



Overview and Scrutiny Committee Tuesday, 19th April, 2016

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**, which will be held at:

**Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping
on Tuesday, 19th April, 2016
at 7.30 pm .**

**Glen Chipp
Chief Executive**

**Democratic Services
Officer:**

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Members:

Councillors R Morgan (Chairman), K Angold-Stephens (Vice-Chairman), N Avey, T Church, D Dorrell, L Girling, S Kane, P Keska, A Mitchell, G Mohindra, S Murray, S Neville, B Rolfe, M Sartin, G Shiell, B Surtees and D Wixley

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS TO ATTEND

WEBCASTING 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.

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If you have any queries regarding this, please contact the Public Relations Manager on 01992 564039.

1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

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

2. The Chairman will read the following announcement:

“This meeting will be webcast live to the Internet and will be archived for later viewing. Copies of recordings may be made available on request.

By entering the chamber’s lower seating area you consent to becoming part of the webcast.

If you wish to avoid being filmed you should move to the public gallery or speak to the webcasting officer”

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

(Director of Governance). To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

4. MINUTES (Pages 7 - 28)

Decisions required:

To confirm the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 23 February 2016.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Director of Governance) To declare interests in any items on the agenda.

In considering whether to declare a personal or a prejudicial interest under the Code of Conduct, Overview and Scrutiny Committee members are asked pay particular attention to paragraph 11 of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements.

This requires the declaration of a personal and prejudicial interest in any matter before an Overview and Scrutiny Committee which relates to a decision of or action by another Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council, a Joint Committee, or Joint Sub-Committee in which the Council is involved and of which the Councillor is also a member.

Paragraph 11 does not refer to Cabinet decisions or attendance at an overview and scrutiny meeting purely for the purpose of answering questions or providing information on such a matter.

6. EPPING FOREST YOUTH COUNCIL PRESENTATION

In 2012/13 this Committee had requested an annual presentation from the Youth Council giving an update on the developing Youth Council programme.

Members of the Youth Council will attend the meeting to outline:

- (i) achievements from the last year; and
- (ii) the plans for the Youth Council for the coming year.

7. ECC CHILDREN SERVICES PRESENTATION

Following on from the last successful talk on Children Services given in November 2014, and this committee's desire to have an update, officers have arranged a follow up presentation.

To this end we have a representative from the County, Chris Martin, the Integrated Commissioning Director (West), at Essex County Council coming to speak to the Committee. He will be talking about:

- The background and an update on the Children's Centres in Essex Consultation taking place now; and
- The Current position of Essex Children Services –
 - How are they coping with staff shortages;
 - Loss of budget
 - Involvement of outside and voluntary services in the provision of children services.

8. FINAL REPORT OF THE GRANT AID TASK AND FINISH PANEL (Pages 29 - 46)

To receive the final report of the Grant Aid Task and Finish Panel.

9. EQUALITY OBJECTIVES 2016 - 2020 (Pages 47 - 60)

(Director of Governance) To consider the attached report.

10. SELECT COMMITTEE FRAMEWORK - REVIEW (Pages 61 - 66)

(Director of Governance) to consider the attached report.

11. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT (Pages 67 - 122)

RECOMMENDATION:

To consider and comment on the draft O&S Annual Report for 2015/16.

The Committee is asked to consider whether they are happy with the draft report (attached) and to make amendments where necessary. Any comments should be submitted to Democratic Services by Friday, 13 May 2016 for inclusion in the final version.

A copy of each Select Committee section of the report has been sent to the relevant Chairman and lead officer of that committee for comments.

This draft is still incomplete as not all Panels have held their last meeting for the year

at the time this agenda went to print.

The final report will be submitted to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 7 June 2016 for endorsement and then on to the nearest Full Council meeting.

12. WORK PROGRAMME MONITORING (Pages 123 - 140)

(a) To consider the updated work programme

The current Overview and Scrutiny work programme is attached for information.

(b) Reserve Programme

A reserve list of scrutiny topics is required to ensure that the work flow of OSC is continuous.

OSC will 'pull out' items from the list and allocate them accordingly once space becomes available in the work programme following the completion of existing reviews.

Members can put forward any further suggestions for inclusion in the reserve list either during the meeting or at a later date.

Existing review items will be dealt with first, then time will be allocated to the items contained in the reserve work plan.

13. KEY DECISION LIST - REVIEW (Pages 141 - 156)

To review the Key Decision List (Cabinet Forward Plan) on a meeting by meeting basis.

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):

Agenda Item No	Subject	Exempt Paragraph Number	Information
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.

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EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES

Committee:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date:	Tuesday, 23 February 2016
Place:	Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping	Time:	7.30 - 9.40 pm
Members Present:	Councillors R Morgan (Chairman) A Boyce, K Chana, L Hughes, S Kane, J Lea, S Neville, B Rolfe, M Sartin, G Shiell, B Surtees and D Wixley		
Other Councillors:	Councillors W Breare-Hall, A Grigg, H Kane, A Lion, J Philip, D Stallan, G Waller and C Whitbread		
Apologies:	Councillors K Angold-Stephens, N Avey, T Church, D Dorrell, L Girling, P Keska, A Mitchell, G Mohindra and S Murray		
Officers Present:	D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), J Chandler (Assistant Director (Community Services)), I White (Projects Officer - Planning Policy), T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer), S Tautz (Democratic Services Manager), A Hendry (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and M Jenkins (Democratic Services Officer)		
By Invitation:	F Kwaku (Barts Health NHS), Dr H Noble (Barts Health NHS) and F Smith (Barts Health NHS)		

45. 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.

46. APPOINTMENT OF A VICE CHAIRMAN

In the absence of the vice-chairman, Councillor M Sartin was appointed vice-chairman for the duration of the meeting.

47. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was reported that Councillor T Boyce was substituting for Councillor G Mohindra; Councillor K Chana was substituting for Councillor N Avey; Councillor L Hughes was substituting for Councillor P Keska; and Councillor J Lea was substituting for Councillor T Church.

48. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the last Committee meeting, held on 05 January 2016 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

50. CHANGE IN ORDER OF THE AGENDA

With the agreement of the Committee the order of the agenda was altered to take items 8 (Basildon Borough Local Plan Consultation) and 7 (Key Objectives, Key Action Plan 2015/16) before the presentation from Barts Health NHS.

51. BASILDON BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

The Forward Planning Projects Officer, Ian White, introduced the report on the Basildon Borough Council local plan consultation. The current Development Plan for Basildon Borough consists of the Saved Policies from the Basildon District Plan (1998) and the Essex and Southend-on-Sea Waste Local Plan (2001), and the recently adopted Essex Minerals Local Plan (2014). The new Local Plan will replace the 1998 policies, setting out an overall development framework for the period up to 2034.

The Committee noted that the key issue in the consultation for Epping Forest District Council was provision of new accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers. Basildon's 2013 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) identified a need for an additional 104 pitches to meet the needs of the authorised, temporary and tolerated sites, and a further 136 pitches to meet the needs of those members of the travelling community who were established on the unauthorised Dale Farm site.

The Borough Council was of the view that suitable and deliverable sites with the capacity for between 98 and 109 pitches could be identified, meeting the needs of the authorised, temporary and tolerated sites. The consultation document concluded that the Borough could not make provision for the need arising from the former Dale Farm community, and that this need will therefore need to be met through the Duty to Co-operate.

In response to an earlier consultation (Basildon Borough Local Plan Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options Report) this Council sent an officer level response in March 2014 (agreed with the Planning Policy Portfolio Holder) which included the following comments: *"I am sure that every other Essex authority would accept that Basildon has a particularly tricky and difficult problem with making adequate provision for future traveller needs. However a joint GTAA is currently being prepared for the rest of Essex and, while it is far from complete, the message that is coming through is that this district is likely to need to more than double the already quite high provision in the period up to 2033 – and this is a district which is currently 92% Green Belt. There are also hints that revised guidance is to be published shortly for consultation, and that this is likely to tighten Green Belt constraints as far as traveller pitch provision is concerned. From this perspective it would appear to be virtually impossible for this Council to make any meaningful contribution to the predicted shortfall in Basildon provision."*

The Essex GTAA was published in July 2014 and adopted as part of the Local Plan Evidence Base at the Cabinet meeting on 8th September 2014. This concluded that Epping Forest District needed to provide 112 new pitches by 2033. As of December 2015 there were 123 authorised permanent pitches in the district.

The new government guidance, Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (August 2015) also changed the definition, for planning purposes, of travellers, excluding those who

no longer follow a nomadic way of life. This will necessitate an update to the GTAA, and was likely to lead to a small reduction in the new pitch target. So while the figure was not quite as high as was anticipated in the March 2014 response to Basildon, there can be no doubt that this district still has a very challenging target to meet its own needs.

RESOLVED:

That the following comments be made to Basildon Borough Council in response to the current consultation on its emerging Local Plan:

- (a) that the commitment to on-going co-operation with other Essex local authorities on cross-border and other strategic planning issues, including provision for the travelling community, be noted;
- (b) that the approach proposed for future provision for the former Dale Farm travelling community, in the light of the revised guidance "Planning Policy for Traveller Sites" issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government in August 2015, be noted; and
- (c) that, whilst being sympathetic to the position of Basildon Borough Council, it was extremely unlikely that Epping Forest District Council would be able to make any provision for the former Dale Farm community as it is probable that the Council will be asking other local authorities to make provision for some of its identified need for the travelling community (112 additional pitches for the period up to 2033) as a result of the 92% Green Belt coverage of the district.

52. KEY OBJECTIVES KEY ACTION PLAN 2015/16 - QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE

The Committee received a report from the Deputy Chief Executive regarding the quarter 3 performance figures of the Key Objectives Key Action Plan for 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 are supported by Key Objectives, which provide a clear statement of the Council's overall intentions for these five years.

At the end of Quarter 3 it was noted that:

- a. 49 (89%) of the individual actions have been achieved or were on target to be achieved by the target date or a revised target date by the end of the year;
- b. 5 (9%) of the individual actions were behind schedule and may not be completed by the end of the year;
- c. 1 (2%) of the individual actions were currently on hold as a result of external circumstances.

Councillor S Kane asked if any of the orange or red indicators would have their targets changed. Mr Macnab said that they were reviewed regularly at the end of the year and they could change the targets for the next year.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee reviewed and noted the progress achieved at the end of Quarter 3 against the Key Objectives Key Action Plan for 2015/16.

53. BARTS HEALTH NHS TRUST - PRESENTATION

The Chairman welcomed officers from Barts Health NHS Trust who were there to update the Committee on their improvement plan from their last visit to this meeting in June 2015. In attendance was Fiona Smith, the Managing Director for Whipps Cross Hospital, with Dr Heather Noble, the Medical Director and Felicia Kwaku, the interim Director of Nursing.

Ms Smith noted that she was here to update the Committee on the measures undertaken since Barts NHS had been put into special measures and Whipps Cross Hospital had received four warning notices issued by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). They had now finalised their improvement plan called 'Safe and Compassionate', with each site having the same headings for their improvement plans. The improvement was being delivered through seven key work streams with both a corporate and site based focus and key government structures (a copy of their presentation is attached to these minutes).

The trust had put in place "safety huddles" for each hospital every day, to discuss any safety or quality issues that would affect their patients. They also reviewed performance on a ward by ward basis against key quality and safety metrics that allowed them to track the measures in place. They also held monthly learning reviews looking at learning and sharing of improvement actions.

The CQC had noted their notices on 'do not resuscitate', they had now extended their training on this, the Mental Capacity Act and on Safeguarding. They had also introduced a Trust wide campaign to reduce hospital acquired pressure ulcers. They now had 6 wards that had no pressure ulcers for 100 days. They had also trained up 40 'safety companions' on safety issues.

They had made progress in freeing up ward managers to manage ward fundamentals; nursing documentation had been streamlined; had started a 'smile and care' campaign and patient engagement workshops; put in a revised complaints process with a requirement to be much more responsive; and visitors and patients were able to identify the nurse in charge via a badge.

They had also ensured that there were appropriate care plans for those patients nearing the end of their life. Also the Margaret Centre had now been refurbished, making it a more safe and comfortable environment for patients and families.

They were also tackling the number of vacancies and engaging more with staff. They had reviewed safe staffing levels and increased funded nursing establishment by 532 posts (150 posts being at Whipps Cross). Their current fill rate was up to 82% and they wished to take it up to at least 90%. They were travelling around the county to recruit staff, especially where there were university schools; and had improved the temporary staff induction process.

They were now putting in place measures to ensure that patients got care and treatment in a timely way, using a whole hospital approach, not just changing certain departments. They were also recruiting new consultants and improving the flow through outpatients departments.

Whipps Cross Hospital now had an integrated discharge team, working with CCGs, Council Social Care and Community Health Teams.

Medical Records were much better now than they used to be, call centre calls were answered within 60 seconds, floor walkers now provide extra training and support to staff in using the electronic health record system.

The Trust now had a new Chairman and a new Chief Medical Officer and a new Deputy Chief Executive. The Trust Board also had two new Non-Executive Directors to strengthen the Board. They also had new site teams in place accountable for operational delivery. They have a new programme called 'listening into action' to engage staff and also hold "Big Conversations" with staff (so far with over 1000 staff). This had resulted in lots of little improvements being made following suggestions from members of staff.

It was important they developed their staff and to this end they had completed a first phase of a career development programme for women and staff from a BME background. Their turnover had now gone down and they now had fewer leavers than starters.

They were also investing £2million in IT, the first steps in a wider programme; £17.5million was planned in investment in Whipps Cross improvements; there was also a ward improvement programme and £15million set aside for medical equipment across the Trust. It was noted that Whipps Cross was an old site, hard for staff to work in, but Barts Health was now investing in the site. A new High Dependency Unit was to be opened by July.

The meeting was then opened up to questions from members.

Q. In reference to the A&E services provided at King George's which I believe are to discontinue and so very likely to add pressure on the A&E departments at Queen's and Whipps Cross. Given the projected increase in population a reduction in A&E provision was a concern.

A. We are engaged in a process of planning for what might happen to King George's Hospital; looking at what may happen and making sure we were happy with the modelling assumptions. We did not want to make a decision until we knew it was safe to do so.

Q. I have noted that you are making massive improvements, but what about the elderly and assessments for when they could leave the hospital, even if they still needed hospital care. Were there enough places for intermediate care for them?

A. We have an integrated discharge team that assesses all our vulnerable patients along with their doctors and physios. It was important that we did not discharge our patients before we should. We also monitor our re-admission rates, which was now going down. We also work with the local social services and other partners.

We have come across situations where the patient really wants to go home although we or their family may not think it's safe. In the end, no matter what we offer, we have to accept their decision.

Q. You have told us of the changes being made, but how are these changes being monitored by senior management?

A. We have an Executive Team and below that a Hospital Management Team monitoring them. They all come from a clinical backgrounds and monitor things on a daily basis. The Chief Medical Officer also walks around the wards and talks to junior staff to monitor the situation. We also have paper based monitoring systems, but you really can't beat walking around.

Last week we had a clinical review from officers from other organisations who gave us pointers on what we needed to do.

We are also trying to peer review our various wards and are trying a lot of different ways to monitor our work, not just by paper records.

Q. Is there a catchment area for Whipps Cross, and also how was 'bed blocking' being dealt with?

A. The majority of patients come from the Waltham Forest area and a small percentage from Epping and surrounding areas. We do not use the term 'bed blockers', they are patients whose discharge has been delayed for various reasons. Today we have 15 of those. These are different from medically fit patients delayed from going home. Last year, we used to have anything from 5 to 53 of these cases a week. We have worked hard to get down to a target of 15 and now that we have achieved that we will work to get it down to 10.

Q. You said that you almost had a full compliment of staff, to keep them you need to keep them engaged and satisfied. How do you make sure staff moral was kept up?

A. This was an important question; we have initiatives such as the big consultation and speaking to and engaging with the staff. We are getting full recruitment by filling our vacant posts and are now at 82%. This was a major campaign for us. We are doing other things such as regular appraisals and staff exit and entry surveys, asking them why they wished to come and work for us etc.

Q. You mentioned a reduction in re-admission rates; have you achieved your target. Also, how long do people spend on trollies waiting to be admitted? And are the new visa rules affecting new staff?

A. Re-admission rates are going down but we are still not meeting our targets yet (of 95%). Our current rate is at about 80 to 85%.

As for how long patients wait, that depends on the nature of the patients ailments. It is a struggle for us to put people into wards, and it can be up to a 10 hour wait. We have opened additional beds and have active management of this.

As for changes in immigration rules this particularly affects nurses and was now being reviewed.

Q. Could you get to your 95% target if people could see their own GP?

A. The reasons why people go to A&E are complicated; there are a mixture of reasons. Whipps Cross already has a GP to assess the patients that come through the front door at A&E.

Q. One of the concerns of the CQC report was that there were not enough paediatric nurses where there should have been.

A. Our Paediatric wards are only staffed by paediatric nurses. Last year we had to close some beds because we did not have enough paediatric staff. We have now opened more beds as our staff levels are up. We now have 23 beds.

Q. Was there a date by which all services should be up and functioning properly?

A. That depends on what you mean by properly. First and foremost we needed to know our services were safe; we then need to improve our services to pass the next CQC assessment and get out of special measures.

The Chairman thanked the representatives from the Barts Health NHS Trust for their excellent presentation and their full and helpful answers and congratulated them on the work they had done so far.

54. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT TASK AND FINISH PANEL - UPDATING REPORT

The Leisure and Community Portfolio Holder, Councillor Helen Kane introduced the report updating the outcomes of the Youth Engagement Task and Finish Panel. Their recommendations were presented to the Cabinet at their December 2015 meeting. The following recommendations (1 to 5) were agreed by the Cabinet but 6 and 7 were not. The five agreed recommendations were:

- i) That the Council retains and continues to support and develop the Youth Council in terms of wider youth engagement;
- ii) 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;
- iii) That the Youth Council acts as a consultee for stakeholder presentations at Overview and Scrutiny Committees;
- iv) That the current operational budget for the Youth Council be maintained at £12,000 per annum; and
- v) That Cabinet considers a request 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.

The two recommendations (6 and 7) not agreed were:

- vi) That the Council pursues the devolvement of the budget and responsibilities for Youth Provision from Essex County Council to the District Council; and,
- vii) That Cabinet considers a request 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.

The recommendations from the review were considered by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet on 21st January and agreed for presentation to Full Council for a final decision.

Councillor Neville thanked Councillor Kane for all her hard work and also the Youth Council. He also thanked the Cabinet for their support but wondered why recommendation 6 was denied. Councillor Surtees noted that the County Council had completely abdicated their responsibilities to the youth of the county by the way it has revised, reduced and retargeted its Youth Services. Some one had to fill that gap; although he was not saying it should be this council without the resources. We needed to be very careful on the stress we put on young people. There was a need for something to happen and the views of the Task and Finish Panel had to be taken seriously.

RESOLVED:

That the update on the outcomes of the Youth Engagement Review Task and Finish Panel undertaken last year be noted.

55. REVIEW OF WASTE RECYCLING COLLECTION ARRANGEMENTS

The Director of Neighbourhoods introduced his report summing up the recent review of the Waste and Recycling Collection arrangements and their initial service failures. The Council's Environment Portfolio Holder believed that it was very important to establish the reasons behind this service failure, not only to help in rectifying any ongoing problems and achieving an acceptable level of future service, but also to help in identifying any lessons for the Council, with respect to the letting of other major service contracts.

To this end, the Environment Portfolio Holder formally requested that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertake a review on his behalf, the outcomes to be formally reported back to Cabinet. Overview and Scrutiny Committee subsequently agreed the request and determined that the Neighbourhoods and Communities Select Committee was best placed to undertake the review, by virtue of their Terms of Reference.

Given the likely level of both Member and Public interest, particularly with respect to the introduction of the revised 4-day collection arrangements, it was agreed that an additional meeting of the Select Committee would be dedicated to this single subject. Given the Work Programme of the Committee, the availability of external contributors to the review and to allow a period of time for the contract to fully stabilise, a date of the 17 December 2015 was set.

It was agreed that the review would be undertaken in 4 parts, covering the following issues:

- 1) Procurement Process;
- 2) Mobilisation and first 6 months of Contract; and
- 3) Revised arrangements from the 12 May 2015.

Part 4 of the review was to reach a set of conclusions around what could have been done better and to recommend any key considerations with respect to how the Council could improve procurement and implementation of any future major service contracts.

Officers had reviewed the notes of the meeting and had identified some key points to be forwarded onto the Cabinet. These were:

Part One - Procurement:

- Competitive Dialogue proved to be an effective means of procuring the new Waste Contract, from both the Client and Contractors perspective.
- Although the Members interview only scored 10% of the quality scores, and on this occasion did not materially affect the final award, it is considered that Member Interviews are still beneficial for future service contracts.
- The role that cross-party Portfolio Holder Advisory Groups play in shaping service contracts was recognised as a positive.
- With contracts which involve major service changes, the costs to the Council should not be underestimated in terms of advising residents etc. The £50,000 on the Waste Contract was in hindsight, too small.

Part Two – Mobilisation and First Six Months:

- Overall the Waste and Recycling Contract mobilisation went well, with service quality maintained over the period November 2014 to May 2015.
- Although TUPE Arrangements were satisfactorily completed for staff transferring from SITA to BIFFA, there were some concerns highlighted regarding communication with staff despite Biffa's best endeavours.
- The innovation forum established between client officers and contractor, proved useful in addressing service issues and identifying areas for improvement, this should be encouraged as good practice.
- The original start date for the change to 4-day collection was not achieved, due to delays in vehicle acquisition and transfer of depots. However, the revised date of 12 May was still in retrospect too early.
- The number and type of informal arrangements that exist between householders and collection crews should not be underestimated and should be specifically addressed in terms of debriefing at end of contract periods.
- Whilst it was felt that the problems encountered around the change to 4-day collection were not simply attributable to the prior notification information provided, it was felt that the letter to all residents could have been clearer.
- The information contained on the Council's Website was helpful, particularly the tool which converted postcodes into revised day collection arrangements.

Part 3 – Introduction of Revised Arrangements:

- Start date for change to 4-day collection too optimistic in as much as new fleet was only delivered days before implementation, preventing crew familiarity and ability to address technical failures.
- A phased approach was not adopted and had not been elsewhere, to the best knowledge of consultants and contractor. However, should not be ruled out in future contracts, certainly there would have been value in test rounds with the new fleet.
- The new IT system would have benefited from earlier implementation and a longer period of testing. The round information from the start of revised collections was inaccurate, leading to whole streets being missed. Lack of integration with client system also a major problem.
- Biffa lost 20% of the workforce that transferred from Sita, the outgoing contractor. This was a loss of valuable local knowledge which should have been captured in some way. Changing staff onto rounds in areas that they were not familiar with and an initial reluctance to utilise knowledge of waste client officers, compounded the problem.
- Some of the fleet purchased was not fit for purpose e.g. Street Sweepers that could not deal with rural road network. In future, demonstration vehicles may prevent re-occurrence.
- A need to utilise agency staff to cover additional rounds and cover vacancies, delayed the stabilisation of the contract. Whilst tender evaluation demonstrated that adequate resources were to be employed, did not take into

consideration the effect of staff turnover. Issue to be explored in future contracts.

In conclusion it would appear that a number of the problems encountered by Biffa when introducing the revised 4-day collection arrangements, could have been avoided with additional time, e.g. to improve staff training and familiarisation with new vehicles and IT, to test drive new routes more thoroughly, to retain and utilise local knowledge of existing staff, to fully run in new fleet and to have operated longer from new depot locations, before the service change.

Councillor Wixley asked why there had been a 20% loss in Biffa staff. He was told that 20% was a high figure. The market for HGV drivers undoubtedly played a part in this, also the 4 day week and the teething problems from the equipment. It may have also been that some of the staff were not good enough. Also, Biffa did not tap into their experience. This led to a general downturn in performance in litter bin collection and street cleansing.

Councillor Sartin the Chairman of that review meeting said she thought that it was a worthwhile exercise as we were able to question Biffa staff. Not only the Council but Biffa learnt a great deal from this exercise. This was a learning curve for the Council.

Councillor Lion wanted to know if the downturn in missed collections and street cleaning was investigated. He was told that these were now down to previous levels as we had with Sita; about 50-60 missed a day. Officers and Biffa were now drilling down to find out just why this was happening. We now have IT aids (GPS and Video) to help us. We were working on assisted collections and were getting to grips with it. We were also putting more resources into litter collection especially the rural roads.

The Environment Portfolio Holder, Councillor W Breare-Hall thanked the O&S Committee and the Neighbourhoods and Communities Select Committee for carrying out this exercise. He was disappointed that so few members of the public attended the meeting. There were three main lessons learnt: more time was needed; staffing problems – big changes were made and it needed to be handled properly; and Communications with the residents – more money needed to be spent on this.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Breare-Hall and Councillor Sartin for all the work they did on this review.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet be advised of the key findings of the recent Review of the Waste and Recycling Collection arrangements.

56. CONSULTATION FROM THE ESSEX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE

The Director of Neighbourhoods introduced a report on the recent Essex Fire Authority consultation. The consultation document proposed three options for organisational changes to the Essex County Fire and Rescue Services against a background of changing risk, reduced funding and a greater emphasis on partnership working. This report was in support of their option 3.

