

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF GOVERNANCE SELECT COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY, 5 JULY 2016
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.15 - 8.20 PM**

Members Present: G Chambers (Vice-Chairman), K Chana, D Dorrell, L Hughes, S Jones, S Kane, H Kauffman, L Mead, A Patel, B Rolfe, D Stallan (Vice-Chairman of the Council), B Surtees, H Whitbread and D Wixley

Other members present: R Bassett

Apologies for Absence: N Avey and M McEwen

Officers Present C O'Boyle (Director of Governance), B Copson (Senior Performance Improvement Officer), S G Hill (Assistant Director (Governance & Performance Management)), V Loftis (Market Research Consultation Officer), M Jenkins (Democratic Services Officer) and M Chwiedz (Performance Improvement Officer)

1. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

It was advised that Councillors K Chana and A Patel were substituting for Councillors N Avey and M McEwen respectively.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

In the absence of the Chairman who had tendered his apologies, the Vice-Chairman became the Chairman and requested nominations for the role of Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That, in the absence of a Vice-Chairman, Councillor H Whitbread be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

4. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the last meeting of the sub-committee held on 20 June 2016 be agreed.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE/WORK PROGRAMME

The Select Committee received a report from the Director of Governance regarding the Governance Select Committee's Terms of Reference and Work Programme 2016/17.

From the commencement of the last municipal year, an Overview and Scrutiny framework based on a structure of four select committees was established. This ensured that all services had a reporting route for overview and scrutiny activities of each committee.

The lead officers nominated for each select committee would be responsible for the review of the terms of reference for each select committee and provided for regular progress reporting. The terms of reference needed recommendation to the Overview and Scrutiny for approval.

It was advised that select committee work programmes should be relevant and achievable, and needed to be informed by relevant service aims and member priorities. With this in mind, a co-ordinating group had been established consisting of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee and each select committee. This group, with support from lead officers were considering a way forward for the identifying appropriate scrutiny activity.

As with the Terms of Reference, select committee work programmes were recommended to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for approval.

At the previous meeting of this select committee held in April 2016, the Members had suggested items for the 2016/17 Work Programme. However it was advised that two of these items; (1) further report on planning appeals in particular those concerning Gypsies and Travellers and (2) the work of the Public Relations Team should be covered as part of the Local Plan and in respect of the second one, by a Bulletin item.

Four items were added to the select committee Work Programme for this year.

RECOMMENDED:

That the following items be recommended to the Overview and Scrutiny for inclusion in this year's select committee Work Programme:-

- (1) Review of the operation of the Council's Petitions Scheme;
- (2) Analysis of compliments and complaints data in identifying trends;
- (3) Review of enforcement activity across the services of the Governance Directorate; and
- (4) Invitation to Essex County Council Highways for a single item meeting to discuss their consultation work on District planning applications.

6. CONSULTATION REGISTER 2015/16 AND 2016/17

The Select Committee received a report regarding the Consultation Register 2015/16 and 2016/17 from the Consultation Officer.

The District Council had a statutory duty to provide responsive, value for money services, in which effective public consultation and engagement was essential for the delivery of these services.

A list of consultation, planned and carried out, by the authority, was published on the website and brought to the attention of the Governance Select Committee, to meet the general duty and best practice guidelines. All consultation and engagement exercises undertaken by the authority complied with the provisions of the Council's Public Consultation and Engagement Strategy and Policy. As part of the strategy, a Consultation Register had been included in the annual business planning process since 2006/07. It set out the issues on which we would be consulting residents and customers during the year. The register incorporated the results of consultation exercises undertaken during the preceding 12 months. It summarised the purpose, start and finish dates, the directorate undertaking the survey and where the results were published.

There were some consultation exercises which were excluded from the register such as Housing Satisfaction Surveys or consultations carried out in relation to a specific planning application.

1. Community Engagement and Involvement

The authority had carried out a wide range of community engagement and involvement activities. There were nine statutory surveys and ten carried out at the discretion of the service. Some of the surveys carried out by the Council in the last 12 months were:

- (a) The Homelessness Strategy Survey.
- (b) Revised licence conditions for holidays sites.
- (c) Waltham Abbey and Epping Upland Neighbourhood Plans.

Of these consultations carried out, eight had an interactive/online element, two were focus groups and used workshops, four were paper based postal surveys and two used meetings.

2. Local Plan

The Council's most important and largest consultation for this coming year was the Draft Plan – Preferred Approach. Two major phases of engagement had already taken place on the new Local Plan.

The Draft Plan – Preferred Approach stage of formal consultation would commence in autumn 2016. This set out the sites and policies that the Council thought were most appropriate, taking into account previous consultation responses and the Evidence Base. This would be a six week statutory consultation and was open to anyone to participate.

