

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Asset Management and Economic Development Cabinet Committee **Date:** Thursday, 13 April 2017

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.00 - 7.45 pm

Members Present: Councillors A Grigg (Chairman), H Kane, G Mohindra and G Waller

Other Councillors: Councillors

Apologies: - W Breare-Hall

Officers Present: D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), C Pasterfield (Consultant), Q Buller (Local Strategic Partnership Manager), A Hendry (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and S Kits (Social Media and Customer Services Officer)

Also in attendance:

38. 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.

39. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Cabinet Committee noted that there were no substitute members.

40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

41. MINUTES

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2017 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

42. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - PROGRESS REPORT

The Local Strategic Partnership Manager, Mr Buller, presented a report to the Cabinet Committee and updated them on a number of projects and issues being explored by the Economic Development Team.

It was noted that:

- The Tourism Website had now been live for more than two weeks. It had a soft launch and was not advertised, but was ready for the Easter holidays. During the first week the number of visits to the site rose by 50% and by the end of the period they had more than a thousand page views more than they had in one week of August last year. This boded well for the future;
- The final designs for sign posts in Waltham Abbey had now been signed off. The scheme was to provide visitors to the town centre an effective navigational system that would enable them to explore the town's attractions. It was anticipated that the 5 day build would be completed by mid-summer; and
- On the one business briefing, 350 copies had been downloaded, a record number. Printed versions were also available and we have had good feedback on these.

Councillor H Kane asked if the Epping Forest Museum was mentioned on the website. Mr Buller said that it was. The new website was a direct replacement for the old one, so everything covered in the old one was in the new one. In fact the museum was the most covered attraction in the district, getting as much exposure as possible.

Councillor H Kane added that she would like to thank, on behalf of the town partnership, the officers who went and gave a presentation in Waltham Abbey and for all their support. The Town partnership has received the money forwarded to EFDC from ECC.

RESOLVED:

That the progress and work programme of the Council's Economic Development Section was noted.

43. ASSET MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS - PROGRESS REPORT

The Director of Neighbourhoods presented a report to the Cabinet Committee on the progress of the Asset Management Economic Development Projects. The Chairman noted that there was also a late updating report issued on 'yellow' and under section 278 road works it should have said that a progress meeting had been held on 7 April. It was agreed that they would have a general update but would then go into private session when they came to consider the Epping Forest Shopping Park to enable members to ask questions about the individual leases etc.

Mr Macnab introduced this regular update. It was noted that:

- In respect with the Oakwood Hill Depot in Loughton, a replacement depot for front line services, relocated from Langston Road. The opportunity was taken to increase the office accommodation by adding a mezzanine floor. The opportunity was taken to look to the re-accommodation of our Housing Repair service, relocation from the St. John's Road redevelopment. An officer working team has been formed and members have had some site visits. They would bring some options in the near future;
- In Pyrles Lane Nursery in Loughton they had undertaken initial marketing work on this site, but held in abeyance as to such time as the council reached a position on the formation of a housing company; a good site for them to start with. But after due consideration the Cabinet Finance Committee and the Council House building Committee had agreed that this would not be happening. A report will go to the June Cabinet meeting on the marketing of the Pyrles Lane nursery site;

- St John's Road Epping; we acquired the Essex County Council's interest, back in December 2016. Since then there has been tripartite negotiations between EFDC, Epping Town Council and Frontier Estates, aimed at ensuring that not only the socio-economic development benefits were achieved but that also the community benefited;
- As for North Weald Airfield, after some soft market testing by Savills on prospective development partners, we were disappointed with the number of external partners that came forward. However with the progress of the Local Plan we have taken the opportunity for Arup Ltd to assess the potential scale and mix of employment uses for the airfield and have completed their initial employment assessment as part of the Local Plan;
- The site of the former Winston Churchill Public House in Loughton, the show home on the site was now open and being advertised, along with two bedroom flats. We had appointed joint marketing agents for the ground floor retail spaces on this site. Potentially looking to be open around September of this year; and
- The S106 agreement for the Hillhouse Development in Waltham Abbey has now been completed and Places for People will be submitting their planning application by the end of this month, with a view of opening their new facilities in November 2018.