In essence, the Essex Fire Authority strategy was to restructure response arrangements (in line with reduced risk) to make savings and generate £3m extra annual funding to support prevention and protection activities.

For Epping Forest District this meant that:

Fire Stations

- In each of the three options, Loughton Fire Station remained a whole-time crewed station *but the number of appliances was reduced from two to one*.
- Again, in each of the three options, the station at Waltham Abbey would convert from a day crewed arrangement *to an on call arrangement*.

Response Times

- Evidence provided in the consultation document shows that for all three options, the impact of these changes on response times would be minimal.

Impact on Council Tax

- Options 1 and 2 require increases in Council Tax of 0.8% and 2% respectively in order to achieve the savings and the prevention and protection budget.
- Option 3 could achieve the savings and the protection and prevention fund goals with no increase in Council Tax.

Greater Partnership Opportunities

- The Council already works closely with the Fire Service particularly in the areas of Community Safety and Contingency Planning. The establishment of a protection and prevention fund as well as the potential for Fire Service staff to take a greater role in prevention activities could provide opportunities for wider ranging collaborative work.

On consideration of the report the Committee agreed with the officer's recommendation that option 3 should be supported.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That officers should respond to the Essex Fire Authority consultation supporting Option 3; and
- (2) That officers should explore innovative collaborative opportunities to improve Community Safety.

57. WORK PROGRAMME MONITORING

(a) Work Programmes

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The committee considered their work programme and noted the current progress and that the programme was mostly complete. The committee noted that items 12 (Progress on 6th Form Consortium) and 15 (Management of Epping Forest College) would be considered in the new municipal year.

Select Committees:

Housing Select Committee

The committee noted that there was nothing to report.

Governance Select Committee

The committee noted that there was nothing to report.

Neighbourhood & Communities Select Committee

The Chairman update the Committee on the extensive topics covered at their last meeting in January 2016. She pointed the Committee to the full and detailed minutes of that meeting that were available on line.

Resources Select Committee

The committee noted that there was nothing to report.

Task and Finish Panels:

Grant Aid Task and Finish Panel

The final report from this Panel should be going to the April O&S Committee.

(b) Reserve Programme

The Democratic Services Manager reminded the meeting that a report reviewing the Select Committee structure would be going to their next meeting. Members should put their views to him as soon as possible to have them reflected in the report.

58. KEY DECISION LIST - REVIEW

The Committee noted the Cabinet's Key Decision List for January 2016. They had no specific items that they wished to consider.

CHAIRMAN

Safe and Compassionate

Epping Forest District Council, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

23 February 2016



Safe and Compassionate: our improvement plan



- **Safe and compassionate**, the Barts Health Quality Improvement Plan was published on 16 September 2015
- It sets out the Trust's response to the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) Inspection reports in 2015
- It also details the actions that staff, patients and partners feel are necessary to provide the communities we serve with safe, effective, compassionate and high quality care
- The improvement plan is being delivered through seven key workstreams with both a corporate and site-based focus, and key governance structures





Safe and effective care

Making safety an absolute priority at all times

Progress highlights:

- 'Safety Huddles' in place at each hospital every day.
- Safety performance dashboard, with performance on ward-by-ward basis against key quality and safety metrics
- Monthly learning reviews by service of quality and safety issues including complaints and serious incidents (68% reduction in overdue SIs at Whipps Cross)
- Implemented extended training on the Mental Capacity Act and on "Do Not Attempt Resuscitation"
- Trust-wide campaign to reduce hospital acquired pressure ulcers (6 wards at Whipps Cross 100 days with no pressure ulcers)
- Trained first 40 safety champions in the Trust to be local experts and drive improvement
- Published 'sign up to safety' plan which will support wards to reduce harm through implementing care bundles across the Trust





Compassionate Care and Patient Experience

Making sure patients are always treated with dignity and respect

Progress highlights:

- Ward managers supervisory – freed up to manage ward and fundamentals of care
- Nursing documentation streamlined and simplified
- Regular comfort rounds by ward staff and audited by Matrons
- Staff at Whipps Cross have started ‘smile to care’ campaign
- Workshop held with patient representatives to co-design new approach to engagement.
Draft principles for future working together agreed, and next steps underway to develop Patient Experience and Engagement strategy
- Revised complaints process - focus on training, resolution and sharing of learning
- Patients and visitors to Whipps Cross are now able to immediately identify the senior nurse on their ward with new ‘Nurse in Charge badges’





End of Life Care

Making sure there are appropriate care plans for those patients nearing the end of their life

Progress highlights:

- Compassionate care documentation introduced to support patients nearing the end of their lives
- Improvements to the Margaret Centre, providing a safe and more comfortable environment for our patients and their families
- End of Life workshop with our partners in the community and establishing a system-wide steering group for End of Life Care with an independent chair
- Strengthened guidelines at Whipps to make sure, where possible, patients can be discharged from hospital so they can die in the place of their choosing
- Appointed link nurses for all our wards to develop stronger partnerships with Palliative Care Team, and provide support for patients, families and carers





Workforce

Making sure we have the right number and mix of staff across services at all times

Progress highlights:

- Staffing levels monitored daily through safety huddles
- Reviewed safe staffing levels and increased funded nursing establishment by 532 posts (150 posts at Whipps Cross)
- Held three Nursing Recruitment Day at Whipps Cross where nurses were assessed, interviewed and given offer of employment if they were successful – all on same day
- Held Healthcare Support Workers Recruitment Day at Whipps Cross in December. 53 applicants were successful
- On track to increase the permanent fill rate. At Whipps Cross, from September to December inclusive, 224 job offers were made
- Improved temporary staff induction arrangements - increased the number of clinical staff undertaking local inductions across the Trust by 13%





Emergency Pathway and Patient Flow

Making sure patients get care and treatment in a timely way

Progress highlights:

- Up to 40 patients a day seen in new ambulatory care unit at Whipps Cross, reducing the burden on A&E
- Recruitment of new consultants for Whipps Cross specialising in treatment of patients with acute medical problems
- Investment planned to improve paediatric pathway at Whipps Cross
- Longer opening hours in our discharge lounge to 8pm (from 5pm) and offering refreshments for patients and families who are waiting
- Whipps Cross Hospital Integrated Discharge Team in place, partnership working with CCGs, Council social care and community health teams – reduction in DTOCs
- Improving follow up appointment process for dermatology and orthopaedics patients at Whipps Cross to ensure that they have received an appointment before they leave hospital





Outpatients and Medical Records

Making systems reliable so they support staff to do their jobs and patients get the care they need

Progress highlights:

- Availability of patient records in clinics at Whipps Cross – up from 75 - 80% in November 2014 to between a constant of 97.8 – 98% currently
- Call centre – calls answered within 60 seconds. Steady improvement over the last 3 months. In November 24%, December 46% and 53% first week in January
- Whipps Cross administrative systems efficiency – the percentage of referrals booked within 7 days of receipt has increased from 74% in November to 85% in December 2015.
- Widespread welcome for troubleshooting phone line for GP enquiries.
- Floor walkers providing extra training and support to our staff in using the electronic health record system
- Staff forums introduced for all outpatients and medical records staff
- Tackling the causes of data entry errors in our Outpatients departments through use of weekly 'hot topics' to focus training and improve accuracy





Leadership and Organisational Development

Strengthening the way the Trust is run and making sure staff have all the support they need

Progress highlights:

- Substantive Chair, Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Nursing Officer, Director of Strategy and Chief Information Officer appointed for Barts Health. Recruitment to other substantive corporate director positions continuing
- Appointed two new Non Executive Directors – both of whom live and work locally to strengthen Trust Board
- New Leadership Operating Model designed and implemented - site team in place at Whipps Cross and accountable for operational delivery
- *Listening into Action* staff engagement approach – 40 clinical improvement priorities and 21 Big Conversations (5 at Whipps Cross) held with over 1,000 staff
- Clinical Director development programme launched
- Completed first phase of a career development programme for women and staff from black and minority ethnic background
- Continued strong partnership working with staffside leads at Whipps Cross



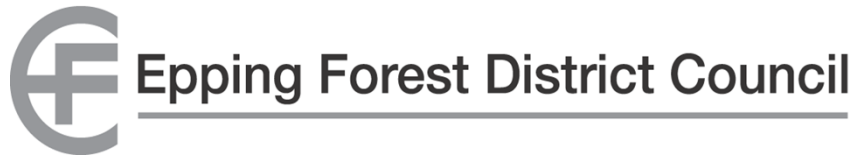


Other developments

Investing in Barts Health

- £2m initial investment in IT infrastructure - with Whipps Cross a priority - as the first step in a wider programme
- £17.8m planned investment in Whipps Cross improvement schemes including backlog maintenance, two new modular theatres, upgrade and refurbishment of HDU, improvement works to the Margaret Centre and new ultrasound suite
- Ward improvement programme in place
- £15m for medical equipment (across the Trust)
- Working with partners to develop options for future development of Whipps Cross site.





SCRUTINY

Report of the Grant Aid
Task and Finish Review Panel
Part Two – Service Level Agreements

March 2016

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Chairman's Foreword

Before I begin to report back on the findings of this Part Two Review of Grant Aid, I would firstly like to acknowledge the tragic loss of the Council's Lead Officer for Grant Aid, Chris Overend.

Chris was Lead Officer for the Part One Review and for most of the Part Two process, until his life came to an untimely end shortly after the October meeting of the Panel. We were sincerely grateful for the work that Chris undertook in relation to Grant Aid and the many other areas of his work within the Council.

.....

At its meeting on 16 September 2014, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the establishment of a Task and Finish Panel to review the Council's Grant Aid Scheme for Sports, Arts, Leisure and Community Groups. This was in terms of the overall policy, guidance and procedures for major grants and Service Level Agreements.

Early in the Review process the Panel came to the conclusion that it would be easier and more logical to break down the review into two parts, namely one focussing on the major grants and associated policy and procedure and the other relating to the Service Level Agreements with voluntary groups active in the District, including the CAB and Voluntary Action Epping Forest, which has been carried out in 2015/16. This report relates to the second part of the review.

I would like to thank those involved for their input and invaluable contributions and ideas within Part Two of the Review. This includes all members of the Panel (Councillors John Knapman, Ann Mitchell, Glynis Shiell, Brian Surtees, Tony Boyce and Stephen Murray), Councillor Helen Kane as the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Wellbeing, Gill Wallis, Community, Health & Wellbeing Manager, Julie Chandler Assistant Director and Nicola Wilkinson, Community & Grants Assistant from Community Services and Safety.

Cllr Caroline Pond
Chairman of Grant Aid Task & Finish Review Panel

Overview

The Review Panel acknowledged the £11,500 saving made from the Grant Aid Budget for 2015/16 in respect of the one –off major grants and considered whether any further reductions could be made to the overall Grant Aid funding programme. It also looked at the various criteria for the distribution of funding; the monitoring and evaluation for each grant awarded and the Service Level Agreements applied.

More detailed consideration was given to the higher level funding agreements, in respect of Voluntary Action Epping Forest and the Citizen's Advice Bureau, who provided presentations to the Panel on their work. In addition, visits were made by the Panel members, to various organisations in receipt of grant funding.

As stated within Part 1 of the Grant Aid Review, the Panel recognised the vital role that the voluntary and community sector brings to local community well-being in the Epping Forest District. However, it also acknowledged the need for a more proactive approach to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of grants awarded, and particularly the higher level grants.

Recommendations:

- (1) That the current level of Grant Aid funding be maintained;**
- (2) That, from 1 April 2016, funding of less than £5,000 per annum for three years be provided for Voluntary Groups without the need for a formal Service Level Agreement, but, subject to the receipt of an Annual Report from each Group outlining the benefit to the District from the funding;**
- (3) That the revised Service Level Agreement as agreed by the Panel, be adopted by the Council (Appendix 2);**
- (4) That the District Council maintain provision for longer term funding to Voluntary Action Epping Forest and Epping Forest Citizens Advice Bureau from 2016/17 onwards, based on performance management benchmarking closely monitored on an annual basis;**
- (5) That a more rigorous process of monitoring is adopted for the higher Grant Awards currently in operation for Voluntary Action Epping Forest and Citizen's Advice Bureau**

Report:

1. The meetings of the Panel for the second part of the Grant Aid Review were held on 20 July, 28 September, 29 October 2015, 15 February and 14 March 2016. In undertaking this stage of the Review, the Panel considered a range of information including the following:
 - The breadth and funding amounts of Service Level Agreements in place
 - The Service Level Agreement (SLA) documentation itself
 - Information from other local councils on Grant Aid agreements and monitoring
 - Monitoring and evaluation paperwork used by the Council
 - Presentations from the two major funding SLA's; Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF) £39,120 and Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) £113,840.
2. At its first meeting the Panel agreed the scope of the Review and that it would be undertaken in three sections, to consider: Epping Forest CAB; VAEF, and the other smaller Service Level Agreements. Visits would be made to a sample of these groups and VAEF and EF CAB would additionally be asked to provide presentations on their work and use of the grant funding provided by the Council.
3. The Panel would also consider the Grant Aid arrangements across a range of District and Borough Councils in Essex, with a view to adopting best practice from these.
4. It was noted that the current Three-Year Service Level Agreements were all due to end in March 2016, hence it would be an advantage to complete the review as soon as possible. VAEF and EFCAB would be advised of the Panel's Terms of Reference before they prepared their presentations to the Panel. A sample of groups in receipt of smaller Service Level Agreements could be visited by the Panel and a questionnaire be sent to each group in receipt of a Service Level Agreement to assist in the Panel's deliberations.
5. At the second meeting of the Panel officers gave an overview of the Grant Aid scheme and advised the Panel that the present two tier Grant Aid Scheme was set up in the 1990s, with the aim of providing a degree of financial security to well-established voluntary groups to enable the Groups to develop their services further. It was an approach that was replicated by other Councils at the time. Currently, there were 15 voluntary groups who had a Service Level Agreement with the Council, ranging from the Alzheimer's Society to Zinc Arts in Ongar which provided a variety of services across the District. Each Service Level Agreement had a number of standard features, such as the provision of up-to-date accounts, minutes from management meetings, and publicising the support provided by the District Council.
6. The Panel was requested to consider the existing arrangements and make recommendations for the operation of Service Level Agreements from 2016/17 onwards, options for which included: maintaining the current arrangements; reducing the number of such agreements; or even dispensing with them altogether. However, the Panel was reminded that it had already agreed in the first stage of the review, that any Group in receipt of a Funding Agreement from 1 April 2016 would be required to show 'added value' to the District, on an annual basis.
7. The Panel was reminded that the current Service Level Agreements, and accompanying criteria, were dated and required revising and it was suggested that the Council should set a threshold of £5,000 per annum below which specific Service Level Agreements would not apply. It would not make any difference to those national organisations which had financial resources more readily available, and for the smaller organisations the Council was not seeing that much return for its investment given the amount of time taken to fulfil all the Council's requirements for an Agreement.

8. It was recognised that simpler, clearly defined criteria such as production of an annual report citing the relevance and value for money from the funding provided by the Council would suffice for the smaller awards. It was felt that the Council should be making it as easy as possible for good organisations to receive Grant Aid funding from the Council and the Panel noted that Uttlesford District Council adopted a similar approach.
9. It was therefore found that the Service Level Agreements in their current form be terminated on 31 March 2016 and that from 1 April 2016, Service Level Agreements only be provided for those Voluntary Groups receiving £5,000 or more per annum. It was also recognised that the criteria for future Funding Agreements should be revised by Officers to take account of local factors. Groups in receipt of Grant Aid Funding should continue to be determined by the Leisure and Community Services Portfolio Holder, regardless of whether a Service Level Agreement was required or not.

Presentation from Voluntary Action Epping Forest

10. J Foile, Chief Officer at VAEF, was invited to give a presentation to the Panel, in order for members to gain a better understanding of VAEF's operation. The Panel was advised that VAEF existed to support the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors, and was established district wide during the early 1990s. The District Council had provided financial support to VAEF by way of an SLA for many years and the funding agreed for 2015/16 was £39,120, which had remained unchanged since 2009/10. From this sum, VAEF paid the Council annual accommodation costs of £11,360 for use of the premises at Homefield House.
11. J Foile highlighted that VAEF worked with many agencies and received referrals from them. For example, referrals for the Handyman Service were received from the District Council. The services provided by VAEF were advertised where possible, including Doctor Surgeries and Dentists etc., but residents would also learn about them from their neighbours by word of mouth. VAEF was also independent from the statutory bodies, which could also help in reaching out to some people.
12. She also informed the Panel of the current key priorities for VAEF, which included: recruiting more volunteers; supporting more people with support needs themselves into becoming volunteers; enabling people to live in their own homes for longer and combating loneliness and isolation as people live longer; and partnership working and engaging with the thematic groups which emerged from the Local Strategic Partnership. VAEF was also looking to increase remote volunteering, for example from people with conditions such as Multiple Sclerosis who could make phone calls to people in an effort to reduce loneliness.
13. In response to questions from the Panel, J Foile stated that VAEF covered the whole District but some services could only be used by the elderly or disabled. The Befriending Service was currently only offered in three areas due to a lack of funding.
14. The Panel was also advised that VAEF were keen to establish a Community Hub, which could potentially be located anywhere in the District, but one of the market towns would probably be the best location. Access to the Hub by residents would be a key consideration when deciding where to locate it. A Community Hub would enable VAEF to set up a 'one-stop shop' for the whole District, and the building could be shared with other organisations. VAEF was always on the look-out for further funding, from the National Lottery and other funding bodies.
15. Members considered the current funding arrangements for VAEF and made recommendations with regard to funding from 2016/17 onwards. It was agreed that given the

current uncertain financial climate faced by local government, it was vital that any funding agreement with VAEF included a range of key performance measures and an “added value” requirement through that agreement. It was agreed that a series of targets would help with performance.

Presentation by Citizens Advice Bureau

16. On October 29th 2015, the Panel received a presentation from R Poulter, Manager at Epping Forest District Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and J Woods, Chairman of the Citizens Advice Bureau Trustee’s Board. This was regarding the services and activities of the CAB in Epping Forest.
17. It was explained that CAB clients generally experienced complicated problems and that 73% of clients were below the average income threshold. However following consultation with the CAB, 2 out of 3 clients had their problems solved. R Poulter provided a series of statistics related to the CAB provision, including;
 - Every £1.00 invested in the CAB generated £3.10 in fiscal benefits, £15.83 in public value and £19.58 in benefits to the individuals who used their service.
 - A saving of £96,000 had been made in reducing homelessness by the CAB.
 - Epping Forest CAB had 56 volunteers and had recently recruited an extra 6 volunteers.
 - The Epping Forest CAB had provided advice to 2,497 people in 2014/15.
 - 33% of enquiries to the Epping Forest CAB concerned benefits and tax credits.
 - Over 25% of CAB clients had a disability or long term health problem.
 - 4 in 5 CAB clients felt less stressed after receiving their advice.
 - 2 in 3 CAB clients had their debt problem solved.
18. J Woods spoke next about the finances of the CAB and stated that funding for the CAB came from District Council grants, CAB fundraising, Parish and Town Councils and donations. However the bulk of funding came from specific projects which the CAB had applied for. The CAB had cut staffing costs from April 2014 and they made savings through sourcing second hand office furniture and equipment where this was possible. However they needed top of the range IT equipment, particularly for assessing official websites.
19. It was explained that CAB branches provided face to face contact, which was preferred by 92% of the CAB’s clients. R Poulter advised that the CAB was planning to move into new offices within Loughton Library and a new site in Hemnall Street, Epping and confirmed that the CAB would be providing an outreach service at Limes Farm, Waltham Abbey and Abridge. They were also working with GPs and they had plans to use Ongar Library at some stage.
20. The CAB was also providing the services of two debt advisors that were additionally funded through the Council’s Housing Revenue Account to the sum of £42,000 and it was planned to continue this service for a further year. These advisors were playing a crucial part in offsetting the potential impact from welfare budget cuts, helping to reduce homelessness. A close working relationship had been established between Housing officers and the CAB and they had quarterly meetings together.

21. At its penultimate meeting, the Panel discussed the details of the SLA with CAB for the amount of £113,840 and it was agreed that the same target setting and closer performance management should be applied, as with VAEF.

Conclusion

22. The Panel was satisfied that the agreed amendments to the Grant Aid Service Level Agreements and improved performance management would ensure that the Council was receiving best value from the grants awarded. They also felt that the level of remaining Grant Aid Funding should remain as it is, to ensure that the Council could continue to support the essential services provided through the voluntary sector.

Epping Forest District Council Grant Aid

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

Between EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL of the Civic Offices, High Street, Epping, Essex ('hereinafter referred to as EFDC')

And (Group`s name) of (Group`s address)
(`hereinafter referred to as the Grantee`)

1. PURPOSE OF AGREEMENT

- 1.1 To ensure the efficient and effective use of EFDC's financial support to the Grantee
- 1.2 To further develop and maintain an effective working partnership between EFDC and the Grantee, in support of the interests of the communities of Epping Forest District.
- 1.3 To give the Grantee financial security regarding the grant for the period of the Agreement, subject to the schedule, arrangements and standards set out in this document being fulfilled.
- 1.4 This Service level Agreement (SLA) does not constitute a legal agreement between the parties; however, this Agreement aims to ensure best use of Council resources and establish a sound working relationship between the parties.

2. TERM

- 2.1 The "term" is the period running from up to and including .
- 2.2 The funding received by the Grantee must be spent in full by the end of the Term for the purposes that it was intended for. If the Grantee fails to spend the allocated funding by this date they will be required to return such part of any unspent grant as EFDC may determine.

3. GRANTEE OBLIGATIONS

The Grantee will:-

- 3.1 Undertake to achieve the outcomes and objectives detailed in **Schedule 1** of this SLA and provide monitoring evidence, as requested via supplied templates.
- 3.2 Participate in annual target setting with EFDC to ensure both parties are clear on achievable expectations.
- 3.3 Provide EFDC with all information and assistance in a timely fashion as is required by EFDC to evidence the performance requirements of this Agreement.
- 3.4 Provide access for an annual visit by the appropriate Portfolio Holder, Members and officers on request.
- 3.5 Comply with all applicable legislation and prevailing laws in the performance of service; including but not restricted to; the Data Protection Act 1998, the Equalities Act 2010 and all others as relevant, with particular attention to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults as detailed by the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) and Essex Safeguarding Adults Board (ESAB).

- 3.6 Provide and maintain policies of insurance through the term of this agreement, as EFDC may reasonably demand as appropriate for their role in achieving the outcomes.
- 3.7 Have robust governance and financial arrangements in place as required by Charity Law and comply with the legal obligations of charities under the Charities Acts and the Companies Acts, taking appropriate preventative action on behalf of themselves (and working with any partners) ensure business continuity to achieve key outcomes, in the event of the Grantee failing to secure its core, or other dependent, funding.
- 3.8 Assist EFDC in compliance with its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in respect of achieving the outcomes in Schedule 1.
- 3.9 Invite the Council to Annual General Meetings (AGM), giving a minimum of 14 days' notice, so that officers may attend.
- 3.10 Ensure that the funding support provided by the Council is positively promoted in any publicity about the organisation.
- 3.11 Adhere to the principles of the Epping Forest Compact.
- 3.12 Advise EFDC in the event that it becomes apparent that it is going to be difficult to spend the funding within the timescales stipulated in this Agreement.

The Grantee will **not**:-

- 3.13 Assign or seek to assign in whole or part, its rights and or obligations under this agreement or sub-contract material elements of its obligations without written consent in writing from EFDC.
- 3.14 Promote itself as associated with or authorised to represent EFDC except insofar as is expressly set out in the Agreement

4. EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OBLIGATIONS

EFDC will:

- 4.1 Provide the funds in accordance with **Schedule 2** of this SLA, subject to the achievement of the outcomes and objectives detailed in Schedule 1 of this Agreement.
- 4.2 Delay or suspend in whole or part payment under this Agreement if the Grantee fails to produce satisfactory evidence of progress towards achieving the outcomes detailed in Schedule 1.
- 4.3 Adhere to the principles of the Epping Forest Compact.

5. MANAGEMENT OF THIS AGREEMENT

- 5.1 Both EFDC and the Grantee will each appoint a "Contact Officer"

The Contact Officer for EFDC will be:

Name

Job Title

Address

Phone Number

Email

The Contact Officer for the Grantee will be:

Name

Job Title

Address

Phone Number

Email

The Grantee will:

- 5.2 Provide EFDC with 2 copies of its Annual Report and audited accounts no later than 6 months after the AGM:
- 5.3 Provide EFDC with copies of the Agenda, Reports and Minutes of all General Meetings and of Business Plans as and when published or revised
- 5.4 Supply EFDC with a copy of estimated income and expenditure in advance of each financial year
- 5.5 Produce a statement at the end of each financial year, separate from the Grantee's accounts, stating how the funding allocation from EFDC has been spent
- 5.6 Provide suitable training for all staff and volunteers appropriate to their role and responsibilities.
- 5.7 Participate in any other monitoring and review exercises approved by both parties and associated with this Agreement
- 5.8 Where practical carry an acknowledgement of EFDC support on all letterheads, annual reports, newsletters and relevant publicity material.

6. REVIEW/TERMINATION OF AGREEMENT

- 6.1 Either party may request a review of this Agreement at any time if it should appear that the arrangement is not working satisfactorily for the purposes intended. In any case, the parties shall undertake a joint annual review of the Agreement.
- 6.2 The annual review will cover all aspects of the operation of this Agreement, which may lead to it being amended by mutual consent.
- 6.3 EFDC may terminate this Agreement by three months' notice in writing to the Grantee in the event that the Grantee fails to comply with the agreed terms.

