

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee **Date:** Tuesday, 20 October 2015

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.30 - 9.34 pm

Members Present: Councillors R Morgan (Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee) (Chairman) K Angold-Stephens (Vice-Chairman) N Avey, K Chana, L Girling, S Kane, A Mitchell, G Mohindra, S Neville, B Rolfe, M Sartin, G Shiell, B Surtees and D Wixley

Other Councillors: Councillors R Bassett, W Breare-Hall, A Grigg, H Kane, A Lion, M McEwen, A Patel, D Stallan, S Stavrou, G Waller, C Whitbread, J H Whitehouse and J McIvor (Youth Councillor)

Apologies: Councillors T Church, D Dorrell, P Keska and S Murray

Officers Present: D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), J Chandler (Assistant Director (Community Services)), S G Hill (Assistant Director (Governance & Performance Management)), S Tautz (Democratic Services Manager), T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer), M Jenkins (Democratic Services Officer), J Leither (Democratic Services Officer) and A Rose (Marketing & Digital Content Officer)

By Invitation: B Page (Deputy Principal of Epping Forest College) and S Markham (Director of (Fusion Project Management Limited))

23. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

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

24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

In addition to the apologies noted above, the Committee were advised that from the Executive side of the Council, apologies had been received from Councillor J Philip.

25. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was reported that Councillor K Chana was substituting for Councillor T Church.

26. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the last Committee meeting, held on 21 July 2015 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(a) Councillor S Neville declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item of the agenda by virtue of being a member of “20’s Plenty for Us.” He advised that his interest was not prejudicial and he would remain in the meeting for the duration of the item and consideration thereon:

- Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2015/16 – Six-Month Review

(b) Councillor W Breare-Hall declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item of the agenda by virtue of having been a governor at Epping Forest College. He advised that his interest was not prejudicial and he would remain in the meeting for the duration of the item and consideration thereon:

- Epping Forest College - Presentation

28. EPPING FOREST COLLEGE - PRESENTATION

The Committee received a presentation from Mr B Page, Deputy Principal of Epping Forest College and Mr S Markham, Director of Fusion Project Management Limited regarding the work of Epping Forest College.

Mr B Page advised 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. Currently, there were 1,783 students aged 16 to 18, 56 adult students, 253 on full cost courses and 188 apprentices.

Mr S Markham advised of future plans in regard to the college site. A proposal was being made for the creation of a Sports and Health and Well being facility, which would be built through a self funded scheme. The college required release of surplus assets to invest. The facility would have full community access.

The college had achieved financial stability, operating surpluses since 2010/11, current turnover was £14 million. A total capital investment of £3.9 million had been made since 2011 in enhancement of facilities for students. During the period 2014/16 colleges had experienced a cut in funding of 24%.

The Committee were advised of the Government national programme for area-based reviews of Post 16 education. Each review would take into account factors including local economic objectives and labour market needs, they would be led by a steering group of local stakeholders including chairs of governors, local authorities and commissioners from colleges. Reviews had started in September 2015 and would be completed in March 2017.

The Chairman thanked Mr R Page and Mr S Markham for their presentation and opened the meeting to members for questions.

(a) Councillor K Angold-Stephens asked about the sale of the “middle site” within the college area, he added that this was sensitive to local opinion. It was understood that Essex County Council had indicated that they would like to build a primary school on this site.

Mr B Page replied that Essex County Council were known to be interested in this site, negotiations would need to take place with them before anything occurred. The college had been in favour of providing housing on the site to fund a health and wellbeing centre on the Lucton’s Field this site which would be open to the public.

(b) Councillor D Wixley asked about the scale of assets, how long was it expected to take to finish?

Mr S Markham replied that sales would ensure self-financing, but each sale was a project which could take from 12-20 months to complete.

(c) Councillor L Girling asked if there were any documents available for public scrutiny in regard to forthcoming development plans.

Mr B Page replied no document was ready for publication yet, as it was commercially sensitive. The college was willing to work with the local community, there would be a public meeting at the college, he added that any proposed development would need planning consent.

(d) Councillor L Girling asked about the security of the college site as there were derelict buildings which were the scene of anti social behaviour.

Mr B Page advised that they had security on the college site at night, particularly the "middle site" which was vulnerable. He said that he wasn't aware of a security issue at the college. They did not have the budget for maintaining the derelict buildings on site.

