

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY, 14 MARCH 2017
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.00 - 8.55 PM**

- Members Present:** Y Knight (Chairman), G Shiell (Vice-Chairman), R Baldwin, A Beales, G Chambers, K Chana, R Gadsby, S Heap, L Hughes, A Mitchell, H Whitbread and W Marshall (Tenants and Leaseholders Federation)
- Other members present:** S Stavrou, J Lea and J H Whitehouse
- Apologies for Absence:** L Girling and B Rolfe
- Officers Present** A Hall (Director of Communities), P Pledger (Assistant Director (Housing Property)), R Wilson (Assistant Director (Housing Operations)), D Butler (Youth Engagement Officer), G Gold (Assistant Community Health & Wellbeing Manager), A Hendry (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and Haydn Thorpe (Asst Housing Maintenance Manager)

59. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (MINUTE ITEM 39 - 23.7.02)

It was noted that Councillor G Chambers was substituting for Councillor B Rolfe.

60. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the last meeting of the Select Committee held on 17 January 2017, be agreed.

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

62. ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL

The Select Committee received their annual report from the Youth Council on their activities and achievements during the current year and plans for the next 12 months.

Four Youth Councillors made a presentation at this meeting; they were Zachary Foster an independent Youth Councillor, Lisa Nakimuli from King Harold Academy, Finlay Jordan from Davenant Foundation School and Annabelle Yamen representing Epping St Johns School.

They thanked the members for the Council's loyalty and support for the Youth Council over the past nine years. The Committee noted that these were newly elected members and were looking forward to their two years of service. In total about 25 Youth Councillors were elected in November 2016. They also thanked members for the grant of £8,000 project money that had enabled them to deliver the

highly successful Emotional Health & Wellbeing project – ‘MiLife’ in seven secondary schools.

Their aim was to ensure that all their peers and the schools continued to have a voice and be involved in their work.

In October 2015, the previous members of the Youth Council held a Youth Conference at the Civic Offices to promote Local Democracy week and one of the stronger themes that resulted from consulting with the 90 strong delegates was the issue of mental health, deemed to be a major issue for young people; to this end they commissioned the Red Balloon Family, a local charity, to work with them and create the MiLife Roadshow.

The Roadshow aimed to raise awareness of positive mental health and help build resilience, enabling young people to help themselves and have better mental health. Over the year they would educate and support over 7000 pupils in the Epping Forest District in their initial year. With 7000 pupils experiencing this hour long roadshow, equating to £1.72 per pupil, it turned out to be very good value. In addition to the £8,000 from Epping Forest District Council, they were also able to secure £4,000 from the Epping Forest Youth Strategy group.

The North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT) and NHS England had expressed their approval of the MiLife Roadshows and would like to work with Epping Forest Youth Council (EFYC) to digitalise the programme so that it can be delivered to all schools, nationally, at no further cost. This project had exceeded the Youth Council's expectations and they were very proud of their work.

The EFYC used social media as an important part off promoting their work and the profile of young people in the Epping Forest District. Giving young people a voice was what the Youth Council was all about. And, as Youth Councillors they have contributed to various consultations. They also have representations on the Epping Forest Youth Strategy Group and have been invited to work closely with the PCC and the Youth Engagement team at Essex Police, as well as the Young Essex Assembly, NELFT volunteers and the Jack Petchey Achievers Network, as well the local school councils.

They also have a busy training programme and had received accreditation for Mental Health First Aid training and will be completing Dementia Friends Awareness Raising as well as Fearless Training by Essex Police, designed to empower young people to make their community a safer place.

Youth volunteering remains a big theme for them and they will be taking part in a Youth Volunteering Day during the summer holidays.

They also reported that in their short time as youth councillors they have obtained external funding of £2700 from various sources over the last 4 months.

The High Sheriff of Essex had endorsed the MiLife project and had submitted it to the High Sheriffs national Crimebeat Awards.

They have produced a Manifesto and they hoped to continue working with the NELFT NHS team in schools to address young people's mental health issues and build resilience. They would also like to work with schools to promote the accredited Mental Health First Aid training. They will also be promoting the Suggestion Boxes in schools to enable pupils to contact them and ask for support in improving services.

In order to bring new and exciting ideas to the community through project work the Youth Council would like the Committee's support to release the £5000 DDF grant money. This work will include working with Epping Town Partnership to support the Youth Festival in July; to collaborate with the Police Cadets on community events relevant to young people; to work with the Community Health and Wellbeing team in schools to address substance misuse, physical health and child obesity; to promote interactive Youth activities map; and to work closely with the Police and Schools to ensure young people to have a better relationship with the police through the "Cuppa with a Copper" campaign.