**Signed on behalf of
Epping Forest District Council:**

**Signed on behalf of
Grantee:**

**Portfolio Holder for
Leisure & Community Wellbeing**

Position:

Dated:

Dated:

SCHEDULE 1

Objectives:

- Xxx
- Xxx
- Xxx
- Xxx
- Xxx

SCHEDULE 2

Payment timetable:

Period:	Payable by:	Amount

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GRANT AID

MONITORING & EVALUATION FORM

All questions relate to your organisation's award for the _____ year.

Organisation name:

Name of person completing form:

Position in organisation:

Telephone number:

E-mail address:

Value of grant awarded:

1. Please detail how the grant award was spent.

A List all the individual items or activities that your grant was spent on	B List the total amount you spent on each item	C List the total amount you spent on activities
Total amount spent:		

2. Please detail how your project/service has benefited the local community?

Please include any statistical information, case studies, photographs or similar, continuing on an additional sheet if required.

3. Please detail how your project/service has achieved the specific objectives and outcomes set?

4. What are the main challenges your organisation faces, financial or otherwise?

Please use this space to offer any further comment or details of your organisation's activities in the future.

Declaration

Two members of the organisation should sign the declaration below. At least one of the persons should be a member of the Management Committee (ie Chair, Treasurer or Secretary). Both persons must have the authority to complete this declaration on behalf of the organisation.

We, on behalf of our organisation, declare that the information provided in this grant evaluation form is correct and complete to the best of our knowledge;

We confirm that all funds received from Epping Forest District Council's Grant Aid Scheme in the financial year have contributed directly to our organisation's charitable aims as identified in the initial application form.

1. Name	
Position in organisation	
Signature	
Date	

2. Name	
Position in organisation	
Signature	
Date	

Please return this form to:

**Assistant Community, Health and Wellbeing Manager, Community Services,
Epping Forest District Council, 25 Hemnall Street, Epping, Essex, CM16 4LU**

Or e-mail: tbc

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Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 19 April 2016



Portfolio: Governance and Development Management (Councillor J. Philip)

Subject: Equality Objectives 2016-2020

Responsible Officer: Barbara Copson (01992 564042)

Democratic Services Officer: A. Hendry (01992 564246)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That, subject to the concurrence of the Cabinet, the Council's Equality Objectives and Action Plan for 2016-2020, be agreed.

Executive Summary:

The Council is required to publish equality objectives every four years to take forward its public sector equality duty. This duty requires that we proactively consider how discrimination can be addressed through the work that we do, and also whether we can advance equality of opportunity and encourage good relations between different protected groups. The setting of objectives provides a focus on the outcomes to be achieved during the next four years.

In 2012 the Council adopted equality objectives which reach the end of their lifespan in March 2016. New objectives have been developed to take the Council up to April 2020, and because the objectives must be specific and measurable, an action plan has been developed to deliver them.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to agree the proposed equality objectives and action plan for 2016-2020.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The setting of equality objectives every four years is required of public bodies under the Equality Act 2010. It is therefore, a key statutory duty that the objectives are set and published, together with the ongoing progress to achieve them.

Other Options for Action:

There is no alternative option to the setting and publishing of one or more equality objective for the period 2016-2020, however different equality objectives could be adopted.

Report:

1. In March 2012 the Council published its first set of equality objectives designed to provide focus for the Council's work to deliver its public sector equality duty, and thereby advance equality for service users and employees. The duty requires public authorities to at all times have due regard to the following three aims:
 - 1) to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - 2) to advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and

- 3) to foster good relations between different groups;

and the objectives set met one of more of these aims and were designed to help the Council to fulfill that duty. This first set of four objectives targeted:

- 1) equality intelligence gathering and the use of that intelligence in service planning;
- 2) the development of equality ownership;
- 3) improving engagement activities; and
- 4) work to allow for the development of a balanced workforce profile.

An action plan to deliver the objectives was adopted, which, as a working document, was subject to further development as the work progressed over its four year lifespan. The progress of work to deliver the action plan has been coordinated by the Corporate Equality Working Group (CEWG), chaired by the Director of Governance, and reported to Management Board and the Governance Select Committee at 6 monthly intervals. The lifespan of these objectives ended in March 2016, and over their lifespan, considerable progress has been made and the objectives have been largely achieved.

2. Over the last year the CEWG has been engaged in the development of a new set of objectives to take the Council forward until March 2020. Whilst the number of objectives the Council must adopt is not prescribed in the legislation, like all equality work, the number and focus must be reasonable and proportionate to the size of the organisation and its functions.
3. This new set of objectives is designed to address the challenges still faced by the Council to embed equality into all its activities and seeks to build upon the progress already achieved. Evidence to support the identification of themes for objectives was scoped, together with feedback from CEWG representatives and a review of work to date. The draft action plan, attached at Appendix A, also seeks to help to deliver the Councils Key Objectives and Transformation Programme, where relevant.
4. The CEWG has consulted with directorates at all stages of the development of the objectives and action plan, and Management Board and Governance Select Committee at key stages of their development. Procurement Steering Group has been consulted in relation to objective 2. Four objectives are proposed and are set out below together with a brief outline of the reasons for their proposal:

Objective 1: To integrate the Council's public sector equality duty into our partnership working

The public sector equality duty is relevant across the full range of its activity including its work through partnerships. The duty also applies to its public sector partners and it may be the Council can access good practice or share work to comply with the duty.

Objective 2: To apply robust equality requirements in commissioning, procurement and contract management

Procurement by local authorities is identified by the government as a key area for the development of equality and where there is the potential to improve the lives of people. Whilst it is evident there is some consideration of equality in our procurement practices, procurement has not been a focus for equality work to date, and integration is required if the duty is to be fully met.

Objective 3: To develop our capacity so that our employees have the knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver our plans

Employee understanding of Council requirements remains important. Whilst some progress has been made in the course of the current set of objectives, the CEWG considers there is the potential to refine and refocus training for employees to reflect

the Council's current position.

Objective 4: To improve and develop equality in our business activities

This includes projects and reviews, and along with Objectives 1 and 2, seeks to build on progress already made in integrating equality into service planning and delivery, and extend it into our wider activities, and at an earlier stage of our investigation and research.

5. The Objectives are supported by other work to deliver the Council's equality duties including an annual information report, equality analysis to understand the impact of our services on people from the different protected groups, and an equality policy and scheme.
6. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to agree the proposed equality objectives for 2016-2020 and the action plan to deliver them. This report will also be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 7 April 2016. The views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be brought to the attention of the Cabinet at its meeting in June 2016.

Resource Implications:

The achievement of the Council's corporate equality responsibilities in relation to the proposed objectives can be met from existing resources.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The adoption of equality objectives to progress the public sector equality duty is in compliance with The Equality Act 2010.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

None relating to this report. Relevant implications arising from actions to deliver specific equality objectives for 2016-20, will be identified by the responsible service director.

Consultation Undertaken:

Directorates at key stages of objective identification and development
Management Board 13 May 2015, 4 November 2015, 2 March 2016
Governance Select Committee 7 July 2015, 1 December 2015, 5 April 2016
Procurement Steering Group 4 February 2016

Background Papers:

Equality Objectives 2012-16
Management Board reports 2 March 2016, 13 May 2015 and 4 November 2015

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

None arising from this report. Relevant risk management issues arising from actions to achieve specific equality objectives will be identified by the responsible service director

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Objective 1: To integrate the Council’s public sector equality duty into our partnership working

Ref	Action	Measures (measurable outcome)	Responsibility	Milestones	Deadline
1.	Include the Council’s equality requirements in terms of reference or service level agreement as appropriate, of <i>new</i> partnerships.	Partnerships which take forward the Council’s equality duty	Senior Performance Improvement Officer	Include as a requirement in business plan guidance	March 2017
			All Directors	EFDC equality requirements included in governance arrangements of new partnerships	March 2020

2.	Reflect the Council's public sector equality duty in governance documentation relating to partnerships listed in the Corporate Community Partnerships Register	The basis and mandate for the inclusion of the public sector equality duty in our work with partner organisations	All Directors with partnership responsibility	Review governance documents of partnerships listed in the Corporate Community Partnerships Register: to establish inclusion of the Council's public sector equality duty	March 2017
				For partnerships not already reflecting the public sector equality duty in governance arrangements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify the partnership governance arrangements review process and review opportunity; implement inclusion 	Sept 2018 March 2020
3.	Include equality outcomes as a criterion in the community grant allocation process	Grant provision which addresses inequality	Communities (Assistant Director Community Services and Safety)	Draft criteria produced and considered by O&S Task and Finish Group and Cabinet	March 2017
				Criteria adopted and implemented	March 2017

4.	Each directorate to be responsible for organising the programme of work experience for 3 young people each year 2016-2020	Young people are helped to acquire the skills and access to work	Resources (HR officers to coordinate) / All Directors	HR to work with Directorates to help develop relevant programmes	August 2016
				Directorates develop and implement programme	September – August each year from September 2016
5.	Work with partners to help older people to reduce the impacts of isolation as identified in the Impact of the Aging population Study	Reduce isolation in rural locations	Communities (Assistant Director Community Services and Safety)	Deliver a series of Older People’s engagement events	Ongoing from April 2016
				Work with partners to establish EF Dementia Action Alliance	Commence April 2016
				Pursue Dementia Friendly Services and Communities linked to above	Commence April 2016
				Work with NHS and ECC colleagues to deliver Early Intervention initiatives in EF	Commence April 2016

Objective 2: To apply robust equality requirements in commissioning, procurement and contract management

Ref	Action	Measures	Responsibility	Milestones	Deadline
1.	Review Procurement Strategy to ensure it reflects EHRC <i>'Buying better outcomes: Mainstreaming equality considerations in procurement'</i> guidance requirements	Consideration of equality embedded in Procurement Strategy	Procurement Steering Group		March 2017
2.	Review procurement Toolkit and guidance to ensure they reflect EHRC <i>'Buying better outcomes: Mainstreaming equality considerations in procurement'</i> guidance requirements for guidance documents	Consideration of equality embedded in Procurement Toolkit and Guidance	Procurement Steering Group		September 2016
3.	At next review opportunity undertake a review of Standing Orders to ensure they reflect EHRC <i>'Buying better outcomes: Mainstreaming equality considerations in procurement'</i> guidance where appropriate	Standing Orders reflect the EHRC guidance for equality in procurement	Director Governance		March 2020

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4	Review Standing Orders user guide to ensure they reflect EHRC <i>'Buying better outcomes: Mainstreaming equality considerations in procurement'</i> guidance where appropriate	Consideration of equality embedded in Standing Orders User Guide	Procurement Steering Group		March 2017
4.	<p>Ensure requirements for procurement business cases and specifications include the following equality considerations:</p> <p>Mandatory consideration:</p> <p>(a) Relevance to equality</p> <p>Considerations where equality is relevant; and applied in a proportionate way:</p> <p>(b) Added value potential;</p> <p>(c) Reasonable adjustments requirements;</p> <p>(d) Positive action which can be delivered through the procurement;</p> <p>(e) Monitoring requirements,</p>	Business cases and specifications include a consideration of equality, and record appropriate equality considerations	Directors		April 2016

	responsibilities, and arrangements; (f) How requirements lots can facilitate equality.				
5.	Ensure PQQ suitability questions include, where relevant, demographic data and analysis of needs to help contractors to respond.	Relevant equality information is provided to contractors via the PQQ	Directors		April 2016
6.	Ensure arrangements for procurement activity advertising, includes a consideration of equality where relevant.	Advertising tailored to sector and size of supplier with capability to deliver requirements	Directors		April 2016
7.	Include equality clauses and requirements in tendering documents where relevant.	Equality requirements are included in tendering documents	Directors		April 2017
8.	Ensure contract management and control process include monitoring of equality requirements	Equality requirements are monitored	Directors		April 2016

9.	Ensure equality benefits derived through procurement are recorded	Information about lessons learned is disseminated via the Intranet/Z Drive	Directors		March 2017
10.	Ensure equality lessons learnt through procurement contracts are captured and applied to future contracts	Information about lessons learnt is disseminated via the Intranet/Z Drive	Directors		March 2017

Objective 3: To develop our capacity so that our employees have the knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver our plans

Ref	Action	Measures	Responsibility	Milestones	Target dates
1.	Provide relevant equality training for employees and ensure future provision builds on training provision to date and targets corporate aims and objectives	Increased value to the Council and the individual of investment in training deployment	Resources (Learning and Development manager)	Training need identified and quantified	March 2017
				Training provision sourced	September 2017
				Training included in the Corporate Training Programme	April 2018

2.	Update Procurement e-learning module to reflect equality requirements set out in Procurement Toolkit and Guidance / Standing Orders / Procurement Strategy	Officers are trained to meet Corporate requirements for procurement activities	Learning and Development Manager / Senior Procurement Officer	Procurement e-learning module reviewed and areas for development identified	March 2017
				E-learning module developed as appropriate	
				Module included in Corporate Training Programme	
3.	Review, evaluate and make improvements (where necessary) to the process for providing members with relevant equality information to support decision making (due regard record process).	Improved provision of relevant equality information to Members	Governance (PIU)	Review Due Regard Record system and evaluate	March 2017
				Identify and develop improvements where necessary	October 2017
				Gain approval of CEWG MB, and appropriate members	
				Promote with staff via District Lines and member Forums	April 2018

				Include in member Training	2017/18 programme	
4.	Develop system for including relevant equality information in licencing and planning decision making	Relevant equality information provided to licencing and planning decision making bodies	Governance (PIU), (Development Management) / Neighbourhoods (Neighbourhood Services)	Liaise with NR and JN to identify process and required tools	June 2016	
				Develop system and gain approvals from CEWG, MB, and appropriate PFHs	December 2016	
				Promote with staff via District Lines	March 2017	
				Include in Member Training Programme	2017/18 programme	
5.	Develop, implement and promote an electronic system for equality screening and analysis submission	Greater accountability, improved record keeping, and information integrity in the equality analysis system	Governance (PIU)	Identify user requirements	June 2016	
				Resources (ICT)	Develop system	September 2016
				Governance PIU / Resources (ICT)	Implement system	April 2017
6.	Maintain accreditation to Mindful Employer for further 3 years	Commitment to supporting the mental health of employees	Resources (HR)		Dec 2016	

Objective 4: To improve and develop equality in our business activities

Ref	Action	Outcomes	Responsibility	Milestones	Target dates
1.	Produce guidance / tool/s to support the integration of equality into projects and reviews	Improved due regard to equality in projects and reviews	Head of Transformation	Integration of equality into project management guidance / tools	April 2017
2.	Map, develop, and promote the potential to channel corporate equality expertise into corporate business processes (eg: <i>Building control for access issues; Neighbourhoods for languages spoken in the district</i>)	Improved resources for business processes	CEWG	Map developed	March 2017
			CEWG	Process developed	March 2018
			All Directors with responsibility	Implementation	March 2020
3.	Produce and promote a process for accessing comprehensive translation services	Improved access to translation services	Governance (PIU)	Process developed	June 2017
				Promote via Intranet and District Lines	September 2018
4	Review the requirement for business advice provided in other languages; extend the provision where identified	Non-English speakers and small businesses helped to gain skills and knowledge to enhance their employment opportunities	All Directors	Requirement reviewed	March 2017
				Develop provision where identified and appropriate	March 2020



SCRUTINY



Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 19 April 2016

Subject: Select Committee Framework - Review

Officer contact for further information: S. Tautz (01992 564180)

Democratic Services Officer: A. Hendry (01992 564246)

Recommendations/Decisions Required

That the Committee consider:

- (a) any necessary changes to the service scrutiny responsibilities of the four select committees, for implementation from the commencement of the 2016/17 municipal year;**
- (b) any necessary enhancements to the current arrangements for the development of work programmes for the individual select committees; and**
- (c) any other matters relating to the operation of the select committees.**

Report

Introduction

1. As the Committee are aware, a new Overview and Scrutiny framework based on a structure of four 'select committees', was established with effect from the commencement of the current municipal year. Details of the select committee framework and the responsibilities of each select committee are attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
2. As the first year of the select committee arrangements comes to an end, it is considered that it would be useful for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review the operation and management of the select committees, particularly in terms of the allocation of service responsibilities between individual committees and the achievability of their associated work programmes.
3. The views of the current chairmen and lead officers of the select committees have therefore been sought in connection with the operation and management of the select committees over the last year. An item was also included in the Council Bulletin during February 2016, inviting other members to contribute to the review, and a number of officers have also submitted observations on the current arrangements. This report presents the outcome of this review exercise.

Select Committee Structure

4. The Committee will recall that the adopted select committee framework largely reflects the Council's current management structure. Although the introduction of a fully-aligned framework was considered at the time of the adoption of the select committee arrangements in February 2014, the Committee considered that the creation of a

standalone 'Communities Select Committee' might result in the disproportionately heavy workload and that the Community Services and Community Safety responsibilities of the Communities Directorate, should therefore be subject to scrutiny through a 'Neighbourhoods and Community Services Select Committee', leaving a standalone 'Housing Select Committee' that reflected the previous framework approach. In adopting this structure, members requested that the appropriateness of the framework be reviewed after one year of operation.

5. The comments and observations that have been submitted in relation to the operation of the select committee arrangements over the last year are largely focussed on the division of service responsibilities, which appear to have created a disproportionately heavy workload in terms of overview and scrutiny activity, between the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Select Committee and the other three select committees. Other matters raised by members or officers on the current select committee arrangements are set out towards the end of this report.
6. For background information, the Governance Select Committee has met on five occasions during the current municipal year. The Housing Select Committee has met on four occasions during the same period, the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Select Committee on six occasions and the Resources Select Committee on five occasions. One meeting of the Housing Select Committee (September 2015) was cancelled during the year due to a shortage of business. An additional meeting of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Select Committee was held during the year (November 2015) to consider a review of the introduction of the Council's new waste collection and recycling arrangements.
7. The Neighbourhoods and Community Services Select Committee also acts as the Council's Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee, keeping under review the activities of the Epping Forest Community Safety Partnership. At the time of the establishment of the select committee framework, it was felt by officers that a move to a strictly directorate-aligned structure could be adequately addressed through the development of focused work programmes for each committee.

Chairman of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Select Committee

8. The Chairman of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Select Committee (Councillor M. Sartin) has indicated that, whilst she understands some of the argument that lead to the introduction of the current framework arrangements, the structure has meant that the Neighbourhoods and Communities Select Committee has assumed a very heavy workload. Councillor Sartin has stated that the Committee has received some substantial reports during the year and has had in-depth discussions on a wide-range of matters. However, Councillor Sartin considers that there have been occasions when there has not been enough time available to the Committee at its meetings to give subjects as fair a hearing as would have been liked or that was deserved.
9. Although an additional meeting of the Select Committee was held during the year (specifically to consider a review of the introduction of the Council's new waste collection and recycling arrangements), Councillor Sartin would not like additional meetings to be held or further select committees to be established to address the difficulties experienced by the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Select Committee in achieving its work programme. Councillor Sartin would like consideration to be given to at least some of the service functions of the Communities Directorate that the Select Committee is currently responsible for, being added to the responsibilities of the Housing Select Committee, particularly as meetings of the Housing Select Committee generally appear to have been comparatively short in duration during the year and that, on one occasion, a meeting of the Committee was cancelled.

Director of Neighbourhoods

10. The views expressed by the Chairman of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Select Committee are generally echoed by the Director of Neighbourhoods, who acts as the lead officer for the Select Committee.
11. The Director of Neighbourhoods has suggested that his previous concern regarding the imbalance between the responsibilities of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Select Committee' and the Housing Select Committee, has transpired. This is not only by virtue of the significant number of diverse service areas contained within the current terms of reference of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Select Committee, but also the corporate importance of matters such as the Local Plan, the Waste Collection and Recycling Contract and community safety etc.). This has, in the opinion of the Director of Neighbourhoods, led to insufficient time to undertake thorough scrutiny activity as, on more than one occasion, meetings have concluded after 10.00pm and agenda have approaching twenty items.
12. The establishment of the select committee framework on a basis not aligned completely to directorate responsibilities has, in the opinion of the Director of Neighbourhoods also lead to a layer of complexity at officer and Portfolio Holder level which is inefficient. Going forward, the Director of Neighbourhoods considers that a straight alignment with the directorate responsibilities would resolve this issue and prevent the work of one select committee being compromised by the desire of another to be largely single issue based.
13. The views of the Chairman of the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Select Committee and the Director of Neighbourhoods are generally also supported by the Democratic Services Officer that supports the Select Committee.

Director of Communities

14. As part of the original consideration of the select committee framework, the Director of Communities expressed the view that the Housing Select Committee should also incorporate matters relating to Community Services and Community Safety (currently covered by the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Select Committee). However, the Director of Communities is of the view that the separation of these Communities Directorate functions between two select committees has not been detrimental and that there have been some real benefits in Community Services' issues being considered by the same select committee that is also responsible for leisure services and provision.
15. The Director of Communities also feels that the workload of the Housing Select Committee is now at an optimum level (following a review of its scope over the past year) and more in line with the workloads of the other select committees, which was a concern of members when implementing the select committee arrangements.
16. Additionally, the Director of Communities also believes that practical benefits have been generated by the new framework for the Safer, Greener and Transport and Leisure and Community Services Portfolio Holders, who only have to attend one select committee, rather than two. From the perspective of officers within the Communities Directorate, the separation of functions has also not appeared to be a problem, since the Director of Communities has led on the Housing Select Committee and the Assistant Director (Community Services and Community Safety) has led the Communities Directorate's input to the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Select Committee.
17. In the opinion of the Director of Communities, the select committee framework has worked much better than the previous arrangement of thematic scrutiny panels, not least since all of the Council's services are now covered by one of the select

committees. In particular, the Director of Communities considers that the scrutiny of Key Performance Indicators by the select committee works much better as the individual committees are able to devote more time to scrutinising performance in their relevant areas.

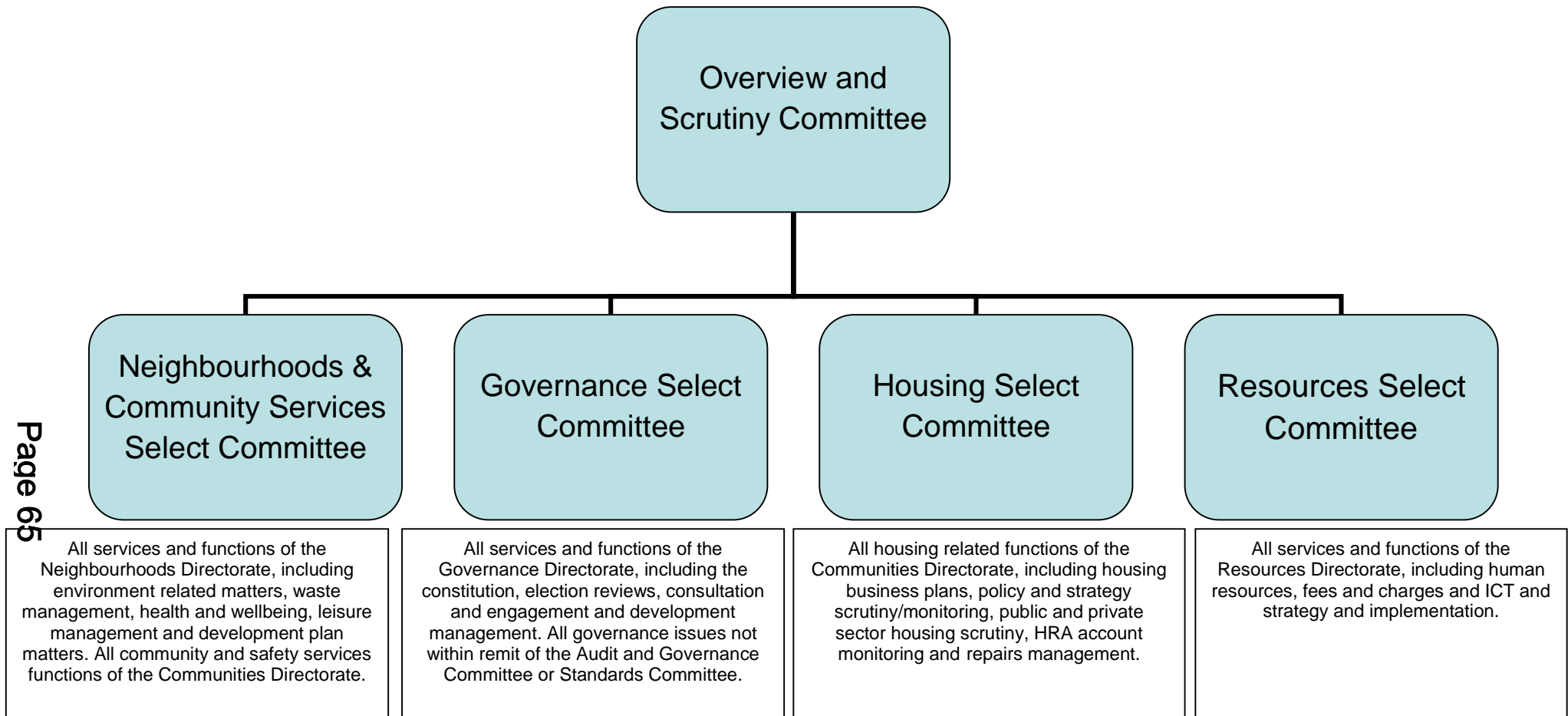
Other Matters

18. The Technology and Support Services Portfolio Holder (Councillor A. Lion) considers that the scrutiny function is still not strong enough and to needs get behind the real issues to improve the functions of the Council. Councillor A. Lion believes that the work programmes for the select committees need to be linked to corporate objectives, business plans and to business, as opposed to financial audit, and has suggested Portfolio Holders could be asked to present the business plan for their portfolio and what they are planning to achieve in the year ahead.
19. On a wider issue, Councillor Lion has also suggested that meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee do not seem to allow members to question things and that, when presentations are made to members, questions should be followed up and reports brought forward on progress. However, it is considered that these matters are already covered by the existing Overview and Scrutiny provisions of the Council's constitution.
20. Councillor Lion has also proposed that a meeting should be held between the chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the select committees at the start of each year, in order to plan the work programmes for the year ahead. It is worth noting however that the development of focused and achievable work programmes for each select committee each year, drawing on Portfolio Holder and service delivery aims and objectives and relevant community priorities, was a recommendation arising from the overview and scrutiny review of 2014/15 that lead to the establishment of the select committee framework.