Councillor Mohindra said that he had asked for a report on the Oakwood Hill Depot on the alarm system and problems and any lessons learnt. Mr Macnab added that the problems with the alarm system has now been resolved but at considerable costs by appointing an overnight security guard in the absence of an alarm system. We will be discussing this with the contractor with a view to getting some recompense.

RESOLVED:

That the current progress on the Council's Asset Management and Development projects were noted.

44. EPPING FOREST SHOPPING PARK - PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee went on to consider that late report on the Epping Forest Shopping Centre, noting that they would be going into private session later to discuss the commercially sensitive aspects of this scheme.

Mr Pasterfield, the Assistant Management Development Consultant, introduced the report, noting that the Shopping Park was progressing well. The last meeting with the main contractor, Mcloughlin & Harvey was held on 30 March 2017. Progress had been good but some delays had been experienced due to additional work for shop fittings which would carry on past the completion date. Concreting and asphaltting of the service road will be completed on 19 April. This would have to cure for a month before it could be used by heavy vehicles. The Park is looking very finished now and they have started scaling down and the site offices are being moved away. They have finished the car park including white lining. The programme for the shop fitting is being brought together. Clearly some tenants take a shorter time to fit out while others take longer as they have more sophisticated requirements.

With regard to the Section 278 road works, progress has been made Essex County Council were helping in some areas. They were still asking us to carry out resurfacing work to Barrington Green South outside the Sainsbury's Service entrance. There was some indication that they may contribute towards this so officers were pursuing this. We had to use only contractors that have been approved, for

example for electrical works, and this was slowing us up. Works would be going into September, but most of the works would be completed by mid August.

Councillor Mohindra asked if we were still on course for an autumn opening. He was told that we were looking to be opened by mid September, with some tenants looking to open in the summer.

Councillor Mohindra then asked about the Abridge Road junction to be opened up to the public in April; did we have an exact date. And secondly, Essex County Council, Highways; has our relationship improved with them as they have been a source of frustration for some time, putting onerous requirement on us. Mr Pasterfield replied that our relationship with the people on site was good although there was a fragmented relationship with ECC Highways, who tended not to attend site meetings and as a result did not understand our requirements and the results this could have on costs and the programme. With regard to the first point, the junction at Abridge has now been resurfaced and the traffic lights are in; footpaths have been laid out and nearly completed. The traffic lights have to be connected up and this was where we were having problems with Essex, signing off with UK Power, this was what we were chasing up all week. The final handover has now slipped into May.

Councillor Mohindra asked if the white lines were now down. Mr Pasterfield said that he did not think so as this would be the last thing to be done.

Mr Macnab said that ECC have now pulled back from the requirements to resurface Barrington Drive, North and other things tend to make us think that things were improving.

Councillor Waller said he understood that there were initially going to be 10 electric vehicle charging points with the potential to increase the number to 20. Had any thoughts been given to publicising this fact as these will be the first that we had? The Chairman said that there would be some publicity along with publicising the opening of the shopping park. Mr Macnab added it would happen in combination between us and the tenants marketing people and they would be flagging this as a strong selling point. Councillor Mohindra understood that throughout Essex there were only 60 charging points and we would then be leading on this.

Mr Pasterfield added that next week they would have a meeting with Savills, the management agents for the shopping park once completed. They have been providing useful advice throughout the process. From practical completion on 15 June the Building Contractor would effectively be gone and the shopping park would be ours. The meeting will be about the management requirements we would need to look after this, and they would also be dealing with the charging points and would have their suggestions on how this could be marketed.

The meeting then went into private session to discuss individual tenants and their requirements which were commercially sensitive.

RESOLVED:

That the progress on the Council's Epping Forest Shopping Park was noted

45. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Cabinet Committee noted that there was no other urgent business for consideration.

46. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED:

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below on the grounds that they would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

<u>Agenda Item No.</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Exempt Information Paragraph Number</u>
7a	Epping Forest Shopping Park	3

CHAIRMAN