They finished by thanking the Select Committee for their continued support and help to give young people a voice through the Youth Council.

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

Councillor Holly Whitbread congratulated the speakers on their presentation. She was interested in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and wondered if they had any ideas on how to tackle ASB. She was told that that the Youth Council's aim was to work with EFDC Councillors on this. There was a lot of work to do on drug abuse and they would like to work with younger pupils (years 7&8) to steer them away.

Councillor Whitbread asked if they thought of using social media to consult people. She was told that they did a lot of work on social media and also distributed leaflets and were doing a lot of work to build on this.

Councillor Knight noted that there was the Crucial Crew scheme and that the Committee had heard about its value. It seemed that young people found it easier approaching other young people. She asked what feedback they had and how their roles as youth councillors impacted this. She was told that the Youth Council was now relaunching the "Suggestion Box" for schools and were finding that the pupils found it easier dealing with people of their own age. They also have had feedback sheets from the MiLife Roadshows which were followed up and it offered some pupils a chance for them to ask for help.

Councillor Stavrou complimented them on a really good presentation. She liked the work that they had carried out on the 'MiLife' initiative; she said that it was good to catch issues like this earlier on in life. She was looking forward to seeing what the Youth Council would do in the future. Ms Butler the Youth Engagement Officer said that 'MiLife' came from the previous Youth Councillors, the idea coming from their Youth Conference. They were now looking at drug and alcohol awareness.

Councillor Knight asked the Youth Councillors if they would like to consider one of their members being co-opted onto the Select Committee (either one individual or through a rota) as she thought their input into the issues discussed as part of the

Committee's Work Programme would be valuable. The Youth Councillors thought that was a good idea and they would be happy for one of their number to be co-opted onto this Committee. Councillor Knight said that she would take this to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their consideration and approval.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Select Committee thank the members of the Youth Council for their presentation, reviewing their achievements and future work programme;
- (2) That the Select Committee recommends to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the £5,000 (allocated from DDF) be released to the Youth Council for projects during 2017/18; and
- (3) That the Committee seeks approval from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to co-opt a Youth Councillor onto this Select Committee.

63. REVIEW OF THE OPENING HOURS AT LIMES CENTRE, CHIGWELL

The Assistant Director (Housing Operations), Mr Wilson introduced the report on the Limes Centre. The centre itself provided a services 'multi agency' hub for local people and the Limes Farm Centre has a large main hall and smaller activities which are available for hire, for both regular bookings and one-off events, including evenings and weekends, which include sports clubs, Children's parties and large faith gatherings.

At its meeting on 9 March 2015, the Cabinet agreed the report on the Housing Improvements and Enhancements Fund. One of the agreed Recommendations was that an additional temporary part-time (18 hours) Housing Officer post be created for a period of 18 months to enable the expansion of services and opening hours at the Limes Centre in Chigwell for a pilot period of 12 months. It was further agreed that a review of the success of the pilot be undertaken by the Communities Select Committee following 12 months of operation to decide whether the temporary post should be made permanent.

Unfortunately, due to recruitment difficulties there were delays in appointing a person to the new temporary part-time post due to the original hours being offered. As a result, it was necessary to re-organise working hours within the Housing Office at the Centre. Therefore, the post was not filled until January 2016.

The pilot period commenced in January 2016 and covered the calendar year and included the following achievements and activities:

- In advance of the pilot period commencing, the additional opening hours and services were publicised through the Council's website, the tenants' magazine 'Housing News'; leaflets were delivered to all properties on the estate and posters placed in public areas. Members were advised through the Council Bulletin
- Following a launch event, the office hours were extended from 9:00am to 12:30pm Monday to Friday to 9:00am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday
- A chip and pin facility was introduced in order to enable residents to pay their

- Council Tax, rent and other payments at the Centre for the first time
- A new local periodic Newsletter was introduced and is delivered to all local residents
- As part of a re-organisation of housing management services 400 additional properties are now managed from the Limes Centre covering Abridge and Theydon Bois. As a result of the change a further existing part-time member of staff was transferred from the Area Housing Office (North) at the Civic Offices to the Limes Centre which further facilitated the extension of hours and services
- The Housing Related Support provider “Family Mosaic” commenced a weekly “surgery” at the Centre from January 2017
- The Citizens Advice Bureau’s Debt Advisor extended their service from one half day to two half days each week
- London and Quadrant Housing Trust who own and manage over 100 properties on the estate have set up a monthly surgery for their tenants which may be extended subject to take-up

As a result of the extended opening hours and the provision of additional services, the number of residents accessing services had increased substantially from 933 visitors in the calendar year 2015 to 1,982 in the calendar year 2016 - representing an increase of 1,049 visitors (112%).