Conclusions

21. The year-end position with regard to the achievement of the work programme for each select committee for 2015/16 is set out elsewhere in the agenda for the meeting.
22. The views expressed in regard to the operation of the select committees over the last year have been considered by Management Board, which is of the opinion that the select committee framework should in future be fully aligned to the directorate management structure. The Board also considers that concerns previously expressed that an aligned structure would result in the service responsibilities of some Portfolio Holders being split for scrutiny purposes across different select committees, can be adequately managed through relevant, achievable and prioritised annual work programmes for each select committee. The lead officer and the chairman of each select committee are responsible for the development of the work programme, which should be informed by relevant service aims and member priorities.
23. In adopting the current framework in February 2015, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee stressed that it did not wish to place additional burden on service directors in respect of attendance at meetings of the select committees, and that meetings of the committees could therefore also be supported by an appropriate Assistant Director most relevant to specific topics under consideration.
24. The Committee is asked to consider any necessary changes to the select committee framework, for implementation from 2016/17. Revisions to the select framework are not a matter reserved to the Council.

Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee Framework



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Overview and Scrutiny
Annual Report for
2015-2016



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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT: MUNICIPAL YEAR 2015/2016

Introduction and Welcome from the Chairman

Welcome to the eleventh report of the Overview and Scrutiny Structure of Epping Forest District Council. After an 11 month long review into the Overview and Scrutiny functions we have established a new way to conduct our business. This year we have established four Select Committees in place of the old Scrutiny Panels structure we have had in previous years. These Select Committees were roughly aligned with the new Directorate structure the Council had put in place.

As always, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the new Select Committees were charged with reviewing Cabinet decisions, the Corporate Strategy, the Council's financial performance and also scrutinising the performance of the public bodies active in the District by inviting reports and presentations from them. The bare bones of scrutiny had not changed, only the way we carried it out.

At the beginning of the 2015/16 municipal year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to the setting up of four Select Committees for the year; no Task and Finish Panels were commissioned, but the already established Grant Aid Task and Finish Panel and the Youth Engagement Task and Finish Panel continued their work from the previous year.

During the year we received numerous presentations from outside bodies including the Epping Forest College, Barts Health NHS Trust, and the Epping Forest Youth Council.

My thanks go to the Chairmen and members of the four new Select Committees and the members and officers of the Task and Finish Panel, and my special thanks go to my Vice-Chairman, Councillor Angold-Stephens for all his help and support through the year.

And of course, I would like to thank all the officers that have worked so hard to keep the Committee members informed and supplied with the background information that they needed to carry out their investigations.

Cllr Richard Morgan
Chairman, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

What is Scrutiny?

- Scrutiny in local government is the mechanism by which public accountability is exercised.
- The purpose of scrutiny in practice is to examine, question and evaluate in order to achieve improvement.
- The value of scrutiny is in the use of research and questioning techniques to make recommendations based on evidence.
- Scrutiny enables issues of public concerns to be examined.
- At the heart of all the work is consideration of what impact the Cabinet's plans will have on the local community.
- However, the overview and scrutiny function is not meant to be confrontational or seen as deliberately set up to form an opposition to the Cabinet. Rather the two aspects should be regarded as 'different sides of the same coin'. The two should complement each other and work in tandem to contribute to the development of the authority.

Alongside its role to challenge, the scrutiny function has also continued to engage positively with the Cabinet and there continues to be cross party co-operation between members on all panels.

Scrutiny has continued to provide valuable contributions to the Council and the Cabinet remained receptive to ideas put forward by Scrutiny throughout the year.

The rules of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee also allow members of the public to have the opportunity to address the Committee on any agenda item.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee coordinated with the Cabinet and pre scrutinised their Key Decision list (their forward plan) on a meeting by meeting basis. This acted as a troubleshooting exercise, unearthing problems before they arose.

The Committee also engaged with external bodies in order to scrutinise parts of their work that encroached on the District and its people. They also received stand alone reports from officers and reports from the Select Committees on the work they carried out during the year.

Select Committees

A lead Officer was appointed to each Select Committee to facilitate its process. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the terms of reference for each of the Committees on the basis of a rolling programme to consider ongoing and cyclical issues. Four Select Committees were established, dealing with:

- i. Housing
- ii. Governance
- iii. Neighbourhoods and Communities
- iv. Resources

The Select Committees reported regularly to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress with the work they were carrying out.

Task and Finish Panels

The Task and Finish reviews are restricted to dealing with activities which are issue based, time limited, non-cyclical and with clearly defined objectives on which they would report, once completed, to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Two Task and Finish Panels were established last year, both finishing this year. They were the Youth Engagement Task and Finish Panel, and the Grant Aid Review Task and Finish Panel.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee consisted of the following members:

Councillor R Morgan (Chairman)
Councillor K Angold-Stephens (Vice Chairman)
Councillors N Avey, T Church, D Dorrell, L Girling, S Kane, P Keska, A Mitchell, G Mohindra, S Murray, S Neville, B Rolfe M Sartin, G Shiell, B Surtees and D Wixley

The Lead Officer was Derek Macnab, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods.

Terms of Reference

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee's main functions are to monitor and scrutinise the work of the executive and its forward plan, external bodies linked to the District Council and the Council's financial performance. It is tasked with the consideration of call-ins, policy development, performance monitoring and reviewing corporate strategies.

The Committee's workload over the past year can be broken down as follows:

(a) Scrutinising and monitoring Cabinet work

The Committee has a proactive role in this area through carrying out pre-scrutiny work. This involved considering the Cabinet's Key Decision List (Forward Plan) for the coming months on a meeting by meeting basis.

(b) Call-ins

The Committee received one call-in this year.

The call-in received was on the Cabinet Decision ((C-018-2015/16) on the release of restructure covenants on land at Epping Forest College, Loughton.

The Call-in was based on the following premises, that:

- 1) *The covenants were imposed by the London County Council to protect an adequate supply of land for educational and NHS use in the vicinity of the residential development they had undertaken.*
- 2) *That need remains valid today.*
- 3) *ECC projections of rising 5s, plus the factors of extensive EFDC council house building and of continuing in-migration, imply a new school will be needed in 7-10 years.*
- 4) *There is no suitable spare land in Loughton on which a new school could be built.*
- 5) *Therefore this land, use of which was restricted for the needs of the then LEA (and NHS), should continue to be protected by covenant, for its original purpose.*

In attendance for the consideration of the call-in was Brian Page, the interim Principal of Epping Forest College; County Councillor Ray Gooding, the ECC Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning and Mark Pincombe the ECC School Organisation Officer.

The responsible Portfolio Holder noted that it was not his job to address the provision of primary educational needs for the area. Officers had asked Essex County Council's Education department and they said that they did not want the land; and the education projection of the population by the ONS suggested that no new places were to be needed in the next 10 years. He had received a request from Epping Forest College to release the Covenant and had to process that request in a reasonable timescale. It was a decision that was looked at in great depth, and in which officers had asked the Education Authority whether they wanted the land and they did not. Given that, the Cabinet had no option but to say that it made sense to release the covenants.

In the end and after reviewing the arguments both for and against, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee confirmed the original decision of the Cabinet (C-018-2015/16) regarding the release of restrictive covenants on land at Epping Forest College.

(c) Select Committees work programme monitoring

The Committee received regular updates from the Chairmen of the various Select Committees reporting on the progress made on their current work programme. This allowed the Committee to monitor their performance and if necessary adjust their work plans to take into account new proposals and urgent items.

(d) Items considered by the committee this year

Over the year the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received various presentations and considered a range of diverse topics.

Presentations:

(i) Barts Health NHS Trust – Whipps Cross University Hospital - The Committee at their first meeting of the year in June 2015 received a presentation from Lyn Hill-Tout, the interim Managing Director of Whipps Cross University Hospital. She was there to report to members on Barts Health NHS Trust's detailed plans for improvement in the areas of concern identified by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The Committee noted that Ms Hill-Tout had only been in post for 8 weeks, although she has had 42 years experience in the NHS and was last at the Mid-Staffordshire NHS Trust.

The Committee noted that 4 warning notices had been issued by the CQC plus specific compliance actions. The key concerns arising from the inspections were: insufficient staff levels; a persisting culture of bullying and harassment; bed occupancy that was too high; and a failure to meet national waiting times targets. Part of these concerns related to the high levels of agency staff and low staff moral.

The four warning notices related to the following regulations: staffing; incidents and learning (staff did not feel that anything was being done); flow, escalation, end of life care; and complaints and PALS.

There were however areas of outstanding practice, one was the effective management of pain relief for children and adults and their 'Great Expectations' maternity programme.

Four major hospital services at Whipps Cross (surgery, critical care, maternity and gynaecology, and services for children and young people) were rated as good for delivering caring treatment.

Ms Hill-Tout noted that Whipps Cross was still needed and had a future in providing acute healthcare to its local population, but has to change and develop a strategy for the future. They were committed to transparency with their stakeholders, staff and patients about their progress. A lot of people looked upon Whipps Cross as their local hospital and there was a lot of positive feedback from the local population.

The meeting was then opened out to questions from the members of the committee.

(See Case Study for full details)

(ii) Volunteering through Time Banking - At their meeting in July 2015 the Committee welcomed Marc Balkham the Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF) time-bank co-ordinator; with him was Chris Overend the EFDC policy officer.

Mr Balkham noted that this scheme covered the Epping Forest District as well as Harlow. This was about an exchange of time and skills between time bank members. They need only do what they wanted, when they wanted to. As they volunteered they built up time credits and were able to claim it back. Some examples of things that could be done were gardening, DIY, help with IT, languages, music or dance tuition. The scheme was free to join, with any exchanges covered by insurance. There was a simple online registration process that also required two referees. This was a requirement for joining, and both referees would be contacted and asked to provide a reference.

Some activities were best avoided such as providing direct care; anything carrying a financial risk; or repairs to cars and motorcycles for critical mechanical works such as breaks, steering or suspension; and childcare and anything connected with children. Groups of members could become mini time banks, if they had a shared location or shared aims.

The meeting was then opened to questions from the members present.

(iii) Presentation from the Epping Forest College - At their meeting in October 2015, 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.

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.

Later in the year this would be a subject of a call-in.

The meeting was then opened to questions from the members present.

(iv) Barts Health NHS Trust - At their February 2016 meeting the Committee received a return visit from Barts Health NHS Trust there to update the Committee on their improvement plan from their last visit to this meeting in June 2015. In attendance was Fiona Smith, the Managing Director for Whipps Cross Hospital, with Dr Heather Noble, the Medical Director and Felicia Kwaku, the interim Director of Nursing.

They had now finalised their improvement plan called 'Safe and Compassionate', with each site having the same headings for their improvement plans. The improvement was being delivered through seven key work streams with both a corporate and site based focus and key government structures.

They had made progress in freeing up ward managers to manage ward fundamentals; nursing documentation had been streamlined; had started a 'smile and care' campaign and patient engagement workshops; put in a revised complaints process with a requirement to be much more responsive; and visitors and patients were able to identify the nurse in charge via a badge.

They had also ensured that there were appropriate care plans for those patients nearing the end of their life. Also the Margaret Centre had now been refurbished, making it a more safe and comfortable environment for patients and families.

The Trust now had a new Chairman and a new Chief Medical Officer and a new Deputy Chief Executive. The Trust Board also had two new Non-Executive Directors to strengthen the Board. They also had new site teams in place accountable for operational delivery. They have a new programme called 'listening into action' to engage staff and also hold "Big Conversations" with staff (so far with over 1000 staff). This had resulted in lots of little improvements being made following suggestions from members of staff.

(See Case Study for full details)

Other Topics Considered:

(i) Over the course of the year the Committee considered the Cabinet's Forward Plan and Key Objectives for the coming year on a regular meeting by meeting basis. At each meeting the Committee looked at the updated list of the coming year's work programmed in for the Cabinet.

(ii) In June 2015 the Committee received a report setting out the year end outturn of the Corporate Plan Key Objectives. The Committee reviewed the report setting out the final outturn and progress made of the Council's Key Objectives for 2014/15.

They noted that:

- (a) 65% of the individual deliverables or actions supporting the key objectives had been achieved; and
- (b) 35% of the deliverables or actions were not completed by year-end.

(iii) The Leader of the Council, Councillor C Whitbread, introduced the Corporate Plan, Key Action Plan 2016/17 report. The Corporate Plan included the aims and objectives which are the Council's highest level strategic intentions. He noted that this was coming out earlier this year so as to get as much input as possible. This was an early opportunity for members to have some input into the Corporate Plan for 2016/17.

(iv) In July 2015 the Committee considered a consultation document on the replacement Waste Local Plan, revised preferred approach. They noted that Essex County Council (ECC) and Southend Borough Council were Waste Planning Authorities (WPAs) and were required to prepare a Replacement Waste Local Plan (RWLP) under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and the revised EU Waste Framework Directive (2010).

The consultation ran from 18 June to 30 July 2015 – a period of six weeks, but the lead-in time for this Committee has meant that officers have had only one week to familiarise themselves with lengthy and quite difficult documentation to prepare this report. Officers believed that this was a wholly unreasonable approach by the WPAs, unfair to all consultees because of completely inadequate time to get to grips with a very important, but very complex, issue.

The formal response by this Council to the consultation emphasised the dissatisfaction that was shared by officers and Members. With future consultations, and with issues of this complexity, the Waste Planning Authorities must make full allowance for the lead-in period required by local authorities to prepare and publicise Committee reports.

(v) Also in July, the Committee considered the newly established Select Committee's Terms of Reference following the Council's revised procedure rules for the operation of the Overview and Scrutiny Function. The terms of reference were developed between the lead officers and the Chairmen of each committee before they went to the first meeting of that select committee for consideration and agreement. The terms of reference were intended to reflect the scope of each committee who were to provide regular progress reporting on relevant matters to be made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(vi) In October 2015, 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.

(vii) The Committee also received the final report from the Youth Engagement Review Task and Finish Panel presented by Councillor A Patel, a member of the Panel in the absence of the Chairman, with 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.

The Panel had 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 had 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 Committee agreed the recommendations made by the Task and Finish Panel and recommended them to the Cabinet.

Through the year the Committee was kept apprised of what was happening to the Task and Finish Panel's recommendations as they went through Cabinet and the budget setting round.

(viii) At the end of each quarter, the Committee received a report regarding the Quarterly 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.

(ix) In January 2016 the Committee received a report on Chelmsford City Local Plan consultation issues. Chelmsford's current local plan would run until 2021 and the next local plan was intended to roll forward to 2036. This consultation on the issues and options was the first of three such public consultation exercises.

Chelmsford shares boundaries with seven other Essex local authorities including Epping Forest District. It has an area of about 34,000 ha, 34% of which is in the Green Belt – this covering the south-west of the City Council area, including the boundary with this Council. It has a current population of 168,300 (with approximately 110,000 in Chelmsford Urban Area) and this is expected to increase to 192,000 by 2022.

Members noted that provision for traveller sites and pitches was a particularly difficult issue for this authority because of the 92% Green Belt coverage and the fact that permanent and temporary pitches were inappropriate development in the Green Belt. As this authority has a target of 112 extra pitches from the Essex GTAA 2014, one of the options for meeting this will be to discuss with neighbouring authorities the possibility of meeting some of this need through joint or shared provision. Chelmsford's consultation document did not mention this as a potential option.

(x) Also in January the Committee received another consultation document on the consultation relating to Crossrail 2.

Following an earlier consultation in 2013, the route for Crossrail 2 was decided upon with the Regional option favoured over the Metro option. This decision accorded with the route preference expressed by this Council at that time. Subject to funding and Government approval, it was anticipated that an application for powers could be made in 2017, with construction beginning in 2020 and completion in 2030.

The route of the Regional Option Crossrail 2 Line would run north-east to south-west in tunnels through central London linking up Wimbledon with Tottenham Hale. At the north-east end of the line a branch was proposed from Dalston heading to New Southgate in Enfield via Seven Sisters. However, the main line would run through Tottenham Hale following the WAML route up to Broxbourne.

The Committee noted that it was important to understand what the overall benefits and impacts of Crossrail 2 were likely to be for the District. In reiterating EFDC's continued broad support for Crossrail 2, there were invariably a number of issues and uncertainties at this stage regarding the likely impacts that implementation of the scheme may have. And, given that 2030 was the very earliest date that the line could become operational, assessment of likely impacts on Epping Forest District were very difficult to gauge at this stage.

In expressing a preference for the regional option this Council highlighted its concern about the need for guaranteed future investment in, and improvements to, the Central Line – both the Epping branch and the Hainault loop. The route, speed and relative ticket pricing for Crossrail 2 when it becomes operational are all variables that are likely to influence passenger behaviour between using Crossrail 2 or the Central Line to access central London.

(xi) At their February 2016 meeting the Committee responded to the Basildon Borough Council local plan consultation and a consultation from the Essex Fire Authority. This consultation document proposed three options for organisational changes to the Essex County Fire and Rescue Services against a background of changing risk, reduced funding and a greater emphasis on partnership working.

(xii) Also in February the Committee considered and agreed the report on the recent review of the Waste and Recycling Collection arrangements and their initial service failures.

It concluded that a number of the problems encountered by Biffa when introducing the revised 4-day collection arrangements, could have been avoided with additional time, e.g. to improve staff training and familiarisation with new vehicles and IT, to test drive new routes more thoroughly, to retain and utilise local knowledge of existing staff, to fully run in new fleet and to have operated longer from new depot locations, before the service change.

This report then went up to cabinet to present its findings.

(e) Case Study: Barts Health NHS Trust – Whipps Cross University Hospital

At their June 2015 and their February 2016 meetings the Committee received a presentation from officers from Barts Health NHS Trust.

They were there because a recent Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection of Whipps Cross had taken place in November 2014 by a team of about 20 inspectors with different expertise. Five domains were used to rate the quality of services: safe, effective, caring, responsive and well led.

The overall CQC rating of Whipps Cross was 'inadequate' and 4 warning notices were issued by the CQC plus specific compliance actions. The key concerns arising from the inspections were: *insufficient staff levels; a persisting culture of bullying and harassment; bed occupancy that was too high; and a failure to meet national waiting times targets*. Part of these concerns related to the high levels of agency staff and low staff moral.

The four warning notices related to the following regulations: *staffing; incidents and learning (staff did not feel that anything was being done); flow, escalation, end of life care; and complaints and PALS*; and the four compliance actions related to safeguarding; consent; records; and equipment.

There were however areas of outstanding practice, one was the effective management of pain relief for children and adults; and their 'Great Expectations' maternity programme. Also four major hospital services at Whipps Cross (surgery, critical care, maternity and gynaecology, and services for children and young people) were rated as good for delivering caring treatment.

The NHS Trust Development Authority (TDA) had placed Barts Health in special measures. These were designed to deliver service improvements at pace by providing support where it was most needed. Part of this support includes the appointment of an Improvement Director and the opportunity to partner with a high-performing trust. It was noted that staff were very relieved when that this report was produced as it had highlighted their concerns.

Improvement programmes would be developed in partnership with staff, staff representatives, patients and partner organisations.

It was noted that Whipps Cross was still needed and had a future in providing acute healthcare to its local population, but had to change and a future strategy had to be developed.

In February 2016 a different set of officers came to the Committee to update them on the progress made by Barts Health in the eight months between their first visit in June. They came to update the Committee on the measures undertaken since Barts NHS had been put into special measures and Whipps Cross Hospital had received four warning notices issued by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). They had now finalised their improvement plan called 'Safe and Compassionate', with each site having the same headings for their improvement plans. The improvement was being delivered through seven key work streams with both a corporate and site based focus and key government structures.

The trust had put in place "safety huddles" for each hospital every day, to discuss any safety or quality issues that would affect their patients. They also reviewed performance on a ward by ward basis against key quality and safety metrics that allowed them to track the measures in place. They also held monthly learning reviews looking at learning and sharing of improvement actions.

They had made progress in freeing up ward managers to manage ward fundamentals; nursing documentation had been streamlined; had started a 'smile and care' campaign and patient engagement workshops; put in a revised complaints process with a requirement to be much more responsive; and visitors and patients were able to identify the nurse in charge via a badge.

They had also ensured that there were appropriate care plans for those patients nearing the end of their life. Also the Margaret Centre had now been refurbished, making it a more safe and comfortable environment for patients and families.

They were also tackling the number of vacancies and engaging more with staff. They had reviewed safe staffing levels and increased funded nursing establishment by 532 posts (150 posts being at Whipps Cross). Their current fill rate was up to 82% and they wished to take it up to at least 90%.

Whipps cross Hospital now had an integrated discharge team, working with CCGs, Council Social Care and Community Health Teams.

They were also investing £2million in IT, the first steps in a wider programme; £17.5million was planned in investment in Whipps Cross improvements; there was also a ward improvement programme and £15million set aside for medical equipment across the Trust. It was noted that Whipps Cross was an old site, hard for staff to work in, but Barts Health was now investing in the site. A new High Dependency Unit was to be opened by July.

The Committee via the Chairman thanked the representatives from the Barts Health NHS Trust for their excellent presentation and their full and helpful answers and congratulated them on the work they had done so far.

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SELECT COMMITTEES

1. HOUSING SELECT COMMITTEE

The Housing Select Committee consisted of the following members:

Councillor S Murray (Chairman)
Councillor A Mitchell (Vice Chairman)
Councillors K Chana, R Gadsby, L Girling, S Kane, J Lea, C Roberts, B Rolfe, G Shiell and J H Whitehouse

The Lead Officer was Alan Hall, Director of Communities. The Committee also appreciated the Housing Portfolio Holder, Councillor D Stallan, attending the meetings to help them with their deliberations.

Wyn Marshall represented the Tenants and Leaseholder Federation, attending the meetings as a non-voting co-opted member to provide the views of residents and stakeholders.

Terms of Reference

The Housing Select Committee was tasked to undertake reviews of housing related services and related functions of the Communities Directorate;

To ensure that they are appropriate and responsive to the needs of residents, service users and others;

To consider the effect of Government actions on housing related services and functions of the communities Directorate;

To undertake performance monitoring in relation to the housing services; and

They also undertake specific projects related to public and private sector housing issues, as directed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Panel scrutinised a number of important issues over the last year, which included:

(i) **Communities Directorate's Housing Service Strategies** – At the beginning of the year (June 2015) the Committee received several reports on the various Strategies and Standards covering Housing and the Communities Directorate. These included the review of the Housing Strategy, Housing Service Standards Performance (2014-15) and review, the Communities Directorate's Housing Service Strategy on Energy Efficiency, the Housing Service Strategy on Housing and Neighbourhood Management, the Housing Service Strategy on Older People's Housing services and the Housing Strategy: 6 month progress report on the Key Action Plan 2015/16.

These were reviewed and agreed by the Committee and would continued to be kept under review throughout the year.

(ii) Key Performance Indicators – Outturn (Q4) Performance - From 2014/15 each former Scrutiny Panel became responsible for the review of quarterly performance against KPIs falling within its area of responsibility. This report therefore included in detail only those indicators which fell within the areas of responsibility of the Housing Select Committee.

Ten of the Key Performance Indicators fell within the Housing Select Committee's areas of responsibility with the overall position in regard to the achievement of target performance at the end of the year, as follows:

- 10 (100%) indicators achieved the cumulative end of year target.

(iii) Presentation on the current and future approach dealing with Private Empty Properties – In November, the Select Committee received a presentation from the Private Housing Manager (Technical) regarding the Current and Future approach to dealing with Private Empty Properties.

The Select Committee were advised that nationally, there had been a reduction in the number of empty homes:

(a) From 783,119 in 2008 to 610,123 in 2014;

(b) Within Epping Forest District Council the reduction had been from 1,837 in 2005 to 1,391 in 2014; and

(c) From the £548,829 received by the District Council through the New Homes Bonus, £57,946 was due to the reduction in empty homes.

(See Case Study for full details)

(iv) Results of the STAR Triennial Tenant Satisfaction Survey - The Council's Communities' Directorate had been a member of Housemark, a national housing benchmarking club, for many years. They had a standard Tenant Satisfaction Survey called STAR (Survey of Tenants and Residents) for its members to use.

