs of our communities whilst minimising the impact on the District's Green Belt.					
<b>Page 49</b>	Update the Council's Housing Strategy, following production of the Preferred Options for the Local Plan.	Communities	Director Communities	Dec. 2016	
	2) To undertake Phase II of a comprehensive Green Belt Review as a key component of the local Plan evidence base.	Neighbourhoods	Assistant Director (Forward Planning & Economic Development)	January 2016	
	3) Agree a Draft Local Plan and undertake the appropriate sustainability appraisal.	Neighbourhoods	Assistant Director (Forward Planning & Economic Development)	May 2016	
	4) Undertake all necessary consultations and negotiations under the Duty to Co-operate with Neighbouring Authorities to ensure that the Local plan meets this test at Examination.	Neighbourhoods	Assistant Director (Forward Planning & Economic Development)	On-going	
	5) Submit the Final Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination.	Neighbourhoods	Assistant Director (Forward Planning & Economic Development)	Oct 2017	

**Corporate Plan: 2015-2020**  
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(b) To increase opportunities for sustainable economic development within the District, in order to increase local employment opportunities for residents.				
1) Continue with the Council's apprenticeship scheme for the district's young people, providing sustainable employment opportunities.	Resources	Assistant Director (HR)	Sept. 2016	
(c) To deliver the Council's new Leisure and Cultural Strategy, in order to maximise participation and value for money in the provision of leisure and cultural services to local residents and visitors.				
1) In partnership with Essex County Council, NHS England and Waltham Abbey Town Council, undertake a Master-planning exercise for the provision of a proposed new swimming pool, new health centre and an independent living scheme for older people at Hillhouse, Waltham Abbey.	Neighbourhoods / Communities.	Director Neighbourhoods / Director Communities.	May 2016	
2) Undertake a public consultation exercise on the Draft Masterplan for Hillhouse, Waltham Abbey.	Neighbourhoods / Communities	Director Neighbourhoods / Director Communities	Sept. 2016	
3) In accordance with the recommendations of the Leisure and Culture Strategy to jointly pursue the provision of a new Secondary School on the Ongar Campus site, with a view to entering a Dual-Use Agreement for the Leisure Centre.	Neighbourhoods	Assistant Director. Neighbourhoods	April 2016	
4) As part of the competitive dialogue procurement process for the new Leisure Management Contract, take forward the provision of a replacement swimming pool in Waltham Abbey.	Neighbourhoods	Assistant Director. Neighbourhoods	Sept. 2016	

**Corporate Plan: 2015-2020**  
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5) Subject to the receipt of funding from Arts Council England, investigate the possible establishment of a Museum Heritage and Culture Development Trust, in order to lever in more external funding than is currently possible.	Communities	Assistant Director (Community Services & Safety)	June 2016	
Aim (iii) To ensure that the Council adopts a modern approach to the delivery of its services and that they are efficient, effective and fit for purpose.				
(a) To have efficient arrangements in place to enable customers to easily contact the Council, in a variety of convenient ways, and in most cases have their service needs met effectively on first contact.				
1) Review the success of the increased opening hours and the increased delivery of Council services at the Council Office at the Limes Centre Chigwell after 12 months' operation, with an interim review after 6 months.	Communities	Assistant Director (Community Services & Safety)	January 2017	
2) Implement and/or produce an Implementation Plan for, the agreed proposals for improving customer contact.	Management Board	Assistant Director (Governance & Performance Improvement)	March 2017	
(b) To utilise modern technology to enable Council officers and members to work more effectively, in order to provide enhanced services to customers and make Council services and information easier to access.				
1) Achieve significant progress in the scanning of paper and microfiche Development Control files to increase both information available on iPlan and enable flexible working.	Governance	Assistant Director Development Management	March 2017	
2) Scan Building Control paper and microfiche files to promote flexible working and reduce storage costs.	Governance	Assistant Director Development Management	March 2017	

**Corporate Plan: 2015-2020**  
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3) Undertake document scanning projects in Legal Services and Development management to support the Transformation Programme.	Governance	Assistant Directors (Legal Services & Development Management)	March 2017	
4) Continue the implementation of the Council's ICT Strategy, with the completion of the following key projects: (a) Roll out and development of Information@Work; and (b) Mobile and flexible working.	Resources	Assistant Director (ICT & Facilities Management)	March 2017	
5) Free up computer suite 1 for re-use as office accommodation.	Resources	Assistant Director (ICT & Facilities Management)	March 2017	
(c) To ensure that the Council understands the effects of an ageing population within the District and works with other agencies to make appropriate plans and arrangements to respond to these effects.				
<span style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); position: absolute; left: -40px; top: 50%; font-weight: bold;">Page 52</span> Complete the multi-service study to identify and better understand the demographics of an ageing population in the District and the effects on the Council.	Communities	Assistant Director (Community Services & Safety)	June 2016	
2) Commence the implementation of the action plan formulated as a result of the multi-service study to mitigate the effects on the Council of an ageing population in the District.	Communities	Assistant Director (Community Services & Safety)	Sept. 2016	
3) Review the delivery of housing support at the Council's sheltered housing schemes in the District.	Communities	Assistant Director (Housing Operations)	June 2016	
4) Review the Council's sheltered housing stock assets, with a view to rationalisation and modernisation through a strategic approach.	Communities	Director Communities	June 2016	

## ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 3 November 2015

**Subject:** Creation of New Post - Water & Pollution Control Officer

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor W Breare-Hall

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### **Recommending:**

**(1) That a supplementary estimate for the Continuing Services Budget in the sum of £10,000 for 2015/16 be approved.**

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1. The Private Water Supplies Regulations 2009 (PWSR) were implemented to meet the UK's obligations under the revised European Union (EU) Directive 98/83EC. The regulations placed a number of additional statutory requirements on Local Authorities and consequently increased the burden on both staff and financial resources. At the time the Regulations were introduced, it was decided by the Council to try and implement the new provisions within existing staff and budgetary resources. Despite the commitment and concerted effort made to try and get the work done, this has not been possible.

2. The Council has been identified by the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) for failing to meet its statutory obligations. The DWI has said that, in the event of the EU fining the UK for failing to meet the relevant directive, it may look to the Local Authorities who have not met their obligations under the PWSR to cover the cost of any infraction. Officers have met with the DWI in order to discuss the challenges that the Council faces with regards to the nature of the PWS within the District, and to demonstrate its commitment to meet its obligations. If the Council is to meet both its statutory duties with regard to private water supplies and other pollution related work and reduce the potential risk of both reputational and financial penalties, an additional member of staff is required.

3. This issue was considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 8 October, and, following the consideration of a number of different options, it was agreed to add a new post of Water and Pollution Control Officer to the Council's establishment. To fund the new post in the long term, a growth bid for the Continuing Services Budget in the sum of £36,650 for 2016/17 was agreed. However, it is important to recruit to this new post as soon as possible, so a supplementary estimate in the sum of £10,000 for the Continuing Services Budget is being sought to fund the post from January 2016 to 1 April 2016.

4. We recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.

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## SCRUTINY



## ***Report to Council***

***Date of meeting: 3 November 2015***

**Subject: Overview and Scrutiny Report to Council**

**Contact for further information: Councillor R Morgan  
(Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee)**

**Democratic Services Officer: M Jenkins**

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report for October 2015 be noted.

### **Report:**

1. At our meeting on Tuesday 20 October 2015, we received a presentation from Brian Page, Deputy Principal of Epping Forest College and Stuart Markham, Director of Fusion Project Management Limited, regarding the work of Epping Forest College and its financial situation. Mr Page explained that the college had expanded its courses recently and were working in close partnership with external organisations to widen the educational experiences of its students.

2. The Committee learnt that despite large scale cuts to colleges from 2014-16, Epping Forest College was financially stable and had had a surplus since 2010/11. The college was amongst the highest performing in Essex.

3. The meeting was then opened to questions from all Members present. Mr Markham was asked about the future of the college site as it was likely that some land would be sold in due course. He advised that no commitment had been made on any land sales but there would be a public consultation and any future development would be subject to planning consent.

4. The Committee endorsed the revisions to the Overview and Scrutiny sections of the Constitution as part of the overall review being undertaken by the Constitution Working Group.

5. We received a presentation from the Youth Engagement Review Task and Finish Panel, which concerned their final report and recommendations. The report was presented by Councillor A Patel and was accompanied by Youth Councillor Jaymey McIvor.

6. The Youth Engagement Review was undertaken between April and September 2015, during which they received evidence from council officers, Youth Council Members and from Essex County Council. The Panel had been particularly interested in the targeted work undertaken with young people who had been identified by local schools as having a range of problems. However, we were disappointed to learn that the County Council did not deliver any youth work in the district due to recent budget cuts. We were advised that there was a sum of £16,500 per annum for youth initiatives in the district, provided by the County Council.

7. The Panel had recommended to us that the current operational budget for the Youth Council be maintained at £12,000 per annum and that the Cabinet be asked for a CSB Growth of £8,000 per annum for an enabling fund to support the Youth Council's access to projects. In addition it was recommended that this Council pursue devolution of the budget and responsibilities for Youth Provision from the county to the District Council. A further bid will be made to the Cabinet for another CSB Growth of £25,000 per annum for targeted work by Community Services and Safety. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee support these recommendations.

8. The Committee reviewed the quarterly progress made on the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2015/16 and we support making training presentations on Overview and Scrutiny available in advance of the meetings. We also support ensuring that Committee recommendations are followed up to ensure that action is taken and will be considering regular progress reporting.

9. We noted progress on the scrutiny work programmes. The Chairman of the Neighbourhoods and Communities Select Committee advised that their meeting of 17 December 2015 would be devoted entirely to the Waste Management Contract. The meeting would be held in the Council Chamber and would also be webcast.

10. We discussed a PICK Form submitted by Councillor S Neville which concerned supporting the principle of moving to a default 20mph limit in the district which was felt would reduce accidents and improve public health generally. We felt that this request should ideally be referred to the Neighbourhoods and Communities Select Committee with an invite extended to an officer of Essex County Council to attend. However we do acknowledge that the District Council's remit in this area is quite limited.

11. Finally, we reviewed the Cabinet's Forward Plan but had no specific items that we wanted to consider further.