A customer exit survey was undertaken between January 2016 and December 2016. Of the 132 responses received, 123 (93%) stated they were in favour of the extended opening hours and 132 (100%) were satisfied with the service.

Because of this it was recommended that the Communities Select Committee recommend to the Housing Portfolio Holder that the additional temporary part-time Housing Officer post be made permanent to enable the extension of services and longer opening hours.

Councillor Chambers and Mr Marshall both agreed that residents would like to see the extended hours made permanent. Councillor Stavrou noted that the attendance numbers had doubled and so it had proved its worth.

Councillor Chambers asked what would be the cost to extend the hours permanently. He was told that it was in the region of £13k pa.

RESOLVED:

That the Communities Select Committee recommends to the Housing Portfolio Holder that due to the success of the pilot and in order for the Limes Centre, Chigwell to continue to provide extended services and longer opening hours, the additional temporary part-time Housing Officer post be made permanent.

64. PRESENTATION ON DISABLED ADAPTATIONS TO COUNCIL PROPERTIES

A short presentation on Disabled Adaptions to Council properties was given by the Assistant Director (Housing Property and Development) Paul Pledger, supported by the Haden Thorpe the Housing Asserts Manager. The meeting noted that about six months ago the Assistant Director Private Sector Housing and Communities Support

gave a short presentation on adaptations carried out in the private sector. The Committee then asked for a similar review of Council properties.

The adaptations were divided into two types, Minor Adaptions (Revenue) and Major Adaptions (Capital). They had an annual budget of £450,000 a year and they all started with a referral from Essex County Council's Social Care Occupational Therapy (OT) Service.

The adaptations help people remain in their homes and clears beds in hospitals. They also have an under occupancy test, if the property was under occupied by 2 or more bedrooms, they would not carry out the adaptations as they should really downsize. Also if tenants were in rent arrears they would not carry out any works. It was also noted that they did not means test Local Authority tenants.

All the adaptations done were assessed by the ECC OT Service who would also prioritise each application and they were actioned in that order.

About £50,000 pa was spent on minor adaptations such as installing hand rails, grip rails and half steps. An average of 170 minor adaptations are carried out in a year, with an average completion time of 23 days. They had a target of 28 days. At the end of Quarter 3 there were only 5 left outstanding. The service achieved a 98% score in the tenant satisfaction survey.

Major Adaptions accounted for the remainder of the budget (£400,000 pa.), there were about 190 of these per year, ranging from putting in extensions, to through floor lifts, stairlifts, level access showers, over bath showers, improving/adapting kitchens, installing ramps and hardstandings.

Except for the building of extensions, works took an average of 72 days. Their target was 56 days. They were above their target as Essex CC tended to ask for upfront payments for putting in Crossovers. The average number of outstanding jobs was 52, but they did have a 100% tenant satisfaction.

Extensions to properties were capped to a value of £35,000; if it were to cost more they would try to get the occupant to pay the difference or work out a different scheme with them. There were currently 8 waiting to be carried out.

The other major piece of work carried out was the installation of lifts especially through floor or stairlifts. Through - floor lifts were for people in wheelchairs and was not an easy adaption to do. Stairlifts were easier as they had a contract with Stannah. They were used across the Essex authorities and when no longer needed the lifts were dismantled and reused elsewhere. But this Essex wide contract would be ending in June 2017 and it would be left to EFDC to take this up. Officers were currently identifying alternatives.

Other major adaptations were bathroom adaptations such as graded floor showers (wet rooms), installations of showers and planned bathroom maintenance programme. They did these more than any other works and were offered to tenants who were on their planned maintenance programme. A graded floor shower was sometimes put in as a default. There was currently a backlog of about 70 jobs.

Councillor Knight asked who was responsible for inspecting the stairlifts. She was told that we were but that Stannah did it on our behalf; this was needed for the insurance on the stairlifts.

Officers were currently looking at this for when the contract runs out in June 2017, as were every other local authority in Essex. It was noted that Stannah was due to come in and discuss this with us shortly.

Councillor Stavrou asked about graded floor bathrooms; what happens if a young family wanted a bathroom. She was told that graded floor bathrooms were only put into ground floor, one bedroom flats. The flat must also be accessible for disabled people.