The Council had commissioned an independent research company to carry out the STAR survey which took place between July and August 2015. An anonymous postal self completion questionnaire was sent to a random sample of a third of the District Council's tenants. In total, 798 tenants took part in the survey, representing a 36% response rate. This was well in excess of the STAR target. There were 26 questions in total.

Overall the resident satisfaction survey results in 2015 were broadly similar in comparison to the last STAR survey with satisfaction scores varying by one or two percentage points, up or down, on the majority of core questions compared to 2012. Where benchmark information was available, the vast majority of results were generally at or above average when compared with other landlords. The most notable result from the survey concerned the quality of homes which showed an 84% satisfaction level.

(v) Response to DCLG Consultation on mandatory 'Pay to Stay' Scheme – The Select Committee received a report regarding the District Council's proposed response to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Consultation on Pay to Stay: Fairer Rents in Social Housing.

In June 2013, the DCLG issued a consultation paper entitled "High Income Social Tenants Pay to Stay." At that time, the Government set out its intention that local

authorities should be given the flexibility to charge those with high income proposed at that time, as more than (£60,000 per year) a higher level of rent to stay in their own homes. The proposal at that time was based on the higher rent being set at 80% of market rents. The Housing Scrutiny Panel, which preceded this Select Committee, supported the proposal at that time but had concerns particularly around administration costs, the creation of “ghettos” which would inhibit mixed communities and felt that different thresholds should be applied to different parts of the country.

In October 2015, the Government issued a further Consultation Paper – Pay to Stay: Fairer Rents in Social Housing. Particular attention was drawn to the two questions on which views were invited by the DCLG, these were:

Question 1: How income thresholds should operate beyond the minimum threshold set at budget, for example through the use of a simple taper/multiple thresholds that increases the amount of rent as income increases and whether the starting threshold should be set in relation to eligibility for Housing Benefit?

Members felt that the introduction of a simple taper could be a sensible approach on the basis that a tenant’s taxable income increased the level of rent increase. However, this change would make the administrative arrangements difficult.

Question 2: Based on the current system and powers that local authorities had, what was your estimate of the administrative costs and what were the factors that drive these costs?

Officers considered that to administer the scheme an additional 2 (FTE) members of staff would be required to deal with matters such as tenants changing incomes and rent levels, backdating increased payments and refunds, altering a tenant’s rent in accordance with their tenancy conditions and undertaking regular reviews.

The Committee was advised that due to changes in income and benefit, officers would need to review cases several times a year.

(vi) Future Approach to Housing Service Strategies – The Director of Communities explained that over many years, the Housing Service had formulated a suite of Housing Service Strategies that individually set out the detailed approach taken by the Council and its officers to various housing activities. All the service strategies were produced in a common format and were then reviewed and updated by officers every three years and reported to the Housing Select Committee for consideration. Around the same time, service strategies relating to landlord services were also reported to the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation for their views.

The Communities Management Team (CMT) had recently considered the cost-benefits of spending the significant amount of time to update these Housing Service Strategies. They identified that although the general principles set out in the Service Strategies were followed, the Service Strategies were hardly ever referred to by officers between the three yearly reviews. Moreover, most of the actions included within the Action Plans had usually already been identified and planned prior to the relevant Service Strategy being updated and were included and monitored through the Communities Directorate’s Continuous Improvement Regime in any event.

The CMT was also aware that this approach to strategic service planning was not adopted by any of the other Directorates, Select Committees or Portfolio Holders. There was therefore an inconsistent approach both across the Council and the

Communities Directorate. However, the CMT was also aware that the Select Committee appeared to find it useful to understand and review the Council's approach to the various housing functions.

The CMT did believe that there would be real benefit in continuing to review, update and maintain some of the service strategies in some form, due to their particular strategic importance or a legal requirement.

Officers suggested that a further report be submitted to the Select Committee recommending that the number of strategies should be reduced, with some of them being combined, significantly reduced in content and reviewed every 5 years, instead of every 3 years.

In January 2016 officers came back with a new approach to covering the strategies most needed by the Council, including a reduction the number of strategies from 16 to 7, which the Select Committee supported.

(vii) Six Month Review of the HRA Financial Plan - As part of the Chancellor's Summer Budget in July 2015, it was announced that all social landlords must reduce their rents by 1% per annum for four years. The District Council's consultants had assessed that the estimated loss in rental income to the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) would be around £14 million over the next four years and around £228 million over the next 30 years. In view of this significant reduction in rental income, the consultants were commissioned to provide a report on the options available to the Council to ensure that its HRA did not fall into deficit.

The Select Committee were advised that the consultant's report identified a number of options available to the Council to re-cost its HRA Financial Plan for the future, including:

- a) Ceasing all or some of the funding currently available within the Financial Plan for future housing improvements and service enhancements for HRA services;
- b) Reducing investment in improvements to the Council's housing stock;
- c) Reducing/ceasing the Council's own Housebuilding Programme;
- d) Further borrowing for the HRA, repaid by the end of the Financial Plan; or
- e) Combinations of the above.

It was advised that the Housing Portfolio Holder had recommended to the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee in September 2015 that most of the £702,000 uncommitted funding within the HRA's Housing Improvements and Service Enhancements Fund for 2016/17 should not be allocated or spent at present.

(viii) Key Performance Indicators - Quarterly Progress – the Committee reviewed the Key Performance Indicators relevant to their Select Committee on a quarterly basis.

(ix) Data Quality Strategy 2016/17 – 2018/19 – At their March 2016 meeting the Select Committee noted that good quality data was essential in supporting the Council's decision making especially where these involved finance and performance. Additionally the Council's customers, partners and others interested in the Council's performance, needed to rely on the data the Council produced for evaluation purposes. The Council was also accountable for the money it spent and how it

managed competing claims on their accuracy, reliability and timeliness in order to plan for the future and met customer needs.

The authority had identified principles and arrangements for ensuring high standards of data quality and had for a number of years formalised them within a strategy to support consistency and encourage high standards of practice of data quality management. Data quality arrangements included ownership of data, systems and ensuring staff had the skills and knowledge needed to deliver high standards of data and data management.

(ix) Housing Service Strategy on Empty Properties (3 Year Review) - There would always be empty homes and properties empty awaiting sale, re-letting or renovation as these were a normal part of a healthy housing market. However properties that were left empty for long periods of time could cause significant problems in the local and national context. They were a wasted resource in terms of housing provision, particularly in areas of high demand like the Epping Forest district where 92% of land was green belt.

The previous and current government had recognised the value of reducing the number of empty properties as part of its overall ambition to provide an additional million homes nationally by 2020. Various incentives and options for local authorities had been introduced which included the New Homes Bonus (which rewarded councils for additional homes provided) and allowing councils the flexibility to charge up to 50% extra Council Tax on property that had been unoccupied and unfinished for 2 years or more. These initiatives had contributed to marked reduction in empty properties nationally.

Within the district the number of empty homes had fallen from 1,837 in 2005 to 607 in 2015. It was the Council's intention to bring 30 empty properties into use per annum.

Case Study: Current and Future Approach Dealing with Private Empty Properties

The Select Committee received a presentation on the current and future approach to dealing with private empty properties.

On a national level there had been a reduction in the number of empty homes:

- (a) From 783,119 in 2008 to 610,123 in 2014;
- (b) Within Epping Forest District Council, the reduction had been from 1,837 in 2005 to 1,391 in 2014; and
- (c) From the £548,829 received by the District Council through the New Homes Bonus, £57,946 was due to the reduction in empty homes.

The Select Committee noted that despite these figures, it was likely that there was an under reporting of empties to the Council because there had been a removal of incentives for people to inform their local authority that they had a home which was empty. Whilst the numbers for long term empties was steadily decreasing in the district (by 57 in the last year), the number of properties that had been empty more than 2 years had hardly changed (124 down to 122). The main reasons that these properties were empty was because they were being left for investment purposes,

the owner had run out of money, properties were under major renovation or they were being marketed for sale possibly at an inflated price.

It was proposed that in the future officers would:

- (i) Continue to offer advice, information and financial incentives to owners of properties which have been at least 6 month's empty;
- (ii) Consider recommending a reduction in the time limit for eligibility for the Empty Homes Repayable Assistant to 6 months (from 1 year);
- (iii) Risk assess all properties that have been empty for at least 2 years against criteria based on length of time empty;
- (iv) Risk assess probate properties that have been empty for more than 2 years;
- (v) Actively pursue those properties with the highest risk score using enforcement if appropriate;
- (vi) Pursue all empties causing issues to local residents or the environment;
- (vii) Seek member approval for Compulsory Purchase or Empty Dwelling Management Orders; and
- (viii) Consider the possibility of the Council purchasing empty properties to replace homes sold under Right to Buy.

2. GOVERNANCE SELECT COMMITTEE

The Governance Select Committee consisted of the following members:

Councillor T Church (Chairman)
Councillor Y Knight (Vice Chairman)
Councillors D Dorrell, L Hughes, S Jones, H Kaufman, M McEwen, B Sandler, S Watson, Jon Whitehouse and D Wixley

The Lead Officer was Nigel Richardson, Assistant Director for Development Management.

Terms of Reference

To undertake reviews of the services and functions of the Governance Directorate and to consider the effect Government actions or initiatives on the services and functions of the Governance Directorate and to review the six monthly progress towards the achievement of the Council's equality objectives and review public consultation and engagement. To report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Council or the Cabinet with recommendations on matters allocated to the Committee as appropriate.

To undertake performance monitoring in relation to the services and functions of the Governance Directorate, against adopted key performance indicators and identified areas of concern.

To review six monthly progress towards the achievement of the Council's equality objectives for 2012/13 to 2015/16 and progress in relation to other equality issues and initiatives.

To develop arrangements as required, for the Council to directly engage local communities in shaping the future direction of its services, to ensure that they are responsive to local need.

To annually review details of the consultation and engagement exercises undertaken by the Council over the previous year.

The Panel scrutinised a number of issues over the last year, which included:

(i) **Review of Elections – May 2015 - Lessons Learnt** – At their July 2015 meeting, the Panel received a report from the Returning Officer regarding the lessons learnt at the recent elections.

The report discussed planning processes and implementation for the elections held on 7 May 2015, the results of which were the election of a Member of Parliament for the Epping Forest Constituency, one Councillor was returned for each of eighteen District Council wards and ten Parish Council elections took place with six contested wards.

This election followed the first year when the Council was required to implement Individual Electoral Registration (IER). Work undertaken to encourage further

registration had prompted some 5,000 changes to the IER register, published in 2014.

All of the election papers were printed by the Council's Reprographics Section, which, as before, provided an excellent service. The proofs of all District Council and Parish Council ballot papers were scrutinised carefully and all ballot papers were printed correctly.

It was advised that nationally, there was an issue regarding a late change made to the logo of the Green Party. The Electoral Commission had agreed the change but had not transmitted this information effectively to Returning Officers.

Due to the number of ballot papers required for the Parliamentary election it was necessary to engage an external printer for the 75,000 ballot papers. The split between internal printing for local elections and external for national ones worked well, it was recommended to continue with this for the 2016 Police and Crime Commissioner election where 100,000 ballots would be required.

The issue of postal votes for Epping Forest went smoothly. Nearly 10,000 postal voting packs were sent out, the most ever. Although there was no evidence of any postal vote fraud, 150 postal votes were rejected for various reasons.

All polling stations opened on time with no access issues. This year, four polling stations were changed due to unavailability of previous locations, no issues were raised in connection with these stations.

Verification and counting of parliamentary ballot papers took place at Debden Park High School enabling a larger number of count staff to be employed. Counting started as soon as the polling finished, the process going smoothly. The final declaration of the Parliamentary seat was made at around 3.45p.m.

Discussions were held with Essex Police prior to the election. Polling stations received visits during the day and there were no instances requiring immediate police presence outside of the regular visits. Police support was also provided at the Count Centres on both Thursday evening and on Friday at Theydon Bois.

(ii) Consultation Register 2014/15 and 2015/16 - The Committee noted that the District Council carried out a wide variety of consultations, both externally for public participation and internally for staff opinions. A list of these were compiled and published as a register on the Council's website, they set out the issues on which individual services would be consulting on or engaging with residents and customers during the year. They summarised the purpose, start and completion dates, service area administering the surveys, location of results and key findings. The register also set out the overall objective for consultation exercises yet to be undertaken.

Amongst the larger surveys carried out by the Council in the last 12 months were the Car Parking Review and the Tenant Participation Survey.

Human Resources would be carrying out further employee "Pulse" consultation to compare and measure staff attitudes against previous survey results.

(iii) Key performance Indicators 2014/15 – Quarter 4 (Outturn) Performance - Six of the KPIs for 2014/15 fell within the Governance Select Committee's area of responsibility. The overall position with regard to the achievement of target performance at the end of the year for these six indicators was as follows:

- (i) Three (50%) indicators achieved the cumulative end of year target;
- (ii) Three (50%) indicators did not achieve the cumulative end of year target; and
- (iii) One (17%) of these KPIs performed within the agreed tolerance for the indicator.

(iii) Equality Objectives 2012-2016 – Quarter 4 progress for 2014/15 - The Equality Act 2010 placed a number of responsibilities on the Council in having regard to equality in the exercise of its functions, this included a Public Sector Equality Day (PSED). It aimed to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons sharing relevant characteristics and those who did not. Further specific responsibilities required the adoption of objectives for improving equality for service users and employees.

In March 2012, the Cabinet agreed four equality objectives for the four years from 2012-16, designed to assist the Council meeting the needs of the PSED. The objectives supported by an Action Plan, focused on key areas where improvement in relation to equality had been identified.

Members received a schedule detailing progress against individual actions, the reporting progress followed status indicators applied to individual actions.

(iv) Section 106 agreements – monitoring report 2014/15 – In October 2015 the Committee received a report setting out all Section 106 Agreements entered into during 2014/15, and details of the benefits realised throughout the year from previous agreements, including monies received where development had commenced.

Members noted that Section 106 Agreements acted as the main instrument for placing restrictions on development, often requiring the mitigation of site specific impacts. Agreements could be sought in situations where planning conditions were inappropriate to ensure or enhance the quality of development and to enable proposals that might otherwise have been refused planning permission to proceed in a sustainable manner. The Committee were reminded that Section 106 Agreements must always be relevant to and proportionate to the scale and kind of related development and could be used to deliver: a) affordable housing; (b) necessary highway works; (c) public open space; (d) the restoration of listed buildings; and (e) off-site infrastructure.

Several members expressed the view that effective scrutiny of Section 106 arrangements required an overview and understanding of how and where monies arising from agreements were intended to be spent and appropriate timescales for the collection of relevant monies and the realisation of the associated benefits.

(v) Key Performance Indicators 2015/16 - Quarterly Progress – the Committee reviewed the Key Performance Indicators relevant to their Select Committee on a quarterly basis.

(vi) Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) – Equality Information Report 2015/16 - The broad purpose of the PSED required the Council to integrate the consideration of equality and good relations into its day-to-day business, positively contribute to the advancement of equality and fairness, and to reflect equality considerations into the design of policies and the delivery of services. The Senior Performance Improvement Officer reported that the review and monitoring of

performance against the equality duty helped the authority to comply with its legal requirement; and to provide inclusive services.

The Select Committee congratulated the Senior Performance Improvement Officer on the development of the equality information report for 2015/16, which set out the Council's many initiatives and achievements in a clear and extremely effective way. Members identified a number of areas for possible inclusion in the report going forward, including the provision of services for young people and individuals leaving local authority care. Several members also expressed support and encouragement for participation in the equality-related programmes offered to councillors as part of the annual member training and development programme.

(vii) Equality Objectives 2012-2016 – Six Monthly Progress – the Committee reviewed the Equality Objectives on a six monthly basis throughout the year.

(viii) Chairman's Expenditure and Allowances – At their December 2015 meeting, the Committee noted that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council received special responsibility allowances in recognition of the particular expenses incurred by the Civic and Ceremonial role. It was advised that an anomaly in recompense for transport costs was addressed by the adoption of a motion at Full Council on 28 July 2015 that a review should be conducted into the current levels for the civic ceremonial budget by this select committee.

In addition to the Chairman's and Vice Chairman's individual allowances, "spending" budgets directly supported the work of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman amounted in total to £22,530. Officers conducted a survey of civic ceremonial expenditure by other Essex and neighbouring councils although differing budget structures made direct comparisons with the District Council difficult, there was a range of costs applied by different authorities, for example Chelmsford City spent £71,000 in total and Braintree District Council spent £17,340.

Officers informed members that the Chairman's spending never went over budget, in addition the Chairman's Secretary made strenuous efforts to reduce expenditure on events by obtaining a fairer bargain for the authority. It was also stated that there had been no inflationary increase in budget for the Chairman of Council in 10 years.

The Select Committee supported referring the Chairman's and Vice-Chairman's Allowances to the Member Remuneration Panel for more direct scrutiny.

(ix) Planning Appeals Performance – Appeal performance was reported every 6 months to the area planning committees using two Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), GOV007 which measured the percentage of planning applications recommended by planning officers for refusal, overturned and granted planning permission by appeal and GOV008 which measured the percentage of planning applications refused by Councillors against the recommendation of the planning officers and subsequently granted planning permission on appeal. Members sought clarity and understanding on why some appeals were dismissed and others were allowed, which in turn would help towards improving performance of these two KPIs as identified in their individual improvement plans.

Members were advised on the problems of attempting to successfully defend a decision to refuse at an appeal if there were no objections from the local Highways authority. However, they felt that the staff at Essex County Council Highways were not particularly pro-active in checking planning applications at the consultation stage for neighbour objections on highway grounds whereas Councillors felt, if they did,

then they could raise objections which would support their own views at the committee meeting.

(See Case Study for full details)

(x) Development Management Pre-Application Advice – The Committee noted that the Local Government Act 2003 allowed local authorities to charge customers for holding discussions prior to the submission of planning applications. This Council had been charging on major category applications since 2007 and had expanded this across other developments including householder extensions. Unlike planning application fees, pre-application advice was set locally, with discussions having always been encouraged as a charging scheme had the benefit of dissuading some ill conceived proposals and highlighted the cost of officer time in the process and recouping some of this cost.

It was advised that the number of pre-applications received and dealt with by officers had markedly increased and although this brought in a larger income to the authority, it had also added significantly to officer workload. In addition the time frame for response, set for up to 21 working days from a meeting, was rarely achieved because of the pressure for turning around planning applications in a timely manner.

(xi) Development Management Chair And Vice Chair's Meeting - Member's attention focussed on the Review of Current and Future Training Needs. Members supported using training, particularly for Parish and Town Councils, to reduce the number of call-ins of planning applications to the Area Planning Sub-committees, better knowledge and understanding of planning considerations would make for better recommendations. It was also felt that regular and smaller "bitesize" training sessions for members would be beneficial as the details were easier to digest.

Members expressed concern with the consultation comments that were received from Essex County Council Highways on planning applications submitted to committees. They requested that Essex Highways' officers should be invited to this select committee to discuss these issues and it was agreed that this should be added to next year's select committee draft work programme.

There was a strong feeling that the District Council was stranded in a situation whereby the county council did not object or make adequate representations on planning applications and thus weakened planning committees' decisions, particularly when appeals took place.

Case Study: Planning Appeals Performance

The Select Committee reviewed planning appeals performance at its meeting held in December 2015.

Applicants applying for planning permission through a planning authority could appeal to the Secretary of State any decision made whether it be refused, or granting with conditions. In these instances, all parties provided the evidence required and were normally determined by exchange of written statements or appearance at a hearing or inquiry. Appeal performance was reported every 6 months to the area planning committees using two Key Performance Indicators. The members of the select committee discussed six recent cases across the district which the Assistant Director (Development Management) had selected.

Members were advised on the problems of attempting to successfully defend a decision to refuse at an appeal if there were no objections from the local Highways authority. However members felt that the staff at Essex County Council Highways were not particularly pro-active in checking planning applications at the consultation stage for neighbour objections on highway grounds, they could raise objections which would support their own views at the committee meeting.

An option for area planning sub-committees was to defer items for a fuller Highways assessment of the application in question. The Governance and Development Management Portfolio Holder advised caution when objecting to planning applications against officer recommendation as good evidence was needed to justify a refusal in all reasons put forward.

Members noted that an officer from the Highways authority did visit the District Council and read current planning applications and also visited relevant sites.

However, there had only been one successful appeal this year where costs had been awarded against the authority.

The current method of analysing the appeals record from the area planning sub-committees was through the 'Probity in Planning' reports submitted to the committees every six months at the end of the meeting which tended to happen after a long agenda. Members supported putting a summary of appeal decisions regularly in the Bulletin and that further training on this topic was also needed.

3. RESOURCES SELECT COMMITTEE

The Resources Select Committee consisted of the following Members:

Councillor G Mohindra (Chairman)
Councillor P Keska (Vice Chairman)
Councillors K Angold-Stephens, N Bedford, S Kane, H Mann, A Mitchell, A Patel, S Watson and Jon Whitehouse

The Lead Officer was Peter Maddock, Assistant Director (Accountancy).

Terms of Reference

- To undertake overview and scrutiny, utilising appropriate methods and techniques, of services and functions of the Resources Directorate, excluding those matters within remit of the Audit and Governance Committee, the Standards Committee or the Constitution Working Group;
- To undertake quarterly performance monitoring in relation to the services and functions of the Resources Directorate, through review of progress against adopted key performance indicators and other appropriate measures;
- To consider the draft directorate budgets for each year, and to evaluate and rank proposals for enhancing or reducing services where necessary, whilst ensuring consistency between policy objectives and financial demands;
- To review key areas of income and expenditure for each directorate on a quarterly basis throughout the year;
- To monitor and review progress on the implementation of all major ICT systems;
- To consider the Council's comparative value for money 'performance', and to recommend as required to the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee, in respect of areas where further detailed investigation may be required;
- To monitor and review areas of concern or significance that comes under Human Resources.

The Panel scrutinised a number of important issues over the last year, which included:

(i) Key Performance Indicators 2014/15 Outturn Performance – At their meeting in July 2015 the Committee received the outturn report for the Quarter 4 results for the Key Performance Indicators for 2014/15. The Committee noted that the overall position for all the KPIs at the end of year (31 March 2015) was:

- 26 or 72% - indicators achieved the cumulative end of year target;
- 10 or 28% - indicators did not achieve the target; and
- 1 or 3% - performed within the agreed tolerance for the indicator.

Eleven of these indicators fell within the Resources Select Committee area of responsibility. The overall position at the end of the year for these eleven indicators was as follows:

7 or 64% - achieved the cumulative fourth quarter target; and
4 or 36% - did not achieve the cumulative fourth quarter target.

(ii) Sickness Absence Outturn Report 2014/15 - Also at their July meeting the Committee received the outturn report for the sickness absence levels for 2014/15.

The Committee considered the sickness absence for quarters 3 and 4, 2014/15. It was noted that the target for sickness absence, under KPI10 for 2014/15 was an average of 7 days per employee; the outturn figure for that year was 9.2 days, making the Council above target for the first time in 4 years.

(iii) Provisional Capital Outturn 2014/15 - The Committee then received a report on the Council's capital programme for 2014/15 in terms of expenditure and financing and compared the provisional outturn figures with the revised estimates. The revised estimates, which were based on the Capital Programme, represent those adopted by the Council in February 2015.

It was noted that the Council's total investment on capital schemes in 2014/15 was £20,114,000, compared to a revised estimate of £24,092,000. The largest underspends were experienced on General Fund projects. In particular, there was an underspend of £1,000,000 on the St John's Road Development scheme as the land purchase and asset negotiations planned to enable the proposed development of this site, had not taken place yet. As a consequence the full £1,000,000 set aside for this scheme was requested for carry forward to 2015/16. In addition, there was another large underspend of £448,000 on the Museum redevelopment scheme, for which Heritage Lottery funding has been secured. A carry forward of £448,000 to 2015/16 was requested.

(iv) Provisional Revenue Outturn 2014/15 – Also in July 2015 the Committee received a report on the Council's revenue outturn for the Continuing Services Budget (CSB) of the general fund and the consequential movement in balances for 2014/15.

Net expenditure (CSB) for 2014/15 totalled £14.547 million, which was £763,000 (5%) above the original estimate and £223,000 (1.5%) above the revised. When compared to a gross expenditure budget of approximately £74 million, the variances can be restated as 1% and 0.3% respectively.

The main movement between the Original estimate and the Revised and Actual position was the creation of the spend and save reserve which had moved £500,000 from the General Fund Balance into an earmarked reserve set up to fund any initial costs required to achieve on-going CSB savings. The fund would operate in a similar way to the District Development Fund (DDF) in that there would be the ability to move budgetary provision money between years as necessary. 2015/16 would be the first year of operation for this Fund.

(v) Planning Enforcement Matters – At their October 2015 meeting the Committee had a report on the work of the Planning Enforcement Section.