(e) Councillor M Sartin asked how far were the college courses connected to obtaining a job?

Mr B Page replied that the college was in communication with business and industry, they were providing courses appropriate for employment needs.

(f) Councillor B Surtees asked about the educational outcomes for college students.

Mr B Page replied that the college success rate in 2013/14 for exam results was 88%.

(g) Councillor S Kane asked about the chances of full employment for college students.

Mr B Page replied that he did not know how many students left the college for permanent work, however they did have a good apprenticeship scheme and were the tenth in the country for success rate.

The Chairman thanked Mr B Page and Mr S Markham for their presentation and answering the Member questions.

29. CONSTITUTION REVIEW - OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

The Committee received a report from the Democratic Services Manager regarding the Overview and Scrutiny Article and related rules from the Constitution which were being reviewed by the Constitution Working Group.

The approach of the review were for rules which applied generally to be moved into the main rules section and Article 6 (Overview and Scrutiny) would be re-drafted to address instances of relevant procedures being spread across the Constitution.

The Democratic Services Manager reported that the Working Group were seeking the views of the Committee on the proposed changes to Article 6 and the Procedure Rules.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed revisions to Article 6 (Overview and Scrutiny) of the Constitution and revised Procedure Rules for Overview and Scrutiny be agreed.

30. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT REVIEW TASK AND FINISH PANEL - FINAL REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee received the final report from the Youth Engagement Review Task and Finish Panel presented by Councillor A Patel, member of the Panel in the absence of the Chairman, Councillor S Murray and Youth Councillor J McIvor.

The Youth Engagement Review was undertaken between April and September 2015 during which they received evidence from Council officers, Youth Council Members and Essex County Council. Although the panel had been particularly interested in the targeted work undertaken with young people, they were disappointed that the County Council did not deliver any youth work within Epping Forest district because of budget cuts. There was a sum of £16,500 per annum for youth initiatives in the district, provided by the County Council.

The Panel recommended that the current operational budget for the Youth Council should be maintained at £12,000 per annum and that the Cabinet be asked for a CSB Growth Bid of £8,000 per annum for an enabling fund to support the Youth Council's access to projects. In addition, the panel requested that the District Council pursue devolvement of the budget and responsibilities for Youth Provision from the County Council to the District Council. A further bid would be made to the Cabinet for another CSB Growth of £25,000 per annum for targeted work by Community Services and Safety of the County Council.

The Leader informed the Committee that he had attended and been impressed by the recent Youth Conference, hosted at the Civic Offices. He felt that better engagement was needed, there was left over monies from the County Council, however taking on more responsibility posed challenges for the District Council. He would like to receive feedback from the Youth Council.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be asked to make the following recommendations to the Cabinet:

- (1) That the Council retains and continues to support and develop the Youth Council in terms of wider youth engagement;
- (2) That the Youth Council be afforded the opportunity to present a report/update twice a year to all Members of Council through a suitable meeting;
- (3) That the Youth Council acts as a consultee for stakeholder presentations at Overview and Scrutiny Committees;
- (4) That the current operational budget for the Youth Council be maintained

at £12,000 per annum;

- (5) That a bid be made for Continuing Services Budget (CSB) Growth of £8,000 per annum for an enabling fund, that the Youth Council can access for projects, to be agreed by the Neighbourhoods & Communities Select Committee;
- (6) That the Council pursues the devolvement of the budget and responsibilities for Youth Provision from Essex County Council to the District Council; and,
- (7) That a bid be made for Continuing Services Budget (CSB) Growth of £25,000 per annum, for targeted work by Community Services and Safety and not at the detriment of the current service.

31. CORPORATE PLAN KEY ACTION PLAN 2015/16 - QUARTERLY PROGRESS

The Committee received a report from the Deputy Chief Executive regarding the Quarter 1 Performance of the Key Objectives Key Action Plan 2015/16.

The Corporate Plan was the Council's key strategic planning document, setting out its priorities over the five year period from 2015/16 to 2019/20. The priorities, or Corporate Aims, were supported by Key Objectives which provided a clear statement of the Council's overall intentions for these five years.