Mr Marshall asked about under occupancy and if an appropriate property was available, would that property also need adapting. He was told that it would, but the Council would also have a family property back. The tenants must consider downsizing if it was medically possible, if not exceptions could be made.

Mr Marshall then asked if officers could not reach agreement with Stannah, what would happen to the stairlifts already put in. Mr Thorpe said that they were currently having talks with Stannah about this and were still evaluating this.

Mr Marshall asked if a stairlift was not wanted by the next occupant would it be removed. He was told that it would remain.

Councillor Mitchell asked, if there was a repair needed would the cost come out of the Council's budget. She was told that it was all covered by the agreement with Stannah.

Councillor Chambers said that it was useful to include servicing in any contract with Stannah. With regard to Occupational Therapy services, a lot of councils were working with agency OT services. He asked if the Council had considered employing a part time Occupational Therapists? Mr Pledger said that we did not pay ECC for this service. Officers have looked at bringing in our own OT but we would not save any money by doing this.

Councillor Janet Whitehouse noted that VAEF also carried out minor adaptations; were they used? She was told that the Council did not use VAEF but used their own staff.

The Chairman thanked the officers for their clear and interesting presentation.

65. 12 MONTH PROGRESS REPORT ON HOUSING BUSINESS PLAN ACTION PLAN 2016/17

The Director of Communities, Mr Hall, introduced the progress report on the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Key Action Plan for 2016/17. This set out the proposed actions the Council would be taking, primarily, over the following year. Having included the Key Action Plan within the Business Plan, it was good practice that the progress made with the stated actions was monitored; one of the Select Committee's Terms of Reference was to review progress during the year.

Members were made aware that the Cabinet had agreed that, in future, shorter business plans should be produced to a standard template based on the four directorates. It was noted that it had not yet been decided how progress with these new business plans will be monitored.

It was also noted, that the HRA Financial Plan would continue to be updated annually and reviewed by the Communities Select Committee prior to it being finalised, with

half-yearly reviews undertaken by the Select Committee as it has done in the past.

The Committee reviewed the 6 Month Progress Report on the Key Action Plan on a page by page basis.

It was noted that the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee had recommended to the Cabinet to continue the Council House Building Programme and to revert from the Council's Modern Home Standard back to the Government's Decent Home Standard.

It was noted that under Action (6) (Council House Building Programme), the first two properties are to be handed over at the end of March 2017.

Under Action (13) Councillor Stavrou noted that Phases 4 to 6 of the Housebuilding Programme were still looking at brownfield sites, but this was not popular with the existing residents. She asked what would be the upper number for the number of properties that could be taken on for the Council Housebuilding Programme. Mr Hall said that there was no real number for this as Section 106 sites were not developed on our own land. He commented that purchasing S106 units was generally easier than building them ourselves.

Councillor Chambers asked that for any housing land development that impacts residents, if all members be informed of this. Mr Hall said that they did inform the ward members on the larger schemes.

Looking at Action (23) Mr Marshall said that the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation were actively looking for associations to join their group.

Councillor Heap asked what had gone wrong with Action (33), (maintain housing stock to modern standards), as it was listed as not achieved. Mr Hall said that the Select Committee would be looking at this issue under the next item. He explained though, that one of our contractors had not been performing.

RESOLVED:

That, having considered the 12-Month Progress Report for the Key Action Plan contained within the HRA Business Plan 2016/17, the Housing Portfolio Holder and Director of Communities noted the comments of the Select Committee accordingly.

66. COMMUNITIES KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE AND REVIEW OF 2017-18 TARGETS

The Director of Communities introduced the updating report on the Quarter 3 performance for the relevant Key Performance Indicators for the Communities Directorate along with the review of targets for 2017/18.

A range of thirty-seven (37) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2016/17 was adopted by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee in March 2016. The KPIs were important to the improvement of the Council's services and the achievement of its key objectives, and comprise a combination of some former statutory indicators and locally determined performance measures. The aim of the KPIs was to direct improvement effort towards services and the national priorities and local challenges arising from the social, economic and environmental context of the district, that are the focus of the key objectives.

The overall position for all thirty-seven KPIs at the end of the Quarter 3 was as follows:

- (a) 26 (70%) indicators achieved third quarter target;
- (b) 11 (30%) indicators did not achieve third quarter target, although 4 (11%) of KPIs performed within the agreed tolerance for the indicator; and,
- (c) 31 (84%) indicators are currently anticipated to achieve the cumulative year-end target, and a further 3 (8%) are uncertain whether they will achieve the cumulative year-end target.