They noted that:

- The Planning Enforcement section was a non-statutory discretionary function of the Council, which had historically been actively supported by Councillors;

- Complaints were received from the public, Town and Parish Councils, Councillors and other departments which were responded to within 24 hours of the complaints, if they involved Listed Buildings, Preserved Trees and new Gypsy & Traveller Sites or within 14 days for all other complaints;
- Officers spent a considerable amount of time on and off site investigating, evidence gathering, negotiating and advising with both complainants and complainers' whilst complying with the law and regulations;
- The complaints ranged from the serious and complex, to trivial and non-planning related with enforcement investigations being completed after a first visit or in more complex cases taking several years;
- All prosecutions and actions had to be legal, proportionate and expedient. The system allowed appeals on planning and enforcement decisions to go as high as the Supreme Court which took time and often appeared to the public and Members that no action was being taken;
- There was encouragement for complaints to keep in touch for regular updates and progress on the cases;
- The section was adequately resourced and had an active relationship with other Councils sections and the Essex Police;
- Income was generated by the receipt of retrospective planning applications and the pursuit of S106 Planning obligation monies;
- The Council had spent £424,000 in 2014/15, which compared to other Essex authorities was greater, although the District had the largest amount of Green Belt in Essex;
- The additional resources invested in planning enforcement reflected the seriousness of the planning enforcement function and would be detrimental to the authority and its residents if it was not maintained.

(vi) Financial Issues Papers – The Committee noted the Financial Issues Paper. This provided the initial framework for starting the 2016/17 budget and updated Members on a number of financial issues that would affect the Authority in the short to medium term. The following issues represented the greatest areas of current financial uncertainty and risk to the Authority, which included Central Government Funding, Business Rates Retention, Welfare Reform, New Homes Bonus, Development Opportunities, Income Streams, the Waste and Leisure Contracts and Transformation.

The Council remained in strong financial position as the overspend in 2014/15 had not been significant and the Council had substantial reserves. Following the General Election a greater political certainty had been created although there were a lot of funding and financial uncertainties for the Council.

(vii) Energy Savings and Improved Management Process – The Committee received a progress update report on energy savings and improved management processing. They were advised that the management and payment of energy supplies had historically been spread across numerous Directorates and the information had become fragmented therefore an energy consultant, Smith Bellerby (SB) had been approached to produce an accurate consolidated database, identify potential savings and streamline working practices.

The Select Committee noted that:

- SB were energy cost reduction specialists;

- The invoice processing element alone utilised at least 2 weeks of a full time post each month which now took 3 hours to process;
- SB dealt directly with the energy companies on behalf of the Council;
- The largest savings were from gas and electric supplies changing to cheaper tariffs which resulted in anticipated saving of £13,000, a scope to reduce available capacity charges yielding £3,300 per year and two additional savings of £500 per year for meter operator and data collector contracts; and
- The majority of savings had been identified during the first year, however the use of SB for a further year would provide time savings and a conclusion to the numerous ongoing disputes.

The Select Committee were in agreement with the use of SB, although concerns were raised about whether the consultants would need to be used continuously.

(viii) Call Handling – The Committee received a report on the first quarter for telephone monitoring statistics 2015/16, which included the percentage of abandoned calls and the number of calls sent directly to the voicemail system.

The Committee were advised that the figures for quarter 1 had been skewed because of problems with the new waste contract, which had now settled down and certain figures needed to be removed as they were related to answer phone services.

(ix) Careline and Housing Related Charges – Also at their October 2015 meeting, the Director of Communities, introduced a report on the charging plan for Housing Related Support (HRS) services.

The Committee noted that:

- The HRS covered the Careline Service, Scheme Management Service and the Intensive Housing Management;
- The Council had increased the HRS charges by 50% for 2015/16, in order to recover expected reductions in funding from Essex County Council (ECC) and for the service to become self funding;
- ECC had decided very late not to proceed with the planned reductions in funding in 2015/16, but because the charges had been increased and the tenants affected had been advised, they remained;
- The Housing Portfolio Holder had presented the Cabinet with 5 options on what action to be taken with the increased income, although after reviewing the services it had been noted that providing the Scheme Management Service there had been a £50,250 deficit;
- The Council also relied on the HRS funding from ECC, which had been expected to reduce in 2016/17 and was likely to continue to reduce in further years;
- Therefore the Cabinet decided that the Housing Portfolio Holder should produce a charging plan on how the HRS charges would be increased each year from April 2016 until the cost of the Scheme Management Service became self-funded and included the annual reductions in funding from ECC;
- The Epping Forest Tenants and Leaseholders Federation supported the charging plan and associated methodology.

The committee were advised that HRS services had been supported by the HRA for over 10 years and that there were other financial pressures on the HRA, therefore it was fairer for all, that the costs were spread over the users of the service.

(x) Fees and Charges 2016/17 - This report which provided details on the fees and charges that the Council levies and what scope, if any, there was to increase any particular charges. This was an annual report produced as part of the annual budget process.

It was noted that:

- The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) had identified the need for savings, around £1m over the four year period with £150,000 falling in 2016/17, which was based on an assumed reductions in Government funding of 10% per annum;
- Increasing existing fees and charges was fairly limited and introducing charges where they were not levied was also limited;
- The traditional use of the September Retail Index (RPI) and Consumer Prices Index (CPI) had been widely used as a guide to inflation but it was thought that the Labour inflation rate was now more relevant as employee costs represented the largest element of the expenses, which was currently 2.8%.

The Director of Communities advised that the Tenants and Leaseholder Federation supported the proposed housing-related fees and charges for 2016/17, which were increased by the labour Inflation rates, which were currently 2.8%.

(xi) Quarterly Financial Monitoring – The Committee received Quarterly Financial Monitoring reports on key areas of income and expenditure, proving a comparison between the original estimates for the period 1 April 2015 to 30 June 2015 and the actual expenditure or income applicable.

(xii) Key Performance Indicators 2015/16 Quarterly Updates - The Committee reviewed the Key Performance Indicators relevant to their Select Committee on a quarterly basis.

(xiii) Draft General Fund CSB and DDF Lists and Savings Update – In December 2015 the Select Committee considered the first draft of the Continuing Services Budget (CSB) and the District Development Fund (DDF) schedule for 2016/17.

They noted that the Financial Issues Paper went to the October 2015 meeting of this committee, highlighting a number of financial uncertainties and risks facing the authority, including the reduction in Central Government funding, retention of Business Rates, Welfare reform and the Leisure Management Contract renewal. Since then there had been a number of other items identified such as the increase in the employers national insurance contributions, relating to the employees in the Local Government Pensions Scheme.

The Governments Spending Review was due shortly; speculation was that District Councils would be hit the hardest, although this Council was well placed to meet that challenge

(xiv) Sickness Absences 2015/14: Quarters 1 & 2 - It was noted that the Council's target for sickness absence for 2015/16 was an average of 7 days per employee. The outturn figure for 2014/15 was an average of 9.2 days per employee. This put the council above its target for the first time in 4 years. This year, although still running above target the figures were slightly better than this time last year. It

was also noted that the 2015 Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) report stated that a number of organisations (not just in the public sector) reported that they had seen an increase in stress related absence and mental health problems. Although minor illness accounts for most short term absence whereas acute conditions such as stress, musculoskeletal, mental health and back pain are the most common reasons for long term absences. The council reflected these findings.

As part of the improvement plan HR will arrange workshops for managers on mental health issues. The first four of a number of workshops have been arranged for December and it would be mandatory for all managers to attend. The Council was also working with 'Rethink', a mental health charity and Vine HR to arrange these sessions.

(xiv) Update of Work Carried Out by the HR Team –

Apprentices - The Committee noted that the first cohort of apprentices (2013-15) had now successfully finished their apprenticeships. The council appointed 7 business administration apprentices and 2 multi trade apprentices. The business administration roles would provide a range of transferable skills and thus offer more opportunities for employment.

A second cohort had now been appointed and it had been decided that it would be just for local young people who would do appropriate NVQs at the local college. There was not as much money around to fund as many places as last time but they received some help from the Communities Directorate in conjunction with a Housing Association and were able to fund two more places, but these places were reserved for the children of their tenants. This time around, the apprentices' progress would be monitored more closely.

Shared Services – HR – The HR team participated in the Essex network of the heads of HR the Essex Strategic Partnership for a number of years. In 2010 the partnership reviewed its governance arrangements and agreed to develop it into a not for profit company.

The aim of setting up a not for profit organisation was so that;

- it could generate its own income so it becomes self-sufficient;
- it could provide value for money for the member authorities in any contractual arrangements;
- Heads of HR could work more collaboratively and achieve greater savings for their authorities; and
- It provides a formal framework for the Heads of HR, limiting the risks and liabilities for individual authorities.

Procurement of a HR/Payroll IT System – The current payroll IT system was not fit for purpose and that officers were presently in discussions with Colchester and Braintree Council's with the aim of jointly procuring a system. The evaluation process was due to be finalised before Christmas 2015 with an implementation/start date early in the new financial year.

Broxbourne – Officers were having initial discussions with Broxbourne Council to identify potential areas where we could work together and find efficiencies. They currently provide museum services for us and it may be we could work closer with them.

Mast Money Budget – It was noted that the Council receives rent from communications companies for the lease of space on the Civic Offices roof for a communications mast. Members have agreed that any money from this lease would be allocated to projects that would benefit the staff.

Employee Engagement – The Graduate Trainee organised Employee Engagement Workshops to involve staff and were run from April to June 2015 to gain feedback from employees on a range of engagement centred topics. There were 62 employees who attended the workshops across five different sessions.

Employee Survey – As part of the work on the Engagement Strategy the Graduate Trainee was tasked with carrying out an Employee Survey. During the workshops referred to previously employees were asked their views

(xv) Review of Private Funding – Also at their December 2015 meeting the Select Committee noted that Grants and Contributions make up a fairly modest proportion of capital funding, this includes section 106 and similar income which the Council receives as part of agreements made when planning permission was granted for development schemes. These monies could be provided for a variety of different purposes and would be based upon requirements identified as part of the planning process. The types of project could range from education, highways, leisure, health and affordable housing provision. In some cases the money was provided to the County Council or the National Health Service and in other cases to this Council.

(xvi) Housing Benefit Fraud and Compliance – This went to the February 2016 meeting of the Select Committee. They noted that from 1 October 2015, the responsibility for the investigation of Housing Benefit fraud was transferred from the Authority to the Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) which was part of the Fraud and Error Service within the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Responsibility for Local Council Tax Support fraud remained within the Authority and was investigated by the Corporate Fraud Team.

Four of the existing Benefit Investigators were transferred to the DWP under TUPE like legislation. The former Benefit Investigation Manager was now the Manager of the Council's Corporate Fraud Team and was the only member of the former Benefit Investigation team who remained with the Authority. The transfer went smoothly.

(See Case Study for full details)

(xvii) Data Quality Strategy 2016/17 to 2018/19 – The meeting noted that the Council needed timely, accurate and reliable data in order to manage activities and meet internal and external requirements to demonstrate accountability through accurate reporting. Data was used for the assessment of the Council's performance, including the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The Data Quality Strategy set out the arrangements for the next 3 years to ensure key data met the highest standards and was 'right first time'.

Good quality data was essential to support the Council's decision making especially decisions involving finance and performance. Additionally the Council's customers, partners and others interested in the Council's performance, needed to be able to rely on the data produced for evaluation purposes. The Council was also accountable for the money it spent and must manage competing claims on its resources. It

therefore required data which was accurate, reliable and timely in order to plan for the future and meet customer needs.

(xviii) Government Consultation on New Homes Bonus – The Committee received a report on the government consultation on New Homes Bonus, part of the draft financial settlement for local authorities.

The meeting noted that:

- The consultation sought views on a number of significant changes to the New Homes Bonus.
- The stated intention of the proposed changes to the scheme was to save £800 million which can then be used to fund adult social care.
- The removal of £800 million and the re-allocation of this amount has the overall effect of changing the distribution so two thirds will now go to counties and only a third to districts.

Case Study – Housing Benefit Fraud and Compliance

The meeting noted that from 1 October 2015, the responsibility for the investigation of Housing Benefit fraud was transferred from the Authority to the Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) which was part of the Fraud and Error Service within the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Responsibility for Local Council Tax Support fraud remained within the Authority and was investigated by the Corporate Fraud Team.

Four of the Council's existing Benefit Investigators were transferred to the DWP under TUPE like legislation. Three of these were transferred to the Harlow DWP office and the other was transferred to the Basildon DWP office. The former Benefit Investigation Manager was now the Manager of the Council's Corporate Fraud Team and was the only member of the former Benefit Investigation team who remained with the Authority. The transfer went smoothly.

If a referral was passed to SFIS for investigation, it could be allocated to any SFIS team and would not necessarily be investigated by the SFIS team in Harlow. As they had no documents relating to Housing Benefit, the Council were requested to provide all the documentation that it had. However, this had proved problematic as the Council needs to send the documents electronically but the DWP's IT system could not accept the file size that the Council needed to send. This had emerged as a problem for all Authorities which the DWP had not yet resolved. The Council either has to split it up into a lot of smaller emails or hand over the paperwork physically, but the amount of work this was causing was becoming a problem.

Following the transfer to the DWP, the Council set up a Compliance team to carry out initial enquiries and clarify/obtain information relating to applications for Housing Benefit/Local Council Tax Support, and Liaison Officer posts were created with part of their duties being the liaison point between the Authority and SFIS.

Traditionally communication with the DWP was difficult because their staff were frequently moved to different roles and/or offices. It was therefore not possible to build any relationship with regard to any particular project or work stream.

Communication with the SFIS team in Harlow had been good with regard to the cases that were transferred, but only because three members of the former Benefit Investigation team were currently based there. However, two of those are now transferring out of the Harlow office which means that future communication may not be so effective.

In conclusion it was noted that the Council's working practices have been changed to adapt to the lack of control over Housing Benefit fraud investigation and officers would continue to monitor the situation and make further changes if necessary. However, it was too early to determine exactly how effective the transfer to a single fraud investigation service would be in reducing fraud in the Housing Benefit system in the future.

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4. NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE

The Neighbourhoods and Communities Select Committee consisted of the following members:

Councillor M Sartin (Chairman)
Councillor H Brady (Vice Chairman)
Councillors N Avey, R Gadsby, L Hughes, B Jennings, L Mead, A Mitchell, S Neville, A Patel and B Surtees

The Lead officer was Derek Macnab, Director of Neighbourhoods and Deputy Chief Executive.

Terms of Reference

1. To undertake overview and scrutiny, utilising appropriate methods and techniques, of services and functions of the Neighbourhood and Communities Directorates (not including Housing matters).
2. To consider any matter referred to the Select Committee by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
3. To keep under review:
 - (i) *Environmental enforcement activities;*
 - (ii) *Safer communities activities;*
 - (iii) *Waste management activities; and*
 - (iv) *Leisure Management*
 - (v) *Local Plan Scrutiny*
4. To identify any matters within the services and functions of the Neighbourhoods Directorate and the community services and community safety activities of the Communities Directorate that require in-depth scrutiny and report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as necessary.
5. To act as the Council's Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee and to keep under review the activities of the Epping Forest Community Safety Partnership as a whole or any of the individual partners which make up the Partnership.
6. To undertake performance monitoring in relation to the services and functions of the Neighbourhoods Directorate and the community services and community safety activities of the Communities Directorate, against adopted Key Performance Indicators and identified areas of concern.
7. To monitor and keep under review the Council's progress towards the development and adoption of a corporate energy strategy / environmental policy and to receive progress reports from the Green Working Party.
8. To receive reports from the Waste Management Partnership Board in respect of the operation of and performance of the waste management contract.

9. To monitor and keep under review leisure management matters and in particular the procurement of the Leisure Management Contract.

The Panel scrutinised a number of important issues over the last year, which included:

(i) Key Performance Indicators 2014/15 Quarter 4 (Outturn) – At their first meeting of the year in July 2015 The Committee considered the outturn (Q4) report for the Key Performance Indicators for 2014/15 specific to this Select Committee area of responsibility.

(ii) Update on the adoption of the River Roding Flood Risk Management Strategy - The Committee considered the letter from the Environment Agency updating the council on the River Roding Flood Risk Management Strategy. It was noted that the Environment Agency (EA) had attended the Safer Cleaner Greener Scrutiny Panel sometime ago to brief them on this management strategy. This letter was sent to every property next to the river and to this Council as it had land by the river. It was noted that members were very unhappy about this strategy.

The EA was responsible for the overview of flood risk management in England and had identified the best way to manage flood risk in the Roding catchment over the next 100 years, with the aim of protecting as many properties as possible while carefully balancing the amount of public money they spent.

(iii) Crucial Crew Initiative – In September 2015 the Committee received a report on 'Crucial Crew'. This was an annual event which was facilitated and delivered by the Council's Community Service and Safety teams. It was specifically designed to educate primary school pupils aged 10 (year 6) in a range of personal safety, health and wellbeing topics.

Crucial Crew has been provided for over 10 years and was historically delivered over the same two week period in June, in line with agreed primary school timetables. This year every Year 6 primary school pupil in the Epping Forest District attended the half day events; in all 1351 Epping Forest pupils participated. In addition 13 schools from the Brentwood area paid to attend, bringing a further 408 children into the project, making a total of 1759 attendees.

The event has traditionally been held at Gilwell Park Scouting Headquarters; however, following recent notification of a planned increase in hire costs by approximately £2000 in 2016 it was decided that an alternative venue of Debden House would be piloted in 2016 for the same venue costs as 2015.

(iv) Draft Community Safety Partnership Annual Report for 2014-15 - The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) was made up of representatives from Essex Police, Essex Fire and Rescue Service, Community Rehabilitation Service, Epping Forest District Council, Voluntary Action Epping Forest and the Magistracy. They meet on a quarterly basis to oversee the range of work undertaken and were responsible for undertaking an annual review of current crime and disorder issues. Their main source of funding was from the Essex Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and although this has reduced, they have still managed to function efficiently and effectively.

Over the year they had assessed the following issues as local priorities:

- Domestic Abuse;
- Assault/violent crime;
- Anti-social behaviour; and
- Burglary in a dwelling.

They did some of the best work in Essex on domestic abuse by care and support of victims. They ran a sanctuary scheme with Community Safety, Essex Police and Essex County Fire & Rescue Service to provide enhanced security to very high risk victims that do not wish to move, making them feel safer at home. They also run 'J9' training courses across West Essex to deal with the preventative side of domestic abuse. Their work on Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) continues to be a priority area. They have an ASB investigator who is trained in mediation and is also the EFDC Restorative Justice Ambassador to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. This was a new initiative to identify emerging problem families and provide support and mediation before problems escalate.

In 2013 with funding from the PCC, EFDC's community safety team purchased 5 cameras allowing the installation of a self contained CCTV system (camera, monitor and recorder). These were offered to local residents on a loan basis with an option to purchase at cost price. They would be used to assist across a broad range of matters including gathering evidence in support of allegations of Anti-social Behaviour or deterring bogus callers.

Burglary from dwellings continued to be a priority crime due to the close proximity to the London Metropolitan area and the excellent transport links through the district. This allows travelling criminals to enter and leave by a number of different means.

(v) Key Performance Indicators 2015/16 Quarterly Updates - the Committee reviewed the Key Performance Indicators relevant to their Select Committee on a quarterly basis.

(vi) Review of the Local Plan – at each meeting the Committee received regular updates on the current state of the Council's Local Plan.

(vii) Uttlesford Local Plan – Issues and Options Consultation – In November 2015 the meeting noted that Uttlesford District Council's previous Local Plan ran into difficulties at Examination in Public late in 2014. The main concerns related to the Objectively Assessed Housing Needs (OAHN) figure relying on out of date evidence and the capacity of the village of Elsenham to take the amount of new development being proposed. The examination was not completed and as a consequence Uttlesford subsequently withdrew the Plan in February 2015.

Their current Issues and Options consultation on a new local plan was intended to be the first of three stages of formal consultation and engagement. They hoped to have a final draft plan by next year and a submission version by 2017.

Uttlesford along with Harlow & East Hertfordshire is one of the Strategic Housing Market Area (SHMA) partners with this Council. Officers were concerned that the SHMA was not mentioned in the consultation document as this was a key piece of joint evidence prepared for the four authorities in the Housing Market Area. Officers were also surprised that there was no mention in the document about the boundary issues and that more was not said about the potential impact of Stanstead Airport.

(viii) Community Services Summer Activities 2015 - The 2015 summer activities were organised and delivered by the Community Services section. They consisted of a wide range of activities to engage children, young people and their families. It was noted that almost 2000 people had participated in the extensive range of activities on offer which included physical activities such as Soccer Tots, mountain biking, Play in the Park and Play in the Forest sessions and dance programmes as well as other creative activities.

These activities were detailed in a brochure that was delivered to all schools in the district. This was supplemented by fliers, posters, school visits, social media, a website, radio interviews and attendance at community events and Town Shows.

There was also an 'Inclusion Programme' which was funded through Essex County Council, designed for children and young people with additional needs. Although parents and carers frequently elect to attend sessions with their children, a special fully supervised camping break was organised this year to give parents respite and enable the children to stay without their families if they wanted to. This proved hugely successful and received excellent feedback.

(ix) Fly Tipping Clearance and Enforcement – In November the Committee also received a report on fly-tipping clearance and enforcement. It was noted that this was a problem that was growing. The Environment & Neighbourhoods (EN) Team were responsible for enforcing waste law in the district. They log all incidents of fly-tipping and prioritise investigations to try and trace the source of the waste and fly-tipper. They took as an example Laundry Lane that was constantly being fly-tipped and constantly being cleared by the district or the County Council. Waste has also been dumped on private land and although the Council has the powers to force the land owner to clear the tip they did have some sympathy with them on this. They were also getting pressure from the private land owners to help them clear up the tipped areas.

(x) Update from the Green Corporate Working Party - The Committee noted that they were working towards a new environmental policy to tie in with the Council's Corporate Objectives.

A presentation was given to the Leadership Team on 11th November 2015 which Directors and Assistant Directors were asked to consider the options for the development of a corporate energy strategy/environmental policy. They came up with a number of suggestions including:

- Electric vehicle charge points in the district;
- The council to have their own electric vehicles;
- E-billing, e-notification, more on-line forms;
- Have targets for energy efficiency as part of the local plan;
- Making communities resistant to the impact of climate changes;
- Making meetings paperless.

These, and the other suggestions made would be taken to the next Green Working Party meeting to be discussed. They would then look to create an 'environmental charter' with an action plan which would then be brought back to this Select Committee for comments and agreement. This would replace the Council's existing Climate Change Policy 2009.

(xi) Review of Waste and Recycling Collection Arrangements – On 17 December 2015 a special meeting was arranged for this Select Committee with a one item agenda, specifically to review the new domestic waste and recycling contract and following the switch to the four day collection schedule and the introduction of new vehicles and technology. This resulted in an unacceptably high level of missed collections. The Council's Environment Portfolio Holder noting that this was an important service, formally requested that the Overview and Scrutiny undertake a review on his behalf and that the outcome be formally reported back to the Cabinet. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that this request should be determined by the Neighbourhoods and Communities Select Committee. Given this, a single, one off meeting of the Select Committee be dedicated to this single subject.

(See Case Study for full details)

(xii) PICK Form on 20mph Speed Limit – In January 2016 The Committee welcomed David Sprunt, from the Essex Transportation Strategy and Engagement, Economic Growth; and Vicky Duff, the Essex Network Management Group Manager. They were there to enlighten the committee on those facts and policies used by Essex County Council and the guidance issued by the Department of Transport on road speeds, especially relating to the implementation of 20mph limits.

The Committee noted that:

- That Essex CC had a Speed Management Strategy advised by the Department of Transport circular 01/2013;
- It had been established by research that 20mph speed limits generally only led to small reductions in traffic speeds;
- The latest advice was that a mix of 20mph limits and 20mph zones would be better, providing that the signing was correct;
- The objective would be that 'any 20mph restrictions should be self-enforcing';
- Any 20mph limit of zone would require a Speed Limit Order, which had to be consulted on;
- The current policy allowed for the consideration of 20mph limits on local roads if the mean speeds were between 24 and 29mph, only then would the Cabinet Member consider putting in a 20mph restriction;
- At the beginning of the limits there would have to be clear signage and also at the end of the restrictions. There would also have to be repeater signs along the route;
- 20mph zones had traffic calming measures e.g. speed humps, chicanes etc. these zones applied not just to one road but to whole areas, such as estates;
- It was noted that generally people did not like them and the low speeds over traffic calming measures also produced more noise for residents;
- The most effective method for reducing speed was the use of chicanes, but it needed some major engineering work to put them in;
- 20mph signs could be used as a calming feature but they would not physically reduce the speeds;
- The county also has a "20's plenty" scheme used mainly outside schools, but very little reductions in speeds were achieved;
- Advisory speed limit signs could be also be used outside schools, they were not mandatory and thus no speed limit order was required;
- Before a scheme was put into place, information was required in the form of speed surveys, traffic surveys and collision data;
- It was noted that a lot of areas in Essex did not have high collision rates for Children and pedestrians;

- Repeat signage in an area tended to create clutter on those roads;
- Essex Police did not have the resources to enforce these areas.

(xiii) Area Crime Analyst – Also in January 2016 the Chairman welcomed the Safer Communities Manager and West Local Policing Area Partnership Analyst, who gave a short presentation on the local crime and disorder figures up to and including November 2015, via the Home Office system, 'iQuanta'. This system provided data for a 3 year span.