3. Internal Consultation

Human Resources had carried out further employee "Pulse" consultation to compare and measure staff attitudes with previous survey results.

4. Cost

All consultation had a cost whether in officer time, postage or other materials. The majority of the Council's public consultation was carried out in-house, costs were therefore kept low and within current budgets. Total cost of consultation within the current register was £114,450.

5. Transformation

A range of desk based research and small scale survey work was being carried out as part of the Transformation process. The Council was currently consulting members, staff, service users and Essex County Council on information services being facilitated via the county libraries. Consultations were being carried out testing public recognition of services provided by the District Council and a third internal staff survey was being developed to measure staff readiness in undergoing change.

6. Tenant Participation

This was an important area of consultation, especially in areas where tenants and residents needed to feel engaged or involved.

Members felt that a bridge was needed between the consultation and the result, they felt that currently there was no clear relationship between consulting and change. Although could look at this greater detail it was advised that the end result of consultations were made clear in final reports on the project with appropriate actions to be taken.

RESOLVED:

That the Consultation Register for 2016/17 setting out issues on which public consultation is undertaken and those consultation exercises completed during 2015/16 be noted.

7. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2015/16 - QUARTER 4 (OUTTURN) PERFORMANCE

The Select Committee received a report from the Performance Improvement Officer regarding the Key Performance Indicators 2015/16 – Quarter 4 (Outturn) Performance Report.

The Local Government Act 1999 required that the Council made arrangements for securing continuous improvement in the way in which its functions and services were exercised. As part of this duty, a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) relevant to the Council's services and key objectives were adopted each year by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee. Performance being monitored on a quarterly basis by the Management Board and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The overall position for all 36 KPIs at the end of the year was as follows:

- (a) 27 (75%) indicators achieved target.
- (b) 9 (25%) indicators did not achieve target.
- (c) 1 (3%) of these KPIs performed within its amber margin.

Five of the Key Performance Indicators fell within the Governance Select Committee's areas of responsibility:

- (i) 4 (80%) indicators achieved target.
- (ii) 1 (20%) indicators did not achieve target.
- (iii) 0 (0%) indicators performed within amber margin.

Members suggested that in relation to GOV007, which concerned the percentage of planning applications recommended by planning officers for refusal were overturned and granted permission following an appeal, it would be useful to include figures alongside the percentages shown.

RESOLVED:

That the Key Performance Indicators 2015/16 – Quarter 4 (Outturn) Performance report be noted.

8. CORPORATE PLAN KEY ACTION PLAN 2015/16 - QUARTER 4 (OUTTURN) POSITION

The Select Committee received a report from the Performance Improvement Officer regarding the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2015/16 – Quarter 4 (Outturn) Position.

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

The Key Objectives were delivered by an annual action plan which contained a range of actions designed to achieve specific outcomes and were working documents and subject to change and development.

The Corporate Plan Key Action Plan for 2015/16 was agreed by the Cabinet in March 2015. Progress in relation to individual actions and deliverables was reviewed by the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly and outturn basis. In May 2016 the Management Board agreed that scrutiny could be enhanced by consideration, on a quarterly basis, by the select committees.

There were 55 actions in the Key Action Plan 2015/16 of which 7 fell within the areas of responsibility of the Governance Select Committee:

- (a) 6 (86%) of these actions had not been achieved at year end.
- (b) 1 (14%) of these actions had not been achieved by year end.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Plan Key Action Plan 2015/16 – Quarter 4 (Outturn) Report be noted.

9. EQUALITY OBJECTIVES 2012-2016 - OUTTURN REPORT AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

The Select Committee received a report from the Performance Improvement Officer regarding Equality Objectives 2012-2016 – Outturn Report and Compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Equality Act 2010 placed a number of responsibilities on the Council, including a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which has regard to equality in the exercise of its functions, eliminating discrimination advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between persons who shared relevant characteristics and those who did not.

In March 2012, the Cabinet agreed four equality objectives for the four years from 2012 to 2016 designed to help the Council meet the aims of the PSED. The current status of the actions was as follows:

- (a) 31 (94%) of the 33 actions had been achieved within the relevant targets.
- (b) 2 (6%) of the 33 actions had not been achieved although significant progress had been made.

The select committee requested more training sessions for Councillors, officers replied that E-Learning was an option but could be labour intensive in maintaining, particularly in regard to occasional updating of legislative requirements. However this could be reviewed later.

RESOLVED:

That the Equality Objectives 2012-2016 – outturn report be noted.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the select committee would be held on Thursday 29 September 2016 at 7.15p.m. in Committee Room 1.