The Key Objectives were delivered by an annual action plan, with each year building upon the progress against the achievement of the Key Objectives for previous years. The annual action plans contained a range of actions designed to achieve specific outcomes and were working documents subject to change and development to ensure the actions remained relevant.

The Corporate Plan Key Action Plan for 2015/16 was agreed by the Cabinet in march 2015. Progress in relation to individual actions and deliverables was reviewed by the Cabinet and this committee on a quarterly and outturn basis.

RESOLVED:

That the progress achieved at the end of Quarter 1 against the Key Objectives Key Action Plan for 2015/16 be noted.

32. MEMBER TRAINING - OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

The Committee received a report from the Democratic Services Manager regarding Overview and Scrutiny processes.

At a recent training session "An Introduction to Overview and Scrutiny" held in June 2015, Members expressed their views on a number of issues.

- (a) Presentations made to the Committee should be made available in advance of the relevant meeting, so they could have early sight of presentation material in aiding the process of scrutiny and questioning. This would be implemented provided that it was possible to obtain presentations from external organisations attending meetings. It was intended that presentations would be published as a supplementary item on the Committee Management system, but not be printed for hard copy distribution.

(b) Time should be made available to follow up matters from the presentation, this was considered a reasonable approach and would be implemented appropriately in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee.

(c) Members felt that improvements could also be made in ensuring that the recommendations of the Committee on specific matters were followed up to ensure that action was always taken where necessary.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed response regarding Member Training in respect of Overview and Scrutiny be noted.

33. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16 - SIX-MONTH REVIEW

(a) Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee considered their work programme and noted current progress, no further comments were made.

(b) Select Committees

(i) Housing Select Committee

The last meeting of the Select Committee scheduled for 8 September was cancelled due to a lack of business.

(ii) Governance Select Committee

In the absence of the Chairman, the Democratic Services Manager reported that at the last select committee meeting, members had discussed Section 106 Agreements from the 2014/15 period. However they felt that a complete overview of progress made on all agreements in preparation was required to allow for greater scrutiny. In addition it was advised that a thorough understanding of how and where monies from agreements were intended to be spent and associated timescales for collection of monies was also needed.

The Select Committee recommended that this function should be referred to the District Development Management Committee (DDMC) which, it was felt, was better placed for dealing with this.

The Chairman of the Resources Select Committee suggested that S106 reports would fit better within their remit rather than DDMC. Therefore the Committee agreed that the Governance Select Committee should be asked to refer this report onto the Resources Select Committee for responsibility.

The Democratic Services Manager concluded the Governance Select Committee report by advising that within the Key Performance Indicators 2015/16, major planning applications had achieved target performance. Finally, the select committee received a report about Public Sector Equality Duty, congratulating the Senior Performance Improvement Manager on her work.

(iii) Neighbourhood and Community Services Select Committee

The Select Committee Chairman, Councillor M Sartin, advised that at their last meeting they received an interesting presentation on the Community Safety Partnership and also one on the work of Crucial Crew. They also received an update on the progress of the Local Plan. The Chairman advised that there would be a special meeting of the select committee on 17 December 2015 to review the Waste Contract. The meeting would be held in the Council Chamber and be webcast.

(iv) Resources Select Committee

The Select Committee Chairman, Councillor G Mohindra, informed Members that they were looking for new pieces of work for their current programme.

(v) Grant Aid Task and Finish Panel

The Committee noted progress made by this Panel.

(vi) Youth Engagement Task and Finish Panel

The final report and recommendations from this Panel was supported by the Committee

(c) Reserve Programme

(i) PICK Form submitted by Councillor S Neville

The PICK Form supported the principle of moving to a default 20mph speed limit in the district, which, it was felt, would reduce the number of motoring accidents and generally improve public health. Councillor S Neville advised that there was a great deal of local support for a significant speed reduction within the district.

The Committee felt that this scrutiny request should be referred to the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Select Committee with an invitation to the Highways Authority to attend.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the monitoring of S106 Agreements be referred back to the Governance Select Committee with a view to onward process by the Resources Select Committee; and
- (2) That the scrutiny request submitted by Councillor S Neville for a speed reduction across the district be referred to the Neighbourhoods and Communities Select Committee.

34. CABINET FORWARD PLAN 2015/16 - REVIEW

The Committee noted the Cabinet's Forward Plan for June 2015. They had no specific items they wished to consider.

CHAIRMAN