The Committee noted that:

- All Crime was up by 14% (630 cases) in comparison to previous years figures to date;
- On a month by month total – in December 2012 there were 591 cases compared to November 2015 with 642 cases, an increase of 7.9% (51 cases) over 3 years;
- Against other similar authorities we had similar figures to Maidstone, who the ONS identified as a match to Epping. Our figures were 56.835 crimes to Maidstone's 56.588 crimes;
- Broxbourne was a border council similar to us with similar proximity to London and transport links and had 62.278 crimes and Watford (with 72.614 crimes) had similar tube and Motorway links;
- The figures for violence against the person showed a 27% (246) increase in Epping Forest in comparison to the previous year;
- Epping was 17% below the Essex average;
- In comparison with other similar authorities, the figures for the year ending November 2015, Epping had 1690, Maidstone 2690, Watford 1704 and Broxbourne;
- Following a peak in October ASB incidents had fallen by a third in December; and
- By locality, Loughton remained the highest, with 263 ASB incidents, followed by Waltham Abbey (176) and Epping (139).

(xiv) CCTV Action Plan – The Committee reviewed the EFDC CCTV strategy for 2016-2022, noting that this report had recently gone to the Cabinet for their information and agreement.

The Committee noted that the strategy covered the period from 2015 to 2022, following on from the previous strategy that was produced in 2008, when the Community Safety Team took over the responsibility for the Council's CCTV provision as part of the Safer, Cleaner Greener Review.

The Strategy set out the Council's current CCTV provision, detailing respective locations, numbers of cameras, condition and costs for maintenance, and repair and replacements over the next seven years, along with recommendations for de-commissioning of equipment. It also provided an overview of the benefits that were realised for the local communities in which it was installed and the various use made of CCTV footage by the Police and insurance companies.

The Council's success in the use of CCTV had generated ongoing demands from Directorates to install new CCTV equipment within key areas of the district and the point had now been reached where an increased budget was required, to meet the costs of replacing old equipment and the increased servicing and maintenance costs, which was also covered by the Strategy.

(xv) Local Policing Proposals – The Committee received a report on the recently proposed Policing cuts and their implications on the Council’s Community Safety Service.

This originated from November 2015, when the PCC, Nick Alston and the Chief Constable of Essex Police announced proposals to make significant changes to local Policing across Essex, in a move to ensure that Essex Police was fit for purpose, in the future.

This report was aimed at starting a discussion with members on the implications of the reduction in police resources and the impact it would have on the Council’s Community Safety Service.

The problem council officers faced were that they were best guessing what was going to happen in the district. They were looking at potential reductions in policing, such as triaging calls into High, Medium or Low risks and then only reacting to high risk cases and fielding the other calls to other relevant authorities. They were mindful that the Council would pick up more work and there would be more disgruntled members of the public not having the Police act on their problems.

Anti-social Behaviour powers given to us by the Government would raise the officer’s workload, especially as the Police would not act. This may also result in more problems at the reception desks from disgruntled members of the public.

The Council only had two ASB officers to deal with the Epping Forest District. They were seeing a rise in cases from 192 to 331 cases. The public would make their feelings known to Members who will then let the officers know, increasing their caseload as they try and resolve complaints on behalf of Members and this would be very time consuming.

(xvi) Reality Roadshow 2015 - Building on the long-standing success of Crucial Crew, the Reality Roadshow initiative was a personal safety, health & well-being event that brought together a host of statutory and voluntary agencies, to deliver a day of educational workshops to Year 9 (14 year old) pupils at schools in the district. It was specifically tailored to address young people’s issues that have been identified as a priority concern locally. It provides over 1100 pupils in the district with expert advice and guidance on making the right choices in life for good health and well being.

Pupils participated in either 5 or 6 workshops depending on individual school timetables and each session was specifically designed to address current issues facing local young people. The workshops delivered in 2015/16 were:

- The Consequences of Crime – delivered by Essex Magistrates
- Online Internet Safety – EFDC’s Community Health and Well-being Team
- Sexual Health - NHS Sexual Health Services
- Legal Highs and Substance Misuse - Alcohol & Drugs Advisory Service (ADAS)
- Alcohol Awareness - AlcoHELP
- Healthy Relationships and Domestic Abuse - Safer Places

The impact of the Reality Roadshow programme on participants was generally very significant, as the messages given are very clear and designed to show the worse

case scenarios of being involved in negative behaviours. The programme also promoted the opportunity for young people to make changes in their lives and to receive support and advice from the various agencies available locally.

(xvii) Response to DCLG technical Consultation on the NPPF – Also in January 2016 the Committee received a report on the response to the proposed changes to the national planning policy consultation. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in 2012 and was supported by the online Planning Practice Guidance. Amendments are now proposed to the NPPF which encompassed the following:

- Broadening the definition of affordable housing, to expand the range of low cost housing opportunities for those aspiring to own their new home (this includes the Government's intention to introduce Starter Homes as a type of low cost home ownership);
- Increasing the density of development around commuter hubs, to make more efficient use of land in suitable locations;
- Supporting sustainable new settlements, development on brownfield land and small sites (up to 10 units), and delivery of housing allocated in plans; and
- Supporting delivery of starter homes.

There were nine sections contained with the consultation paper and 23 questions on which answers were sought.

(xviii) Museum Development Trust – At their March 2016 meeting the Committee received a report on the proposal to establish a Museum Development Trust for Epping Forest and Lowewood Museums.

The meeting noted that In April 2015, officers were successful in securing £55,000 funding from Arts Council England (ACE) as part of its Resilience Programme, to undertake two feasibility studies. The aim of the studies was to investigate opportunities for supporting resilience of the Museum, Heritage and Culture (MHC) service over the long-term and during economic austerity.

The key recommendation to come out of the study was to establish a Development Trust to operate in parallel to the general management of Epping Forest and Lowewood Museum services based on the model of a company limited by guarantee and registered charity.

They noted the positive benefits of setting up a separate charitable entity, which included the ability to access a range of funding possibilities that were not previously available, opportunity to secure additional grants and donations and the ability to claim Gift Aid on qualifying ticket sales.

A tripartite arrangement came into being in early February, following an approach by Chelmsford City Council for support and advice in relation to operation of their Museum Service, which had just received funding for a major Heritage Lottery Fund project.

Two senior officers from Chelmsford came to look at our museum and talk to senior officers here. They had discussions about the Trust and how to set it up. They were very impressed with our work and were keen to act as a partner agency for us and set themselves up as a separate Foundation Trust. We shall establish a close relationship with them as well as Broxbourne.

(xix) Prevent Initiative and Radicalisation Issues – Also at their March meeting the committee received a report on the Home Office funding for the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism – the ‘Prevent Duty’ that came into force for local authorities on 1st July 2015.

In October 2015, the Council received notification from the Home Office, that it would be allocating £10,000 to all local authorities (excluding priority areas) as a one off payment in this financial year, for the delivery of specific work to support the implementation of the Prevent Duty.

All Councils were required to apply for the funding and needed to present a plan on how the money would be spent. The application on behalf of EFDC focussed on two distinct areas of work; the upgrading of the Council’s IT systems to prevent misuse of IT for extremist material, and, the provision of a Prevent Education Programme within the district’s local secondary schools, for both pupils and teachers.

Following the receipt of the grant a nationally recognised Training Programme ‘*Me and You Education*’ was therefore commissioned to undertake the delivery of in-schools Prevent work and this has been delivered to pupils in years 7 – 13.

(xx) Brentwood Draft Local plan: Public Consultation - The Committee noted that the Brentwood Draft Local Plan includes the strategy, planning policies and proposed land allocations intended to cover the period 2013 to 2033.

Epping Forest District and Brentwood Borough are in a very similar situation – i.e. with challenging pitch provision targets from the GTAA (112 and 84 respectively) and with very comprehensive Green Belt coverage (92% and 89% respectively), so there could be some advantage in considering joint provision in the general area of the common boundary.

(xxi) Response to Lower Thames Crossing Consultation - Highways England was consulting on proposals for a new road crossing of the River Thames connecting Kent and Essex. It was considered that a new crossing was needed to reduce congestion at the existing Dartford Crossing and unlock economic growth, supporting the development of new homes and jobs in the region.

The proposal was the culmination of lengthy investigations into options for a new Lower Thames Crossing which has been lobbied for by Kent and Essex County Councils and business leaders.

(xxii) Replacement Essex Waste Local Plan – Consultation - The Replacement Waste Local Plan: Pre Submission Draft was the version of the Plan proposed to be submitted to the Secretary of State, leading up to independent examination by a Planning Inspector later in 2016. It included a vision statement, objectives and a spatial strategy to enable the delivery of sustainable waste development, site allocations and policies to manage waste development. The Plan covers the administrative areas of Essex County Council and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council.

The focus of this consultation, which was being carried out under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 was on soundness and legal compliance. The Planning Inspector could only address these issues in his consideration of the Waste Plan.

(xxiii) Data Quality Strategy 2016/17 – 2018/19 – The Committee noted that the Council needed timely, accurate and reliable data in order to manage activities and meet internal and external requirements to demonstrate accountability through accurate reporting. Data was used for the assessment of the Council's performance, including the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The Data Quality Strategy set out the arrangements for the next 3 years to ensure key data meets the highest standards and was 'right first time'.

The Council had identified principles and arrangements to ensure high standards of data quality and had for a number of years, formalized them within a strategy, to support consistency and encourage high standards of practice of data quality management. This revised strategy continued to reflect the principles for data quality originally identified by the former Audit Commission.

(xxiv) Enforcement Activity – The Committee received an updating report on the enforcement actions taken in 2015. They noted that in line with previous reports on enforcement activities of the Environment & Neighbourhoods team, the data has been broken down into 6 month periods covering the summer and winter months. In general summer months were busier, particularly for noise complaints. This pattern has been repeated in 2015.

Noise and waste/fly-tipping issues make up a large percentage of the teams enforcement work, it was estimated that the Environment and Neighbourhood Officers (ENO) spend 80% of their time on these two issues across the district.

In some cases officers are clearly working towards establishing non-compliance with the law, with the aim of instigating prosecution proceedings e.g. fly-tipping incidents. However, officers also spend a great deal of time trying to educate, deter and resolve issues informally. That was particularly the case with noise issues and other neighbour nuisance complaints. Although prosecutions draw attention, enforcement officers investigate and resolve many more cases informally.

Officers have started to use new powers to issue formal Community Protection Warnings (CPW) and Community Protection Notices (CPN). This new power provided officers with more scope to deal with some issues that previously did not fall under specific statutory nuisance powers.

Although the new power was welcome, the Committee noted that it came at a time when other enforcement agencies, that share similar enforcement responsibilities, such as the Police, Environment Agency and Essex County Council were increasingly under pressure, leading to more enforcement work being directed to the ENO team.

Case Study: Review of Waste and Recycling Collection Arrangements

On 17 December 2015, the Chairman of the Committee welcomed the members of the public, officers, councillors and invited guests to a special meeting of the Neighbourhoods and Communities Select Committee. The meeting was to review the new domestic waste and recycling contract and following the switch to the four day collection schedule and the introduction of new vehicles and technology. This had resulted in an unacceptably high level of missed collections. The Council's Environment Portfolio Holder noting that this was an important service, formally

requested that the Overview and Scrutiny undertake a review on his behalf and that the outcome to be reported back to the Cabinet. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had agreed that this request should be determined by the Neighbourhoods and Communities Select Committee. Given this, a single, one off meeting of the Select Committee be dedicated to this single subject.

In addition to the Environment Portfolio Holder and the Council's lead officers on Waste and Recycling, senior representatives from Biffa municipal were present. They were invited to give evidence and answer questions.

Part one – the Procurement Process

The Committee went on to review the procurement process. The consultant from White Young and Green, who supported the council through the procurement process gave a brief description of why the council chose to go for Competitive Dialogue, the procurement process, any key considerations and service improvements identified. He noted that this process enabled the bidders to take into consideration:

- the grounds maintenance service;
- establish synergies between grounds maintenance and street cleansing services;
- to market test the in-house service for fleet management and maintenance;
- to seek a solution in relation to depot provision;
- an innovative approach to the provision of trade waste collection and recycling;
- achieve a minimum average recycling rate in excess of 60%;
- the provision of up to date ICT; and
- where affordable to endeavour to go for innovation and added value.

The Council had expressed a wish to move from their current depot and explore alternative type of fleet contract and would also examine the contract term, which should be longer than the former 7 years.

They were also looking at how recycling, composting etc. could be improved; the procurement process was wholly designed to see how contractors would tackle this.

Part two – Mobilisation and the first 6 months of Contract

The meeting went on to consider the second part of the review, the mobilisation and the first 6 months of the contract.

Officers advised the meeting that the decision to award the contract was made by the Cabinet in May 2014. After that there was a handover period from Sita to Biffa. The first thing was to get Biffa set up at the Langston Road depot; TUPE staff transfer over to Biffa; transfer assets like vehicles and the stock of wheelie bins and other containers etc. This was carried out successfully and Biffa operated the 5 day collection service from 4 November 2014. The Waste and Recycling Manager added that the council acted as a buffer between the outgoing and incoming contractors.

Officers noted that every household received a letter about the change over, with a calendar showing the collection dates, information was also put on our website with a search tool to enable householders to check the date and type of waste and recycling collection, and this proved very successful. The Council had received criticism for not

having enough publicity, but the problem was not that, but that collections were missed.

The Portfolio Holder added that with hindsight the letters were not as clear as they could have been. But more broadly, we had done a good job communicating by using the website and other means.

Part three – Revised Arrangements, Problems, Operational Issues & Remedial Actions

Officers noted that the 4 day collection consisted of Tuesday to Friday collections, a one pass collection for dry recycling and glass and new ICT and Customer relationship Management systems for the management of customer contact and also the new collections for small electrical equipment, textiles and batteries.

At the start the Council had received feedback that the collections were not happening as effectively as they should have been. Some houses were missed and this was coupled with a lack of knowledge of some of the areas being covered. Staff did not necessarily know the location of some of the bins as there were some unusual places they were being kept. This ended in missed collections and staff had to do some relearning of the 'ins' and 'outs' of an area. Some rural areas had consistent problems at this time.

At its peak the contact centre was getting about 750 calls a day and they handled this by drafting in staff from other areas to answer calls and emails. An additional problem was that officers had to learn new ways of processing the new systems; at the start the lines of communication were not that clear, but this had changed now.

A member of the public said that she had received her recycling calendar for May to October for which she thanked the officers. But, right from the beginning her general waste was collected but her recycling waste wasn't. On numerous occasions during May and July when she reported it she was told that Biffa would be informed of this.

Officers from Biffa noted that that the new ways of working required change. They should have been using local crews; and once they started operating they were not achieving what they should. They then had to run three 'mop-up' crews to deal with the problems that arose. A combination of various issues caused a perfect storm. They also lost some employees and with them local knowledge. The new vehicles were different and needed some time for familiarisation; they were also slower which impacted on the length of the rounds. They were also relying on a new IT system which had teething problems and the longer working days meant that they got caught up in traffic as well. They noted that they did not have enough resources and introduced four new rounds and also had to bring in new people.

The Chairman noted that a full report would go to the February Overview and Scrutiny Committee and onward to a future Cabinet meeting.

TASK AND FINISH PANELS

1. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT REVIEW TASK AND FINISH PANEL

Origin

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of 10 February 2015 set up a Task and Finish Panel to review potential options for the best use of the existing budgets for youth engagement for the future. Also, they agreed that it would be helpful to co-opt two youth councillors to sit on this panel and give their input. This Panel stemmed from a PICK form submitted by Councillor Kane the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Community Services.

Aims and Objectives

- (a) To report findings to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and submit a final report for consideration by the Committee and the Council by November 2015;
- (b) To include two representatives from the District Youth Council on the Task and Finish Panel;
- (c) To determine the impact of the Council's current engagement with young people, through consultation with local statutory and voluntary sector partners, and,
- (d) To determine the best use of the allocated funding for the future.

Draft Terms of Reference

1. To review the operation of the Youth Council and identify specific areas of work undertaken and the success and impact of these;
2. To review the level of engagement with peers in local schools and 'other young people' of all ages across the district, through the range of work undertaken by the Youth Council and the importance of this engagement for local community groups;
3. To consider feedback from local schools and other partners in respect of the work of the Youth Council;
4. To identify the expenditure related to various elements of the Youth Council work programme and analyse the cost/benefit of this;
5. To consider other work undertaken by Community Services and Safety to engage with young people and identify the costs associated with this;
6. To consider the status of Essex Youth Services following recent service transformation and resulting implications for the district; and,

7. To prepare a set of recommendations for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in November 2015.

The Panel

The Committee appointed the following members to serve on the Panel:

Members (up to May '15): S. Murray, G. Mohindra, C. Roberts, B. Surtees, K. Adams, R. Butler

Members (after May '15): S. Murray, G. Mohindra, C. Roberts, S. Neville, B. Surtees A. Patel

Other Members who attended: Mrs H Kane, J McIvor (Youth Councillor), M Tinker (Youth Councillor)

Officers: J Chandler (Assistant Director Community Services and Safety), G Wallis (Community, Health & Wellbeing Manager and R Perrin (Democratic Services Officer).

The Panel had its first meeting in April 2015 and their last meeting on 14 September 2015.

Outcome

Recommendations of the Panel in relation to the Epping Forest Youth Council was:

- i) That the Council retains and continues to support and develop the Youth Council in terms of wider youth engagement;
- ii) 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;
- iii) That the Youth Council acts as a consultee for stakeholder presentations at Overview and Scrutiny Committees;
- iv) That the current operational budget for the Youth Council be maintained at £12,000 per annum; and,
- v) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee makes a bid to the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee 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.

Recommendations of the Panel in regard to future delivery of youth provision by Community Services and Safety:

- i) That the Council pursues the devolvement of the budget and responsibilities for Youth Provision from Essex County Council to the District Council; and,
- ii) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee makes a bid to the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee 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.

2. GRANT AID REVIEW TASK AND FINISH PANEL

Origin:

At its meeting on 16 September 2014, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the establishment of a new Task and Finish Panel to review the Council's Grant Aid Scheme for Sports, Arts, Leisure and Community Groups in terms of the overall policy/guidance and procedures for Major Grants and Service Level Agreements including those for the determination of applications, and those for the pre and post determination stages.

Aims and Objectives:

- (a) To report findings to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to submit a final report for consideration by the Committee and the Council by April 2015;
- (b) To gather evidence and information in relation to the review through the receipt of appropriate data, presentations and by participation in fact-finding visits to other authorities if necessary;
- (c) To have due regard to relevant legislation and the Council's procedures;
- (d) To consult political groups and independent Councillors during the review process.

Term of Reference:

To review the current structure of the Grant Aid Scheme, taking into consideration the terms of the overall policy/guidance and procedures those for the determination of applications, and those for the pre and post determination stages and how this framework would best fit the structure of the Council.

(1) To specifically consider:

- The eligibility criteria and assessment arrangements for funding taking into account the budget available and the thematic areas in the leisure and cultural strategy;
- The grant maxima;
- Appropriate arrangements for safeguarding;
- Review procedures.

(2) To consider any other matters that are deemed appropriate.

The Panel

The Committee appointed the following members to serve on the Panel:

Councillors Caroline Pond (Chairman), J Knapman (Vice-Chairman), T Boyce, A Mitchell, S Murray, G Shiell and B Surtees

The Panel did not finish its work by the end of the 2014/15 municipal year and continued its work into the 2015/16 year, holding its final meeting on 14 March 2016.

The Panel recognised the vital role that the voluntary and community sector brought to local community well-being in the Epping Forest District. However, it also acknowledged the need for a more proactive approach to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of grants awarded, and particularly the higher level grants.

Outcome

The Panel were satisfied that the agreed amendments to the Grant Aid Service Level Agreements and improved performance management would ensure that the Council was receiving best value from the grants awarded. They also felt that the level of remaining Grant Aid Funding should remain as it is, to ensure that the Council could continue to support the essential services provided through the voluntary sector.

The Panel made the following recommendations:

- (1) That the current level of Grant Aid funding be maintained;
- (2) That, from 1 April 2016, funding of less than £5,000 per annum for three years be provided for Voluntary Groups without the need for a formal Service Level Agreement, but, subject to the receipt of an Annual Report from each Group outlining the benefit to the District from the funding;
- (3) That the revised Service Level Agreement as agreed by the Panel, be adopted by the Council;
- (4) That the District Council maintain provision for longer term funding to Voluntary Action Epping Forest and Epping Forest Citizens Advice Bureau from 2016/17 onwards, based on performance management benchmarking closely monitored on an annual basis; and
- (5) That a more rigorous process of monitoring is adopted for the higher Grant Awards currently in operation for Voluntary Action Epping Forest and Citizen's Advice Bureau

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme – March 2016

Overview and Scrutiny Committee			
Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress / Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(1) OS Annual Report 2014/15	9 June 2015	Final report went to the June 2015 meeting.	09 June 2015; 21 July; 20 October; 05 January 2016; 23 February; and 19 April.
(2) To receive an information item on 'Volunteering Through Time Banking'	21 July 2015	Received an information item from the VAEF time banking co-ordinator.	
(3) To meet with Essex County Council in respect of Children Services and on annual basis, with the attendance of the Director of Children's Commissioning.	19 April 2016	Recommendation taken from the Children Services Task and Finish Panel. Chris Martin last attended the November 2014 meeting. Deferment to 2016 agreed by O&S Committee on 21/7/15.	
(4) Six monthly review - (a) Monitoring of OS recommendations (b) OS work programme	20 October 2015	Last completed in October 2015	

(5) To review the strategic direction of Epping Forest College, its vision for the future and its relationship with the Community	20 October 2015	The deputy Principal of Epping Forest College addressed the October 2015 meeting. In September 2014, the Committee agreed that the Principal should be asked to address them on an annual basis.
(6) To receive a presentation from Epping Forest Youth Council	5 January postponed to April 2016	Members of the Youth Council to attend with an update on their programme of work.
(7) Key Objectives 2014/15	Outturn report went to the 9 June 2015 meeting	Outturn report for 2014/15. (Quarterly progress reports in respect of the annual Key Objectives are made to the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)
(8) Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2015/16	Progress reports to be considered on a quarterly basis.	Quarterly progress to be considered at meetings to be held in Oct. 2015 (Qtr. 1), Jan 2016 (Qtr. 2) and Feb 2016 (Qtr. 3).
(9) Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2016/17	Went to the 21 July 2015 meeting	The Key Action Plan process has been brought forward to align with the budget setting process. To be considered by Cabinet in October.
(10) Barts Health NHS Trust	9 June 2015, 23 February 2016 & 28 February 2017	Ms F Smith the Managing Director of Whipps Cross, Dr H Noble & F Kwaku came to the Feb 2016 meeting. It was subsequently agreed that a representative would come back to another meeting to update the Committee in the new year.