10 of the Key Performance Indicators fell within the Communities Select Committee's areas of responsibility. The overall position with regard to the achievement of target performance at Q3 for these 10 indicators was as follows:

- (a) 8 (80%) indicators achieved target;
- (b) 2 (20%) indicators did not achieve target, and
- (c) 0 (0%) of these KPI's performed within the agreed tolerance for the indicator
- (d) 9 (90%) indicators are currently anticipated to achieve year-end target and a further 1 (10%) is uncertain whether it will achieve year-end target.

It was anticipated that this one indicator not currently achieving the target would meet its target by the end of Quarter 4.

The Committee went on to review the proposed indicators and targets for next year. It was noted that whilst the recent annual review considered that the current indicator set was appropriate to provide challenge and improvement during 2017/18, a number of changes to targets have been identified for the coming year.

The review of the KPIs which fell within the areas of responsibility of the Communities Select Committee had resulted in 2 proposed changes to targets:

- **COM004** - Temporary accommodation – the target has been decreased
- **COM006** - Modern Home Standards – it was now recommended that this be deleted subject to agreement by the Cabinet.

Councillor Chambers complimented officers for achieving the target for COM010 – on the Council's Careline Services. It was noted that the national targets were similar so it was suggested that we kept this target.

Councillor Chana noted the difficulties we had with contractors and asked if we had an approved list. He was told that the rules said that any contractors must be registered with "Construction Line". Councillor Chana asked if we did any vetting of these companies. He was told that yes, we did carry out further vetting once they have met the "Construction Line" initial standards.

Councillor Knight asked how the arrangements for the outsourcing of Careline was doing at present. Mr Wilson said that there were no problems at present. Staff were going along with the arrangements that had been put in place or will be putting in place. They were looking to put in high standard specifications for the contract that they hoped to let at the end of the year or early next year.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Q3 performance in relation to the Key Performance Indicators within the Select Committee's areas of responsibility be noted; and
- (2) That the proposed Key Performance Indicator set and associated targets for 2017/18 for those areas which fall within the Select Committee's areas of responsibility be endorsed.

67. CORPORATE PLAN KEY ACTION PLAN 2016-17 QUARTER 3 PROGRESS

The Select Committee reviewed the Quarter 3 progress on the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan for 2016/17. The Key Objectives were delivered by an annual action plan, with each year building upon the progress against the achievement of the Key Objectives for previous years. The annual action plans contained a range of actions designed to achieve specific outcomes and were working documents and were therefore subject to change and development to ensure the actions remain relevant and appropriate.

There are 49 actions **in total** for which progress updates for Q3 are as follows:

• Achieved or On-Target:	26 (53%)
• Under Control:	13 (27%)
• Behind Schedule:	4 (8%)
• Pending:	6 (12%)
	Total 49 (100%)

16 actions fell within the areas of responsibility of the Communities Select Committee. At the end of Q3:

- 6 (38%) of these actions have been 'Achieved' or are 'On-Target'
- 5 (31%) of these actions are 'Under Control'
- 5 (31%) of these actions are 'Pending'
- 0 (0%) of these actions are 'Behind Schedule'

Mr Marshall asked about the relocation of the Housing Repairs Service from the Epping Depot to alternative accommodation, for which North Weald had originally been proposed. He was advised that the Cabinet had determined that the Housing Repairs Depot would now be co-located with other services at the Oakwood Hill Depot, Loughton.

RESOLVED:

That the third quarter progress of the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan for 2016/17 in relation to its areas of responsibility be noted.

68. TERMS OF REFERENCE/WORK PROGRAMME

(a) Terms of Reference

The Select Committee's Terms of Reference were noted.

(b) Work Programme

The Select Committee noted their Work Programme and that all but two items had been completed and three additional items.

They noted that item 37 – *Housing Strategy 2017-2022* would be going to the June 2017 meeting; and that item 38 – *review of the future use of sheltered/ grouped housing scheme sites* had been deferred pending the outcome of the Stage 1 further HRA Financial Options report.

69. REPORTS TO BE MADE TO THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee noted that a report would be going to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee asking permission that a representative of the youth councillor be co-opted onto this Committee for the new municipal year.

70. FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee noted the future dates for this meeting and that this was their last meeting for this municipal year.

Councillor Stavrou thanked the Chairman for her good chairmanship during the year saying that she had enjoyed attending the meetings and listening to the various presentations they had during the last 12 months.

The Chairman in turn, thanked the members, vice chairman and officers of the Committee for their hard work and support throughout the year.