(11) Essex County Fire and Rescue Service	January 2016 Presentation of ECF&RS to be held as separate briefing for all members (27 January 2016)	To receive a presentation from the Fire and Rescue Service on the review of their service provision and on the consultation exercise. To ask the Essex CC Portfolio Holder to also attend.	
(12) Progress on 6 th Form Consortium (PICK submission)	October 2016	To review the progress of the new 6th Form consortium set up in the District in September 2015. To ask appropriate head teachers to the meeting. More appropriate for Sept. 2016 after a year of operation.	
(13) Constitution Review – O&S Procedure Rules	20 October 2015	Completed Review of O&S Constitution Article and Procedure Rules considered by the Constitution Working Group during September 2015 and agreed by the O&S Committee on 20 October 2015.	
(14) Youth Engagement Task & Finish Panel	23 February 2016	Report from Leisure and Community Services Portfolio Holder or Assistant Director (Community Services & Safety) three months after completion of the scrutiny review, indicating whether recommendations from the review have been agreed or modified (23 February 2016). Portfolio Holder/lead officer to further report on progress with the implementation of such recommendations after six months.	
(15) Management of Epping Forest	7 June 2016	To arrange a visit from the Superintendent of Epping Forest, Paul Thomson and Judy Adams the Chairman of the Friends of Epping Forest on the present public consultation on the Forest Management Plan for 2017-2027	

Select Committees

Housing Select Committee 2015/16 (Chairman – Councillor S. Murray)

Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress/Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(1) Performance against Housing Service Standards and Review (Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)	June 2015	COMPLETED	16 June 2015 08 September Cancelled; 10 November; 12 January 2016; and 08 March
(2) 6-Month Progress Report on Housing Strategy Action Plan 2015/16	June 2015	COMPLETED	
(3) Housing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – 2014/15 Outturn	June 2015	COMPLETED	
(4) Housing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – Quarter 1	November 2015	COMPLETED	
(5) Six Monthly Progress report on Housing Business Plan Action Plan	November 2015	COMPLETED	
(6) Six-Month Review of the HRA Financial Plan	November 2015	COMPLETED	
(7) Housing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – Quarter 2	November 2015	COMPLETED	
(8) Housing Strategy Key Action Plan 2015 – 12 Month Progress Report	January 2016	COMPLETED	

(9) Housing Strategy Key Action Plan 2016 (Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)	January 2016	COMPLETED	
(10) Briefing on the proposed Council rent increase for 2016/17	January 2016	COMPLETED	
(11) Private Sector Housing Strategy Action Plan – Annual Progress Report		No longer required – A presentation was given at the November meeting on the approach to dealing with private empty properties, with the Housing Service Strategy scheduled for consideration at the March 2016 meeting. The Housing Portfolio Holder has also recently formally agreed to extend the existing Private Sector Housing Strategy (pending the formulation of a new Housing Strategy) - and the report to the Portfolio Holder provided a progress report on the Action Plan.	
(12) Proposed housing service improvements and service enhancements – 2016/17 (Recommendations to Cabinet)		No longer required – Due to the requirement to reduce rents by 1% p/a for 4 years and to sell “high value” void properties to fund the Voluntary Right to Buy for housing association tenants, the Finance and performance Cabinet Committee has placed a moratorium on the use of the Housing Improvements and service Enhancements Fund until a further review of options to ensure the HRA remains in surplus for 30 years is undertaken in 2016.	
(13) Housing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – Quarter 3	March 2016	COMPLETED	
(14) Housing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – Targets for 2016/17	March 2016	COMPLETED	
(15) 12-monthly Progress Report on Housing Business Plan Action Plan 2015/16	March 2016	COMPLETED	

(16) HRA Business Plan 2016/17	March 2016	COMPLETED	
(17) Data Quality Strategy 2016/17 and 2017/18	March 2016	COMPLETED	
(18) Homelessness Strategy 2015-2018	June 2015	COMPLETED	
(19) Housing Service Strategy on Housing and Estate Management (3-Year Review) (Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)	June 2015	COMPLETED	
(20) Housing Service Strategy on Energy Efficiency (3-Year Review) (Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)	June 2015	COMPLETED	
(21) Housing Service Strategy on Older People's (3-Year Review) (Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)	June 2015	COMPLETED	
(22) Housing Service Strategy on Harassment (3-Year Review) (Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)	November 2015	COMPLETED	
(23) Results of the STAR Triennial Tenant Satisfaction Survey	November 2015	COMPLETED	
(24) Housing Service Strategy on Empty Properties (3-Year Review) (Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)	March 2016	COMPLETED	

(25) Review of the approach to the Scheme Management Service to sheltered housing and properties designated for older people (Recommendations to Cabinet/Housing Portfolio Holder)	June 2016	Deferred to June 2016 meeting – Officers are currently formulating the proposals, which need detailed consideration before they can be brought forward.	
(26) Report of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel on its Service Review of Tenant Involvement	June 2016	Deferred to June 2016 meeting – Very little progress has been made by the Tenant Scrutiny Panel, which has been exacerbated by the recent departure of the Tenant Participation Officer. However, recruitment to the post is underway and the new officer will be assisting the tenants and Leaseholders Federation to review its approach to tenant scrutiny.	
(27) Review of the future use of sheltered/grouped housing scheme sites (Recommendations to Cabinet/Housing Portfolio Holder)	June 2016		
(28) Housing Service Strategy on Home Ownership and leaseholder Services (Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)	November 2016	Deferred to January 2018 meeting – in line with the recommendation of the report on the outcome of the review of the future coverage and scope of housing service strategies	
(29) Policy on HMO Licensing		No longer required – The Policy has now been considered and approved by the Cabinet direct, at its meeting in December 2015	
(30) Housing Service Strategy on Housing Advice (3-Year Review) (Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)		No longer required – in line with the recommendation of the report on the outcome of the review of the future coverage and scope of housing service strategies	

(31) Housing Service Strategy on Under-Occupation (3-Year Review) (Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)		No longer required – to be incorporated within the Housing and Estate Management Service Strategy when next reviewed, in line with the recommendation of the report on the outcome of the review of the future coverage and scope of housing service strategies	
(32) Housing Service Strategy on Rent Collection and Administration (3-Year Review) (Recommendations to Housing Portfolio Holder)		No longer required – to be incorporated within the Housing and neighbourhood Management Service Strategy when next reviewed, in line with the recommendation of the report on the outcome of the review of the future coverage and scope of housing service strategies	
(33) Discussion on Future approach to Housing Service Strategies	November 2015	COMPLETED	
(34) Presentation on the current and future approach to dealing with private empty properties	November 2015	COMPLETED	
(35) Response to DCLG consultation on mandatory “Pay to Stay” Scheme	November 2015	COMPLETED	
(36) Revised approach to Housing Service Strategies (reduced no. and content – with updates every 5 years)	January 2016	COMPLETED	

**Governance Select Committee 2015/16
(Chairman – Councillor T. Church)**

Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress / Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(1) Review of the Elections 7 May 2015	7 July 2015	Review of the processes for the General, District Council and Parish Council elections COMPLETED	07 July 2015; 06 October; 01 December; 02 February 2016; 05 April
(2) Review of Public Consultations	7 July 2015	(a) Annual Review COMPLETED (b) Technical Consultation on Implementation of Planning Changes COMPLETED	
(3) Key Performance Indicators 2014/15 – Outturn	Outturn KPI performance (Governance indicators only) considered at first meeting in each municipal year	Outturn KPI performance report for 2014/15 to be considered at meeting on 7 July 2015 COMPLETED	
(4) Key Performance Indicators 2015/16 – Quarterly Performance Monitoring	Quarterly KPI performance (Governance indicators only) considered on a quarterly basis	Quarterly KPI performance reports for 2015/16 to be considered at meetings on: 6 October 2015 (Q1) - COMPLETED 1 December 2015 (Q2) - COMPLETED 2 February 2016 (Q3) - COMPLETED	
(5) Proposed Governance Key Performance Indicators 2016/17	Draft indicator set KPI performance for 2016/17.	Proposed Governance KPIs for 2015/16 to be considered at meeting on 5 April 2016 COMPLETED	
(6) Planning Appeals Performance	1 December 2015	To receive examples of recent appeals decisions issued by the Planning Inspectorate. COMPLETED	
(7) Development Management Chair and Vice Chair's Meeting	2 February 2016	To receive feedback from meeting (27 October 2015) of Chair and Vice Chair's of the Area Planning and District Development Management Committees - COMPLETED	

(8) Equality Objectives 2012-2016 – 6 monthly reporting	7 July 2015	Review 6 monthly performance: 7 July 2015 - COMPLETED 1 December 2015 - COMPLETED	
(9) Proposed Equality Objectives 2016-2020	5 April 2016	Proposed Equality Objectives 2016-2020 to be considered at meeting 2 February 2016 COMPLETED	
(10) S106 Monitoring Report	6 October 2015	COMPLETED It is recommended that Future reports to be referred to District Development Management Committee for consideration. OSC has since recommended that these reports be referred to the Resources Select Committee.	
(11) Planning Enforcement Report		This item has been referred onto the Resources Select Committee.	
(12) Review the budget for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council	1 December 2015	Referred from Council on 28 July 2015 to this select committee. Following discussion on 1 December 2015 to be referred to the Remuneration Panel - COMPLETED	
(13) Annual Equality Information Report - 2016	6 October 2015	COMPLETED	
(14) Development Management – Pre-Application Advice	2 February 2016	To receive details of the resource requirements for pre-application planning advice and opportunities for increased member involvement in the pre-application process - COMPLETED	

Neighbourhood & Communities Select Committee 2015/16 (Chairman – Councillor M. Sartin)			
Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress / Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(1) Enforcement activity	March 2016	Received March 2016 - Annual report Committee	08 July 2015 15 September; 17 November; 17 December (special); 19 January 2016; 15 March
(2) CCTV action plan review	January 2016	Annual report to Committee	
(3) Annual Report of the Community Safety Partnership	September 2015	Completed - Annual report to Committee	
(4) KPIs 2014/15	July 2015	Outturn report for 2014/15	
(5) To review the specific quarterly KPI's for 2015/16	Quarterly	Progress reports to meetings: Q1 in September 2015; Q2 in November 2015; Q3 in March 2016	
(6) Receive notes of Waste Management Partnership Board	As appropriate To Council Bulletin	Notes reported to Committee at first available meeting following receipt. Received 17 June 15 minutes in Nov.	
(7) Receive notes of the Bobbingworth Nature Reserve Liaison Group and updates as appropriate.	As appropriate To Council Bulletin	Notes to the Committee at first available meeting following receipt;	
(8) To receive updates from the Green Corporate Working Party	As appropriate (received an update on the current position in November '15)	To monitor and keep under review the Council's progress towards the development and adoption of a corporate energy strategy/environmental policy and to receive progress reports from the Green Working Party.	

(9) Feedback on the success of the Crucial Crew Initiative and learning points for future programmes	September 2015	Completed	
(10) Report on the outcome of Stage 1 feasibility study on the options for establishing a Museum, Heritage and Culture Development Trust	March 2015	Report received at the March 2016 meeting	
(11) Feedback on the success of the Summer Holiday Activity Programme and Learning points for the future programme.	November 2015	Received at the Nov. meeting	
(12) Feedback on the success of the Reality Roadshow initiative and learning points for future programmes.	January 2016		
(13) Report on the extensive new offer provided to visitors following the expansion and improvement of the Epping Forest Museum	March 2016 TBA		
(14) To receive regular updates on the current position of the Local Plan	Update to go to each meeting.	Committee to keep a watch in brief on the position of the District's Local Plan - (last went to March'16 meeting)	
(15) To review the waste Contract and associated problems as put forward by the PICK form	September (Scoping) and 17 December 2015	To scope out the PICK form at the September meeting; one off review in December 2015; report to O&S and Cabinet	
(16) To receive a report on the 'prevent initiative' and radicalisation issues.	March 2016	Went to the March meeting.	

(17) To receive a presentation from the Council's area crime analyst on her work.	Went to the January 2016 meeting		
(18) The Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services to attend a future meeting to address the problems of fly-tipping	Went to the November 2015 meeting		
(19) To review a PICK Form put forward By Cllr Neville on a default 20mph signed speed limit.	January 16	This item was passed to this Committee by the O&S Committee held on 20 October 2015. Scoped out at the Nov.15 meeting. ECC Officers came to the January meeting to explain the 20mph rules and regulations.	

Resources Select Committee 2015/16 (Chairman – Councillor G. Mohindra)			
Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress / Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(1) To review the specific quarterly KPI's for 2015/16	Quarterly	Progress reports to meetings: Q1 in October 2015; Q2 in December 2015; Q3 in February 2016	14 July 2015; 13 October; 14 December; 09 February 2016 and 12 April
(2) Key Performance Indicators 2014/15 - Outturn	Outturn KPI performance considered at the first meeting of each municipal year	Outturn KPI performance report for 2014/15 for July 2015 meeting.	
(3) Detailed Portfolio Budgets	Portfolio budgets considered on an annual basis jointly with the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee.	Annual Review of portfolio budgets to be considered at joint meeting with the F&PM Cabinet Committee in January of each year.	
(4) ICT Strategy – progress	Progress against ICT Strategy Considered on an annual basis. Last update in Oct. '15	Progress report considered at meeting on 13 October 2015, including call/response handling. A report on options following introduction of new telephony system.	

(5) Fees and Charges 2016/17	Proposed fees and charges for 2016/17 considered at October 2015 meeting	Proposed fees and charges considered on an annual basis each October
(6) Provisional Capital Outturn 2014/15	Provisional outturn for 2014/15 considered at July meeting.	Provisional Revenue Outturn considered on an annual basis at first meeting in each municipal year.
(7) Provisional Revenue Outturn 2014/15	Provisional Outturn for 2014/15 considered at July 2015 meeting.	Provisional Revenue Outturn considered on an annual basis at first meeting in each year.
(8) Sickness Absence Outturn	July 2015	To review the Sickness Outturn report for 2014 -15.
(9) Sickness Absence	Half-yearly progress reports for 2015/16 to be considered at December and July meetings.	Detailed progress against achievement of sickness absence targets reviewed on a six-monthly basis
(10) Medium Term Financial Strategy & Financial issues paper	October 2015	Received the financial issues Paper and Medium term financial strategy including 4 year General Fund forecast
(11) Quarterly Financial Monitoring	Oct. 2015; Dec. 2015; & April 2016	To receive quarterly financial monitoring Reports
(12) Apprentices & Graduates	December 2015	To receive a presentation on the Council's apprenticeship scheme and it's graduate scheme (updating report received in Dec).
(13) Planning Enforcement	October 2015	Received a review the Planning Enforcement team's work. Considering their processes and not specific cases.

(14) Shared Services Working	December 2015	To review any shared services working being carried out by EFDC. HR currently working with Colchester and Braintree Councils on a shared HR payroll system.	
(15) Facilities Management	October 2015	Received an updating report on the rationalising of the Council's Energy Bills.	
(16) Private Funding	December 2015	To consider any avenues of private funding available to EFDC.	
(17) Housing Benefit Fraud & Compliance	February 2016	Received a report in February 2016 on the fraud team's work.	
(18) Corporate Debt Processes	July 2016	To receive a report on the approach adopted to dealing with debts due to the Council.	
(19) Careline & Housing Related Charges	October 2015	Received a report on the proposed charging plan for Housing Related Support (HRS)	

Task and Finish Panels

Grant Aid Task and Finish Panel 2015/16 (Chairman – Councillor C. P. Pond)

Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress/Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(1) Terms of reference, scoping report and work programme.	Final report to be made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April 2016.	<p>Completed - Final report to go to the O&S Committee in April 2016</p> <p>Workload commitments within Community Services & Safety mean that the January 2016 timescale for the final report of the Panel could not be met. The Panel will not be able to produce a final report for the 2016/17 budget setting process and this will therefore be deferred until 2017/18. Final report of the Panel to be made to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 19 April 2016.</p>	<p>14 January 2015; 2 March; 31 March; 16 April; 20 July; 28 September; 29 October 15 February 2016 14 March</p>

**Youth Engagement Task and Finish Panel 2015/16
(Chairman – Councillor S. Murray)**

Item	Report Deadline/Priority	Progress/Comments	Programme of Meetings
(1) Terms of reference, scoping report and work programme.	Terms of reference and work programme to be considered at initial meeting and referred to the June, Overview and Scrutiny Committee for adoption.	<p>Completed Final report went to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October 2015.</p> <p>Progress reports on implementation of recommendations to be made to the Committee in February and April 2016 in accordance with the O&S rules of the Constitution.</p>	<p>20 April 2015; 18 May; 22 June; 08 July; 11 August; 14 September</p>



**Epping Forest
District Council**

THE KEY DECISION LIST

INCLUDING PROPOSED PRIVATE DECISIONS

(4 February 2016)

The Key Decision List including Proposed Private Decisions

There is a legal requirement for local authorities to publish a notice in respect of each Key Decision that it proposes to make, at least 28 days before that decision is made. There is also a similar requirement to advertise those decisions, whether they are Key Decisions or not, which it is proposed to be made in private with the public and press excluded from the meeting. This Key Decision List, including those decisions proposed to be made in private, constitute that notice. Copies of the Key Decision List are available for inspection at the Council's Civic Offices, as well as on the Council's website in the 'Your Council' section.

Any background paper listed can be obtained by contacting the relevant Officer in the first instance, or failing that the Democratic Services Officer listed below.

Key Decisions

The Council's Constitution defines key decisions as:

- (i) Any decision within budget and policy that involves expenditure/savings of £250,000 or more in the current municipal year;
- (ii) Any decision not within budget and policy that involves expenditure/savings of £100,000 or more in the current municipal year;
- (iii) Any decision that raises new issues of policy;
- (iv) Any decision that increases the Council's financial commitments in future years, over and above existing budgetary approval;
- (v) Any decision that involves the publication of draft or final schemes, which may require either directly, or in relation to objections to, the approval of a Government minister;
- (vi) Any decision that involves the passage of local legislation; and
- (vii) Any decision that affects two or more wards, and has a discernible effect on the quality or quantity of services provided to people living or working in that area.

Borrowing or lending decisions undertaken under delegated authority by the Director of Resources are not defined as a key decision.

The Council has also agreed the following additional requirements in relation to key decisions:

- (a) Key decisions cannot be made by officers;
- (b) Key decisions not within budget and policy can only be made by the Council;

- (c) Key decisions within budget and policy but involving expenditure/savings in excess of £1million can only be made by the Cabinet and/or Council;
- (d) Key decisions within budget and policy but involving expenditure/savings between £250,000 and £1million can be made by the relevant Portfolio Holder;
- (e) Portfolio Holders can only make key decisions affecting their wards if the decision is based upon a recommendation by a Service Director or as one of a range of options recommended by a Service Director.

Private Decisions

Any decisions that are proposed to be taken in private will be reported as such. The paragraph number quoted relates to Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and their definitions are as follows:

- (1) Information relating to any individual.
- (2) Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
- (3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
- (4) Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
- (5) Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
- (6) Information which reveals that the authority proposes:
 - (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
- (7) Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

Corporate Aims & Key Objectives 2015/16

- (1) 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:
- (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;
 - (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:
 - (i) The Epping Forest Shopping Park, Loughton;
 - (ii) The Council Housebuilding Programme;
 - (iii) The St John's Redevelopment Scheme, Epping; and
 - (iv) North Weald Airfield;
 - (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.
- (2) 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) To increase opportunities for sustainable economic development within the District, in order to increase local employment opportunities for residents; and
 - (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.
- (3) 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;
 - (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; and

(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.

Cabinet Membership 2015/16

Chris Whitbread	Leader of the Council
Syd Stavrou	Deputy Leader and Finance
Richard Bassett	Planning Policy
Will Breare-Hall	Environment
Anne Grigg	Asset Management & Economic Development
Dave Stallan	Housing
Gary Waller	Safer, Greener & Transport
Helen Kane	Leisure & Community Services
John Philip	Governance & Development Management
Alan Lion	Technology & Support Services

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WORK PROGRAMME - 4 FEBRUARY 2016 TO 5 MAY 2016**PORTFOLIO - LEADER**

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	KEY DECISION	DATE OF DECISION	DECISION MAKER	PRIVATE DECISION	REPRESENTATION ARRANGEMENTS	BACKGROUND PAPERS
Greater Essex Devolution	Update on the latest position concerning Devolution for the Greater Essex area.	Yes	9 June 2016	Cabinet		Glen Chipp 01992 564758	
Transformation Project	To consider the scope of the Transformation Project.	Yes	3 March 2016	Cabinet		Glen Chipp 01992 564758	
Council Constitution	To approve the new Constitution for the Council	Yes	26 April 2016	Council		Simon Hill 01992 564249	Agenda & Minutes of the Constitution Working Group

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	KEY DECISION	DATE OF DECISION	DECISION MAKER	PRIVATE DECISION	REPRESENTATION ARRANGEMENTS	BACKGROUND PAPERS
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WORK PROGRAMME - 4 FEBRUARY 2016 TO 5 MAY 2016

PORTFOLIO - FINANCE

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	KEY DECISION	DATE OF DECISION	DECISION MAKER	PRIVATE DECISION	REPRESENTATION ARRANGEMENTS	BACKGROUND PAPERS
Council Budget 2016/17	The Budget setting process for 2016/17, including:	Yes				Bob Palmer 01992 564279	
	1...Financial Issues Paper		20 July 2015	Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee			
	2...Fees & Charges		12 November 2015	Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee			
	3...Draft Budget Lists		21 January 2016	Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee			
	4...Executive Approval		4 February 2016	Cabinet			
	5...Final Approval	16 February 2016	Council				
Corporate Risk Updates 2015-16	Quarterly update of the Corporate Risk Register	Yes	21 January 2016	Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee		Bob Palmer 01992 564279	
			4 February 2016	Cabinet			
Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2017/18	Review of the Scheme for 2017/18:	Yes				Janet Twinn 01992 564215	
	1...Consider amendments		21 July 2016	Cabinet			
	2...Finalise Scheme		1 December 2016	Cabinet			
	3...Approve Scheme	15 December 2016	Council				

WORK PROGRAMME - 4 FEBRUARY 2016 TO 5 MAY 2016

PORTFOLIO - ENVIRONMENT

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	KEY DECISION	DATE OF DECISION	DECISION MAKER	PRIVATE DECISION	REPRESENTATION ARRANGEMENTS	BACKGROUND PAPERS
Review of the Waste Management Contract	To consider the Scrutiny review of the new Waste Management Contract and any recommendations therein.	Yes	7 April 2016	Cabinet		Derek Macnab 01992 564050	
Contaminated Land	To agree a programme of inspection & budget allocation for the investigation of potential contaminated land sites within the District.	Yes	7 April 2016	Cabinet		Kim Durrani 01992 564055	Contaminated Land Strategy
Waste and Recycling Policies	Update to Waste & Recycling Policies	Yes	21 July 2016	Cabinet		Kim Durrani 01992 564055	None

WORK PROGRAMME - 4 FEBRUARY 2016 TO 5 MAY 2016

PORTFOLIO - HOUSING

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	KEY DECISION	DATE OF DECISION	DECISION MAKER	PRIVATE DECISION	REPRESENTATION ARRANGEMENTS	BACKGROUND PAPERS
"Invest to Save" Proposal	To agree the future use of the "Invest to Save" funding for the provision of rental loans and rental deposits.	Yes	4 February 2016	Cabinet		Roger Wilson 01992 564419	
Affordable Housing Policy	To agree the Council's approach to the mixture of affordable housing on S106 sites.	Yes	19 February 2016	Housing Portfolio Holder		Alan Hall 01992 564004	
Purchase of Street Properties	To agree the purchase of individual street properties from existing HRA budgets.	Yes	26 February 2016	Housing Portfolio Holder		Paul Pledger 01992 564248	
Off Street Parking Programme 2016/17	To consider the future of the Programme and, if appropriate, approve the Programme for 2016/17.	Yes	3 March 2016	Cabinet		Paul Pledger 01992 564248	
Council Housebuilding Programme Annual Report	Annual report on progress and costs.	Yes	3 March 2016	Cabinet		Alan Hall 01992 564004	
Replacement of Council Owned Sewage Treatment Plants	To agree the approach for replacement, given that the Plants are past their life expectancy.	Yes	3 March 2016	Cabinet		Lyndsay Swan 01992 564146	
Norway House Chalets	To consider a feasibility study for the redevelopment of the site at Norway House, North Weald, currently occupied by temporary chalets.	No	24 March 2016	Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee		Paul Pledger 01992 564248	
Housing Development Strategy	To approve the updated Housing Development Strategy	No	9 June 2016	Cabinet		Paul Pledger 01992 564248	
HRA	To adopt an approach to	Yes	16 June 2016	Finance and		Alan Hall	

Financial Plan	ensure that the HRA does not fall into deficit			Performance Management Cabinet Committee		01992 564004	
Sheltered Housing Service	To agree the future approach to the Service.	Yes	1 September 2016	Cabinet		Roger Wilson 01992 564419	
Sheltered Housing Assets	To agree a Strategy for the future provision of individual housing schemes.	Yes	1 September 2016	Cabinet		Alan Hall 01992 564004	

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	KEY DECISION	DATE OF DECISION	DECISION MAKER	PRIVATE DECISION	REPRESENTATION ARRANGEMENTS	BACKGROUND PAPERS
Museum Development Trust	To receive a report on the findings of the Museum Resilience Proposal and consider the feasibility of establishing a Museum Development Trust.	Yes	3 March 2016	Cabinet		Julie Chandler 01992 564214	

WORK PROGRAMME - 4 FEBRUARY 2016 TO 5 MAY 2016**PORTFOLIO - SAFER, GREENER AND TRANSPORT**

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	KEY DECISION	DATE OF DECISION	DECISION MAKER	PRIVATE DECISION	REPRESENTATION ARRANGEMENTS	BACKGROUND PAPERS
NEPP - Off Street Parking	To consider the costs, procurement strategy and associated timeline for the provision of Off Street parking arrangements in the District.	Yes	7 April 2016	Cabinet		Kim Durrani 01992 564055	

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	KEY DECISION	DATE OF DECISION	DECISION MAKER	PRIVATE DECISION	REPRESENTATION ARRANGEMENTS	BACKGROUND PAPERS
Facilities Management Capital and Revenue Requirements	To approve Capital & Revenue funding for projects necessary to maintain the building fabric and systems.	Yes	6 October 2016	Cabinet		David Newton 01992 564580	Facilities Management Planned Maintenance Programmes 2014/15 to 2017/18.

WORK PROGRAMME - 4 FEBRUARY 2016 TO 5 MAY 2016

PORTFOLIO - ASSETS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	KEY DECISION	DATE OF DECISION	DECISION MAKER	PRIVATE DECISION	REPRESENTATION ARRANGEMENTS	BACKGROUND PAPERS
Epping Forest Shopping Park	Update report on progress with the project. Update report on progress with the project.	Yes	11 February 2016 14 April 2016	Asset Management and Economic Development Cabinet Committee Asset Management and Economic Development Cabinet Committee	YES, paragraph (3)	Derek Macnab 01992 564050	Report by Colliers International Previous reports to the Cabinet
Signing of Development Agreement for St John's Road, Epping	To sign an agreement for the development of the St John's Road area in Epping	Yes	3 March 2016	Cabinet		Derek Macnab 01992 564050	
Development and parking at Vere Road, Loughton	To agree a co-ordinated approach to the provision of affordable housing developments and public car parking in Vere Road.	No	14 April 2016	Asset Management and Economic Development Cabinet Committee		Alan Hall 01992 564004	

WORK PROGRAMME - 4 FEBRUARY 2016 TO 5 MAY 2016

**PORTFOLIO - GOVERNANCE & DEVELOPMENT
MANAGEMENT**

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	KEY DECISION	DATE OF DECISION	DECISION MAKER	PRIVATE DECISION	REPRESENTATION ARRANGEMENTS	BACKGROUND PAPERS
Equality Scheme & Equality Objectives 2016-20	To review the Equality Scheme & agree the Equality Objectives for 2016-20	Yes	7 April 2016	Cabinet		Barbara Copson 01992 564042	None
Affordable Housing Viability Appraisals	To approve local Planning Guidance for applicants on the Council's requirements for the submission of viability appraisals relating to affordable housing	Yes	4 March 2016	Governance and Development Management Portfolio Holder		Alan Hall 01992 564004	None